The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Points Out Benefits to USVI Resulting From Passage of Inflation Reduction Act

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Friday lauded the successful House and Senate passage of H.R. 5376, known as the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

She said the act "is historic legislation that will lower families' kitchen table costs, create millions of good-paying jobs delivering the most significant action on climate in history, and dramatically reduce the deficit."

The bill does the following, according to Democrats:

- Lowers prescription drug prices: finally enables Medicare to negotiate the price of prescription drugs, prevents excessive price hikes, and caps out-of-pocket costs to $2,000.
- Lowers the cost of health care: caps insulin at $35 per month for Medicare beneficiaries.
- Lowers energy costs and delivers largest-ever climate action: invests in domestic energy production and manufacturing, while reducing carbon emissions by roughly 40 percent by 2030 with historic investments in energy security and tackling the climate crisis.
- Lowers the deficit and helps fight inflation: makes a historic down payment on deficit reduction of approximately $300 billion to fight inflation.

“The investments included in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 will bring down consumer energy costs, increase American energy security, while substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions and represents the single biggest climate investment in U.S. history, by far," Ms. Plaskett said. "This bill will support energy reliability and cleaner energy production coupled with historic investments in American clean energy manufacturing while also providing a range of incentives to consumers to relieve the high costs of energy and decrease utility bills."

Relative to the U.S. Virgin Islands, the congresswoman said IRA makes significant investments in coastal communities, infrastructure, community development and agriculture.

"The Virgin Islands and its residents will be eligible for new federal funding opportunities, such as a new EPA program intended to reduce air pollution around ports, USDA electric loans for renewable energy, a Department of Energy HOMES rebate program to incentivize the installation of residential energy efficient products, a new Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant program administered by the Department of Transportation, NOAA grants for projects to restore coastal economies and protect communities that depend on healthy coastlines, and funding opportunities for underserved farmers and for agricultural research and extension at insular area land grant institutions like UVI," she said. "There is also a provision that will allocate $15 million to the Department of the Interior to provide technical assistance for climate change planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resilience to U.S. Insular Areas."

Ms. Plaskett added, “The Inflation Reduction Act is a historic victory for America’s families and for protecting our planet and I and my team worked hard to ensure the Virgin Islands’ eligibility for all of the funding available in the IRA. It is my hope that the Government of the Virgin Islands will vie for as much of this funding as possible in order to help lower the cost of energy, address our pressing issues related to climate change, while also creating more jobs in community development and a cleaner energy sector for our territory.

“With the House and Senate’s passage of this legislation, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 now heads to President Biden’s desk for his signature into law.”