GOVERNMENT HOUSE
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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DPNR Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol gives a presentation during the Department of the Interior's Climate and Infrastructure Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Delegation of Agency Heads Give Presentations At National Infrastructure Conference in Hawaii

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien led a contingent of USVI agency and department heads recently attended the Department of the Interior's Climate and Infrastructure Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. The team made presentations along with other territories and stakeholders on critical infrastructure needs and projects in the U.S. Virgin requiring support provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

Attendees heard from presenters on critical topics such as Water, Energy, Built Infrastructure, Natural (Blue-Green) Infrastructure, Broadband and Legacy Pollution. The DOI leadership wants to ensure that it is responsive to priorities and support the successful implementation of projects supported by the BIL.

"The Virgin Islands is appreciative of the DOI's efforts to ensure that the climate and infrastructure needs of the Territories receive the focus that it desperately needs," Director Williams-Octalien said. "We look forward to reconvening with federal partners to discuss potential funding set-asides for the Territories to execute the projects."

Joining Director Williams-Octalien in presenting at the conference were V.I. Energy Office Director Kyle Fleming; DPNR Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol; V.I. Next Generation CEO Stephan Adams; V.I. Water and Power Authority's Director of Water Service Don Gregoire and Senior Project Engineer Kai Smith of the VI

Port Authority. Public Works Commissioner Derek Gabriel, Office of Management and Budget Director Jenifer O'Neal also accompanied the group to Hawaii.

Among the presentations:

- Director Fleming presented on "Mitigating the Virgin Islands Energy Crisis," and discussed a number of his department's initiatives, such as growing the Government of the Virgin Islands' fleet of electric vehicles; the effort to lay a cable connecting the USVI power grid to Puerto Rico's grid; and the push toward renewable energy.
- CEO Adams presented on "Project Sailfish," an initiative for connecting the USVI to the mainland through modern undersea cables, which offers the local community greater bandwidth capacity, network resiliency, enhance control over the broadband infrastructure and help the Territory establish digital sovereignty.
- Senior Engineer Kai Smith presented on the V.I. Port Authority projects underway at the airports, including the enhancements to the terminal at Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix and the construction of the parking deck and terminal expansion at King Airport on St. Thomas.
- Commissioner Oriol presented on the restoration of Great Pond and the St. Croix East End Marine area by creating a relief ingress and egress; dredging the historical channel entrance; dredging the entrance channel in Great Pond Bay; and the direct removal of mangroves for water to create marine nursery habitat.
- WAPA's Director of Water Distribution Don Gregoire presented on water service expansion projects on all three islands: the East End Water System Expansion on St. Croix; the Bordeaux Submarine Waterline Expansion on St. Thomas; and the Submarine Waterline and Waterline to Myra Keating Clinic projects. These projects could provide potable water access to underserved areas throughout the Territory.

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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