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FEMA Administrator Visits Territory to Tour Recovery Projects, Including JFL North and WAPA

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FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell receives a tour of WAPA's Estate Richmond Power Plant and Water Desalination Plant to discuss ongoing projects and internal operations to improve the territory's power and water infrastructure and reliability. By. BRETT WALSH FOR FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Wednesday that Administrator Deanne Criswell reviewed ongoing response and recovery activities in the U.S. Virgin Islands with visits to Government House, the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority's Estate Richmond Power Generation Plant and Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital North on the island of St. Croix.

This trip marks Criswell's second visit to the USVI as FEMA Administrator, FEMA said.

“Visits like this give me the opportunity to engage with community partners to better understand the ongoing recovery mission,” said Criswell. “Even as new threats emerge, like sargassum and the effects of climate change, FEMA continues to work closely with Governor Bryan and all of the territory’s agencies to move recovery forward here in the Virgin Islands.”

"We remain grateful for the support of FEMA under the leadership of Administrator Criswell in our effort to not only rebuild a resilient public infrastructure post hurricanes Irma and Maria but also for their support as we transform our territory for generations to come," said Governor Albert Bryan.

According to the release, during her visit, Criswell reviewed the state of the recovery with USVI Recovery Director Kristen Hodge and her staff and discussed the ongoing sargassum response with Federal Coordinating Office Patrick Cornbill and Caribbean Area Office Coordinator Mark Walters. She also met at Government House with Governor Bryan's Chief of Staff Karl Knight, Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency Director Daryl Jaschen, and WAPA CEO Andrew Smith.

Following her meeting at Government House, Criswell received a tour of the water desalination plant co-located at the Estate Richmond Power Generation Plant from WAPA leadership to gain new insight into both the recovery from Hurricane Maria and the response to a recent sargassum inundation impacting water production.

Criswell also visited Juan F. Luis Hospital North for an update on the status construction of the temporary hospital slated to open later this year. FEMA has obligated \$111 million for the temporary hospital. FEMA has also awarded \$10.5 million for architectural and engineering work for the permanent hospital, currently estimated to cost \$800 million for its replacement.