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FEMA Awards WAPA \$19 Million to Manage Recovery Projects

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Public Assistance Program has approved funding in the amount of \$19 million to the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority for State Management Costs, the Office of Disaster Recovery (O.D.R.) has announced.

These funds will support WAPA in its efforts to finance upcoming management activities and reimbursement for costs associated with recovery projects initiated to reconstruct after the damages caused by Hurricane Maria in 2017, according to the O.D.R. Eligible activities include site inspections, preliminary damage assessments, developing detailed site-specific damage descriptions, and training related to eight projects obligated for work done in the St. Thomas district.

WAPA Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer stated, “we are pleased with the continuing support of FEMA towards the long-term mitigation projects that WAPA will undertake over the next three to five years. The obligating of these federal dollars allows the Authority to build the capacity needed to manage the anticipated federal funding earmarked for WAPA.”

The O.D.R. said WAPA was previously awarded \$370 million for projects related to the Advanced Metering Infrastructure System, repair to damaged vehicles, water distribution for the Sarah Hill Complex, drinking water projects, pump station repairs, electrical distribution permanent repairs, emergency protective measures related to power restoration on St. Thomas and power debris removal for St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island.

“This \$19 million FEMA Public Assistance grant will support the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority with building capacity in its mission to manage long-term projects across the Territory,” said USVI Recovery Director Jacqueline J. Heyliger.

WAPA must conduct and report management costs related to activities that track, charge, and account for its eligible expenditures.

“The authority has been obligated over one billion dollars to date to support recovery efforts. This funding will provide necessary resources to WAPA to efficiently manage these projects,” said O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien.

Following the review of the appropriate supporting documentation by WAPA, FEMA will reimburse the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority at 100 percent of the submitted request, the O.D.R. said.