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# USDA Announces Major Grant Program for Water Infrastructure Repair in U.S. Virgin Islands

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**Sargassum inundated St. Croix in 2022, leading to a disaster declaration by Governor Albert Bryan and triggering funding support from the federal government. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands has announced a major grant program to support the U.S. Virgin Islands' efforts in repairing water infrastructure damaged by significant water shortage and the unprecedented influx of sargassum seagrass in 2022.

These grants, made available as part of President Joe Biden's Investing in America agenda, are aimed at rebuilding the economy from the ground up, the USDA said. They promise to invigorate

manufacturing and clean energy investments in the United States, create high-paying jobs, and lay the foundations for a clean-energy economy that is resilient to climate change.

“We are committed to helping people rebuild their lives and communities,” USDA State Director Lakeisha Hood Moise, stated. “This funding will ensure that rural communities impacted by natural disasters have the necessary resources to repair or rebuild their water infrastructure. Given that rural America is the heart and soul of our nation, this funding is pivotal.”

The USDA is allocating over \$247 million in grants through the supplemental disaster funding provision of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. The funds will be available until they are exhausted.

Eligible applicants for these grants include rurally located public bodies and nonprofit organizations. The funds can be utilized to repair damaged water infrastructure and develop resilience against future disasters.

Applications can be submitted electronically through the USDA's application intake system, [RD APPLY](#). More information on how to apply can be obtained by contacting the Rural Development State Office or visiting the USDA [website](#).

According to the USDA, these grants are part of the broader efforts of the Biden administration under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. In the upcoming weeks, the USDA expects to announce additional funding for disaster-struck rural communities, aiding them to repair, rebuild, and fortify essential community facilities.

USDA's Rural Development loans and grants are aimed at expanding economic opportunities and improving the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance underpins infrastructure improvements, business development, housing, community facilities like schools, public safety, and healthcare, and high-speed internet access in rural, Tribal, and high-poverty areas.

The USDA said that under President Joe Biden it is transforming America's food system by prioritizing resilience, competition, access to safe and nutritious food, climate-smart practices, and equity. The department said it is committed to removing systemic barriers and building a workforce that is representative of America.