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Governor Bryan Signs FY2022 Executive Budget, FY2021 Supplemental Executive Budget

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — On Thursday, September 30, 2021, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. signed the Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget bills and the FY 2021 Supplemental Executive Budget amendment, which appropriates money for a wide range of capital projects, $5 million for the V.I. Waste Management Authority's debt to the V.I. Water and Power Authority and contributes $10 million to the Government Employees' Retirement System (GERS), in addition to the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) employer match of $14 million.

The Governor's FY2022 General Fund Budget total of $924,198,794 features a number of highlights for the upcoming fiscal year, including:

- $75 million for income tax refunds.
- $19.2 million in wage increases for government employees.
- $1 million for the GVI Financial Fellows Program, which is a program for recent graduates to work on a rotating business within the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Finance, the Office of Disaster Recovery and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.
- $225,000 for the creation of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention.
- $250,000 for the creation of the Office of Health Information Technology Exchange.
- $38 million for health insurance for government retirees.
- $3.8 million for outstanding Unemployment Insurance.
- $2 million for Workers Compensation payments to providers.
- $3 million for Bureau of Information Technology IT upgrades.
- $2 million to fund the Office of Disaster Recovery.

In his transmittal letter to Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory, Governor Bryan thanked the 34th Legislature for approving the budget bills, and he commended them for taking a conservative approach to the budget given the closure of the Limetree Bay facility, which occurred after the FY2022 Executive Budget was written.

However, Governor Bryan expressed his disappointment that the Senate did not consider his two-year FY2022-2023 Executive Budget proposal.

"Such a move would have facilitated the growth, sustainability and stability of the economic development the Territory truly needs and which would send a strong message to investors," the Governor wrote.

He also expressed concern that Bill No. 34-0129 appropriates the Department of Tourism's budget in the Tourism Revolving Fund.

"The fund should be used to ensure that our smaller hoteliers and attractions get the benefit of our marketing, as they cannot afford to do so like our larger and more notable flags," Governor Bryan wrote. "It must be noted that most of our competitors boast larger marketing budgets. The department is entitled to a separately funded budget, inclusive of adequate advertising funding, outside the Tourism Revolving Fund. The fund is subject to national and global disturbances and consumer preferences. I have approved this bill in protest and urge the Legislature to reconsider its actions."

Governor Bryan also signed the FY2021 Supplemental Executive Budget Bill, which appropriates $24,423,321 to several departments and agencies to pay outstanding obligations, fund a number of capital projects and for other related purposes, including:

- $350,000 for lighting improvements on Strand Street in Frederiksted.
- $1.5 million for repair of the Frederiksted Waterfront and revitalization of Midre Cummings Park.
- $300,000 for repair and maintenance of the Eastern Cemetery Crypt on St. Thomas.
- $1 million for the renovation of restroom facilities in Downtown Charlotte Amalie.
- More than $1 million for outstanding Hurricane Active Duty Pay for National Guardsmen from Hurricanes Irma and Maria.
- $10 million in direct funding to the Government Employees Retirement System.

The GVI's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.

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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