



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## DPNR TO RECEIVE \$69M FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

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Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources is thrilled to announce the successful acquisition of a \$69 million grant from the Climate Resilience Regional Challenge. Starting in October, this grant will significantly enhance the territory's resilience to climate change and coastal hazards. This funding is part of the Biden Administration's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge, a competitive \$575 million program under the Biden-Harris Administration.

"This grant presents an incredible opportunity for the people of the Virgin Islands," said Commissioner Oriol. "With job creation, support for community partners, and the expansion of the Territorial Park System, we anticipate a range of exciting projects over the next five years to safeguard our natural resources."

The grant includes activities pursuing nature-based community guided solutions across three pillars: (1) Implementation of Watershed and Coastal Improvement Plans, (2) Climate-Resilient Land Conservation and Park Development, and (3) Education and Workforce Development.

"The success of this grant is rooted in the dedication of the conservation community in the Virgin Islands," said Director Kristina "Kitty" Edwards of the Division of Territorial Parks & Protected Areas. "Collaboration with community organizations has been key, and I am excited to share updates on their projects. The next five years will be transformative for conservation efforts in the Virgin Islands."

"Capacity-building efforts will include hiring staff, interns, and technical experts, as well as investing in educational organizations and their young audiences. This grant will create five new positions within the Department, 24 full-time positions across five community partner organizations, and provide paid training opportunities and internships for at least 100 Virgin Islanders. Stay tuned for updates on each program as the grant progresses," said Commissioner Oriol.

"This grant underlines our unwavering commitment to not just confront, but proactively combat the impacts of climate change. I extend my deepest gratitude to the

Biden-Harris Administration for this vital support. With these funds, and in partnership with our resilient community, we are determined to fortify our islands' defenses against environmental adversities. Through innovative conservation strategies and steadfast community engagement, we are setting a robust example for climate resilience. Together, we are ensuring that the Virgin Islands remain a safe, sustainable paradise for future generations," concluded Governor Albert Bryan Jr..