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## **U.S. Transportation Department Awards USVI \$22 Million For Crown Bay Cargo Infrastructure Expansion**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced on Thursday that U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has awarded the U.S. Virgin Islands \$21,869,260 for the reconstruction and modernization of cargo handling and storage infrastructure at the Crown Bay Terminal on St. Thomas.

The funding comes after intensive efforts and lobbying of federal officials that the Office of the Governor and the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) began last year.

“The funding for this project follows the continuous efforts and contact by office and Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe and will help the Port Authority expedite the expansion of the cargo terminal at Crown Bay,” Governor Bryan said. “VIPA’s project is part of my Administration’s larger plan for the Territory’s economic development, and the expansion of the cargo facilities on St. Thomas will bring greater revenue to the U.S. Virgin Islands through added marine and shipping traffic.”

The project includes bulkhead rehabilitation, concrete apron restoration, reconstruction of three cargo storage areas and security improvements including lighting, fencing and fire protection.

The expansion, which is located in an Opportunity Zone, will facilitate more efficient cargo movement both into and out of St. Thomas, a press release from the U.S. Department of Transportation states.

VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe said the current facilities are too small for the needs of the community and still needs repairs from the 2017 hurricanes.

“The receipt of a \$21.9 million grant to improve our marine ports is unprecedented for the Territory,” Director Dowe said. “This grant will allow for the much-needed expansion of the 40-year old cargo terminal in Crown Bay and will make St. Thomas a prime port for transshipment throughout the eastern and southern Caribbean.”

Director Dowe also thanked Tropical Shipping, Crowley and RAM Consulting Services in Jacksonville, FL who partnered with VIPA’s staff to submit the information required to obtain the grant.

The monies for the U.S. Virgin Islands is part of a funding package the federal agency disbursed across 15 states and totaling \$220 million.

“This \$220 million in federal grants will improve America’s ports, with nearly half the projects in Opportunity Zones, which were established to revitalize economically distressed communities,” Secretary Chao said in a statement.

The Port Infrastructure Development Program aims to support efforts by ports and industry stakeholders to improve facility and freight infrastructure to ensure the country’s present and future freight transportation needs are met, according to the U.S. Transportation Department.

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