



| Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure and Planning

Legislature USVI

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- 0:00:00 Let's get started. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Thank you. Let's go. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Let's go. Let's get started. Thank you. Let's get started. Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. Thank you. Let's go. Let's go. Thank you. Let's go. We'll be right back. Good morning, everyone, good morning colleagues, good morning to our hardworking
- 0:10:41 central staff, employees, good morning to our testifiers, and a special good morning to the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning meeting of Monday, May 15, 2023 is hereby called to order. Before we go into our agenda though, as we embark on another graduation season, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to extend an enthusiastic congratulations to all the 2023 graduates who have successfully achieved this very important milestone, graduating. What's great about receiving an education is that once you've obtained it, no one can take it back. As you move through the next phase of your life, whether it's out to the working world or if you're pursuing a higher education or you're furthering your education, or if you're going on to the military, please know that the Virgin Islands needs you.
- 0:11:44 A recent study, as I'm sure we are all aware of by now, a recent study by the RAND Corporation, which was commissioned by FEMA, indicated that the U.S. Virgin Islands is in need of more than 5,000 workers to support our recovery. 5,000 workers to support our recovery. I urge you, new graduates from UVI, from Charlotte Amalia High School, from the various schools in the territory, please contact the Division of Personnel and apply for those vacant positions. And remember, great things happen when you move beyond your comfort zones. Colleagues, today marks the second meeting of the Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning. Our recovery from the hurricanes of 2017 has been a very complicated and grueling one, certainly with many moving parts.
- 0:12:48 The public deserves to have coherent, simplified, and accurate updates as to where the territory stands on this long journey, how federal and local funds are being spent, and specific timelines for the completion of critical projects. The

Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning endeavors to do just that, working with my colleagues, and working collectively with our partners in the recovery efforts, commencing this morning with three significant players in the recovery process. OMB Director Ms. Jennifer O'Neill, our Territorial Hospital Team Executive Director Mr. Darrell Smalls, And of course, Public Works Commissioner, the Hon. Derek Gabriel.

0:13:44 It is imperative that as a territory, we work together to ensure that we do not squander an opportunity never seen before in the history of the U.S. Virgin Islands, to rebuild our homeland in a manner that this and future generations can be proud of. Madam Clerk, can we have a roll call? Yes, Mr. Chair. Senator Diane T. Capard. Senator Capard absent.

0:14:20 Senator Alma Francis Heiliger. Senator Heiliger absent. Kenneth L. Gittins. Senator Gittins, absent. Senator Maurice C. James. Here. Senator James, present. Senator Franklin D. Johnson. Senator Johnson, absent. Senator Carla J. Joseph? Present.

0:15:00 Senator Joseph? Present. Senator Milton E. Potter? Here. Senator Potter? Present. Mr. Chair, we have three present, four absent. Thank you very much Madam Clerk. Colleagues, we have a quorum and we may proceed. Madam Clerk, are there any pieces of correspondence to be read into the record at this time? Yes, Mr. Chair. Dated May 15th, 2023, to the Honorable Milton E. Potter, 35th Legislature Chairman on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning.

0:15:43 Greetings, Senator Potter. Please note for the record, I will be tardy to the Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning schedule for 9.30 a.m. on Monday, May 15, 2023, in the Earl B. Otley Legislative Chambers on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. I will arrive as soon as possible. Thank you for your understanding. Regards, Sen. Alma-Francis Heiliger, 35th Legislature member of the Committee on Disaster, Recovery, and Infrastructure and Planning. This concludes our correspondence, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Please record Sen. Alma-Francis Heiliger as tardy. Okay. Madam Clerk, can you please read today's agenda into the record?

0:16:46 Today's agenda, today's agenda, um, states the Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning has scheduled a meeting for Monday, May 15th, 2023 at 930 in the Earl B. Otley legislative chambers to receive status updates on all anticipated and underway disaster recovery related projects, programs, and the status of federal funding specifically pertaining to the Virgin Islands Office of Management and Budget, the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works, and the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team. Invited testifiers, Jennifer O'Neill, Director of the Virgin Islands Office of Management and Budget, Derek Gabriel, Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works, and Darrell Smalls, Executive Director, virgin islands territorial hospitals redevelopment team this concludes the reading of the agenda mr chair madam clerk thank you very much testifiers welcome thank you for being here we're going to ask you to put your name on the record and to introduce the members of your team who may have accompanied you this morning, beginning with our OMB director, it's Jennifer O'Neill.

0:18:30 Good morning, Jennifer O'Neill, director, Office of Management and Budget. Testing. Good morning, Derek Gabriel, commissioner for the Department of Public Works. Outside with me, Mr. Jomo McLean, our program manager for the Office of Highway Engineering, Mr. Ruben Jennings, our assistant commissioner for the St. Thomas-St. John District. And in St. Croix, we have Mrs. Tawana-Nicholas, our chief engineer for the territory. All right. Welcome.

0:19:00 Mr. Smalls? Morning. Good morning, Senator. Daryl Smalls, executive director of the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team. All right. Morning. Thank you. Director O'Neill, you may proceed with your testimony. Thank you, Senator Potter. Good day. Chairman Milton Potter, members of the Committee on Disaster Recovery, Infrastructure and Planning, other senators of the 35th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and members of the listening and viewing audience. I am Jennifer O'Neill, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and I appear before you pursuant to your invitation to provide an update with respect to the status of the territory's disaster recovery efforts to include updates on all federal funds, i.e.

0:19:47 The APA CARES Act 1 and 2, Inflation Reduction Act, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Relative to your request, this testimony will provide responses to the funding that has been awarded, allocated, and expended, and will also detail what funds are remaining. Specifically, the items being addressed per your invitation are as follows. The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. This is an act of Congress enacted on March 6, 2020. The legislation provided emergency supplemental appropriations of \$8.3 billion in fiscal year 2020 to combat the spread of coronavirus disease or COVID-19 and counter the COVID-19 pandemic. The territory was awarded \$6,206,237 to the Department of Health from this act. Of this sum, the Department of Health appears to have expended all.

0:20:46 The Family First Coronavirus Response Act required certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions were applicable from the effective date through December 31, 2020. The territory was awarded \$20,723,201 from this act, \$20,474,005 to the

Department of Human Services, and \$249,196 to the Department of Education. Of the sums, DHS has expended all \$20 million, and VIDE expended \$7,250, leaving a remaining balance of \$241,946. This grant has since expired and the funds are no longer available to expend.

- 0:21:42 The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or the CARES Act, as you know, this act was established to provide direct economic relief and assistance to state, local, tribal and territorial governments that have been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. These funds were only to be used to cover expenses that were necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19, were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved at that time, March 27, 2020, the date of enactment of the CARES Act for the state or government, and were incurred during the period that began on March 1, 2020 and ended on December 31, 2021.
- 0:22:29 The territory was awarded \$542,842,531 from the CARES Act to 15 agencies. The allocations included the first stimulus payment of \$1,200 to eligible individuals, and just under \$100 million remains available. These funds are available until expended. IRB had 84.7, OMB 105.5, VIDE 73 million, DHS 11 million, JFL Hospital 11.8 million, SRMC 10.1 million, Department of Labor 124 million, VITEMA, \$49.6 million, Department of Health, \$12.1 million, LEPC, \$2.9 million, DPNR, \$1.2 million, Department of Public Works, \$4.1 million, VIHFA, \$5 million, Virgin Islands Port Authority, \$42.6 million, and the Virgin Islands Housing Authority, \$4.6 million.
- 0:23:34 On April 24, 2020, the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act was signed into law, marking the fourth major legislative initiative to address COVID-19. The act included a number of health provisions to address the domestic outbreak, as well as additional funding provided for the Paycheck Protection Program under the Small Business Administration. The Territory was awarded \$4,668,794 to the Department of Health from this Act. Of this sum, the Department of Health has expended \$834,172, leaving \$3,834,622 available for spending. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.
- 0:24:24 Both the CARES Act of 2020 and the Coronavirus Response and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 provided fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries. The CARES Act implemented a variety of programs to address issues related to the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, and the Consolidated Appropriations Act continued many of these programs by adding new phases, new allocations, and new guidance to address issues related to the continuation of the pandemic. The Consolidated Appropriations Act was passed by Congress on December 21st, 2020, and signed into law on December 27th, 2020. The territory was awarded \$50,606,003 to four agencies from this act. The allocations are as follows and includes the second stimulus payment of \$600 to eligible individuals. The Bureau of Internal Revenue, \$46 million. Department of Health, \$3.5 million. VIDE, \$951,000. And the Virgin Islands Port Authority, \$126,000.
- 0:25:38 The American Rescue Plan Act, or APA, of 2021 is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 117th United States Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11th, 2021 to speed up the United States recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession. First proposed on January 14th, 2021, the package built upon many of the measures in the CARES Act from March 2020 and in the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021. The act included issuance of \$1,400 in direct stimulus payments to individuals. The U.S. Virgin Islands was advanced \$108.7 million to cover the estimated costs of the stimulus payments. The American Rescue Plan Act included provisions for the administration of the coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds. The Virgin Islands is the recipient of \$547,176,884 through this provision of the statute. Those funds provide a substantial infusion of resources to support urgent response efforts to decrease the spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control. It addressed the economic fallout and laid the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery. Funding for the state and local fiscal recovery funds is subject to the requirements specified in the final rule adopted by Treasury on April 1, 2022. As things stand today, the final rule identifies five categories of eligible uses. Responding to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19. Responding to the negative economic impacts with respect to COVID-19, providing premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work during
- 0:27:33 the COVID-19 public health emergency. It's for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experience due to the pandemic, and to assist in meeting the critical needs for investments and improvements to existing infrastructure in water, sewer, and broadband. ban. I take this opportunity to reiterate that there are some specific restrictions to the use of these funds. The statute provides that recipients may not use fiscal recovery funds for deposit into any pension fund for the purpose of reducing an accrued unfunded liability. The statute also prohibits the use of fiscal recovery funds to directly or indirectly offset a reduction in net tax revenue resulting from a change in law, regulation, or administrative interpretation during the covered period. As set forth in the award terms, the U.S. Virgin Islands has until December 31st, 2024, to obligate funds provided through the Fiscal Recovery Fund, and December 31st, 2026, to expend those funds. As a result, the administration has given priority to planning, obligating and expending the

funding received under the prior COVID response allotments. A considerable portion of the fiscal recovery funding has been earmarked for infrastructure investments that address our aging water and sewer systems, as we are particularly concerned about water and sewer disaster projects that have been denied or delayed through the FEMA and HUD processes. We are also looking for synergies with projects that will be funded, such as road projects where there's opportunity to bury water and sewer lines before paving commences to date the territory has been awarded 740 million 438 thousand four hundred and forty seven dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act. The sums received are as follows: Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, \$28.3 million, and the Economic Development Authority, \$56.2 million. Within the \$28.3 million being administered by the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, \$8.5 million is for the Homeowner Assistance Fund, \$4.9 million is for the Emergency Rental Assistance I, and \$14.8 for the Emergency Rental Assistance II programs. The final part of what we have been awarded so far is \$56,234,176 for the State Small Business Credit Initiative, which is being administered by the Economic Development Authority. The recovery of the territory remains a priority and the mission to continue to strengthen the

territory's critical infrastructure and positively impact the economy is in full swing. The Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Disaster Recovery are steadfast in leading the charge of reviewing funding for projects, tracking the progress of those projects, and addressing any issues and roadblocks, all in compliance with federal regulations. In 2022, approximately 35 large recovery projects were completed, including Vaitima's tsunami warning system, the installation of brand new playground equipment at Head Start facilities territory-wide, and the restoration of recreational facilities at Fort Frederick Beach in Frederickstead. 2023 is a significant year for the recovery as critical projects enter the construction phase to include the Arthur Richards Pre-K to 8 school on St. Croix and the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Center on St. Thomas. Work will also continue on the rehabilitation of the territory's parks and sports facilities. Currently, Emile Griffith, Rudy Krieger, and Joseph Albain Parks are all in progress, as well as the libraries and the Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion, which when completed, will bring online 248 units of affordable housing. The Department of Health is also making progress on a new office for women, infant, and children at the Newt Hanson Complex on St. Thomas, and WAPA is diligently working on its installation of new generators at the Randolph-Harley substation. Overall, in 2023, ODR projects the completion of 44 projects and anticipates the start of over \$930 million in recovery projects.

Coupled with projects already in progress, over \$1.63 billion is projected to be expended in fiscal year 2023. This would result in \$81.3 million in gross receipt taxes anticipated from disaster recovery projects. All in all, the Territory now anticipates more than \$12 billion in recovery funding because of the 2017 hurricanes. To date, \$7.4 billion of those funds have already been allocated, and in 2022, the Territory expended over \$460 million in recovery funding.

In total, \$5.9 billion has been obligated from various federal sources, and over \$2.9 billion has been expended to date. Though progress is being made, it is not without its challenges. The recovery continues to manage the effects of rising inflation, the impact of supply chain issues, local match shortfalls, deficiencies in building capacity, and increasing construction costs. Nevertheless, we remain steadfast in our mission to ensure the start and completion of critical projects, make sure projects meet deadlines, and track invoices to secure timely payments. As of May 3rd, 2023, state and local fiscal recovery funds have been allocated to the authorized expenditure categories as displayed below.

Public health, negative economic impacts, public health, negative economic impact, public sector capacity, premium pay, infrastructure, revenue replacement, and administrative costs. You will see in the two charts that were included, the total \$547.1 budget amount, which is the amount that was received, approved projects of \$374.4 million with a remaining \$172.7 million to be allocated. Of the approximate \$547 million the Territory has received, roughly \$374.5 million has been obligated for specific projects and uses, leaving approximately \$172.7 million to be obligated. The obligated amount equates to approved projects totaling 374.5 in different areas, and of that sum, we have disbursed \$271.6 million, leaving a balance of just under \$103 million to be disbursed for those approved projects. This body will appreciate that the approved and dispersed amounts continue to change every week, actually every day, as new projects come online and payments are made. Some key projects that are in the pipeline to be approved are a number of waterline expansion and sewer projects that will significantly enhance what is currently in place by WAPA and the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority. However, we are ever cognizant of our timelines and will ensure that all projects are in fact obligated by the December 31st, 2024 deadline and that we expend all \$547 million by December 31st, 2026. Relative to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or the IIJA, you will note that to date, \$148.3 million in bipartisan infrastructure law funding has been announced for the U.S. Virgin Islands with over nine specific projects identified for funding.

Since the law passed, \$55.9 million has been announced for transportation and roughly \$32 million for clean water infrastructure projects in the USVI. And as of today, more than 4,000 households across the territory are receiving

affordable high-speed Internet. Based on formula funding alone, the USVI is expected to receive approximately \$96 million over five years in federal funding for highways and bridges. To date, \$18.4 million has been announced for roads, bridges, roadway safety, and major projects. This includes \$18.4 million in highway formula funding for bridges in 2022 and 2023, and \$25 million through the RAISE program in 2022 and 2023. For internet, the USVI will receive a minimum allocation of at least \$100 million to help ensure high-speed internet coverage across the territory.

0:36:34 For water to date, the \$32 million has been announced for the U.S. Virgin Islands to provide clean and safe water across the territory and improve water infrastructure. This includes the \$32 million available in fiscal year 2022 and 2023 provided through the EPA. Of this funding, \$13.6 million is dedicated to lead pipe and service line replacement, with another \$8.6 million for safe drinking water investments that can also support lead pipe replacement in fiscal year 2022 and 2023. Additionally, on April 4, 2023, the USVI was awarded an additional \$45.5 million through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to upgrade drinking water treatment systems, which is imperative for healthy communities. For public transit, based on formula funding, the USVI would expect to receive approximately \$17 million over five years under the IIJA to improve public transit across the territory. To date, the Virgin Islands has been allocated \$3.4 million to improve public transportation options across the territory. Clean energy and power.

0:37:47 Power outages cost the U.S. economy more than \$70 billion annually. To date, approximately \$6.9 million has been allocated to the U.S. Virgin Islands for clean energy, energy efficiency, and power. This includes \$1.7 million for weatherization, \$1.6 million through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program, and \$1.1 million to prevent outages and make the power grid more resilient. Additional grid funding will be made available in the coming months. For the airports, the IIJA invests \$25 billion in airports to replace and modernize airport infrastructure. To date, we have received approximately \$6 million for airports. for ports and waterways. Like the airports, our ports and waterways are in need of repair and investment. To date, we have received roughly \$45.5 million for ports and waterways. Resilience. Millions of Americans feel the effects of climate change and extreme weather every day. More frequent hurricanes, wildfires, heat waves, floods, unprecedented power outages, and persistent droughts devastate our communities and threaten our infrastructure. To date, approximately \$53.6 million has been allocated to the USVI for infrastructure resilience, including \$52.2 million through the Army Corps of Engineers for flood mitigation. Additionally, on April 21, 2023, Vice President Harris announced that the Department of Commerce has recommended \$14.3 million for projects across the USVI to make communities and the economy more resilient to climate change as part of the Investing in America agenda. They include \$6.9 million for the USVI Coral Restoration Foundation, \$6.6 million for the Nature Conservancy, and \$878,000 for the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources. Finally, the Inflation Reduction Act, which is touted as the most significant legislation in U.S. history to tackle the climate crisis and strengthen American energy security is designed to lower energy costs for households and businesses, create jobs for American workers, and deliver a clean, secure, and healthy future for our children and grandchildren. The savings, jobs, and other benefits provided by this legislation will reach communities across the U.S. Virgin Islands. Among other things, it will lower prescription drug costs and cap the maximum out-of-pocket

0:40:23 costs that seniors will have to pay, and lower energy costs to make it more affordable for families in the USVI to purchase energy-efficient appliances when they need to, make repairs around their homes, and save money under utility bills each month, including through rebates covering 50 to 100 percent of the cost for low- and moderate-income households to install new electric appliances. With all of this, Mr. Chair, you can imagine that there is much work to be done across many fronts, including keeping track of all the funding awarded and ensuring timely spending. I hope that my testimony has brought some clarity to the status of the recovery projects within the Territory and the associated funding received. This concludes my testimony, and I remain available to respond to questions. Thank you.

0:41:13 Thank you very much, Director O'Neill, for your very extensive and very thorough presentation. Gabriel, you may proceed with your presentation. Good morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Mr. Chair. Senator Johnson, just like you know, I'm on. So noted, Senator. Thank you. Thank you. Good morning. Good morning to all. Good morning, Senator Milton Potter, chairperson of the Committee on Disaster Recovery and Infrastructure, committee members, all other senators in attendance today, as well as those in the listening and viewing audience. I am Derek Gabriel, commissioner of the department of public works with me today our assistant commissioner ruben jennings chief engineer to juana nicholas and highway program manager jomo mclean thank you for the opportunity to provide updates to this committee specifically on the department's disaster recovery projects across the territory fema funded projects the cip and local engineering division continues to manage our in-house fema projects as well as contribute to the project management for other government agencies the following highlights a few projects but a full list a full listing can be found in the appendices dpw annis hope compound st croix the scope includes demolition and rebuild this project is in the design phase and is 85 complete the design is scheduled to be completed by july of 2023 the relocation of staff to a temporary facility in preparation for the rebuild has been a priority the design of the temporary facility is 90 complete however we

are still awaiting we are still awaiting approval from fema on the temporary facility the design of that facility is also scheduled to be completed by july of 23 with construction expected to commence in march of 2024 once approved the frederick said concordia office on st corey scope of work also includes demolition and rebuild this pro the design for this project is 100 complete and will be submitted in the coming months to the department of planning and natural resources for permitting and to the department of property and procurement for solicitation due to a funding shortfall dpw will supplement this project with local funds the anticipated construction date is march of 2024 the king's hill chapel on st croix the scope of

0:43:30 work includes repairs to damage components of the chapel the design for this project is 100 complete and the project is now in the procurement phase we anticipate construction will start by the end of 2023 the kingsill cemetery parking lot paving on st croire the scope of work included parking lot reconstruction this project was completed in august of 2022 at a cost of 630 124 dollars and 50 cents the parking lot is now being used by the community williams delight on st croire scope of work includes road reconstruction and drainage mitigation the design for this project is 100 complete some roads included in the project some roads included in this project are currently under a field under appeal with fema due to a severe funding shortfall caused by the areas under under appeal dpw is working on a plan to supplement this project with funding from other phases or to phase the project to allow for some road reconstruction and repairs to begin the mount pleasant east road repairs on st croix scope of work includes road reconstruction and drainage mitigation the design for this project is 100 complete and the final construction documents are now being reviewed we expect to submit these documents to property and procurement for bid solicitation in june of 2023 and we anticipate construction will start by the end of 2023 frenchman's bay botany bay perseverance bay and red hook bay watershed on st thomas scope of work includes road reconstruction drainage mitigation retaining wall construction and embankment replacement construction on this project started in july of 2022 and is approximately 50 complete sites included in this project are botany bay one and two frenchman's bay and cabria point water island watershed on saint thomas the scope of work includes road

0:45:20 reconstruction and drainage mitigation construction on this project began in september of 2022 and is approximately 90 complete we also expect this project to be completed by july of 2023 sites included are honeymoon beach overdown road flamingo road and providence hill great cruise bay fish bay coral bay and majo bay watershed on st john the scope of work also includes road reconstruction and drainage mitigation construction on this project started in june of 2022 and is approximately 30 complete there are a total of 13 sites for this project sites where construction has begun or are susanna berg pocket money francis bay hill coral bay adrian hill and pastory jersey bay watershed on st thomas scope of work includes roadway reconstruction drainage mitigation and retaining wall and a retaining wall this project has been separated into three smaller projects purple shop roads marion doll wall and the concrete plant roads these projects are currently under design review fema review and environmental review we estimate construction will begin in 2024 the dpw st john maintenance building the scope of work includes demolition and rebuild the design for this project is 70 complete and is expected to be finalized by october of 2023 we currently have an estimated construction start date of june 2024 for this project dpw is also working on securing additional funding due to an expected shortfall in addition to our dpw fema funded projects as a government engineering and project management arm the department supports our sister agencies with their disaster recovery and capital improvement projects most of the workload is currently managed by our local engineering and cip staff and cip staff is from other agencies we work closely

0:47:14 with the with the office of disaster recovery to provide program and project management oversight to ensure projects are delivered efficiently and funds are spent correctly we work closely with agencies such as the department of health sports parks and recreation education the police department and fire services among others federal highway emergency relief projects the office of highway engineering continues to manage federal highway emergency relief projects that resulted from the 2017 hurricanes to date dpw has received approximately 80 million dollars of federal highway er funds and expended over 50 million dollars of those funds the remaining balance of the funds is for projects that are currently in construction throughout the territory vi s-t-e-r s-t-x number three this project managed by eastern federal lands highway division is a design build project which includes 16 damage sites throughout the island of st croix some sites include midland midland road bridge east airport road bridge lagoon bridge concordia road east end road and the north shore road construction on four roadway sites is complete and five culvert sites are currently under construction the remaining three bridges and two culvert sites are in the final 100 design phase ccm permits have been approved for those five sites it is expected that all construction work on this project will be completed by december of 2024 if there are no more no further delays or setbacks the final walkthrough for completed sites route 732 windsor road route 763 route 765 rainforest road and the end of route 66 on melvin evans highway intersection was completed on march 7 2023 a public informational meeting was held in in april of 23 for the altona lagoon bridge and it is anticipated mobilization on that segment will begin this summer permanent traffic signs for saint croix this project is slated to to install new traffic and regulatory signs throughout the island of St. Croix. The selected contractor, Celestine Construction, has installed new signage throughout

the island and remains at 75% complete. The contractor is in the process of ordering additional signs, including street name signs, for several federal routes. There have been numerous delays due to supply chain issues and contractual issues. A shipment of signs has been received. However, the contractor is awaiting delivery of signposts.

0:49:40

A supplemental contract is currently process for this project. V-I-S-T-E-R-S-T-T-0-0-4. Managed by Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, this was a design-build project which included 13 damaged sites throughout St. Thomas. All sites in St. Thomas are complete, and final inspections were performed in April of 2023. Some of the sites included Route 335 Upper Lindbergh Bay, Route 30 Blackpoint Hill, Route 333 in the vicinity of Dorothea Fire Station Route 42, Mondale Road Route 33, Shibui Route 334, Upper Crown Mountain Route 37, Hull Bay Route 38, Weymouth-Rhymer Highway Permanent Traffic Signs for St. Thomas-St. John This project also aimed to install new traffic signs throughout the District of St. Thomas-St. John The selected contractor, Custom Builders, has completed the installation of all new signage throughout the Island District Substantial completion has been issued by DPW, and the project is in the closeout phase. V-I-S-T-E-R-S-T-T-0-0-2.

0:50:44

This project, which was also managed by Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, is complete, and final inspections were performed in April of 23. it is it included five damage sites throughout st john including route 104 near starfish market route 107 coral bay route 108 bordeaux mountain road and route 1041 in fish bay thank you for the opportunity to to give an update today my team and i are ready to answer any questions you may have thank you very much commissioner gabriel for your informative presentation and next we're going to, I want to definitely recognize Senator Franklin Johnson, as well as Committee Vice Chair, Senator Diane K. Part. Welcome, Senators. We're going to move now to Executive Director Darrell Smalls. Dr. Smalls, you may proceed with your presentation, sir. Good morning, Honorable Senator Milton E. Potter, Chairman of the Committee on Disaster recovery, infrastructure, and planning, Honorable Senators of the committee, other Honorable Senators of the 35th Legislature, Senate staff, fellow testifiers, and the listening and viewing audience. My name is Darrell A. Smalls, Executive Director of Facilities and Capital Development for the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team, which I serve under the leadership of Chairman Christopher E. Finch of the Virgin Islands Government Hospital and Health Facilities Corporation. Thank you for this opportunity to testify this morning as to the status of the recovery efforts as it pertains to the Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital and Medical Center, the facilities that make up the Schneider Regional Medical Center, which include the Roy L. Schneider Hospital, the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute, and the Myra Keating-Smith

0:52:42

Community Health Center. As the Executive Director of the THRT my primary role is to manage and oversee the programmatic design, final design, bidding, project management, procurement, construction, and project closeout for the redevelopment of our territorial hospitals and health facilities. With respect to the Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital and Medical Center, during my most recent Senate presentation, I reported that we have successfully achieved several milestones that have long been in the making. These milestones include, one, the construction of the critical administration building, which will house critical non-clinical functions for up to 20 personnel to include physician and nursing administration who will directly support JFL North. More importantly, the critical administration building will serve as a primary entrance to JFL North and will provide connectivity between JFL North and the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center. We will commence the construction of the foundation within the next week, after which we will commence the erection of the 6,500 square foot facility. The building, which is already in production, and the long lead component, the elevator, has also been released for fabrication.

0:54:03

The building is scheduled to be completed and ready for occupancy by October 2023. The development and construction of the five acre lease lot to the east of JFL North will provide space for the much needed parking that is required to support the operations of the interim hospital facility as well as for visitors. This five acre lot will also house a 10,000 square foot building that will provide relatively close access for medical records, materials management, and facilities maintenance. Our construction plans and specifications are 100% completed and the project will be public advertised during the month of May 2023. Construction is slated to be completed by the second quarter of 2024. Thirdly, and proceeding concurrently with the two previous projects, is the transition of the remaining non-clinical personnel that remain within JFL North to our least off-site facility. The retrofitting of this facility has commenced and will be ready for occupancy by September of 2023. This off-site facility will house all non-clinical support functions such as the executive leadership team, human resources, the business office, medical records, IT, and will provide for the major bulk storage to support materials management and nutritional services along with other critical hospital supplies. The most significant milestone to date on the Island of St. Croix is the permanent replacement of Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital. I recently reported that we cleared the final major hurdle to arrive at a fixed cost offer from FEMA and And that no later than Friday, May 12th, the Independent Expert Panel, which is an entity

- 0:55:56 outside of FEMA, would have completed their review. I am pleased to report that the IEP completed their review on Thursday, May 4th, after which I approve to proceed to the large project notification process, which can take up to 45 days after which we will receive notification that the project has been obligated. And yes, I am counting the days, which means by Monday, June 19, 2023, we should receive the formal fixed cost offer. Since this is considered a mega project, or one greater than \$25 million, there are several reviewers who must review the overall project in great detail. As this is a large project, Congress will be involved as they too must approve the funding for this most important project. Once we receive the official fixed cost offer, we will commence immediately with the issuance of a solicitation, specifically a request for qualifications to review and establish a pool of qualified respondents who ultimately would be deemed responsive and be eligible to submit a proposal once issued for the construction of the new Juan F. Louis Hospital.
- 0:57:09 Last but certainly not least are the renovations that are required within the VICC. These interim renovations will enable critical functions that presently remain within JFL Maine that are critical to the operations of JFL North to be safely relocated. These vitally important support functions, excuse me, these vitally important functions support direct patient care which were not integrated into the JFL North facility yet are essential to the provision of care such as outpatient radiology services, interim JFL inpatient outpatient access, outpatient phlebotomy, physical therapy, and outpatient diagnostic cardiology services, just to name a few. With respect to the Schneider Regional Medical Center, we have successfully achieved several key milestones that also have been long in the making. These milestones include, one, the selective demolition phase of the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute, which was severely impacted by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, has been successfully completed. I am happy to report that the THRT recently issued the public solicitation as of the week of April 17th for the services of a responsive contractor who once selected will ultimately reconstruct the damaged facility. A mandatory walkthrough for contractors is scheduled for tomorrow, May 16th, and Wednesday, May 17th. Our objective is to issue a notice to proceed for the construction to commence no later than September of 2023. The target completion date that would coincide with a September NTP for this critically needed cancer institute is December of 2024. With respect to the Myra Keating Community Health Center,
- 0:59:04 We have cleared the final hurdle to arrive at a fixed cost offer from FEMA. Originally, we anticipated by Friday, May 12th, the independent expert panel would have completed their review. I am pleased to report that the IEP completed their review on Wednesday, May 3rd, after which I approved to proceed to the large project notification process, which also can take up to 45 days. Thereafter, we will receive notification that the project has been obligated.
- 0:59:36 Once again, I am counting the days, which means by Monday, June 19, 2023, we should receive the formal fixed cost offer. Similarly, this is considered a mega project or one greater than \$25 million. it. As such, several reviewers must review the overall project in detail, as well as Congress, as they too must approve the funding for this most important project. Once we receive the official fixed cost offer, we will commence immediately with the issuance of a solicitation, again an RFQ, to review and establish a pool of qualified respondents who ultimately would be deemed responsible and be eligible to submit a proposal once issued for construction of the Mary Keating Smith Community Health Center for the residents of and visitors to the island of St. John. The final and most significant project to be obligated is the Roy L. Schneider Hospital. RLSH by far has been the most challenging project in that it took years of arduous discussions, wrangling, and perseverance until we successfully demonstrated the extent of the damages and arrived at a consensus that it met the criteria for a full replacement. Currently, working collaboratively with our consultant, Whit O'Brien, along with FEMA, the THRT has remained insistent that we arrive at an amicable decision as it pertains to the captured elements of the total damages incurred and their respective costs. To put the discussions into perspective, both Juan F. Louis Hospital and Roy L. Schneider were both designed and constructed as 250-bed hospitals in the early 1980s. Utilizing the information garnered during
- 1:01:27 the fixed cost determination for JFL, the framework has been established and is being utilized as the benchmark for developing the ultimate replacement cost for RLS. We anticipate that both the THRT and FEMA will mutually agree on a path forward no later than June 23rd, after which we can successfully arrive at a fixed cost offer no later than September of 2023. Working with our architect of record, we have been proactive with developing conceptual schemes which will facilitate an aggressive yet efficient design schedule that once completed, we could potentially realize realized construction commencing within 24 months after a fixed cost offer has been achieved. My team and I, along with FEMA and the Office of Disaster Recovery, have remained and will continue to remain vigilant and steadfast throughout this entire process. Similarly, the THRT, along with the Territorial Board and the Executive Leadership Team, has forged a transparent and collaborative working relationship to bring to the forefront and address all issues that may arise. As with any construction-related projects, we have encountered numerous roadblocks, however, my team and I have continued to work tirelessly and creatively to obtain the required outcomes needed to successfully meet our objectives. While there is much more work to be accomplished, I am confident that together we will be stronger, provided we work collectively towards one objective, and that is to construct the most efficient, standardized, resilient, sustainable, state-of-the-art

healthcare facilities for the people of the Virgin Islands. As I conclude my presentation,

- 1:03:21 I want to personally thank Ms. Kristen Ahaj, Recovery Director here in the Virgin Islands, for her continued support of our hospitals, and Mrs. Adrienne Williams-Octolin of the Office of Disaster Recovery for her unwavering support as a liaison between the hospitals and FEMA. Equally important, I want to give thanks to the Territorial Board, the executive leadership teams of the Juan F. Louis Hospital, and the Schneider Regional Medical Center for their support to the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team, and to the consummate professionals of the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team. This concludes my presentation. I will remain available to answer any questions at the appropriate time.
- 1:04:02 Thank you very much, Executive Director Smalls for your very informative testimony today. Colleagues, we will proceed with a seven-minute round, seven-minute round. We would like to first recognize non-committee member, Senator Ray Fonseca. Welcome, Senator, good morning. And I understand that today is a colleague's birthday, Senator Diane Capehart.
- 1:04:38 Is it? Is that true? Senator? Good morning. Good morning. That is very true. Okay. I was tempted to sing happy birthday for you, but I'll spare the listening audience that. But happy birthday to you. Thank you, Senator. Okay. We're going to start with this. This is the first job I ever come to work on my birthday. I just had to let it come. That shows your commitment to the people of the Virgin Islands. That will not go unnoticed, Senator. Thank you, Senator. Awesome. We're going to start our round of questioning.
- 1:05:15 Well, my first question is to Director O'Neill, and I wanted to ask you outline a myriad of programs and federal funding sources. I just wanted to know, do you have the sufficient manpower, the financial team, to adequately manage, you know, the myriad of, you know, financial programs that, um, you, you spoke about this morning. Uh, Senator, um, you know, that's a loaded question because I will say no, but we're doing it right. So, and we're doing it in, in collaboration with ODR. So we are working really closely together, um, and pooling our resources to make sure that we can continue to track. We do have some challenges. We have some things we have to go back and go into the system to verify and validate, which takes some time because we do ask the departments to provide the reports, but we want to validate as well. So we go back in periodically and do some validation. It does take some time. We do have some challenges, like I said with staffing but we're making it work overall overall um with regards to this recovery process I just wanted to get your opinion what actions can we as a territory um in collaboration with the federal agencies take to improve the recovery process in general. Honestly, I think when we first started, there was a lot of help that was needed and those, the respective federal agencies provided a lot of guidance, Treasury and HUD, et cetera, they gave us a lot of guidance. They asked if we needed people, they made people available to us to answer questions. So we got that support. Now we are a couple years in and we have a much better understanding of what to do and what not to do and we are, I think we're managing. We need some people. Of course I'm going to never say we don't need additional people.
- 1:07:29 We do need some additional people but we're going to keep pushing. To your point from earlier with the students who just graduated, please apply for the next cohort of GVI fellows, we need you to come into that program. My first group is graduating the end of September, and they will be full-time, permanent employees in whichever department they choose. We will have another cohort, so these recent graduates just coming out of UVI, please submit your applications. It's going to be available in the next few weeks through the Division of Personnel. So, please.
- 1:08:12 When does a new cohort start for their financial? The ideal start would be that first pay period beginning in October. Okay. Once the new fiscal year begins, that's when we try to begin. So it'll be somewhere between October and November is when we will have them, we would like to have them start. Okay. We just hang tight, submit applications, get them in quickly. You can start to reach out to any of us. Of course, we've expanded the program. I just want to put that out there. You know, it's not just financial anymore.
- 1:08:44 We can give you the free marketing opportunities. You keep going. Keep going. Yeah, it's not just the financial anymore. It's, you know, anyone with math degrees, applied science, it's IT, it's engineering, project management, construction management, anything along those lines. accounting finance of course business anything along those lines we need you to come in to the government of the virgin islands because you are you at the end of the day you are the future we are not going to be here commissioner gabriel daryl none of us are going to be here we need the young people to come in so we can train them yeah and we can step out so that's the goal get them moving and and be employed and gainful and gainfully employed where they are learning public service is you have to be dedicated. You know, we all need public service because that's where the people in the territory get their resources.
- 1:09:42 We need to have that, have them submit their application. So just to put that out there, and thank you for the time. Sure, sure. I mean, I gotta say that I have been impressed from what I've seen so far with the quality and the caliber of the

folks, the young people who have gone through your program. I don't know if it speaks to the quality of the program or if it's the motivation of these young people or a combination of both. But I definitely like what I've seen so far. I definitely encourage our young people who have the capacity and the motivation and the right attitude to explore participating in this program. So kudos to you for coming up with a concept of this program. You and your colleagues in the executive branch. Thank you. We're going to move forward with the first senator here.

1:10:37 Before we do that, I want to recognize my colleague from Frederick Stead, Senator Kenny Gittins. Senator, welcome. Senator Joseph, you're recognized for your seven minutes. a pleasant a pleasant good morning to everyone and my colleagues I also want to and the listening and viewing audience I want to wish all of the ladies a happy belated Mother's Day and also really congratulate and commend the hard-working men and women from the Department of Public Works the Office of Management and Budget, as well as the hospitals. I really know, I know, I know a lot of work goes into it. And the chairman mentioned about the level of staffing. We know we are under a crisis regarding human capital and getting good people to do the work. My concern every day is that if we don't shore up our human capital and have them in a place where they can still be challenged to do the work, we will see them getting burnt out. I really think that we have to look at other avenues other than college graduate. Maybe there are other occupations and other opportunities for young people or older people to do while they may be earning their degrees.

1:12:20 So I always keep an open mind because once to me you have completed high school at a certain level, you can learn and learning takes place every day, every day. So you don't have to have that specialized degree, but you should be able to learn and to be able to implement. And as we heard in a past meeting from the persons who are the third party fiduciaries here in the Virgin islands under the department of education we have a major issue here with implementation consistent implementation so let me just start some of my questionings i will begin first with you director o'neill kindly indicate for me i'm on page Page 3, in your testimony, you indicated that for the Department of Health receive monies from the Family First Coronavirus Response Act, and they receive about \$20.4 million. And to your understanding, all of that money was expended from the total \$20.7 million. But the Department of Education, they received \$248,196,000 from that funding source, and they expended \$7,250, with a remaining balance of \$241,946.

1:14:09 This money is no longer available based on your testimony. Was this money returned to the funders, which would be who? The Department of Health and Human Services? So, Senator, I'm not 100% certain of the funds have been returned, but I do know that the grant has expired. And to my knowledge, no... When did the grant, I'm so sorry to interrupt you, when did the grant expire?

1:14:39 This would have been back in 2020. want 2020 okay so what I noted and I really want to thank you for your report but what I noted in it I didn't see expiration dates and I know you've reported on many of these and I even went up on the internet to try to see some of the dates the expiration dates of the grants that would help us to you know be sure that we are spending in accordance of that time frame and if you have you know pursued any extension no cost extension so i'm going to run through them and if you could provide a listing i know you may have provided it before and i and i didn't see it um here so senator i will i will get that list and provide it to you because i don't have it with me today but i will be happy to provide you with all of the dates for all the awards and i would also encourage you just so that we could all be really true and transparency if it could be listed also on your website i don't absolutely i don't see it and so it would help me just in uh being able to manage and provide that level of oversight and drill down and see where we are and two minutes there are other items so that that is one of the other things so you aren't you aren't knowledgeable So what was the source of funding for that Family First Corona Response Act? Which department?

1:16:10 Is it the Department of Health and Human Services? Yeah, to my understanding, yes, it was the Department of Health and Human Services for that initial sum. Okay, let me skip. Okay, thank you. All right, so the Consolidated Appropriation Act, I'm on page number five. what is the total amount remaining in this fund because it's not stated here and neither are the expiration how much money we have left and if we could get a break I tried to look for it again on the OMB website and I didn't see anything maybe it's me and I didn't see it is it you think it's there and I just ain't seen it I see the Yeah, so these are, because they're old, this is on our revised site that we're working on.

1:17:07 So it will be shown shortly, but you can also see it. I'm so sorry. What's your time frame for your revised site to go live? In about two months. But it is actually showing on ODR's website. You can see it on ODR. Can I see all of these on ODR's website, or is it just... You should be able to. yes okay i'll check yes and if it isn't there i don't have the okay dates i'll see if i can get some dates while we're still in that that would be superb for me and it's the same questions i would have for some of the other fund how many how much money is um remaining okay now let's skip to to DPW quickly, I just, Mr. Chairman, may I just ask one question?

- 1:18:01 Yes, Senator, you may wrap up. Thank you kindly. You're so kind today. I wonder if it's because of Senator K-Paw's birthday and she's your vice chair. But I wanted to ask you regarding some of these, you know, your strategy in actually funding these projects that you have. I know most of them are FEMA projects, and you're looking at fast-tracking some of them. Are you looking to shift the funding sources? Good morning, Senator. Derek Gabriel, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works.
- 1:18:38 So we've been looking at a number of methods, if you will. So some we've been looking at phasing where we can. So if we split it up, we could use the available funding now until we identify more funding to come, whether through whichever tranche. We've been reaching out to the Office of Disaster Recovery as well to see if we could tap into, I think, the Asset Recovery Fund. I know that we just did some, we forwarded some projects that had some funding issues so we could look at them with a new line of credit as well, that we're pushing our disaster recovery projects forward. And then there's a number of projects that we've actually gone back to FEMA to appeal to see if we can get some more funding.
- 1:19:14 Okay. Mr. Chairman, I don't know if we're going to have a second round, but I do have some follow-up questions to ask the Commissioner of Public Works relative to their projects, specifically regarding the road projects here in our district. But I will hold that for a later time, sir. Thank you, Ken. Thank you, Senator. We may have a brief three or four minute lightning round. So you can save your questions for that time. Thank you very much, Senator.
- 1:19:52 Next up, Senator Maurice James, Senator James, you may proceed with your seven minutes. you mr chairman good morning virgin islands good morning colleagues good morning testifiers good morning to everyone in the room i first want to extend congratulations today the grad to the graduates of the career and technical education center today's their graduation of course i want to wish my colleague a happy birthday i want to begin with um director o'neil um because you know words are important as a matter of fact in all these testimonies there were words that that for me because it was my initial reading this morning when we received the testimonies I was trying to find my way around the words.
- 1:20:52 So I'm going to begin with Director O'Neill, where you... And it follows up on the question concerning the funds that were expired for the Department of Education. i wanted to ask how how are these um different agencies monitored with respect to the use of the funds so that there are no funds returned because i saw below where you also mentioned the amount that was awarded to the 15 agencies so and that 100 million remains so i'm I'd like you to explain to the public, how do we ensure that funds are not returned to the federal government? Is there a mechanism in place?
- 1:21:51 So, Senator, that comes with us asking the departments, as I mentioned earlier, for reports to actually report on where they are with their grants. So we do self-reporting, and then we go back and do a true-up. We go into the system, we do, you know, our investigations to see where they are. If it appears that funds are in danger of lapsing and we do a deep dive soon enough to catch it, then we work with the departments to get, you know, to rectify it. But there are some, like in this case, that we just did not get to and we missed that one.
- 1:22:32 How do we ensure that that doesn't happen in the future? Well, we're trying to do it differently now. Of course, this was when the pandemic started and there were a lot of things that were in flux. Now we have a much better process and we are doing not just listening or waiting for the departments to submit their reports, the departments in order to spend, of course, they have to send those budgets to OMB to be put on the system. So we are having the Federal Grants Management Unit work with the departments and ODR to look at where we are with the spending and trying to head these things off because of the more frequent monitoring that we're doing. Thank you. I also wanted to ask what jumped out at me on page 8 was where you said that we are particularly concerned about water and sewer disaster projects that have been denied or delayed through the fema and hud process processes um can you explain a little more on that um for me about what's going on with with projects being denied or delayed through those um fema and hud processes i'll have um i'll ask uh commissioner gabriel to chime in here on that part thank you senator uh good good morning derry gabriel commissioner department of public works so um i can speak to on the waste water side i know that we have actually recently asked fema to give us um like a 30 million dollar advance so we could push the design forward on a lot of their projects if you recall i think it was late last year in the last quarter of last year is when they got the um the approval for prudent replacement i'm saying for just for the island of st croix um so we have asked for our cash we have asked for an advance not a cash advancement and advance of 30 million dollars to push those design for that design forward a lot of the delay that we're seeing is really on the design front and we are trying to do some utility coordination as well i know we've been talking to fema to ensure that we um are avoiding duplication of benefits and we are also trying to pull out some i think i spoke to this last time we're trying to remove that paving piece so that we public works can manage that on behalf of all of the utility um partners the i'm glad we we're gonna segue into you then on uh department of
- 1:24:56 public works um i had a few questions other questions for director o'neil but i i do want to move forward uh i noticed that um when it came to two minutes f a emergency relief projects the er projects. And as you know, I'm a Khrushan, St. Croix Senator, so I wanted to ask this. I noticed that for some reason you're able to get through the projects on St.

Thomas in terms of getting them completed, which is great. But I wanted to know what accounts for st croix projects more or less being in design phases a long time i what's going on yeah that's a really good and i noticed too that a lot of your um you know there's a lot of design complete when i look through it it's like design design design does design just take longer is that it yeah so for the site the design is taking a lot longer um especially for the sites on st croix um a lot of of them are, well, some of the sites that we listed are bridges, which does take a lot of input, not just from our local permitting agencies, but also Army Corps of Engineers, and that's a lengthy process. So the design has taken a lot longer, the design and permitting phases have taken a lot longer than we anticipated, but we are, I feel like we're finally pushing through the ceiling, and you should see construction moving. I know we had the public information town hall last month on the Lagoon Bridge, which is a pretty important one for the for the community of saint croix and when you talk about bridges too see you leading me to another question you know that bridge up by um kenny gator ballpark when you're going up to seven days adventist school yes spring gott yes what's going on with that what's going on with that because that that seems to need

1:26:53 work soon yeah so that you are correct um we are hoping to see construction on that one yeah oh wow geez we're expected to see construction on that one next year i know we split the project to allow for that bridge to go first because it was one comprehensive project to include the rest of spring gut road so we split it up so that we could get that bridge repaired um as soon as possible we will do what we can we're trying to work with our um with the permitting agencies especially on the federal side to make sure that we get some approval soon and push that project forward thank you commissioner um mr chairman i'll wait for the next round um i'll i'll pass because my time i believe has been called it has been thank you it has been thank you very much senator james um i wanted to ask you um what was that dr o'neil you had a you had a question oh you wanted to respond yes yes thank you senator i wanted to actually respond back to Senator Joseph on the Families First for Education and Department of Human Services.

1:28:01 The actual awarding agency was the U.S. Department of Agriculture, not Health and Human Services. So it was Agriculture. And yes, the Department of Human Services did expend their full amounts. That's right. That's right. That's right. That's right. That's right. That's right. That's right. services, not health. Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for that. Dr. O'Neill, are there any audits required for any of our pandemic funds? Absolutely, Senator. We're actually going through one right now on CARES Act.

1:28:41 The Treasury, U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Inspector General is reviewing the CARES Act monies that were received, the roughly \$75 million that were received by the territory directly from Treasury. That is one audit that we are already going through. And there have been some additional ones that have begun from Department of Interior on some of their funding as well.

1:29:10 Okay. Are you comfortable? You don't have any anxiety about these audits? You're comfortable that we've been... I am very comfortable. We have full documentation, so all the pre-meetings that we've had and then all the follow-ups that we've had since, everything that they've asked us to provide, we've been able to provide with no issues and clarified whatever questions they've had so far. So I don't foresee there being any issues, any clawbacks from the feds. Okay.

1:29:44 Excellent. Senator Franklin, Senator Joseph, you recognize for your point of inquiry? Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. This question is just a follow-up to your question. When do you anticipate that the audit that is being conducted by the Department of the Inspector General's office is going to be completed. Which agency or department is the Inspector General being conducted? Is it Health and Human Services? No, Senator, it's Treasury. The Treasury, sorry. So when do you anticipate that audit will be concluded? That's a great question that I don't have an answer to. They're still in there. When did it start? It started earlier this year. and typically audits take a while so they and it's not just the Virgin Islands they have different teams so I don't I don't think he'll be concluded before probably the end of this year okay and have you received any findings you mentioned that anything that they asked you to explain you have been able to explain to their satisfaction that's correct we have no findings at this point they're still in their investigation investigative stage um so there are no findings at this point okay thank you so much thank you senator joseph senator franklin johnson senator johnson are you still there yes i'm there can you hear me yes i can hear you loud and clear you may proceed with your seven minutes sir i thought it was 17 minutes good morning that will be seven good morning good morning to all my colleagues good morning to the testifier good morning to the viewing and listening audience i first want to say happy birthday to my colleague diane k pod senator diane k but i hope you live to see many more i also want to extend uh happy belated mother days to all the mothers in the territory definitely want to do that and

1:31:54 then i would like to start out with um that's a simple question for mr small but before i even talk about to Mr. Small. I want to say, last week, me and my mom had been to St. Thomas. My mom had a surgery done. Procedure, everything went well. But I must say, and I said this to Mr. Small, but I must say it publicly too. The professionalism of the nursing staff, the doctors, everyone out in Roy Lester-Snyder Hospital is untouchable to any other. The The nurse system was

nice, courteous, everybody treated my mom and me, and the rest of the patient that I saw on the fourth floor, with nothing but respect and timely service.

1:32:35 I want to say thank you to all of those staff in the Roy Lester Snyder Hospital. Mr. Smalls, how are you doing this morning? Good morning, Senator. How are you doing? I'm fine, thanks. I might have missed, but I want you to give me a little help. What's the status on the cardiac center here on St. Croix, the status, what didn't receive some damages? And if it did, if I missed something, does help me out with that.

1:33:05 Senator, could you repeat that? I missed that. The cardiac center in St. Croix, did it not receive some damages? And what's the status if it did, as far as us moving forward with getting it started up and fixed? All right, the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center did not receive any damages as a result of the hurricanes. Okay, so what's the status on that? Is it up to par? Is it lacking? And you might not know if there's some physician needed, but everything is in tact with that piece of facility on St. Croix?

1:33:40 Unfortunately, Senator, I deal with the construction. I'm not really involved in the administrative or the medical side of the facility. All right, thank you very much. And again, I said thank you to those folks there. My line of question right now, so now it goes out. Senator, I don't know if you can hear us, but we can hear you, and you're actually frozen on the screen. Okay, Senator, try to disconnect and reconnect, and we'll move to you, move on to you when you are able to reconnect with us. In the interim, we're going to move on to the next senator. Before we do, I'd like to recognize the presence of non-committee members, Senator Donna Fred Gregory.

1:34:35 Welcome, Senator. We're going to move to Senator Dionne Capard. Senator Capehart, you're recognized for your seven minutes. Testing. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning to the people of the Virgin Islands. Good morning to the testifiers. I want to take this opportunity to say congratulations to all the graduates in the territory from elementary to junior high school high school career and technical education private schools congratulations and thank you all for the birthday wishes as I said I really don't walk on my birthday but you know I have a different kind of job so I'm going to ask this question because here it is we are about to we are approaching hurricane season and I'm very scared because a lot of our projects have been allocated they're waiting solicitations they're waiting permits from DPNR I don't know if director O'Neill if you can answer this. What ramifications would this have in the event that we have another natural disaster and we have all these open-ended projects still out there?

1:36:20 Senator, I think that's a loaded question. I'm probably above my My capacity to respond at this point relative to projects, the open projects, that would be Commissioner Gabriel, so I will direct it to him. So on a financial aspect, if we were supposed to have a natural disaster, you're the one that has all the monies that it comes through and the whole process correct so if we were supposed to have a natural disaster um would we have to um forget about those old projects and then come back again to see what was existing Maria Irma damages to what would be a new, a new disaster. I am just trying to get an idea of how this would happen in the Virgin Islands. Would this put us back? You know, I'm just trying to get some clarification as to what would we do as a territory.

1:37:38 So Senator, I will say that once projects have been obligated through federal agencies, those projects would remain on the books and be projects to continue once the next disaster passes. We would have to continue with those once they've been obligated already by the federal agencies, unless the federal agency comes back and says, we no longer want you to do these projects. But outside of that, those projects would continue. Now relative to say APA dollars or anything like that that we still have, that we have access to and can use, we can then probably go change our plan, submit that to Treasury and ask for approval to use those funds to deal with a new disaster financially. That would be what we do.

1:38:35 I don't think that we would sit and say, well, we have APA dollars in this case because that's the funding that we actually have in the bank, that we would say at that point, we don't want to use it to assist with a new disaster or a current disaster, and we want to just hold on to it. So I'm quite certain that Governor Bryan would make that request to Treasury to have the funds reallocated um so that we can use it in the way that it needs to be used in the event of a disaster okay thank you um so what would you say is the biggest problem um besides um individuals you can't find skin skilled individuals to um work these you know from probably even disaster recovery, working on and getting all these projects going. What would you say is the biggest challenge for the departments, say providing information?

1:39:42 Can you give me an understanding of why some projects are not allocated thus far? Some aren't allocated just simply, and if we're talking based on AAPA, some of them aren't approved yet just because of timing. We have a number of projects that are already approved, and the largest issue I think we have is the number of contractors, or the lack of contractors that we have to get these projects moving. And so that automatically delays a lot of the projects that we would like to do. And as Commissioner Gabriel mentioned, design alone is taking at least a year to 18 months. So when you have these major projects and you have all these things in design, it's going to be a challenge when they come out of design to

actually get moving without adequate contractors to get that done. So some of the reason why is just that, it's capacity on other fronts outside of central government.

1:40:42 Thank you. Commissioner Derrick Gabriel, you mentioned in your testimony today for Williams Delight St. Croix, you mentioned the design for this project is 100% complete. Some roads included in this project are currently under appeal with FEMA. Can you explain that please? Yeah. Derrick Gabriel, Commissioner, Department of Public Works. Sure, Senator. So when FEMA looks at a project, they don't approve like an entire neighbourhood. They approved certain roads that they believe were damaged. The ones that we can prove that were damaged, a few years ago, before I started, FEMA deemed \$80 million worth of roads ineligible for the District of St. Croix alone, which was a significant setback. So what we've been doing is we have what we call Project 1s and 2s, and we've been looking at ways to reallocate resources to cover entire neighborhoods where we can. because of the extensive design that was done and because of the extensive attention that we paid to drainage improvements, the cost for the project is pretty significant. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Capehart.

1:41:58 Committee on Disaster Recovery Infrastructure and Planning will stand in recess briefly for two Two minutes. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. We'll be right back. Let's go. I love you Let's go. We'll be right back. Just Thank you. Thank you. We'll be right back. We'll be right back.

1:49:05 Thank you. infrastructure and planning is back on the record. We are going to proceed to our next senator. I don't know if Senator Johnson was able to successfully reconnect. He told me during the break that he was still experiencing some challenges. So we're going to continue to move to Senator Ray Fonseca. Senator Fonseca, you're recognized for your seven minutes.

1:50:08 Yes. Pleasant. Good morning. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And I'd like to continue and wishing congratulations to all the graduates in the territory. Mr. Chairman, we had mentioned about employment to get some of these projects completed. Well, we have a lot of graduates from the high schools and also the university that has recently received an advanced certification. And of course, yesterday was Mother's Day, so happy Mother's Day to all the warm and loving and caring and attentive mothers in the community special welcome to our distinguished panel of testifiers here we have mr. Gabriel welcome Jennifer O'Neill and of course mr. Darrell small some well see money I got to repeat these they got 50 million in the Consolidated Appropriation Act, 547 million in the CARES Act, 700 million in the America's Rescued Act. I try to add up and my calculator can't even reach the number but I think it comes to about 1.3 billion dollars see money um you know um i want to bring to attention um here right in on page seven of your testimony um um jennifer you said um the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experience due to the pandemic you know i was looking here um i don't know if the listening public can see this right but i have a chart here of our health insurance coverage in the virgin islands and this here is the national average as you can see right here

1:52:12 the uninsured is nine percent and in the vi you can see there's 24 percent uninsured and um i think that's very important that we address that 24 um percentage uninsured um and you know we're going to be having some discussions on that but i wanted to get to um mr gabriel uh real quick you know um my good friend my partner out there miguel in bovoni um i saw him yesterday he said fonseca don't come down this road he had no pavement here since 2004. well you know i so lucky today because i have mr daryl gabriel the commissioner of public derrick gariel the commissioner of public works here today and this gentleman here is the road paving king last year for election miss son we had road paved and i'd like to congratulate him but they got five road in bovoni and miguel tell me this one aim paved till 2004 in fact he going to um one of them tire place to get his daughter car replaced but you know you only have about five votes in that road but he got a lot of young people some graduates so i think it may be about 10 of them now so it's it's a very important so uh commissioner gabriel can you give me an update on the roads in Bofoni. Thank you. Thank you, Senator. Derek Gabriel, Commissioner, Department of Public Works. So that project is listed in our testimony. It is part of the Jersey Bay watershed. So we do have a FEMA project for that area. Unfortunately, it is a ways out. We are dealing with not only right-of-way issues, but we have some easement challenges as well, because the major part of that is, I should say, the hazard mitigation component, which is going to allow for a lot of drainage um so you know we do anticipate that construction will begin in 24 but in the meantime we are working on some temporary repairs to the area um that we're hoping to push forward later this summer with director o'Neill's assistance okay well um thank

1:54:24 you very much for that update but you know i even if you can't pave it can you put a grate on it so that you could level it off because they got some big pothole. Listen, you could grow frog and fish and thing in these potholes. Can we put a grade on it to level off the road? So we are looking, again, at even more temporary repairs, even prior to the ones that we are looking at later this year. We will look into that, but the department doesn't have a grader on the island of St. Thomas that's in operation right now. But we will look at it. We will continue to see what we could do.

- 1:55:00 Okay, thank you very much, and you know, like I keep telling you, you know, you are a star commissioner, you know, I give you an A plus, I know you do what you say, and you mean what you say, and congratulations, but, you know, please, you know, try to get those five roads in Bovoni. One other question I wanted to go back on. Two minutes. Commissioner O'Neill, Wang Louie was awarded 11.8, and Snyder Regional was given 10.2 in the CARES Act, 10.1 in the CARES Act, on page 4 of your testimony of the \$542 million. Can you give me the details of what that went for?
- 1:55:51 Senator, good morning. So those funds were awarded to JFL from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. And they have expended all of it. They were to deal with different, they were given based on Medicare facilities or providers impacted by COVID. So it was an allocation that was just to go to medical facilities from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Both hospitals received those funds, and both hospitals have spent all of those funds, and those grants have now been closed out. Okay. Very good. Thank you very much.
- 1:56:47 Because, you know, I'm the chairman of the Hospitals, Health, and Human Services Committee. And I remain a little bit concerned about, especially about the \$90 million that Roy Lester Snyder is reporting in accounts receivables. Some of them go way back, like we said, probably need to be looked at. But the uninsured compensation is the main issue that I have with the hospitals. because you know i don't want to say that the hospital needs a bailout i think the hospital also have time management mr chair can i just finish my statement yes you may conclude yes i think the hospital also have some management issues but remember um during the pandemic a lot of patients went to the hospital and that could have affected the uninsured potential because Because, you know, the hospital is responsible for treating the COVID cases, et cetera, et cetera. So we'll continue the discussion on this because we want to make sure that we can provide quality care to our population. And thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for your leniency.
- 1:57:58 Thank you very much, Senator. Point of inquiry, Senator Fred Gregory. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning to my colleagues and good morning to the testifiers. and the listening and viewing audience. Just a follow-up on the question that was asked by the previous speaker with regards to the COVID, the CARES Act, I think, dollars that became available to the territory for health purposes in particular. Director O'Neill, you indicated that those funds have since expired? No, Senator.
- 1:58:32 For the two hospitals, they didn't expire. They actually used all of their allocations helped helped department of actually it was department of human sir um education so let me tell you why i'm asking the question that'll probably help us move this along quickly quicker so um there was a promise to pay a 250 incentive to individuals who uh were vaccinated i believe it It was last carnival, and there are individuals calling my office saying that they never got their 250. So is it a funding issue? What is the challenge?
- 1:59:12 So, Senator, it's not a funding issue. That actually was paid for through APA funds, and it was provided to the Department of Health. That was a program run by the Department of Health and Department of Finance, and so it's not a funding issue. We've provided the funding. I am not sure why the cards haven't been. That follow-up is appropriate at DO Department of Health. So the funding to support the 250 became available, so individuals should have received their . Absolutely, Senator. Thank you.
- 1:59:47 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Fred Gregory. The chair recognizes the presence of committee members, Senator Alma Francis Hyligo. Welcome, Senator. I wanted to ask, before going back to Senator Franklin Johnson, who has been reconnected to the system, I wanted to ask you, Commissioner Gabriel, the chart that you submitted to us here today, does that reflect a complete list of DPW's FEMA projects? Yes. That is for DPW. For DPW.
- 2:00:27 Correct, yes. Okay. And you should have two broken up into PA and HMGP? Yes. Okay. Yes. Yes. Okay. Have all of these projects received matching funds? Did we identify a match for these various projects? The HMGP is 100%, and then on the PA side, there are some match projects in there as well. Okay. Can you identify the ones where, you know, that required a match that were not 100%?
- 2:01:05 The P8 attachment. I think all those projects required a 10% match. Okay. And we have identified a match for them. Is that what you're saying? Yeah. So right now we're pulling most of the 10% match from our HUD, from the CDBG-DR and the CDBG mid-tranche. That's where a 10% payment has been identified from. Coming from. That's correct. Okay. Senator Frankie Johnson, you are recognized for your remaining, Madam Chair, for your remaining four minutes and 30 seconds, Senator.
- 2:01:36 No, you don't get a full seven minutes again, Senator Johnson. I thought I only had two minutes out at seven, but I had to write ahead. My final question was to the Public Board Commissioner of the Mons, Gabriel. I spoke about the Williams-Delight Road. There's some one of those roads in Siberia that federally funded, and I was told that there was X amount of money, but not the entire amount of funding. What's the status on those roads that has federal funding allotted to them? And when would those projects start up again to complete? So thank you for the question, Senator Johnson.

- 2:02:09 So what we're doing is we have one project for Williams Delight. What we're trying to do is figure out a way to reallocate some funding. We have about it's approximated to be about a 2.1 million shortfall for that project um so we're trying to find the we're trying to identify the funding shortfall so that we can address all the roads in Williams Delight the design that we did was a pretty comprehensive one and we needed to be able to address the drainage in that area which you know is pretty significant okay and now um with the public work and the zone compound what's the status of that how many employees you have there and is there some reports about they're having some more complaints and more in the facility yeah um so right now I would say the department is up just about evenly split between the two districts um so we have about approximately 120 130 100 yeah 120 130 employees at Anna's Hope um we are feverishly moving forward right now the delay is um we haven't gotten a temporary facility approved by FEMA um that design is ongoing we are still pushing forward I have gotten we have gotten some complaints about mold um we have gotten a we've gotten a pretty comprehensive um quote or estimate from a AC repair company so we are pushing to do those repairs this summer um which should alleviate a lot of the concerns that we have at the Admiral Compound and then and then you spoke about the Frederick State Concadia office you mentioned that there's a shortfall um what's the amount of money shortfall needed to for this project from the local government to be completed um I have to ask yeah let me let me ask uh miss the chief engineer Mr. Wanda Nicholas if she's aware of how much the funding shortfall is for that project and and that fund is needed from the local and how to match to get it complete
- 2:04:07 say that again Senator I'm sorry I missed the question and if the shortfall that you have and is it the shortfall where the locals are going to have to match that funding out to get that project complete yes that's what the funding shortfall is going to have to come from and that was one of the projects that we did um forward to the office of disaster recovery um for additional funding because what we're hoping to do is if we could get our project constructed then we could move some of the Annals Hope employees down to Concordia and then we could proceed with those repairs at Annals Hope okay so you have some figures there for me once you get a figure I want to ask you about that uh Paradise Road Mountain is a road behind you that was slated to be fixed so you know what I'm speaking about no I'm not I'm not 100 aware which road you're talking about Senator just just in the interest of time what I can do is I can get you to um funding shortfall on the chair's time if he doesn't mind just in interest of your time that's Mount Pleasant West Road behind a Paradise yes okay so we do have a FEMA project for that area as well uh good morning good morning to Wanda Nicholas uh Senator the in the testimony it indicated Mount Pleasant East but that is actually Mount Pleasant West okay so that is under final review and we be anticipated going to solicitation next month.
- 2:05:25 And that's federally funded? That is correct. Okay, and then we asked the question about the figure of the shortfall. I don't know if you were the person was going to answer it, but no, that's sorry about it. Yeah, Commissioner said I knew we were going to have that sent to the office. The shortfall is \$1.8 million. All right, and Mr. Chair, I don't know if my time is up. Do I have a few more minutes? You have 30 seconds, Senator. My question will be to QMB Director.
- 2:05:59 Good morning, Ms. O'Neill. Good morning. Was an extension on the first Coronavirus Response Act FFCRA requested? No, Senator. We did not need to request an extension on that. We expended all of the funds within the allotted time. Okay, what's the percentage of private sector employees through the employer receive the Paycheck Protection Program? What's the percentage? Because I have a lot of private sector that continue reaching out and saying that they have not received their funding.
- 2:06:33 So the Paycheck Protection Program was done through the banks and not through central government, so I do not have any numbers on that program. All right. I think I heard time. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll wait. I think you might have a second round, right? We will. We will. A brief second round. A lightning round. Thank you very much, Senator. Director O'Neill, there seems to be a number of infrastructure projects where there is a shortfall. Are pandemic funds available to utilize to bridge that gap? Are there pandemic funds available that can be utilized to bridge that gap?
- 2:07:16 Senator, yes and no. And I say that because typically you cannot use grant funds to offset grant funds. So we'd have to use our local dollars. And the yes comes in in the piece that we have for revenue replacement, which we have used to assist with some road projects, et cetera, that, yes, we can use for a match if necessary, but it could only be from that category of ARPA.
- 2:07:49 Okay. Okay. The money that you said was on the bank, you said, I think you said ARPA funds? It's ARPA funds. We have it on the bank. What's that money, what's that amount, that dollar amount that we have on the bank? Right now we have, it's about \$260 million or so that is still remaining in bank accounts. It's two separate bank accounts, but about \$260 million.
- 2:08:17 Okay. And our interest, the interest that we were getting on that, I mean, I think either you or the governor or someone was mentioning the amount that we make and interest on a monthly basis or something like that. Correct. We have \$200 million in a money market fund account and the interest we receive on that is at last check, it was about 4.85%. This was

a couple of weeks ago, I think it's probably a little bit higher now because interest rates did go up. So it should be over 5% right now compared to the less than 1% that we were initially receiving in another bank. So what we got in two months for interest, actually not even a full two months, a portion of February and all of March was equal to what we'd receive for over an entire year at the other bank.

2:09:15 Okay. So that is a part of your overall strategy with regards to finding dollars to supplement shortfalls? Is this funding... Absolutely. Yes, because there are no restrictions on any interest that is earned by the federal government. All we would need to do is come back to this body for approval to place the monies to whatever project or wherever there's a need for us to use the interest earned. Okay. Thank you very much, Director. Senator Kenneth Gittins, you recognize, sir, for your six minutes, for your seven minutes.

2:09:52 and you want to cut me short good morning to all good morning chair i must say that today's discussion is one of importance that a number of people are looking forward to hear so hopefully we wouldn't rush through this today talking about the lightning round the next go wrong we need to get some questions answered but first off let me just do some housekeeping and say happy birth I mean happy Mother's Day to all mothers and those who have served in the role of being a mother though Mother's Day is every day in my book a special Mother's Day to my mom in heaven as well i also want to take the time to salute our men and women in blue as we the nation celebrates national police week which started yesterday sunday may 14th and will conclude on saturday may 20th and today being the 15th of may today is proclaimed national peace officers memorial day and so we salute those who have lost their lives during the line of duty. And at this time, I would like Mr. Chair, with your indulgence, to ask for a moment of silence as today's proclaimed National Peace Officers Memorial Day.

2:11:37 Sure, sure, Senator. We will recognize a moment of silence in recognition of this very important day. thank you very much thank you thank you uh mr cheer and as i conclude uh my housekeeping let me say happy birthday to my good colleague diane tk park may the good lord continue to bless and keep you to see many more birthdays but mr chair and colleagues like my good colleague uh i think he spent his earlier days in savannah and then uh out bovoni but like my good colleague said well sir see money so true i'll start with uh commissioner gabriel commissioner gabriel uh the omb director spoke on page 13 of her testimony where she indicated that the public transit will receive some \$17 million and has already received \$3.4 million. Really and truly, I'm still looking to see the improvements to our public transportation in the Virgin Islands. What was the \$3.4 million used for, and what are the plans for the balance of these monies?

2:13:28 So, thank you, Senator Derrick Gabriel, Commissioner, Department of Public Works. so um the bulk of the money that we have received thus far um was for a lot like we purchased ppe's for some of our um through the cares like we purchased ppe for some of the drivers we did a lot of sanitization of the buses sanitization of the bus shelters and we also made some repairs um we purchased some like air purifiers as well so what we're saying ppe's i know what ppe's are but for the viewing and listening audience, what are PPEs?

2:14:02 Like the protective personal equipment, so masks, gloves, you know, sanitizers, goggles for some of the drivers that wanted them, et cetera. Thank you. You and I will have a sit down too as I want to have a discussion with you prior to introducing legislation regarding our bus shanties. Sure. Let me flip over quickly before I come back to you, Commissioner Gabriel. Director O'Neill, how are you? I'm well, thank you, Senator.

2:14:37 Hope you had a good Mother's Day yesterday. On page three, you noted that there is just under \$100 million remaining in CARES Act funding. What are the plans for this money, and why hasn't it been utilized? So, Senator, thank you for the question. A number, well, all of it, actually, is allocated to various agencies. With timelines through July 31st, 2024, some are September 30th, 2026, they have a number of programs that are already in process. Yes, so it's allocated for specific things from specific federal agencies for CARES Act.

2:15:28 It's not any funding that is just to say the way we had 75 million and we could use however we wanted. In this case, this 100 million roughly that we have remaining is for specific uses by specific agencies awarded by specific federal agencies. Thank you. And that said, has every Virgin Islands worker entitled to premium pay that's under the \$70,000 threshold? Have they received their payments? Senator, I can't say every.

2:16:02 We can only speak to what we have received and we have processed all that we have received that were under \$70,000. What about those making in excess of the \$70,000? Where are we with those? So we are looking to make those payments by the end of June. It would be \$1,250 going out to individuals who were healthcare and or first responders only.

2:16:35 Thank you so much. And you also note, I'll touch base with you on that. also noted on page eight, as set forth in the award terms, the U.S. Virgin Islands has until December 31st, 2024, to obligate funds provided through the Fiscal Recovery Fund and December 31st, 2026, to expend. What percentage of these funds have been obligated so far? And what are we doing to assure that all is expended in a timely manner.

- 2:17:14 So Senator, if you look on page 11 of the testimony, where I show the budget amount of the 547, and we have approved projects of 374 million so far approved, leaving 172. So that would be 68% that's already approved, meaning obligated, and the remaining 172 is going through a process now. We have a number of projects that are on the books, including water and sewer projects, in particular water expansion and sewer expansion, wastewater, et cetera, through waste management and WAPA Public Works in particular, those are pending, but we already have the applications and they are being reviewed for final approval.
- 2:18:19 Thank you for your responses, Mr. Chair, I'll await the second round as I have several more questions. Thank you so much. Thank you very much, Senator Gittins. Commissioner Gabriel, what's the plan for the remaining public transportation funding? Yeah, so we have a number of things planned in the works. I know we plan to, this summer, we should be putting out a RFP for new buses for both St. Thomas and the St. Thomas St. John District as well as St. Croix. So what we saw last time, we actually had a RFP out for buses, and the cost escalation was actually going up month by month by month, which prohibited us from continuing with that procurement. So we have identified some additional funding, and we're planning to put that back out. We are even looking at diversifying our fleet. We're moving toward medium-duty buses. We're also looking to... The next solicitation should include low-emission and hybrid buses as well. So we're looking to do that. We do have some, also some repairs. This summer we're anticipating repairing bus shelters on all three islands. We're hoping to be able to break that solicitation up to allow for smaller contractors to win that work. So we're looking, that's kind of what we're looking to do now, and we have a number of other repairs to our facilities across the islands.
- 2:19:45 Okay. When you have funding initiatives like this that impacts the general public, is there a space, is there a process for public input as to how funding might be utilized, what the public may like to see, that sort of thing? Is there a process where you get the general public involved and engaged in these types of initiatives? So there is, and that's a really good question. With a lot of the funds that come through the Federal Transit Administration, there is the public involvement piece that does happen. So for example, when we were establishing the disadvantaged business goal for the ferry project that's currently um in solicitation we actually did um a town hall meeting and we spoke to people we allowed public comment of course there wasn't much participation but there were some um so there there there does we do allow for that um even on the i know on the bridge um on the altona lagoon bridge we also recently had a public involvement hearing um just so people could be able to ask questions we talked to them about the new design and that kind of stuff okay i think is important i know that in the territory sometimes you have these um public hearings and people just don't show up right i think we need to develop some strategies some different strategy to get our folks involved and engaged so you know senator i'll say i do agree with you i think that if anything you could say one of the positives that came out of um the pandemic was us utilizing technology to our advantage so a lot of them know we've been doing combination whether it's in person or virtual meetings to allow for that participation um you know the last meeting we had i know we were chastised because we had it on a sunday but we tried to do something different to see if we would get more public involvement and it's still you know it was still scarce okay thank you very much commissioner senator fred gregory you are recognized for your
- 2:21:38 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Very quickly, Director O'Neill, I know that the speaker before the chair asked about the premium pay. And you know that we recently had a discussion around the premium pay. Did you get an opportunity to flesh out the concern about the fact that now that you have made a decision to pay those above the 70,000 salary rate. Many of those organizations, agencies, companies, et cetera, did not submit because they were following the edict.
- 2:22:23 So how are we going to address that? So, Senator Yaz, we did speak about that last week. I have not had an opportunity as yet to speak to Governor Bryan about it, but it is on my agenda we actually have a meeting tomorrow our financial team meeting so i will bring it up at that point okay thank you for that all right um i think the what was it two two two graduations ago uh students were advised that they could get a thousand dollars from the virgin islands board of education um how is that working out how did that work out because i think that was a one-time offer it actually lasted over two years um and of the million dollars that we had allocated for that uh i think if i remember correctly we it was over 900 000 that was actually expended okay so students did take advantage students absolutely took advantage of it perfect wanted to make sure that we were on task with that um I may come back, okay, one more for you, I think. So in your testimony on page 10, you talked about the 12 million that the territory is anticipating receiving in federal funds, recovery funds, of course, and that we have been awarded, allocated some \$7.54 billion to date, and we've expended some \$460 million.
- 2:23:55 And 5.9 has been obligated from various federal sources and 2.9 billion, 5.9 billion has been obligated and 2.9 billion has been expended to date. Now we know that the legislature in our last session, we approved the line of credit. So naturally, you know, I'm going to ask about what, how are we, where are we with the line of credit and did we make i think i saw

that we made the payment to wapa did we make the payment to wapa from the line of credit what bank did we use etc so senator we actually made the we are still in negotiations with with the bank um to finalize the line of credit and because the payment was due we made the payment from our bank account to be reimbursed upon closing of the line of credit we expect that the line will be closed by next within the next two weeks at maximum uh and at that point the bank account will be replenished of that 45 million so you're still in negotiations with the bank for the liner credit yes senator that's very interesting but i'll leave that for now um director gabriel very quickly uh sugar estate project tell me so the first avenue project yes so we are um we anticipate having a contractor we're publicly announcing the contractor award within the next 30 to 45 days um we have already started i guess um getting ready for our town hall meeting like we like we discussed so that's going to take place this summer as well um and i think we are we we may have we have a funding shortfall on that project too we do have a we have a funding shortfall based on the bid that we got back so i

2:25:44 So I do plan to have those discussions with you. So we appropriated some money from the legislature, but I thought that you all had some federal dollars for that. Some EPA, it's still a shortfall, even with the funds that we had. So Director O'Neill, of the billions of dollars that we're receiving, do we have an opportunity, because that's a major road within a community, do we have an opportunity to to give any consideration from any of these federal funds that we have to backfill any shortfalls for this particular project?

2:26:20 Ms. Senator, I think we're... And I don't think you can really answer it now, but do we have, I guess the better question is do we have any available infrastructure resources? Ms. Not for roads at this particular moment, but we are bringing the reappropriation request for the funding that we have at the public finance authority that may be able to be used for that yeah because this is a major project i mean it's the road is really bad so of course you know i'm going to ask you about um the appropriations that we made for the um not a drive we continue to see that um that uh congestion is there any light at the end of the tunnel to start that project heading towards the mall of course so there was also a funding shortfall on that project um recently i think i was paying attention to a hearing that you had and i heard about i can't remember the name of the act um but we have recently wrote to finance to see if we could access some of the money so that we can continue because that should cover the funding shortfall if we're able to to grab that i have been paying attention doing my homework i think we sweep that money already but anyway we could work it out okay one way or the other but we can work it out and then the other one is um i have this young lady who has a farm in um mandel Mandel Bay Area, and she's having serious challenges.

2:27:37 She cannot access her farm. As a matter of fact, she has some livestock that she is now selling off. She hasn't done anything this year or in the past few months. She needs access. We got help out our small businesses, especially our farmers in particular. So where are we with this project? I think the road eroded because of the rain. You're right. So we are trying to address it in-house. I know we have a lot of our back hosts have had some serious issues. We're trying to get them up and running so that we could kind of work with her to make it passable. She needs to eat.

2:28:16 I know. Yes, I agree. It is on our radar. It's a big problem. Please help that lady out. She's had to lay off her employees, et cetera. She's going to eat. Let's figure it out. You have issues with your buckles? Well, what the issue is? Those are mechanical problems, but we're working again. I'm working. Please, please, I beg. I'm begging for her. You don't have a page number on these, but I need to get some clarification. So, this is your FEMA HMGP projects.

2:28:54 Okay. So, I'm unclear. Hannah's rest drainage improvement. Their water amount was funded at \$94,000. The contract was \$330,000. What does actual cost mean? What do I mean? That's \$95,000. That's the difference? How much we liquidated to date? Oh. Okay, so let's change that word in. Yeah, okay. Yeah, not actual cost. Actual cost is what project costs. So expended to date is what it is. Correct. Okay, so these projects are moving along. Correct. All right. I hate to think that I don't have any more questions to ask you I ask the line of credit Bordeaux so of course you know we have a challenge with the Bordeaux road we have one road coming in the same road going out and we've talked about the possibilities of I can't remember exactly but you are better than me when it comes to this exactly what that other road is that we can possibly may I continue? Yes, you may wrap up, Senator. That other road that we can possibly utilize to ensure that, you know, the residents of Bodo have an opportunity to come out or get into Bodo in the event of a disaster. What conversations are we having? Is there any conversation in earnest to really address that? We've been at this for like, I want to say five years as long as I've been here. So I guess you want to speak to it? No. So there's a current design that's on the books. And along that road, along the plotted path, there's a number of property acquisitions that need to be done that make that a bit of an expensive project. But we are looking at some alternatives. So for example, I think it's below the area of the Massac home is the other alternative that we're looking at now, which is mostly our land.

2:30:35 But that would require funding. It would require a significant amount of funding. Yeah, but we really need to figure out a way to work on that particular project. It matters to that community it's a safety issue it's a health and safety issue and we really need to figure out how to um how to make some accommodations to get some road fix to ensure that individuals

living in that area are able to get out of border if necessary right no i agree and we are looking on i know i i've been speaking to the department of agriculture to see if we could maybe tap into some funding that they have like through usda i know we were talking also to wap out to see if there's a possibility for waterline expansion there that would allow for us to do some civil work that would make the road work less expensive so we are looking at a number of alternatives to make that happen okay thank you mr chair thank you for the time um let's kind of stay focused on that matter with that that um traversing in and out of bordo please thank you got you thank you very much senator fred gregory um director o'neill i i wanted to just piggyback I'll circle back around to the discussions that you had with the previous two senators about premium pay. I think I heard you mention, and forgive me if I'm wrong, if I misheard what you said, you mentioned that I think for the over 70,000 individuals, individuals making over \$70,000, did I hear you say that it will be restricted to first responders and healthcare professionals?

2:32:10 That's correct, Senator. Is that a federally imposed restriction or is that something that we locally came up with? No, Senator, for anything over our allowed calculation, which is that \$70,000 cap, we have to follow what the federal government says. And it is specifically for those who were on the front lines dealing with COVID healthcare and first responders. So that is federal mandate. Federal mandate, specifically healthcare frontline folks and first responders. Correct. Senator.

2:32:53 Thank you for that. Thank you for that. Senator Alma Francis Heiliger, you're recognized for your seven minutes, Senator. Thank you. good afternoon to the people of the territory good afternoon to the testifiers good afternoon to central staff and staff alike i too would like to extend i hope everyone had a happy mother's day and we're here today to work so i am looking forward to having this conversation um my first set of questions how many design firms do you guys utilize in order to push through and get these projects done yes mr gabriel yeah come uh dary gabriel commissioner department of public works um so for our disaster recovery projects we use we have springline that does on task order that does that is on task orders just give me a number i'm trying to utilize my whole seven we have about six total about six companies we're using yeah correct um one of the things i keep hearing is that it's taking a long time because of design what have you guys done to potentially open it up to see if you could get more people to come in because you know the more you have the quicker we could get this stuff done what are you guys doing so we just bought on three new firms which brought the number to six oh i'll say it was three before correct it was uh yes that's correct okay so we're gonna have to what number you think would ideally really see us see some significant progress because to sit around for 12 to 18 months just trying to get designs done that is a huge part of why this is taking forever yeah so we probably at least need to double it we probably need like 12. what do you think you need to do to get to that 12.

2:34:42 um i mean senator we we post them on open solicitation okay so it's a matter of firms just um applying i know i will be honest um we do the government of virgin islands does have an issue you know we are trying to rectify making payments more you know in a timely fashion and i know that probably scares off a few of the firms from bidding on projects yeah we do have that problem um the other question i want to ask well hopefully we could get that rectified because we need to start speeding this up um i want to ask about covid um who's here from dealing with health um the funding with coven when when you guys spoke about the health department already spending off their their shares of the money and human services i believe you said those areas spent all of their their funds that's what i was told well they're sorry senator there are different grants and uh if you're speaking specifically to the one family first yes yes that that was Department of Human Services, and yes, they did spend all of their funds.

2:35:48 Okay. Part of me, I'm a little bit concerned from the... We talk a lot about disaster recovery and infrastructure from the perspective of building. And a lot of times for me, disaster and infrastructure has to do with the people. how because all these buildings we build all the transportation we get is for the people but how much of the monies are really going towards in assisting the people with mental health issues we spent a lot of money on lotteries to try to deal with covet we spent a lot of money on so many things but i'm trying to figure out with all the monies that are coming in for the recovery of this territory how much of it is actually earmarked to deal with the recovery of the actual people that we're housing and building all these things for do you have any assessment or anyone could share that with me uh senator no those would be specific to departments especially for funding received from the u.s department of health and human services to the department of health and to the department of human services they would have their plans and i don't have those in front of me to be able to tell you are any of these projects geared toward mental health buildings or can any of the monies be utilized for stuff like that because when you have a situation of people going through hurricanes and we are literally dealing with people that are still dealing with trauma they're still out of their houses because our housing program of trying to build these hundreds of homes is so far gone from even getting completed you know you're dealing people with covid we had a lot of people that were dealing with suicide i am very much concerned about that aspect of our recovery and how much of these monies are actually going towards the very people we're building all these things for so what projects can or any of the monies can be utilized to say help with maybe building or helping with mental wellness

locations that we do desperately need here in the territory.

- 2:37:58 Before you respond, the stenographer requested that you state your name before you respond. We have a new stenographer. Thank you. Jennifer O'Neill, director at OMB. Senator, to answer your question, there is some funding allocated within ARPA specifically for mental health. I will get you the exact amount in a little bit, but that would be under the public health um the number three the public health negative economic impacts public sector capacity it would be under that category um that's shown on page 11 okay there is some uh funding available in there in our submitted plan to treasury specifically for mental health okay that i would like to hear a little bit more about that and get the numbers on that um i i know that our COVID numbers are down. So that's a great thing. And one of the things I wanted to find out just to make sure that to mitigate any issues, because I don't want us to go through what we did before, because you clearly saw the impact it had on our community. And I know from reading and listening to some of the testimony that there is still limited testing available. Why have we limited just to, if anyone can answer me based on what I was listening to and reading, why is it limited to just symptomatic situations when we have gotten to a point where we've already recognized that even people that are vaccinated could fully have COVID and spreading it? You understand? I'm trying to figure out how do we potentially mitigate potential issues in the future but why are we still limited yeah senator I
- 2:39:55 would not be able to provide your response on that unfortunately what I can say is the the federal health emergency ended yes May 11th and so a number of things have and will change as we move forward in terms of what's what what's allowable and so Department of Health would be better able to shed some light on that um the monies that we were able to for the line of credit time um could i ask my final question please yes you may send it thank you um the hundred million dollars the legislation was able to pass for the line of credit part of those proceeds from what was shared with us is to utilize for a unfunded projects and projects that need you know that seed money what what full assessment that you guys have done of all the projects that you are dealing with have come up with a number as to potentially how much money is needed overall for these projects and do you think what we got in a line of credit is more or sufficient?
- 2:41:06 Senator, I think that's an ongoing process in terms of calculating the numbers. It is dependent on the project. Not every project requires a match. Those that do, we still have to assess where they are in the process and then determine what amount is actually needed. Is the \$100 million enough? it is a revolving line of credit, or it will be a revolving line of credit, I think it will be enough because the intent is not to keep it outstanding. You continue to pay as you go.
- 2:41:39 I guess that's where I thought you guys had come up with a potential idea for a total amount because the original request was for 150. So I thought you guys had did some type of assessment and said, well, okay, it's going to be in this ballpark that we need to be revolving. But thank you very much for your answer. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the additional time. Thank you very much, Senator McFrancis Heiliger. Point of Inquiry, Senator Donnifer Gregory. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification, because I don't want incorrect information going out to our community. Director O'Neill, the funding that, well, the line of credit that was approved most recently by this institution was to take care of projects, not unfunded projects.
- 2:42:34 Correct, Senator. That's correct, Senator. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Chair, I'd like to clarify something, if I can. You may. Yeah. So, I know there's a lot of questions surrounding the design process. And I do want to say that 12 to 18 months is a typical design period for a large project, especially on our infrastructure projects, what I call our horizontal construction, what is taking us a lot longer is to do the utility coordination. So for example, we have projects where we're working with both WAPA on their waterline, on their electrical undergrounding, and then now we're including waste management to make sure that they also have their wastewater replacement on those projects. And I mean, on the vertical projects, and Director Smalls can speak to this, when you're building a school or you're building a hospital, you're building a public facility, you want to make sure that the design process is as deliberative as possible, and that not only that you have an engineering and an architectural review, but that you're also making sure that the end user, the people that will actually be using the building, have everything that they need, and each of them comes with their own specifications, their own schematics, et cetera. Thank you for that point of inquiry.
- 2:43:50 recognize the mic of senator thank you while we have the omb director here because i i just needed some clarity on one thing um when it came to the line of credit um specifically in the because i want to know exactly what all we could utilize it for and how your office steps in with the shifting around of money um in the original bill that came down there was a it said 2023 that basically the funding could have been you couldn't be shifted around for 2023 if you recall how the legislation was written do you remember uh when you say the funding couldn't be shifted You mean on a budget front?
- 2:44:38 Yes. When they spoke about, it said it could not be moved around for the operation, funding from the operation of the government. Correct. On Senate Day, when we got to this amended document, which was put on my desk shortly before we were able to vote, there was one word added in front of it that said for the general operation. and it was not in the

original document but when you put one word in front of for the operation of the government that would have meant monies could not have been shifted but if you add in one word that says for the general operation does that now open the door from your perspective from omb to potentially now decide what is general operations versus not general operation And I'm trying to understand how that would work because I'm still trying to make sure that when it comes to this line of credit, it gets utilized for the projects and even with dealing with the payback. How would that work from your perspective?

2:45:46 So, Senator, it wouldn't change. It would not affect the operating expenses at all of the government. It would be used specifically for projects, just to fill a gap for shortfalls for projects. I'm talking about being able to move monies around in the budget, so we can't do that. No, the budget would not, and just to be clear, OMB or central government cannot, we cannot move any monies within the budget unless it's, well, within a specific line item. You can move certain things, but you can't take and move money from say OMB to public works or from public works to the Department of Health We cannot do that. We can also can't move money from personnel to operating expenses or from utilities to personnel We can't do any of that either. So we will not be able to change the budget in any way The only change that will be to a budget Appropriations from the OMB standpoint would be if we do not have funding enough cash, that is, then we have a reduction in allotments. But that's not changing the budget. That's not shifting monies anywhere. We still follow the budget that is approved by this body.

2:47:07 And that would be for every year for in... Yeah, I was just curious since that word was added in and I wanted to make sure it didn't make a difference. Thank you so much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Executive Director Smalls, I wanted to ask you, I don't know if you mentioned it, this go around in the previous testimony before the health committee, who did the demolition of the cancer center and what was the cost?

2:47:41 Good afternoon, Senator. The selected... Excuse me. Good afternoon, Senator. Darryl Smalls, executive director. The selected contractor was Benton Construction. Unfortunately, I don't have that number right before me, but I could get it very shortly for you. Okay. Okay. Thank you for that. It was done in a timely manner? Yes, it was. Okay. You said in your testimony that Myra Keaton was a mega project. I believe you said that GFL rebuild is a mega project, and I think in your testimony you said that this requires some special steps. I think you said that there was some congressional role for Congress in that final process. Can you explain a little more about that process, what it looks like, and whether or not is there a role for our local delegate to Congress in that process? Has she been engaged and involved?

2:48:45 What role, if any, does she play in that process? Okay. Good afternoon again, Senator Darrell Smalls. As far as my understanding, the delegate to Congress, her role was on the upfront, trying to help the territory receive the necessary funds for the recovery. Because any project is larger than \$25 million, FEMA then asks the Army Corps of Engineers to what they call the independent expert panel, and they review all of the engineer's estimates and the cost for a particular project. We have since passed that. Now it goes on to the large project panel review, which again, all they're doing is fine-tuning and making sure that there's no shortfall, that there was nothing missed in the overall engineer's estimates. It's not so much in a way of reducing the cost, but to make sure and ensure that everything that it's accounted for or what we have determined to have been damaged in the result of the storms is inclusive or included in that engineer's estimate. Finally, because they're large sums, even though my understanding in our conversations with FEMA, because these are significant projects, Congress ultimately does have a vote. I don't understand all the parameters around it of what would be involved in the vote, but essentially they're just voting to approve the funding to be utilized for that specific project. Thank you for that explanation, Director Smalls.

2:50:16 With regards, I guess it's a similar question to the question posed to Director Gabriel about utilization of funds, public funds, federal funds, to do projects and to rebuild, with respect, thinking about Roy Schneider Hospital and that long process that is ahead of us to rebuild that facility. Is there, and with your team and your group and the board, is there a space for local input and involvement in the development of that project, how it should look, what we would like to have, is there a place for that as we go forward with such a significant initiative as that?

2:51:06 Again, good afternoon, Senator. Great question. Right now where we're at in the process, one thing that was grateful to FEMA, that they saw the need that immediately following the hurricanes, they did provide funding for the selection of architectural and engineering firms. So shortly thereafter the storm, we were able to issue a solicitation and select three architects, one for Mary Keating Smith, one contractor who was awarded both the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute as well as the Roy Schneider Hospital, as well as one for the Juan F. Louis Hospital.

2:51:42 As part of the entire design phase, there is a public component that once we are awarded those fixed costs offer for these major projects. There will be a public engagement period. To date, what we have engaged primarily has been internal of our facilities, meaning all of our personnel from nursing, physicians, frontline staff, to make sure that we get their buy-in and their understanding of the project, understanding that they are the subject matter experts, having worked in these

facilities for a number of years. Eventually, we will get to the public involvement period. Unfortunately, when it comes to a hospital, there's not much in a way of variations. An operating room is an operating room. A patient care room is a patient care room. But we definitely want to enlighten the community and expose the community of what is to come. Senator Fred Gregory, proceed with your point of inquiry.

2:52:37 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. the discussion that you were having, we need clarification. Are we making any changes to the footprint of the hospitals as far as the number of beds, et cetera? I need to be clear on that. One thing, Senator, that we are doing is we are reconstructing on our existing sites. So that's both sites? Yes. Okay. We will be constructing on our existing sites. We have taken a deep dive. Our facilities were constructed as 250-bed facilities, double occupancy. Across the territory, I don't think through the years that we've seen an average daily census beyond 100. As a result, we are examining what is in the best interest of our healthcare community. We are looking at the current census. We're looking at projections going into the future to be able to design and develop the facilities that one, we can staff as well as facilities that we can maintain. I think the COVID pandemic was a very good example that even if you want to look at a smaller bed capacity, you also have to look at surge capacity. So whatever we ultimately decide, it's going to be contingent on what we look at in terms of the census, what our average daily census has been historically, projections into the the future and ultimately what we can maintain and what we can operate with our current staff as well as staff into the future.

2:54:11 Thank you. Thank you very much. You mentioned storage capacity. So in the event of, let's say, I hate to even put it out there, another pandemic or something, if you initially, if you decide to scale down to 100 beds and then there is a need for us to once again have a 250-bed? Are you talking about having some sort of flexible-type rooms or whatever that can be, you know, serve as a multi-function, multi-purpose type facility?

2:54:44 Absolutely. And I didn't follow up on your question, Senator Gregory. One of the things that we look at, not only are we building on the current site, all of our rooms currently your double occupancy. The space requirements for a patient room today, the size of a patient bathroom, the size of the operating room, the sizes of our patient care areas are almost double in what the requirements are today. So you will see perhaps a larger square foot facility, but that doesn't necessarily equate to a larger bed capacity. If you've ever gone to a hospital on the mainland today, you'll notice when you go into a patient room, the head wall where there's the oxygen and all of the supplies, it's usually two head walls within a room. And one of the purposes of that is even though you have a single occupancy, you can literally put two beds or two patients into that room for surge capacity and be able to adequately serve your patient care.

2:55:42 Okay. Okay. Thank you very much for that explanation. That was informative. We're going to move on to second round. We're going to give four minutes, a lot four minutes to that, beginning with Senator Carla Joseph. You're recognized for your four minutes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I really think this is a very great opening to a discussion regarding where we are. I'm hopeful going forward that ODR will be invited to this meeting as they work in tandem with all of the agencies regarding our disaster recovery projects. I wanted to ask a question, Commissioner Gabriel, relative to Estate Thomas area and their roads.

2:56:42 I know that a previous question was asked and answered regarding the status of Sugar Estate. Is any of the roads in Estate Thomas area also slated for FEMA recovery monies or projects? So yeah, we do have a combination project. using FEMA money as well as some money we were awarded through the CIP grant, I think is what it was. So kindly indicate, is it on this? Because I was trying to identify them here on this spreadsheet that you had provided.

2:57:25 Is it here? I believe so. I was just going to say the FEMA portion should be on this spreadsheet. That's correct. Okay. Because I didn't see that. much could you tell us then um how much the fema portion would be for the estate thomas area from this spreadsheet i didn't see it i'm trying to look for it but i didn't see it let me um if you give me a few and i should be able to get back to you even if it's not in the chair's time i should be able to give you that information okay thank you kindly and how much are we looking for from the other grant because that is critical for us to know especially with our constituents in there okay so i'll get back to you well i know we have on the saint thomas bay watershed project uh the combined project one saint thomas bay watershed the combined project one i think it is one the fourth project from the top on the fema pa worksheet it's listed there but i could give you the exact amounts right the breakdown i could give you that so you have those So you have a lot of projects here for the St. Thomas Bay watershed, and it's not really broken out even in your testimony. So that was my question. It would help us for you to just break it out, because we are receiving calls from our constituents throughout the territory. And so we would be able to pull up this as used as a resource and say, hey, this is where they are with it. Okay. So I would like to get that information through the chair with a breakout for that area specifically. Now, I also wanted to also ask you, Ms. O'Neill, if you have any other besides the Department of Treasury Day Inspector General, you mentioned the Department of Interior Inspector General Office is also doing an audit, correct?

- 2:59:25 To my knowledge, yes, Senator. And that's directly with your department. Are there any? No. Which one? No, the Department of Interior was with Department of Finance and the way things are processed, namely payroll in particular, that's what they were looking at. And it doesn't have to do with, well, it has to do with federal funds. Correct. funds received from what... First of all, this is a disaster recovery meeting. Are there any disaster recovery funds that they are looking at too that they had given to us? Not to my knowledge, Senator.
- 3:00:05 Okay. Thank you. Leave it there. We rest it down right there. Okay. So now I just wanted to finally go to you, Mr. Smalls. Mr. Chairman, may I wrap up with one question? You may wrap up with one question, Senator. Thank you kindly. I just want to ask a question relative to the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Center. I wasn't able to glean from your testimony whether the equipments, how are they going to be handled that are or were there before the whole demolition and also how are they going to be replaced?
- 3:00:50 Good afternoon, Senator. Daryl Smalls, Executive Director. The project worksheet that is for the replacement of the equipment is a separate project worksheet from the construction. Currently, we are getting ready to submit a cost alignment to coincide with the actual cost of the equipment. I'm happy to report that my team, we executed a solicitation, And most recently, the board did approve the selection of that equipment. That equipment is a long-lead item. And as such, we are hoping that the equipment will arrive to coincide with the completion of the construction activities. And the disposal of the current equipment that's there. That's what I also mentioned.
- 3:01:38 What was a part of our solicitation was the ability for the selected vendor to remove the current equipment. So that was included in the solicitation. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for the leniency. I appreciate it deeply. And Mr. Chair, to answer the question that you had asked earlier, the contract was awarded in the amount for the demolition of the Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute in the amount of \$888,548.38. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for that quick turnaround.
- 3:02:20 Senator Maurice James. Senator James, you're recognized for your four minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will begin my questions with the Executive Director. mr smalls um in your testimony you you specifically say that um for roy lester snyder hospital the construction could commence potentially commence within 24 months after the fixed cost offer has been achieved. Does that also apply to the Wanglui Hospital?
- 3:03:09 Good. Because I didn't see a timeline for Wanglui. Yes, I'm sorry. Good afternoon, Senator. The Roy Schneider Hospital, because it was the longest to come online, from an architectural and engineering design perspective, we have not even begun any preliminary designs for the building. We've only worked on specific schemes. As it pertains specifically to the Juan Eflouy Hospital, we have been working collaboratively with our architect, again, similarly on schemes and design potentials, but again, just waiting for that fixed cost offer to make that final determination as to what we would be constructing we don't expect it to do to last to take that long because what we're going to do with the wang louis is immediately begin with the demolition phase which we're hoping to begin before the end of this calendar year thank you and um talking about the demolition i i noted um that on page four you talk about the renovations that are required within the vicc because of the the various um i guess services that are still being am i reading this correct that that those services are still being provided within jfl maine uh where you talk about for example outpatient radiology radiology services or am I misreading that paragraph?
- 3:04:40 No, Senator, you are reading correctly. Following the hurricane, the leadership of the Juan F. Louis Hospital was successful in acquiring a project worksheet to do just that, to provide temporary services within the VICC. JFL North, as constructed, is primarily patient care, or I should say inpatient care, so outpatient services would not be available within JFL North. So that means if the demolition is December, then all of this has to be done before that demolition, correct?
- 3:05:15 That is correct. That's why we're trying to move post-aste. Right. Okay. Thank you. And I thank you for those answers. I wanted to ask, there was a sentence in Director O'Neill's testimony about, and this may actually have to be answered by Commissioner Gabriel. One minute. On page 13, there is a sentence that says that today the U.S. Virgin Islands has been allocated \$3.4 million to improve public transportation options across the territory. What type of, what are you looking at in terms of improving the options? Is there something else you're thinking about or we should be looking forward to?
- 3:06:05 Yeah, so what we're looking at is there's a number of things that we've been looking into. We are looking at shifting from heavy duty to medium duty buses, which will allow us to be a little bit more flexible. Also, hopefully reduce the downtime that we have with mechanical issues. We're also looking, I know we got some study money to look at doing new routes, changing the routes, as a lot of the traffic generators are moving throughout the district. and then like i said earlier we are looking to um rehabilitate a few of our bus shelters um on all three islands this summer oh okay i thought it was it meant doing something a little different but i i will i will raise that in the future um hearing with you one more question mr chairman i just have one short question to ask um of director o'neill if i may sure you may you may senator

okay thank you sir the question director o'Neill has to do with the wapa uh loc but more so um the status of the application to i believe it was hud uh do you know the status of that application because i i remember we the 145 is supposed to be reimbursed by whatever monies we're getting from hud am i correct in that and can you tell me the status yes uh hi senator so the status is that we continue to have conversations with hud there have been a number of internal meetings between hfa wapa well hfa meaning virgin house housing finance authority the water and power authority and hud specifically on what items need to be addressed within the application. There are two things or three things I think that are still pending from WAPA and from the government. My understanding is that the HFE Interim Executive Director will be meeting with the governor this week to finalize the one piece that is due or necessary from the government side and WAPA is working through their part to get the rest of it submitted to HFE for final submission to HUD shortly. So, but the HUD is aware, they are having continuous meetings,

3:08:27 and we still are on the same page of having HUD approve the 145 to reimburse the government. Thank you. And just one more, and that would have to be done before August, correct? Because the \$100 million is due by August, correct? Yes, the remaining \$100 million to VTAL, yes, Senator, is due in August. Thank you, thank you, Director O'Neill.

3:08:56 Thank you for the additional time, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it. Sure, you're welcome, Senator. Executive Director Smalls, I think in your discussions, your presentation, you mentioned And we spoke about fixed costs, and I'm thinking along the lines of the government and FEMA agreeing on a fixed cost for the rebuild of Wang Lui Hospital, for the demolition and the rebuild. How does that work with fixed costs? Is there room for additional, is there any flexibility should that project exceed the projected amount? First of all, tell us exactly what a fixed cost process is and how the whole process will work if we should exceed the project cost.

3:09:55 That is an excellent question, Senator. Fixed cost offer is just that. the final cost they come up with, that is it. You will not get another penny thereafter. What goes into that now, that is why I talked about the long, arduous process. What started off was looking at our current facilities, a 250-bed facility, what would it cost to rebuild a 250-bed facility in today's market? Looking at every aspect of the hospital from a construction standpoint, and I say construction not any equipment what would it take to construct a facility of that type today then adding factors such as shipping the increased costs compared to what we see on the mainland uh like a 30 to 40 percent increase in costs uh for the same items uh what we also look at is what we call the contract duration i think i i had a presentation before the board the other night and I said that we we looked at a theoretical design the theoretical design was to look at what it takes to build that 250 bed facility and we looked at it over a duration of about 10 years and why we say 10 years we factored in perhaps if we had two storms along the way how long it's going to take to design how long is it going to take to for demolition in the case of Wang Louie we constructed a temporary facility and then we're going to demolish and then at the end of it, we'll have a brand new facility and then we have to demolish the existing facility. Here on St. Thomas, we're looking at Myra Keating. We're looking at a facility that we're going to demolish and then construct. The Charlotte Kimmelman Cancer Institute was a selective demolition and then construct. The Royal Schneider

3:11:47 Hospital is looking at how can we construct a new facility, move into that facility and then do the demolition. So what FEMA looks at is the entire duration for that entire process. When we talk about, you know, are there going to be any, in case there's cost overruns or a change in cost, a lot of that is taken into consideration in that entire evaluation. So a certain percentage, when we do, when the fixed cost offer is publicly identified, that is one thing that I want to caution all contractors who are going to be bidding on these projects, that that ultimate price is not the construction price. It has a lot of escalation and cost factors that also go into it. So I encourage anyone who's going to be bidding that they sharpen their pencils because our team, our architects, we're really going to be looking at the bids that come in. So yes, a fixed cost offer is just that. A fixed cost offer, if they're going to give you, provide us with \$5, that's it. Nothing more. Thank you very much for that clear explanation, Director Smiles. So it's important for us to get it right from the very beginning and factor in everything when determining what that final, I guess, negotiated dollar amount is with FEMA.

3:13:06 That is great, Senator. It is really important. Yes. Thank you for that. Next up, we will ask Senator Johnson You're recognized for your four minutes. Good afternoon. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I want to start back with my good friend, Public Park. I heard you spoke about the Rainforest Road. You know, we talk about that road. I've been talking about this for quite some time. You're talking about the expanding and getting tourists to come to the Big Island of St. Troy. that's one of the most tri-vossed roads with taxis when i want to give people a tour through what we consider rainforest ain't raining but that's how we call it rainforest what's really the whole up of this project when can we see some light it is and i will say it without any fear the worst road in the virgin islands right now without any fear so just for clarity do we see some new movement on this road and just to make sure we're both on the same page you're talking about um mahogany road right mahogany road yes correct um so as you know there is there is a large federal highway project um that we have for that area that is still being worked on um we have a number of right-of-way issues and i

continue to say it um we have been making significant progress um you know since we've been blowing that trumpet a lot of people have been calling into the office but that right now the right-of-way issues continues to be our one of our probably our major challenge um we are working we have identified some funding on the local side um and again um we're hoping that later this year that's another project that we hope that we are going to push forward once that funding is approved by this body do we have someone in

3:14:54 your department that's assigned specifically for that right because this yes and all happened to that rule that was great and it's bad yes so we do have we have an individual in our federal highway office that is um responsible for the right away on that project and we do also have assistance from our um from our consultants as well what i'd like to do i'm your indulgence that sometime you connect me to the sports inside to get a bus and tour that's what's going on over there with that road i really am interested to see this road moving because it's a it's a well-traveled road with taxi guys and tours and stuff like that and if we're gonna compete we better get this road yes okay no problem give me a call i'll make an appointment with the individual and and have that walk through of that it's important very important to us sure thing um thank you very much um director um for the example one actual question was wafer and waste management authority considered as beneficiary for that physical recovery fund uh senator if they were go ahead sorry uh yeah well um both entities were considered uh for funding and they have been provided with significant amounts of funding what was the primary areas of funding will be used for the primary area of funding will be used for so as we know with wapa it's been fuel replaced fuel fuel cost replacement, let me not say replacement, but assistance with the increased fuel costs.

3:16:33 That's been the largest sum of money that we've expended for WAPA and to WAPA. For waste management, it's a number of water projects that are now coming online. We've just started to do our releases. I think they have about \$19 million in water, wastewater projects, let me be clear, wastewater projects uh that uh they are eligible for and that they will be receiving um as we move forward they've already gotten two two pieces out of that i think out of that 19. and of course wapa still has at this point we um some water projects uh water expansion projects would uh wapa is eligible to receive some additional funding for those specific water expansion projects as well okay thank you very much and i think my time closer car but i want to ask you this question here with the battle the president is having with washington right now this dead ceiling time and these parts should we be concerned around here unless and if these things doesn't happen what some of the shortfall the territory would see and what plan do you guys have if this doesn't happen uh so senator we're not concerned right now with the debt ceiling i'll tell you because i mean like i explained earlier i think we have about 68 that's already obligated uh and some are in the works so before the federal government can tell us that they need money back we will have already obligated um the funds my time has been covered i wrap up on this and that 68 is the 68th percent of No, Senator, that's 68% of the 547 million in APA funds received by the Territory.

3:18:17 Oh, APA funds. I'm sorry. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Johnson. Director O'Neill, at one point, I think early in this year or late last year, I know year. I know there was a push for us to sort of lobby the folks in Washington to waive the match. I know that was a big push. I haven't really heard anything about it since. I don't know. Is that still something that we are kind of have a full court press moving towards, or have we pretty much taken a U-turn and decided that that's not feasible anymore?

3:19:03 I wouldn't say that we've completely turned away from it. I think the delegate is still fighting that on some fronts, and Governor Brown supports her, of course, in that. Of course, any waiver helps us. We would note that the Department of Interior and the White House put out a press release earlier this year about the \$200,000. That's something that actually was in place for quite a while, that \$200,000 waiver of most grants. So they just made it more geared towards all grants.

3:19:40 So we have that first \$200,000 that we do not do a match on. that yeah like i said the delegate is still looking to see if we can get additional waivers especially on those fema projects um so it's we haven't turned our backs on it okay thank you very much for that senator kenny gittins you're recognized for your four minutes Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me go straight to Director Smalls. Realistically, given all hurdles uh when you think of construction uh will begin on the maraketing uh clinic on saint john you know i'm really concerned about the state of our healthcare system on saint john what's what's what's the real status of uh maraketing and how soon you think we could see this construction? Senator, as I presented earlier, we just cleared the last hurdle and I'm hoping within the next 45 days or less that we will receive the fixed cost offer. Meanwhile, we have started our discussions with the architect of record based on what we anticipate receiving so that how can we move forward with expediting that project. We were fortunate that we were able to receive funding after the storm and we have a state-of-the-art temporary facility while it is not ideal it is providing all the quality care that is required on the island of saint john okay as the vice chair of uh health and hospitals i

3:21:31 think the chair and i uh will uh do a walk through with you on saint john will contact you on that But OMB director, you know, there's a lot of funding here that I'm seeing for WAPA and energy projects. What steps are being taken to assure that we are reimbursed for our \$45 million that was just granted to WAPA? Senator, the \$45 million in particular is to be

reimbursed from HUD through the CDBG mitigation funds.

- 3 : 22 : 06 we are in the process still of getting the application finalized and submitted to hud there are a number of ongoing meetings internally and with hud so we are still on on task with that and we're still moving forward okay and lastly for you on page 13 um what specifically is being done with the hundred million dollars that you spoke of for high speed internet that sounds like a great deal of money as it is my impression that most of the territory has access to internet is this money being used to subsidize the cost of monthly bills who is uh actually eligible for this so senator that uh we have not actually received those funds as yet we have submitted a plan um to ntia i forgot the what it stands for but we've submitted that plan to them. The Office of Management and Budget will actually be the ones administering that grant once it is approved. We will of course include VINGN, BIT, and the Office of Health Information Technology to ensure that the plan and what NTIA says we are eligible to do, we will be doing. But they have some very specific guidelines on what can and can't be done all right thank you uh commissioner gabriel uh one minute can you tell me anything about um the plans for the lumber that's been stocked up at the alexander henderson elementary school on st croix for the past four or five years no my understanding is that belongs to VIHFA.
- 3 : 23 : 56 Okay, and there's no conversations going on whatsoever amongst the administration that you can tell us what's truly going on with this lumber? Not that I am involved in. Senator, I'll jump in real quick and say that the lumber is being used. We've started from the HFA perspective, putting on that hat. We've started to use some of the lumber for ongoing rebuild of homes. That has started, so you'll see the piles starting to reduce as time moves forward. And that's what I was going to ask the engineers.
- 3 : 24 : 32 If these pieces of lumber are still in good quality shape to be used on people's houses? A number of them, yes, Senator. They are still in good condition. the wood the lumber has been rotated so it's not just the same amounts of sitting out it's rotated so uh times it's it's still usable okay because i'm happy to hear this because you know when it comes to the hfa all it is i i just listen to it and it sound like a flowing tongue which is just a gift of gab people want and need their their homes repaired and these numbers are just sitting there lastly I'll just ask if if you guys have petitioned the federal emergency management agency for adjustments to requirements I am not aware of any at this point we'd have to we will confer with Director Williams-Octolin of ODR and see if there's any movement on that.
- 3 : 25 : 41 Thank you. Mr. Chair, in closing, can you ask the Commissioner of Public Works to just explain to us, he stated on page three, he spoke about some roads in Williams-A-Lite under appeal. Can he just speak to what that appeal process is and what exactly is going on there thank you thank you very much senator gittens commissioner yeah sure i i appreciate that question senator and thanks for the opportunity to clarify so um though that appeal is pretty much closed at this point and i need i do need to clarify that at the beginning you heard me speak about projects project ones and twos um a lot of the project twos that were slated for william's delight were deemed ineligible and um we actually lost that appeal so what we did we We wanted to make Williams Delight, it was necessary to make it a comprehensive project. So we went ahead and instead of just keeping the roads that were approved, we did the design to accommodate the entire community, which is why now you see that approximately \$2.1 million shortfall, because we're including roads that were deemed ineligible by FEMA. I hope that answers the question. Thank you, Commissioner.
- 3 : 26 : 51 On a daily basis, we receive phone calls from concerned citizens talking about their neighborhood roads. It's a big thing. I know there are limitations as far as funding, but is there a plan? I know Public Works started doing some neighborhood roads, a good number of projects, I believe last year and the year before that. Is there a plan to have a phase two as far as addressing some of these treacherous roads?
- 3 : 27 : 27 And I'm gonna show you a picture that a lady sent me of a road in the... In a Bolongo Bay area, I mean, a real treacherous road. Is there funding for us, public works, revisiting these types of neighbourhood projects? so um we did a lot of really good work um and and to be very honest with you a significant amount of it came out of this body um when we got the debt the excess the debt excess reserve funds um and we did a lot of community roads um and then subsequently um 30 million dollars approximately 30 million dollars was given to public works through the revenue replacement tranche um and we went back and we did we completed a lot of those projects that were left incomplete with the act 8454 funds um we did anticipate you know being able to keep that going right now we don't have any funding identified i know a lot of the that tranche has been since um expended for other purposes so um i mean it's a conversation that i know that our our department is consistently having with government house and i would of course love to have that conversation with you and your colleagues as well about how we could really keep that going absolutely um executive Director Smalls, how does the hospital currently deal with disposal of medical waste?
- 3 : 28 : 49 Good afternoon again, Senator. Medical waste currently is packaged and prepared for shipment out of the territory. I believe it was somewhere back in the late 90s, early 2000, whereby the territory's incinerators were deemed out of compliance. The EPA regulations that would have been able to facilitate that, it was just cost prohibitive. In both districts,

we've actually received grants from the Department of Interior to construct autoclave systems, which would deem the waste no longer hazardous medical waste.

3:29:31 Unfortunately, our territorial situation, our landfills, do not accept medical waste. Even though it's no longer hazardous medical waste, it's still categorized as medical waste. So as such, once the waste is sterilized, it will still have to be shipped off island. Of course, it should be at a reduced cost because the provisions for shipping it, it, the EPA regulations over water, over land, are very strict, very costly. It's anticipated that our costs should go down significantly in the future.

3:30:08 Thank you for that. Senator Capehart, you're recognized for your four minutes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon all. I wanted to ask Executive Director Small On page five of your testimony, you made reference of the independent expert panel, which is an entity outside of FEMA would have completed their review. Can you give me an explanation of who is the independent expert panel?

3:30:50 Good afternoon, Senator. The independent expert panel is a subsidiary under the Army Corps of Engineers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, after we've gone through the process to arrive or the process to help arrive at a fixed cost offer, a number is generated. That independent review then takes a look at that number, determines if it needs to go up or it needs to be reduced when they're examining the entire package that had been produced by FEMA at that point in time.

3:31:27 So they consider the rising inflation, increasing construction costs when they do their reviews? Absolutely, Senator. All of that is taken into consideration and that is why the next step, the large project review is to make sure that the independent review did not miss anything and to validate all of the numbers that have been generated. Thank you for that clarification because I always heard about this in this review panel but I didn't know who it was made up of. As I want to say congratulations to the Modular Hospital and I'm very concerned of the demolition of the Wang Lui Hospital. Can you give me a breakdown of how that demolition would happen and if any of the residents in that area would be impacted from any kind of dust, any kind of environmental impacts?

3:32:35 Can you tell me how that demolition would happen? Yes, Senator. That demolition is going to be a very meticulous demolition process. There will be community announcement prior to the demolition phase, unlike what we see typically when you see a demolition project, this wrecking ball just going and knocking a building down. There will be a lot of internal demolition, removal of doors, windows, anything internal of the building, and then you'll see a strategic dismantling of the building, removal of the roof, exterior walls, which will then be left with the steel frame, and then you'll start to see that come down. Of course, we have to take into consideration all the EPA regulations as well as the Department of Planning and Natural Resources regulations to ensure that we don't impact the surrounding community, our waterways, as well as any impacts to the road infrastructure as a result of moving all of this large equipment or large debris from the site.

3:33:41 Thank you. Director O'Neill, I just, I know we touched about the employee premium pay, the COVID stimulus funds, particularly, I wanted to find out what was the status of Plaza Extra East with their 392 employees that have not received that funding? Senator, I do not have specifics on any particular business right now.

3:34:14 We can have a conversation offline and speak to someone in my office, and we'll be happy to provide you with that information. Okay, I think, yes, this definitely warrants further discussion because as you all know that constituents call us and 392 employees at Plaza employees at Plaza Extra, they too feel that they did not get their COVID stimulus fund and I just needed to inquire on that.

3:34:52 So I will definitely reach out to you or your staff. Thank you. You're welcome. be just in response. There are a number of businesses who will say that they have not received payment, et cetera. And there's a number of reasons why, like they have not submitted an application or they have not submitted complete information like the W-9s for all of the employees, et cetera. So there have been a number of cases where some employees have been, have received the premium pay because we receive information for them. And then there are a number of other employees at those same establishments who have not yet been paid because we don't have their information. So it is incumbent on the businesses and their HR staff to provide all of the information to OMB so that all of the employees can be processed. I know just from experience, where they complain, the employees in particular will complain because they do not know or haven't had conversations with their HR to understand that their HR really haven't submitted all of the documents. And that's where the problem lies. So again, in this particular case, I do not know what the issue is or even if they have in fact submitted all of the documents, but we can have that conversation offline. thank you mr chair if you would allow me just one follow-up question as something you mentioned a lot of individuals have the opportunity to apply for this covid stimulus funds can you tell me if because of all this availability of funds there were individuals that said that they had 10 employees and they actually only had one are you working with the attorney general's office or who are you working

with to make sure that there's no fraud being done with these covet stimulus funds so senator every business or entity that submits a request for premium pay

3:37:07 has to certify that what the information they are providing is accurate. And so if we do in fact go back and find that there have been businesses who lied, then steps would be taken with those entities through the Department of Justice to get that rectified. At this point, based on certifications provided by businesses and other departments, including semi-autonomous autonomous entities and the judicial and legislative branches. We do not have reason to believe that we have paid out premium pay to any entity that may have lied. We don't know that that is the case.

3:37:54 So if you are aware of something, you can let us know and we can investigate further. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Capehart. You got that extra two minutes because it's your board day today, Senator. So, I don't see you didn't get anything from the chair. Point of inquiry? I returned my board day time. Senator Heiliger, you are recognized for your point of inquiry. Thank you. This is through the chair to Director O'Neill. This is for my edification as well as public information um one of the things that as a senator i kept getting asked was the legislature eligible for premium pay absolutely senator meaning when you say the legislature you're talking about the senators well not the senators per se central staff yes and central staff has been paid okay because i wanted because a lot of people have asked about that and i was not privy to that but to my knowledge i i figured getting that information so the public could better understand it it again the program is for all eligible employees of any entity that worked during that period workers you're saying from the legislature was paid that's what you said to my to my knowledge thank you thank you very much senator francis heiliger uh commissioner gabriel From my observation, it appears to me that the Department of Public Works is getting a chunk, a large percentage of the funding through Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority is going to Public Works.

3:39:45 What are you doing with the funding? I see a complex look on your face, like really? So, I mean, I know right now in the current action plan, I believe we have \$110 million slated for Veterans Drive. And I know we're in talks with HFA on how we can access that mitigation tranche. So, that chunk is going to be slated for Veterans Drive? Correct. And I know we recently had a meeting with HFA, like I said, to try to figure out how we could gain access to that. because we do have... Last year, we were awarded the RAISE grant for \$25 million.

3:40:25 So we are looking to make adjustments there as well. How are those tasks going? Has it been fruitful discussion? So I think... For us, it really is a matter of trying to forge a path because we do want to... We have a timeline and a schedule that we're trying to fit in there. But we're trying to understand exactly when we will gain access to the funding, which I think is still a sliding scale. Our recent conversations will at least begin to get the documentation ready on our side so that we can apply for those funds. So it's in the action plan. We still have to apply for those funds and be approved by HUD before we can get access to that money.

3:41:06 Okay. Okay. Thank you very much, free response, Commissioner. Senator Ray Fonseca, you're recognized for your four minutes, sir. Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a question for both Darryl Smalls and also Commissioner Gabriel. Please recognize Senator Fonseca's microphone. Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a question to Daryl Smalls and Commissioner Gabriel, because I remember, in fact, that Mr. Smalls actually served as the Commissioner of Public Works a while back. So I want to read something here for you from, I got it from RS Means Construction, and it says to construct a new two-lane undivided road, it's about 2 million to 3 million per mile in rural areas and about 3 to 5 million in urban areas.

3:42:08 and that's from RS Means. So, Daryl, I wanted to ask you first, Mr. Smalls. When you was in the Commissioner of Public Works, approximately how much was the cost per mile to construct a road? And then, Mr. Gabriel, I want you to answer that same question. Senator, if I may, RS Means is not applicable to the United States Virgin Islands. We are using it as a national tool right now because it has a lot of parameters in there, but you can extrapolate that if you use it based on today's numbers, you can add at least 30 to 40 percent to those costs in RS means. During my tenure as a commissioner, we were looking at approximately a million dollars per mile to do all the proper improvements to a road, sidewalks, drainage, and reconstruction of a road okay and commissioner gabriel what is the cost now yeah um i think i mean to to commit to director small's point um he is correct right now we're about we're seeing about two to three million dollars a mile when you include all of the different improvements sidewalks drainage striping etc okay so when you receive bids is about two to three million dollars per mile and sometimes in in excess of because remember right now again you're dealing with a limited contractor pool as well okay and you just mentioned that the veteran drive was a hundred and ten million how how long is that road the what what was the amount for the veteran drive you mentioned the alexa mr mclean to respond yeah clarify please please recognize mr mclean's microphone testing jomo mclean highway program manager

- 3:43:57 so the 110 million is for phase two which is approximately almost a mile a mile okay so they're telling me it's three million a mile and this one here is 110 million a mile okay i guess you got some goal in it but let me let we go on here i want i want to ask you a question here right because i can i can see that maybe this is a good suggestion right you You have some backhoes here with the graders, right? In the front, you know, that's the big thing that you can load a truck.
- 3:44:30 So I know that you're short staff. I remember public works used to be a big, big, big department, and it was split up. But going back to the Bovoni Roads, right? You say you didn't have a grader, but you have the backhoe loaders. You can't take the back of them on some of the road and grade it, and then you compact it so that they could last for a while. because we're talking about roads that are dirt these roads are not even asphalt so i mean do you have sufficient staffing tell me because if you if you need staffing to do these things you know we need to know because you can hear the the myriad of questions coming from the whole virgin islands about roads so do you have enough staffing uh commissioner gabriel so um derry gabriel commissioner department of public works um we do have we have operators we have heavy equipment operators again and i mentioned it earlier the challenge is we have a lot of we do have a lot of issues with our heavy equipment so not all of it is functioning at the moment um i we could look into it like i said we could definitely look into doing something to repair it out there you know yeah thank you because you know we in the meantime while you're doing it mr chair may i just finish me thank you because in the meantime while you're doing you know this 110 million dollars for the one mile they got a lot of other little roads that need a little greater go on it you level it off you compact it and you know put some gravel and stuff so that we can get these things because we can understand you can't get to all of them one time but the people are transversing these roads and so they need that assistance thank you mr chair for your diligence thank you very much uh senator i'm going to allow the commissioner and Mr. McLean to elaborate.
- 3:46:16 I know my colleague from Savannah and Bovone mentioned the hundred and something million dollars per mile. So I want to give you an opportunity to elaborate and explain. Yeah, I appreciate that, Mr. Chair. So I want to just mention a few of the scope items because it is a very extensive scope. Not only do we have seawall construction, which is significant, we have road widening, a pedestrian and bicyclist promenade that we're going to be installing historic lighting landscaping including pocket parks like you see on the current phase fill which has to be done green space as well and parking the scope is very extensive and anytime you're looking at doing you're we're looking at doing you know let's say construction from the water side that does include a significant mobilization of resources that has to come for that so that's why you see that And, I mean, that costs for the project. I will also tell you, we recently attended a workshop with our other territorial partners, and they're seeing even more significant costs escalation on some similar projects that they have. And I will tell you, Senator Fonseca, they were asking us for our pointers and tidbits on how we got phase one that was about, what, \$48 million executed in such a short space at times. So, I mean, you're seeing it not just here in the U.S. Virgin Islands, but all across the nation and with our other territorial partners as well. Point of information. Senator Fonseca, you're recognized for your point of information.
- 3:47:40 Yes. Thank you very much, Commissioner Gabriel, for that additional information. And thank you very much for the response. Thank you for the time, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Senator Fonseca. Senator Fred Gregory, you are recognized for your four minutes. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Director Gabriel, so I read your testimony and you were very specific to what did I say?
- 3:48:22 Commissioner. Gabriel. It's okay. You know how we live. Yeah, it's okay. You know how we live. We're long-time family friends. It's okay. Actually, we're family. So the Office of Highway Engineering, you have major projects there. You have a number of projects, FEMA-related projects, et cetera. But one of the things that you didn't do, you talked about the project started, et cetera, and where you are with some of the projects. Is there a reason why you don't indicate what your timeline as to the completion timeline is on your projects? So, some of the projects, we do have estimated completion timelines.
- 3:49:04 Some of them we've been having to extend. We've seen significant supply chain issues. I mean, it's really, we've seen cost escalation that has made a lot to use. Director Smalls' point has made a lot of our contractors go back and sharpen their pencils. of them, I know one we just had, were in the process of executing a change order to give the contractor another 120 days because of some of what we're seeing. And that's totally understandable, but I believe that, you know, as you bring your testimony for the institution, we should see some timelines. I know that from time to time we could have unreasonable conversations, but the goalpost could move because it's based on what you're saying, you have different challenges. So, but I would like to see that you would at least have some sort of a timeline to completion when you come back the next time and you have to present, then you say, this is why we didn't meet this timeline because we know that we have challenges. These challenges that we have are not unique to the Virgin Islands when it comes to supply and demand, if you will, now because of all that has happened as a result of COVID. But people would like to see, they would like to at least have some excitement about where we're going. But I know, I see that you've started a number of

projects, but there's no, I have no idea like when we're going to see these projects completed and I dare, it's just not here. So that's something that I would strongly recommend that we consider, you consider doing in the future, okay? Even if you have, and you make it clear that there are challenges, and we may have to move the goalposts, but some information regarding what you're anticipating is important. Director O'Neill, very quickly, page 12 of your testimony. You made reference to the highway and bridges, and a number of other projects, internet water, public transit, clean, energy and power, et cetera, right? So these funds are anticipated funding.

3:51:15 No? Okay. Yes, Senator. That is anticipated. We have not received all of this funding. Okay, so help me to understand. So these are anticipated funding. Are these just entitlement funds that we automatically receive or we have a responsibility to submit an application outlining exactly what it is that we intend to do with these funds and then receive approval and then the funds flow down to the Virgin Islands? And if that's a yes, what's the status of our applications for these respective projects that we have in front of us? It's quite a number, port and waterways resilience airports you name it uh yes senator so my understanding is that with the iija uh the infrastructure and investment jobs act they there is an application that is required for uh most of it uh commissioner gabriel can speak to most of them because they all well they tie under him all right well this was your testimony right yes i read it okay good yes whomever yeah so our federal allotment um automatically is going to come over the next five years um that's actually going to be added to our regular allotment and then the fta funds um we just have to apply through the federal system trams to get access to those funds and uh do we have some anticipated timeline as to when we're going to do that i know we have a lot of projects it's just is we have this is an overwhelming time with projects but have we prioritized those that are critical to us for the now or for the next two years and moving yes um the short answer is yes i know on the federal highway side we've already i mean we we've moved that money that we've gotten already into the design phase for existing projects that we're pushing forward so like um a project

3:53:08 let's say like wrap the rapoon hill expansion we've um we've identified some significant funding there one second okay my time has been caught but i think that we're having a little confusion with your response is. Can I clear it up? Okay. So basically what I'm asking is for instance, you have the, and I don't know who all they belong to. We could make assumptions. You have the clean energy and power. Right. That's energy office. You have, right. So the question that I have specifically is, is there an application that is necessary for those respective agencies that are responsible? Who's working with them? are these applications going to happen? And the reason I'm asking this question is because I'm a firm believer that what gets monitored gets done. So if we're monitoring it, we don't know what's happening. Right. So Senator, yes, their applications are required for most of these, and we, meaning OMB and ODR, will continue to work with those agencies who are identified or specifically for these to ensure that applications are submitted. We have plans in place and we know how and when that funding will be coming and spent so that we can continue to monitor.

3:54:24 But that will be an OMB ODR task. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the time. I'm gonna ask through the chair, through the chair, I would like to ask that the office of ODR as well as OMB in conjunction, both offices in conjunction with each other provide to this body a report on the, what is it, IJIA funds as it relates to the anticipated application timelines, et cetera. Thank you.

3:54:53 Thank you very much. Director O'Neill, you heard the request. Thank you. We'll reach out to ODR. Next up, Senator Alma Francis Heiliger, you're recognized for your four minutes. Thank you. Good afternoon once again to my colleagues, people of the territory. My first set of questions I want to direct to Mr. Smalls. One of the things we have to deal with here is individuals dealing with cancer and quite a bit of people having to go off island. me what the progress or what the how far along are we and where are we when it comes to the Charlotte Kimmerman Center and what are some of the things that potentially will be coming on board with the rebuilding of this center senator as I indicated we just completed the demolition phase we're right now in a procurement phase we have a mandatory walkthrough tomorrow and Wednesday for contractors who hopefully by June 14th will submit their prospective proposals, after which we will select a contractor and we can move to a notice to proceed by September.

3:56:11 That's the building, I appreciate that part. How do you guys plan on outlining the services at the center? Do you guys have an outline as to what all you guys will be offering this time around or are we sticking to the same standards that we had previously? I wouldn't necessarily say that we're sticking to the same standards. I think the quality of care that we'll be able to provide with the new state-of-the-art equipment between the linear accelerator and the CT simulator. We're also considering the addition of PET-CT, which is going to help with the treatment of cancers. It will definitely improve the quality of what the physicians will be able to provide. I think that coupled with the brand new facility, we'll be able to offer much more in a way of services to the people at the Virgin Islands.

3:57:06 Definitely. And I'm personally looking forward to it because my office gets inundated with individuals that want to come home. And they're just looking forward to hearing a deadline and how far along we are because they want to be home

with their friends and family. and people that could help them through the process as opposed to be living away and there's no real support. In the testimony, it spoke about the hospital in the 80s having 250 beds. What are the plans? Are we trying to add another 100? What are the thought process behind potentially getting more beds? Because one of the things that I get a lot of phone calls about is no beds in the hospital um people going into emergency room i heard a story today with the individual that came straight out of a 30 something hour surgery and had to sit down holding their hand because they couldn't even get a room um we had a sit i had another conversation with another individual that spoke about a young lady one minute ingesting um something laced and had an entire psychotic break they had to send her back home there's no no no space so how are we going to fix that aspect and potentially improve on the amount of beds in the hospitals senator one thing um from the the late 80s where we had 250 beds patient care or how we treat patients is a lot different today okay gone are the days where a person stays in a hospital four five days or a week so reducing it excuse me are we going to be reducing that number i wouldn't say that we're going to reduce it i'm not privileged to to come out and say that today but what we have to look at is not only the availability of beds you also have to look at the availability of staff nursing technicians the physicians and everything that's associated with patient care so

3:59:06 it's just not a matter of having beds i mean you could have a number of beds but if you don't have the staff to to manage it it doesn't matter it doesn't matter time thank you um may i ask a final question please yes you may senator i appreciate you um while i was sitting here i had a conversation earlier with um director o'Neill and we were talking about the premium prey program and i got a constituent because i want to make sure that we have it clear on the record When I asked the question specifically about the legislature being able to receive funding for premium pay, and we spoke to, I asked about central staff.

3:59:52 I think you had also said senators, but I think I don't want the public to have heard, hear something different. So, did you specifically say that senators, senators' offices, as well as central staff, was entitled, or they could have applied for premium pay, or was it just limited to the central staff? So, Senator, again... This is for public education, as well as my own, because I was not aware, and I want to make sure the public gets the right information.

4:00:27 So, again, it is for employees who worked during that time, not from home, had to come into the office, as long as the entity, whatever entity, deemed them eligible and submitted their names with all supporting information, we did not question... Only thing I'm trying to clear up, were senators included as those employees? that's what i want the public to hear that they were not no senators were not included thank you appreciate it thank you very much senator francis heiliger um executive executive director director o'Neill i wanted to ask you the last time we were here i think we had odr and housing finance authority here um with us and there was some talk and i heard the governor mention it sometime time recently too, there was some talk about shifting some of the responsibilities that Housing Finance Authority had, and I know you sit on the Housing Finance Authority Board, shifting it to the Office of Disaster Recovery. I just kind of heard something general and broad put out there.

4:01:46 I just wanted to know if, where are we with that? Is that something that is seriously being worked on? What sort of timeframe are we talking about? And what components are we talking about shifting possibly to ODR? Senator, I think to my understanding, it is still very much in play or being considered. It is something also that would have to be approved by HUD. So my understanding is communication has been had with HUD. sure where HUD stands on that as yet, there have been conversations with the Public Finance Authority Board because ODR is an entity under PFA, and the Housing Finance Authority Board has to meet on this proposed measure as well, that hasn't happened as yet, but that will happen shortly, and that is the most recent update that I have.

4:02:46 Okay. What sort of timeline are we looking at? Is something going to happen this summer? Senator, if it's to happen, it would be for the next fiscal year. Next fiscal year? Yes. Because there would be a number of things that would be required. Approval from HUD and some of the other things. Exactly. Okay. My final question really has to do, and I don't know if it's a question or if it's a statement. I know you mentioned earlier about the portable water program initiative that's going to be funded through some of these disaster recovery dollars, and I was reading over the weekend about some municipalities that are not using, and perhaps Commissioner Gabriel and former DPW Commissioner Smalls can weigh in on this, and maybe Mr. McLean, they were no longer using the PVC-type pipes because of potential health risks. So a number of municipalities in the states. So I was wondering if we were talking about things like that. I know we're embarking on a major project between us and the Waste Management Authority and WAPA and all of that. Are we actively engaged in those types of discussions with the understanding of where the conversations are going regarding PVC pipes and potential health risks?

4:04:19 So I'm throwing that to Commissioner Gabriel. He can put on his waste management hat and answer that question. Okay. Derrick Gabriel, Commissioner, Department of Public works. So I know I did see the report as well. And I know in a lot of cases we have been leaning to our design consultants to come up with more, I would say, industry standards as those

change. You know, what we're seeing is I think everybody sees that the construction industry is rapidly changing, you know, becoming more modern. And we're trying to keep up with those standards, especially as we have this influx of funds where we're able to really put in modern systems while we have the opportunity. I know on our side, that's what we've been asking all of our design consultants to implement the most up-to-date standards, industry standards with our designs.

4:05:07 Okay. I just want us to see this as a priority, because those consultants are living here. Really? They're coming here for a time, doing their thing, and they're gone. So I really want this to be a major priority for us, you know, if it is in fact, if there are the studies are saying that this PVC approach is not the way to go futuristically, and we have an opportunity to, you know, to take some, to redesign this whole, you know, portable water project. It is my hope that it is something that we are not going to just rely on, you know, what some folks who are doing the design say, but we're going to keep them honest and really make sure that we're doing what is in the best interest of the people of the Virgin Islands.

4:05:57 And I would say, so there are clauses in each of our solicitations that speak to modern design standards and industry standards and specifications, but we also have really good individuals, competent individuals that are tasked with doing the design reviews. I know Ms. Nicholas is one of those people. She's very detailed. Mr. McLean, we have a number of individuals on our teams that are, those are the kinds of things that we're paying attention to.

4:06:24 Thank you very much. Senator Fred Gregory, you're recognised for your point of inquiry. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I neglected to ask, as it relates to the infrastructure dollars, what's the timeline for expiration on these funds? Senator, they have different dates, but of course, the longest period is December 31st, 2026. That's for a number of them, including APA.

4:06:55 So 2026 for the infrastructure dollars, and we are now in 2023. And well, it says 70 over five years. Are you sure it's not longer than that? Most of them are. There are some that will go past that based on their requirements. So the one that he has raised, I think that it's five years. Mr. Chair, if you would allow me. So if we haven't had a 2026 conversation, we should have received funding from 2022. So that's why 2026 would make sense, now that you're saying that, right? So I am very concerned about where we are with these extensive projects, because if we have a three year window, basically, right, that's what we're saying, to expend these funds for these major projects, we need to get moving. Yeah, we don't have time on these projects. So, I'm trying to really understand, you know, again, who's monitoring this?

4:08:02 So, Senator, of course, we are in continuous conversation and we are monitoring again ODR and OMB. We are talking. Commissioner Gabriel is responsible for a lot of this stuff. And And so, we're pushing him, and he's pushing us, because he continues to come looking for more money. Right? So, Mr. McLean has some additional information. Mr. McLean? Yes, Jomo McLean, Highway Program Manager. Senator, some of the infrastructure dollars, the 2026 deadline is for obligation of those funds, not for expenditures.

4:08:42 May I respond? Yes, you may. So usually when you obligate, so you obligate by the 2026, but usually you have one year to expend. So what's your expenditure period? Like on federal highway dollars, you do not have one year to expend. What's your expenditure period? The expenditure period is, in some cases, five years after obligation. Okay.

4:09:09 Well, I would see that would make sense because these are really big projects. This water project is a huge project. okay so that makes sense thank you so we don't have any reason to be too anxious that's what you're saying we based on the rules and the guidelines we have some breathing room to get these projects so I think I think I feel comfortable speaking for each of us here when we say we are very um we're very anxious because we want to see I mean our community has been recovering now for five years I think everybody wants to see these projects move forward we are also i know every single person at this table is making sure that we speak with our federal partners early and often so they are also aware of the pitfalls that we're having you know so we could daylight those often you know i'm sorry they like those early and really you know make sure that we're getting past having solutions so we're moving with a sense of urgency on these yeah there's no question yeah for sure colleagues i think we've exhausted um our our day uh is there Is there a final burning question that any of you may have?

4:10:18 Hearing not, Senator Fonseca. Yes, to Commissioner Gabriel. One quick question. Do you think it would be cost effective if you was to increase your staff to have a bigger road crew? It's a good question. So we've been doing a considerable amount of patching the last couple years and we've really done a lot of repairs as many repairs in-house and there's a number of projects that you know um similar projects that you've talked about which we've been able to address in-house not just um using our own heavy equipment and actual asphalt from the plants but also um you know working with some of our contractors as well like if they're in the area to make ancillary repairs um i think we have been it's you know more staff is always good i think you run into the challenge though of you know that temporary repairs versus permanent repairs and not using funds like double dipping if you will like using funds twice when we really need to be

trying to fix every road in a territory just about um so yeah thank you thank you very much mr jay thank you very much uh colleagues we have exhausted our line of questions for today I want to thank our testifiers, some of the heavy hitters in our recovery process, Director Jennifer O'Neill, Commissioner Gabriel, Mr. General McLean, Mr. Darrell Smalls, Mr. Ruben Jennings. Thank you all for gracing us and allowing us to take a few hours of your time today. I always feel guilty about having you here for more than an hour because you could have been doing some kind of recovery work. if you weren't here, but the general public really needs to know and they want to get a coherent feedback as to where we are, what's going on. And I think this was, it also solved as an opportunity to educate the general public as to where we are with the various projects from the hospitals to the roads, et cetera. So thank you very much for being here.

4:12:20 I'm gonna give you each 30 seconds or so to just wrap up, beginning with Ms. Jennifer O'Neill. Thank you very much, Senator Potter, and to the committee members and other members of the 35th legislature. Thank you for having me here today as part of this great team to provide an update on disaster recovery projects and funding. One last thing that I would like to say again, especially on the premium pay, again, if you made more than \$70,000, you are not eligible for premium pay unless you were a first responder or a health care worker. That is it. Outside of that, no one else is eligible if you made more than \$70,000. And again, that is total compensation, not one job. You may have had several. Total compensation, \$70,000 or more, you are not eligible unless you are a first responder or a health care worker who was on the front line. So I just wanted to make that clear because I've gotten a lot of text messages asking about that and saying people are calling. So I just want to put it out there again.

4:13:38 And so, Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the time. Thank you very much, Director O'Neill. Commissioner Gabriel. Thank you. first and foremost I just want to of course thank the men and women at the Department of Public Works that actually do all the hard work that we speak about I want to recognize of course our contracting community we could not do it without them as well I do want to echo the sentiments of every single person here as we have all these graduates not only from high school but also from the universities and colleges I want to encourage you to stay tuned to our the Division of Personnel website apply for jobs make sure you're coming home to be a part of the recovery. This is a recovery that is for Virgin Islanders and we want it to be by Virgin Islanders as much as possible. I want to also encourage each, both you and all of your colleagues as well to keep the conversation flowing and the dialogue flowing. I know it is a lot to understand and no matter how many hearings we have, it does take a lot of conversations and dialogue to really understand the full depth and magnitude of the recovery and what we're facing. So I do commend you and your staff for keeping a hearing like this. I do appreciate the conversation. And finally, to our public, just continue to be patient with us. You know, it is a robust recovery that we're having. It really isn't a recovery. It's a transformation, like the governor says. We're transforming our territory for years and for generations to come. So stay tuned with us. Stay patient with us. But we are working on your behalf for the betterment of future generations. Thank you. Thank you very much, Commissioner Gabriel.

4:15:13 Executive Director Smalls. And thank you, Senator. Just to echo the sentiments on behalf of the Territorial Hospital Redevelopment Team and more importantly to the community who is dependent on health care in the territory, we want to assure you that our hospitals are number one priority for us. And of course, I want to thank the Territorial Board, and I have to thank my board member who is here today, one of my bosses, Director O'Neill, as well as the executive leadership of the respective hospitals. And of course, to my robust team, we have a lot of work to do and we're going to continue to grow because we have a mission and that is to build brand new, state-of-the-art, resilient health care facilities for this territory.

4:15:58 Thank you very much, Executive Director Smalls. Thank you, team, for all that you do. The Committee on... I almost said rules. The Committee on Disaster Recovery and Infrastructure and Planning is now officially adjourned. Oh, oh, oh Oh, oh, oh, oh

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke - only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

19x **Commissioner Derrick Gabriel**

heard in this transcript as: Gabriel

11x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson**

heard in this transcript as: Frankie Johnson, Franklin Johnson, Johnson

- 10x **Senator Ray Fonseca**
heard in this transcript as: Fonseca, Fonseca's
- 9x **Senator Milton E. Potter**
heard in this transcript as: Milton Potter, Potter
- 7x **Senator Alma Francis-Heiliger**
the surname alone also matches: Alma Francis Heiliger
heard in this transcript as: Alma Francis Heiliger, Heiliger, McFrancis Heiliger
- 7x **Senator Carla Joseph**
the surname alone also matches: Clifford Joseph; Karla J. Joseph
heard in this transcript as: Carla J. Joseph, Joseph
- 7x **Senator Fred Gregory**
the surname alone also matches: Donna A. Frett-Gregory; Donna Frett-Gregory; Donna A. Fred Gregory; Frank Gregory
heard in this transcript as: Gregory
- 7x **Senator Marise C. James**
the surname alone also matches: Javan James; Giovanni James Sr
heard in this transcript as: James, Maurice C. James, Maurice James
- 6x **Senator Diane T. Capeheart**
heard in this transcript as: Capehart, Diane Capehart
- 5x **Senator Kenneth L. Gittens**
heard in this transcript as: Gittins, Kenneth Gittins, Kenny Gittins
- 4x **Governor Juan F. Louis Hospital**
- 3x **Governor Albert Bryan Jr**
heard in this transcript as: Bryan
- 2x **Senator Diane T. K. Park**
heard in this transcript as: Diane K. Part
- 2x **Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna Fred Gregory, Donnifer Gregory
- 2x **Senator Franklin D. Johnson Yay**
heard in this transcript as: Yaz
- 1x **Senator Donna Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory

Bills and acts referred to

Matched by number against our own acts corpus. The number is what the recognition heard, so it may be wrong; where it resolved, the title is the one the Legislature gave the act.

Act 8454 · An Act appropriating the excess debt service reserve funds for the outstanding Matching Fund Revenue Bonds to fund certain urgently needed capital projects across the Territory ---0