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FEMA Obligates \$30 Million to Waste Management Authority for St. Croix Wastewater Design, in Jumpstart to Territorial Project

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St. Croix's Wastewater map By. THE V.I. OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY

The Office of Disaster Recovery announced Tuesday that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has jumpstarted the replacement of the St. Croix Wastewater system with a \$30 million award to the Waste Management Authority. The funds will be used to begin the architectural and engineering design work for the island of St. Croix, and will allow the territory to begin the design in advance of the obligation for the system-wide replacement projected at \$1.5 billion, O.D.R. said.

Late last year, FEMA determined that the damages caused by the storms in 2017, coupled with the age and deterioration of the island's wastewater facilities, made full replacement the most cost-effective option to meet industry standards, stop frequent sewage overflows and resolve the need for recurring repairs.

"The award provides critical funding to assist the Authority with the procurement of a design firm to engage in proper planning as we begin the arduous process of modernizing the wastewater infrastructure throughout the Territory," said WMA Executive Director Roger E. Merritt. He further explained that the Authority is now closer to construction as the WMA is working to solicit a firm to provide the design work, according to O.D.R.

"This is not just one step forward for the Waste Management Authority. It is also a critical piece to addressing the "One Dig" mandate," said O.D.R. Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien. "The identification of funding to begin design work ensures that the replacement of wastewater lines is included in other infrastructure projects for electrical undergrounding and water line projects already on the drawing board. The Office of Disaster Recovery thanks FEMA for their proactive approach to addressing this issue and will continue to coordinate with consultants Witt O'Brien's to identify solutions to moving the Recovery forward."

The wastewater replacement determinations for St. Thomas and St. John are expected by the end of the year, according to the release.