

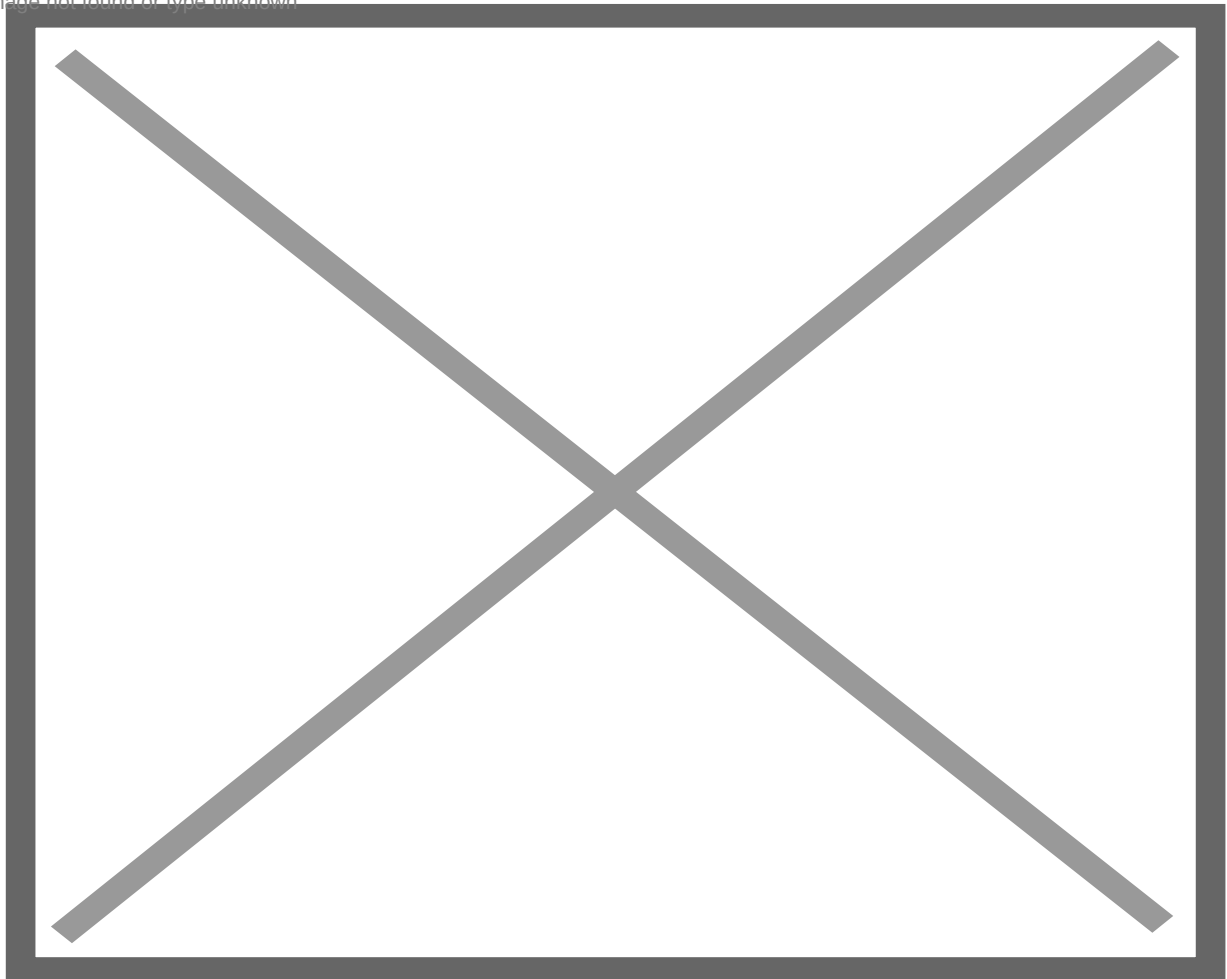
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Covid State of Emergency Extended Through May 10

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Linda Straker **April 08, 2022**

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By approval of ten yeas, three nays, one not voting and one absent, the request from the Office of the Governor to extend the State of Emergency for another 30 days was approved by members of the 34th Legislature when they met in session on Thursday.

Bill 34-0231 is an Act renewing and extending the Declaration of a State of Emergency in the U.S. Virgin Islands based on the Covid-19 pandemic for an additional 30 days from April 10, 2022, to May 10, 2022

The no votes came from Senators Alma Francis-Heyliger, Janelle Sarauw and Javan James Sr. while Sen. Kurt Vialet did not vote and senator Steven Payne Sr. was absent.

The senators objecting to the extension are not of the belief that the territory would lose any of its grant funding directly linked to pandemic recovery because the funds are already allocated to the

territory.

The letter requesting the extension explains that the territory must continue the public health state of emergency to ensure that the USVI continues to have access to funds and resources it would not otherwise have.

“Our hospital like many across the country is suffering from the lack of staffing linked to the workload, deaths of colleagues in the clinical world, and increase in the national scale. The federal state of emergency has allowed us to tap into FEMA funding that supports staffing throughout the territory and allowed for the continued activation of Title 32 and the assistance of the Virgin Islands National Guard who have championed keeping our borders safe,” said the request which was read out to members of Legislature by the clerk.

The request further said that the continuity of federal eligible programs such as SNAP, PEBT, Medicaid, child care and cash assistance TANF have been directly tied to the state of emergency declaration, and this will allow the territory to maximize the number of benefits and services that the Department of Human Services could provide to its most vulnerable clients.

“There is a direct correlation between the Presidential Order and what the Territory is eligible to receive in benefits. Should the state of emergency not be renewed, these vital programs would cease,” said the letter of request, which pointed out that between March 3 to 30 the total number of people tested for Covid-19 was 11,495, and out of that there were 210 positive cases as well as two additional fatalities.