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Territory to Receive Funding for Roads, Bridges, Broadband and More as \$1 Trillion Infrastructure Bill Heads to Biden's Desk

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Congress's House of Representatives late Friday voted in favor of the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill that had long been approved in the Senate — a much needed victory for President Joe Biden, whose much larger social spending and climate measure continues to languish. Lawmakers voted 228-to-206 in favor of the infrastructure measure, with 13 Republicans crossing the aisle to join their Democratic counterparts.

On Saturday, Governor Albert Bryan thanked Mr. Biden and Congress for the measure's approval, which the governor said will help his administration maintain its momentum in its efforts toward the territory's recovery and enhancing economic stability.

“This is a landmark package of legislation that will bring the country, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands, a much-needed economic shot in the arm after the devastating financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Mr. Bryan said. “President Biden and both Houses of Congress are to be commended for their determination to assist the American people, and on behalf of the U.S. Virgin Islands, we are grateful that our leaders were able to stay on track through weeks of negotiations to bring this bill to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Biden is expected to sign the bill. Among the big provisions is \$550 billion above projected federal spending on roads, bridges, expanded broadband access and other provisions, such as replacing lead pipes in water systems, according to the Wall Street Journal. WSJ said the measure will inject \$110 billion in funding for roads, bridges and major projects, along with another \$39 billion to modernize and make public transit more accessible to elderly commuters and the disabled.

Relative to the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Bryan administration is expecting a share of the following:

- \$110 billion for roads, bridges and other major projects
- \$65 billion for broadband
- \$55 billion for water systems
- \$39 billion for public transit

Government House said Mr. Bryan encouraged Congress to work on Mr. Biden's \$1.75 social spending and climate bill, whose true price tag is \$3.98 trillion, [according to the Penn Wharton Budget Model](#).

“On behalf of the territory, I also want to urge the House and Senate to expeditiously finish approving the “Build Back Better Act,” which would greatly enhance the lives of Virgin Islanders through benefits to social services in multiple areas,” Mr. Bryan said, according to Gov't House. “It is my hope that our elected officials in Washington, D.C., continue their efforts and maintain the progress they have made to help raise the standard of living for the Territory and across the country.”

Under the current version of the “Build Back Better Act,” benefits to the USVI include increases to Medicaid, funds for tuition, capital projects, climate change mitigation and historic preservation and other assistance for community development, according to Gov't House.

Mr. Bryan also thanked Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett for working closely with his administration and her colleagues in Washington for the bipartisan infrastructure bill's passage on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands.