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# Plaskett-Sponsored Bill Aims to Limit Expansion of Virgin Islands National Park on St. John

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Federal legislation to prevent the expansion of the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John has been introduced by congressional delegate Stacey Plaskett.

H.R.3025, according to a statement from Ms. Plaskett, would take “the necessary steps to prevent an increase of land owned by the Park.”

The draft legislation, introduced on April 28 and sent to the House Committee on Natural Resources for consideration, “prevents any net increase of federally owned land in the Park,” according to the statement, which explained that while “individuals and entities would still be able to donate or exchange land with the Park”, the National Park Service (NPS) would have to balance that acquisition with the conveyance of an equal acreage “out of federal ownership through a sale,

exchange or donation.”

Ms. Plaskett says she believes the legislation is necessary to prevent more of St. John from being swallowed up by the Park that already takes up two-thirds of the tiny island’s limited land space. Residents there, Ms. Plaskett argues, “are already confronting housing shortages,” and the new bill aims to ensure that an expanding Park does not contribute to that problem.

The Congresswoman says that the legislation is crafted to ensure that NPS does not hide behind bureaucracy to excessively delay required transfers. For example, the bill lays out a 1-year deadline for the Park to sell land in order to avoid an increase in net acreage. If the parcels remain unsold after six months, the list price decreases by 10 percent each month. The legislation also requires the Park to provide a cash payment if a land exchange results in greater value transfer to the park than the non-federal party. This is exactly [the arrangement](#) proposed in the land swap deal between NPS and the Government of the Virgin Islands to facilitate the building of a school on St. John.

According to Ms. Plaskett, “this legislation addresses the concerns I hear consistently from Virgin Islanders about the ever-expanding presence of the Park on St. John.” The Congresswoman said that the Park must not be allowed to crowd out “the native people in furtherance of neo-colonial Bourgeois wildlife ideals (albeit sometimes well intentioned).”