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USVI Staging Relief Effort to Support St. Vincent and The Grenadines

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Chateaubelair, St. Vincent during the La Soufriere Volcano eruption in April, 2021. By. DR. THOMAS CHRISTOPHER, MVO/UWI Seismic Research Centre

The U.S. Virgin Islands Office of the Governor and the Department of Tourism are working with residents to collect supplies and raise funds for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, who have been devastated by the eruptions of La Soufrière volcano, said the V.I. Dept. of Tourism in a release issued Friday evening.

The entire territory is joining forces to pack and fill shipping containers that will be transported to St. Vincent courtesy of Tropical Shipping, D.O.T. said.

“The people of the U.S. Virgin Islands, including many residents who originally hail from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, stand with our Caribbean brothers and sisters who are still reeling

from the severe impact of La Soufrière's eruptions," said Governor Albert Bryan, who added that his administration is working with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and St. Vincent's National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) to identify the most appropriate forms of aid and assistance needed in the midst of this disaster.

USVI government agencies and entities, including the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) and the Virgin Islands Fire Service, local companies, community organizations and individuals are providing pro bono and in-kind services. MARCO Trucking (St. Croix), The Westin St. John Resort Villas, and Grade All Heavy Equipment, Inc. (St. Thomas) have committed time and resources to the initial efforts, according to the release.

Items being collected include nonperishable food, water, sanitary supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE). In addition to the material goods that will be collected, monetary donations are being solicited from companies and individuals. All proceeds and supplies will benefit the more than 20,000 displaced residents, thousands of whom are currently in shelters.

Requested items include:

- Disinfectants
- Bleach
- Liquid soap
- Water
- Canned and nonperishable food items
- Hand sanitizer
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Bars of soap
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Combs
- Body lotion
- Shave gel
- Razors
- Facecloths
- Bandages
- Tissues
- Nail clippers
- Hair ties
- Lip balm
- Feminine hygiene products (tampons and pads)

"The Department of Tourism is calling on all Virgin Islanders to join us in showing our support and care for the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Having endured multiple natural disasters, we know all too well the devastating impact these events can have on individuals, families and communities, not only in the days and weeks following the disaster, but also in many cases for months or even years," said D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte.

Camillo Gonsalves, minister of finance, economic planning and information technology for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, expressed gratitude to the territory for its pledge of support and assistance in this difficult time.

The Department of Public Works' yard in Christiansted, St. Croix will serve as a secure collection site, and VIPA has authorized the use of its Crown Bay facility in St. Thomas for receiving donated items between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. (Monday to Friday) and 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday). VIPA has also committed to making an in-kind donation to support the Territory's efforts. Donors are encouraged to drop off donated items no later than May 8.

Volunteers are welcome to assist with packing and loading the containers as well as creating an inventory of goods collected.

To volunteer or make an in-kind donation of supplies, please contact the Department of Tourism at info@usviupdate.com.

To make a financial contribution, visit cmexmedia.org/svg. Caribbean Media Exchange, Inc. (CMEx) is partnering with the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands to accept donations. CMEx is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which means that donations are tax deductible for U.S. citizens who itemize their deductions. All donations received will be remitted to the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for distribution to NEMO and the Red Cross.