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USVI Awarded \$5.6 Million by Biden Administration to Fight Impacts of Climate Change

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The U.S. Virgin Islands is set to receive just over \$5.6 million of the \$3 billion recently approved by President Biden to increase the nation's resilience to the impacts of climate change, the Office of Disaster Recovery has announced. The investment has been made available for natural hazard mitigation measures across all 59 major disaster declarations issued due to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

According to O.D.R., to confront the growing climate change crisis, FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will provide funding for mitigation projects to every state, tribe, and territory that received a major disaster declaration in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The territory's total amount of \$5,627,618 was based on a 4 percent calculation of the estimated total amount of FEMA Public Assistance awards as of June 1, 2021, according to the release.

“FEMA continues to support the U.S. Virgin Islands as they build a more resilient infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Mark A. Walters, coordinator of FEMA’s U.S. Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office. “This additional funding will go further to assist the Territory with its hazard mitigation efforts and future needs associated with the impacts of changes to the climate.”

O.D.R. said the funding will support the prioritization of mitigation needs in both districts. The territory’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will review submitted proposals and approve projects designed to reduce the risks associated with climate change, address residential vulnerabilities, help utilities or other critical facilities adapt to changing weather conditions, and undertake other infrastructure protection measures.

“This critical funding will bolster the territory’s efforts to rebuild resiliently by constructing structures, developing infrastructure projects and supporting community initiatives that will ensure our systems are able to withstand any disaster event,” said O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien.

Eligible applicants for this funding are government agencies and private/non-profit entities with a 501(c)(3) designation. Interested parties can request an application package from the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Officer by sending an email to hmgp@vitema.gov or calling (340)773-2244. Applications must be received by August 5, 2022.