



EPA Regional Administrator Visits U.S. Virgin Islands as Hurricane Maria Response Turns to Recovery

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(New York, NY – April 24, 2018) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to help the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) respond to the damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria and is transitioning from response into long term recovery work. On Monday, EPA Regional Administrator Pete Lopez met with Governor Kenneth Mapp, Interim Executive Director for the USVI Waste Management Authority Tawana Albany Nicholas, and other local and federal government officials in St. Thomas, USVI to discuss continued support and coordination on environmental protection.

“We deeply respect the people of the U. S. Virgin Islands and all they have been through. This trip reinforced the dedication of the community’s leaders and the close working relationship we have worked to develop.” said Pete Lopez, EPA Regional Administrator, whose own family was made homeless by Hurricanes Irene and Lee in New York State seven years ago and who also has family in Puerto Rico. “Under the leadership of President Trump and Administrator Pruitt, we are committed to storm recovery in the USVI. We will continue to work with the Governor’s administration, the Senate and other civic leaders to advance their vision for helping communities rebuild stronger and more sustainably.”



EPA Regional Administrator Pete Lopez meets with USVI Waste Management Authority Interim Executive Director Tawana Albany Nicholas at Bovoni Landfill in St. Thomas, USVI. Photo courtesy of U.S. EPA.

EPA is coordinating recovery needs with FEMA and other federal agencies with a goal of addressing long-standing challenges and environmental concerns. The EPA is participating in recovery assessments, along with territory and local government partners, to provide a springboard upon which joint strategies will be built for the USVI. Access to clean drinking water and supporting wastewater infrastructure will remain a top priority, along with work to address solid waste issues exacerbated by the hurricanes.

EPA Hurricane Irma and Maria Accomplishments in the U.S. Virgin Islands:

- Household Hazardous Waste collection operations are complete. More than 145,000 items of waste were collected and nearly all containers have been transported off-island for proper disposal, keeping them out of landfills and out of harm's way. Items included different types of containers, drums, propane tanks, cylinders, electronics, batteries, and freon extraction.
- 150 tons of medical waste were bagged and transported out of the USVI for proper disposal off-island.
- 38 tons of solid hazardous waste were collected and shipped off-island for proper disposal.
- 1800 gallons of liquid hazardous waste were collected and shipped off-island for proper disposal.
- 8300 gallons of liquid hazardous waste were collected for recycling or reuse.
- 477 sunken or grounded vessels were assessed; hazardous substances were removed from 327 of them.
- Eight municipal wastewater treatment plants in the USVI were assessed.
- More than 2,400 drinking water samples were collected and analyzed to advise system operators on any problems with the quality of their drinking water.
- 123 chemical and hazardous waste and oil facilities were assessed.
- Conducted air monitoring around marine vessel operations and construction and demolition debris operations to safeguard health and safety.

For more information about EPA's work in response to the hurricanes and for more photos, visit EPA's [Hurricane Maria website](#) and [Hurricane Maria story map](#).

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