



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

FEDS FORMALLY APPROVE SCOPES OF WORK FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Commissioner Dawn L. Henry, Esq. of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources is pleased to announce that on Thursday, December 3, 2015, the Department received formal notification from the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs approving the scopes of work for the intended renovations of three public libraries. The Commissioner would like to thank Commissioner James of the Department of Public Works and Director Bowry of the Office of Management and Budget for their invaluable assistance.

Earlier this year, it was announced that nearly \$1 million in grant funding had been released under the Office of Insular Affairs' (OIA) Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Program to make infrastructure improvements at three public library facilities throughout the Territory; \$250,000 for the Athalie M. Petersen Library in Frederiksted, \$600,000 for the Florence Williams Library in Christiansted, and \$65,000 for the Elaine I. Sprauve Library in Cruz Bay, St. John.

"However, the public needs to be aware that the Department may not commence any work on these projects until the Office of Insular Affairs has ensured that all Federal environmental laws and regulations are compiled with through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all other applicable environmental laws and regulations," said Commissioner Henry. *"The renovation projects may only commence once OIA has issued an Authorization to Proceed (ATP)."*

On October 21, 2015, the Department issued a press release announcing the re-opening of the Athalie Petersen library which had been closed in the summer due to air conditioning failure. The main AC unit was replaced, and professional cleaning was performed in order to reopen for service. The near \$10,000 cost was borne by the Department and not by any expenditure under this federal grant.

The Department anticipates that the bidding process for the various renovation projects on both islands will commence early 2016. See attached letter of approval from the Department of Interior.