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Bryan Not Expected to Seek State of Emergency Renewal After June

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Governor Albert Bryan said Monday that barring an emergency he would not seek a renewal of the Covid-induced state of emergency declaration which expires at the end of June.

The governor's decision not to pursue an extension comes as his administration is now treating Covid-19 as an endemic, where the virus's presence is constant and follows predictable patterns occurring at an expected, baseline level. "We know that Covid is winding down in terms of the pandemic phase of it," Mr. Bryan said during his weekly press briefing.

As of Friday there were 627 active Covid-19 cases territory-wide, including 445 on St. Croix, 139 on St. Thomas, and 43 on St. John, [according to the health department](#). The territory's positivity rate stood at 11.93 percent.

Mr. Bryan said he wanted to end the state of emergency in May, but there were some federal programs along with some efforts from the V.I. Dept. of Health that were ongoing. "I told them that I will extend it until June 30," Mr. Bryan said, adding that funding for some other programs will end on June 30 as well. "I'm expecting, barring any emergency or anything else happening, that we will be taking down [the state of emergency declaration]... On June 30 we will be done," he said.

The state of emergency has continued since the pandemic started in March 2020, and it allowed the local government to move quickly to meet the crisis's demands across the board, to include both local and federal funding for indelible programs — bypassing hurdles put in place to ascertain sufficiency.

In recent months, lawmakers started complaining about the constant requests and the Senate's failure to renew or reject them, leading to the automatic extensions.

“This will be the third extension of the state of emergency because of a lack of action from this body and we can’t continue to kick the can down the road,” Senator Kenneth Gittens [said in March](#). "I have been saying over and over that we need to repeal what was done in the 32nd Legislature and at the next session that repeal will be there because this is costly to the people of this territory..."