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Governor Bryan Issues Statement On Congressional Action Forgiving USVI of $300 Million in Community Disaster Loans

Waiver on Debt Incurred from 2017 Hurricanes Brings Tens of Millions in Financial Relief to WAPA, Juan F. Luis Hospital and Schneider Regional Medical Center

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. released the following statement on Congress' passage of a Continuing Resolution to fund the government through December and avoid a government shutdown that also waives the U.S. Virgin Islands' debt of $300 million in Community Disaster Loans that resulted from the 2017 hurricanes:

"It is with great pleasure that I can announce that our efforts for a year and a half toward having the federal government forgive $300 million in debt from federal disaster recovery loans after Hurricanes Irma and Maria reached fruition today when Congress passed its Continuing Resolution to avoid a government shut-down," Governor Bryan said. "Since the Bryan-Roach Administration took office, one of our top priorities has been working for the removal of this debt to the Territory. While this administration has focused successfully on stabilizing the Government of the Virgin Islands' financial situation and paying off its debts to our residents, vendors and other entities, we never wavered in our efforts to convince the federal government to acquit the Territory of the debt it incurred from those 2017 storms.

"While this certainly is a financial relief for the local economy and strengthens the foundation the Bryan-Roach Administration has been building to stabilize the government's finances, it is even more important for our two hospitals and WAPA, which have been overly burdened by the debt they incurred when Irma and Maria ravaged our islands," the Governor said.

"The waiver of the debt for Juan F. Luis Hospital, Schneider Regional Medical Center and the V.I. Water and Power Authority will relieve some of the financial strain they have been struggling under and push those entities further down the road to total recovery much more quickly and greatly assist them in delivering complete and high-quality service to the community," he said.

"I'd like to thank our federal partners in Congress, in the Biden Administration, FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor, Delegate Stacey Plaskett and especially our hard-working GVI team, who persisted in pursuing this goal for the betterment of all Virgin Islanders as we continue our momentum of recovering from the worst hurricanes we have ever experienced," Governor Bryan said.

The forgiveness of the $300 million debt from the Community Disaster Loans comprises financial relief of:

- $94.5 million for WAPA
- $42 million for Luis Hospital
- $19.3 million for Schneider Regional Medical center
- $145 million for the Government of the Virgin Islands

In a letter to President Trump dated March 19, 2020, Governor Bryan requested forgiveness of the Community Disaster Loans and the president's "assistance with a deepening financial crisis of great urgency caused by the expanding of the coronavirus pandemic." The Governor also sent an "Urgent Request for Relief Under Outstanding Community Disaster Loans" to FEMA Administrator Gaynor on March 24, 2020.

As the Bryan-Roach Administration continued its lobbying efforts with its federal partners to dismiss the disaster loans, Governor Bryan also sent letters requesting urgent action toward that loan dismissal to Administrator Gaynor and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin on May 20, 2020 and July 6, 2020.

On May 17, 2021, Governor Bryan also sent a letter to President Biden asking for his assistance in forgiving the CDL debt.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is investing in the Territory's people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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