

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Seeks 90-Day State of Emergency Extension as Omicron Variant Leads to Record Infection Rates

Government / **Published On December 30, 2021 03:43 PM /**

Staff Consortium **December 30, 2021**



Governor Albert Bryan on Tuesday sent down proposed legislation to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory requesting that the 34th Legislature approve a 90-day extension to the current State of Emergency he proclaimed in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Gov't House, the current State of Emergency extension is set to expire on Monday, January 10, 2022, and Governor Bryan is requesting that it remains in effect until April 10, 2022.

According to the release, the governor's request follows the spike in active Covid-19 cases that struck the USVI during the Christmas holiday weekend and currently is increasing the number of cases at an exponential rate because of the highly contagious Omicron variant of the virus, which has reignited the pandemic nationally and globally.

"Thus, we have begun to, once again, adapt and prepare for an increase in active cases, hospitalizations, and possible deaths," Mr. Bryan wrote in his transmittal letter to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory. "The principal reason for seeking an extended Extension of the State of Health Emergency is to keep our community safe."

The governor also noted that the extension of the State of Health Emergency will continue to provide access to funds and resources that the territory would not otherwise have, Gov't House said.

"Our hospitals like many across the country, are suffering from the lack of staffing linked to the workload, deaths of colleagues in the clinical world, and increase in the national pay scale," Governor Bryan wrote. "The Federal State of Emergency has allowed us to tap into FEMA funding that supports staffing throughout the Territory and allows for the continued activation of Title 32 and the assistance of the Virgin Islands National Guard."