



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802  
340-774-0001**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 523 – 2022.A**

**ORDER AND PROCLAMATION  
BY THE GOVERNOR  
OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS  
RENEWING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE  
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS  
DUE TO UNPRECEDENTED INFLUX OF SARGASSUM SEAWEED  
AFFECTING THE TERRITORY'S WATER SUPPLY**

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**WHEREAS**, the undersigned issued Executive Order and Proclamation No. 523-2022 dated July 22, 2022, declaring a State of Emergency in the United States Virgin Islands Due To Unprecedented Influx of Sargassum Seaweed Affecting the Territory's Water Supply ("Declaration of a State of Emergency") to coordinate the Territory's response and protective actions; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 25, 2022, the President of the United States issued an Emergency Declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands due to water shortage and health impact from unprecedented sargassum seagrass influx for an incident period beginning July 15, 2022, and continuing for 90 days; and

**WHEREAS**, the Declaration of a State of Emergency Executive Order dated July 22, 2022, invoked the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Act, 23 V.I.C. § 1001 - 1016 and authorized the Governor to exercise the powers and duties set forth therein to direct and aid the response to, recovery from, and mitigation against emergencies; and

**WHEREAS**, Title 23, Section 1005(a), Virgin Islands Code, vests in the Governor the responsibility for meeting the dangers to the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands and its people presented by emergencies or major disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, the undersigned designated the Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources as the Incident Commander ("IC") to direct the territorial response and directed all agencies under the direction of the Governor to fully cooperate with the IC and any representative thereof in furtherance of the Order declaring the State of Emergency in the Territory; and

**WHEREAS**, the undersigned directed the Director of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (“VITEMA”) to activate the Emergency Operation Centers on July 22, 2022 and designated Daryl D. Jaschen, the VITEMA Director, as the Territorial Coordinating Officer (“TCO”); and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Title 3, Section 401 and Title 23, Sections 1032 and 1033 of the Virgin Islands Code, the undersigned directed the Incident Commander and the TCO to take all actions necessary to protect the public health and natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, sargassum is a free-floating pelagic seaweed which has had an unprecedented blooming due to the deforestation of the northern Amazon basin combined with the rapid expansion of agricultural fertilizers and nitrogen, and documented changes in sea temperatures; and

**WHEREAS**, the United Nations and the European Union through the One Shared Ocean Initiative predicts the level of nitrogen in the North Brazil Shelf will remain high in the coming decades promoting increased sargassum seaweed production; and

**WHEREAS**, the massive influx of sargassum seaweed on and around July 15 has had a negative impact on the Water Production Facility at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (VIWAPA) Estate Richmond Plant on the island of St. Croix, resulting in challenged intake pump efficiency from clogging, maximum filter backwashing, increased chlorine injection and threatened membrane and equipment failure; and

**WHEREAS**, the IC and the TCO, along with the Territory’s federal partners, have assisted the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority in taking immediate action to prevent water production plant failure and avoid critical impacts to the U.S. Virgin Islands community, due to this sargassum influx; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, the existing State of Emergency may not last longer than thirty (30) days unless renewed by the Governor; and

**WHEREAS**, for the safety of our people, the need for the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands to remain in a State of Emergency is paramount to respond to this unprecedented influx of sargassum seaweed threatening the Territory’s water production plant which would have critical impacts on the U.S. Virgin Islands community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority granted to me by Section 11 of the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, and afore-cited sections of the Virgin Islands Code, do hereby ORDER:**

The State of Emergency declared effective July 22, 2022, which is set to expire on August 21, 2022, along with all terms declared and ordered, is hereby renewed and extended for an additional 30 days pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code and shall continue in full force and effect through *September 20, 2022*, unless earlier lifted or

extended by order of the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, A.D., 2022.



  
Albert Bryan Jr.  
Governor

**ATTEST:**

  
Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.  
Lieutenant Governor