THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
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USVI JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

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Federal Government Approves USVI Request for Assistance With Influx of Sargassum Affecting St. Croix Water Plant

Support limited to preventive measures to allow water-production on St. Croix to continue at normal levels; government agencies working with FEMA on mitigation strategies

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced that the White House has approved his request for federal support in protecting the V.I. Water and Power Authority's water plant on St. Croix from becoming overrun by the large influx of Sargassum seaweed threatening to disrupt normal water production on that island.

The scope of the federal declaration is limited to actions taken by the federal government at the request of the territory to protect the offshore water intake operations in Estate Richmond so it can continue operating at normal levels.

The Governor asked St. Croix residents and businesses to conserve water as they can, but he stressed that water production currently is at normal levels and there is no threat public health at this time.

DPNR Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol, who is overseeing the cooperative efforts with FEMA at the St. Croix water plant, said the stench resulting from the decay of the Sargassum that has accumulated along the shores of the Territory, comes from the production of hydrogen sulfide, which creates a rotten egg smell similar to that resulting from a ruptured sewer pipe.

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs has clarified that while the current Sargassum State of Emergency is in effect Territory-wide, the price freeze currently in place for water products and services applies only to St. Croix.

For accurate and updated information regarding the WAPA water plant on St. Croix and the Sargassum State of Emergency, go to the Government of the Virgin Islands Joint Information Center at vi.gov/jic/.

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