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V.I. Port Authority Receives \$12.5 Million for Cyril E. King Airport Resilience Project

V.I. Port Authority secures federal grant for infrastructure improvements

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The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

The Biden administration has allocated a \$12.5 million grant to the V.I. Port Authority, targeting infrastructure enhancements at the Cyril E. King International Airport in St. Thomas to bolster resilience against climate change impacts.

According to a release issued Thursday, the funding is part of nearly \$830 million in grant awards designated for 80 projects nationwide, aimed at fortifying transportation infrastructure against

extreme weather conditions and climate crisis consequences, such as flooding, sea-level rise, heatwaves, and other disasters.

These initiatives are funded through President Biden's Investing in America agenda and specifically through the PROTECT Discretionary Grant Program established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Secretary Pete Buttigieg and FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt highlighted the urgency of this investment, noting the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events due to climate change, which pose significant risks to America's transportation system.

"From wildfires shutting down freight rail lines in California to mudslides closing down a highway in Colorado, from a drought causing the halt of barge traffic on the Mississippi River to subways being flooded in New York, extreme weather, made worse by climate change, is damaging America's transportation infrastructure, cutting people off from getting to where they need to go, and threatening to raise the cost of goods by disrupting supply chains," he said.

The Virgin Islands project focuses on restoring approximately 460 feet of shoreline to mitigate flooding and prevent shoreline erosion, crucial for maintaining the airport's operations and the petroleum facility essential for aviation fuel supply during emergencies.

This funding is a strategic effort under the Biden Administration's broader commitment to climate resilience, which includes over \$50 billion secured for climate resilience and adaptation projects through various legislative actions.

The PROTECT grants signify a proactive step towards safeguarding the nation's infrastructure and ensuring economic stability by addressing the vulnerabilities of critical transportation systems to climate-induced phenomena.