

VIRGIN ISLANDS OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY



# TESTIMONY

**Committee on  
Culture, Youth,  
Aging, Sports, and  
Parks**

**36th Legislature of the  
Virgin Islands**

**PRESENTED BY:**

**ADRIENNE L. WILLIAMS-OCTALIEN**

**DIRECTOR**

**April 20, 2026**

Good Morning, Honorable Senator Angel Bolques Jr., Chairman of the 36th Legislature's Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, and Parks, distinguished members of the committee, fellow testifiers, and the listening and viewing audience. I am Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, Director of the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR).

ODR has prepared the following testimony in response to your subpoenaed request for any related information on the financial and project management of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium redevelopment project. The Paul E. Joseph Stadium project is a capital improvement project managed by the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works (DPW). The stadium's reconstruction is funded by legislative appropriations, not through a federal disaster recovery program, and as such does not fall under our agency's direct purview.

However, the ODR provided support to facilitate the approval of the territory's Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) application with FEMA in 2020, as a part of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program's (HMGP) flood management oversight in conjunction with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR).

To provide some background, after the 2017 Hurricanes Irma and Maria, as part of the resulting federal disaster declaration, FEMA conducted a Community Access Visit (CAV) from July 23-27, 2018. This was the territory's first CAV in approximately ten years.

The purpose of the review was to ascertain how the Territory was managing and enforcing the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) floodplain requirements. This in-person site visit is used to identify ways to improve the floodplain management program and verify compliance with the NFIP. CAVs enable FEMA and state floodplain management teams to evaluate and assist communities in fulfilling their responsibilities under floodplain management.

The CAV typically consists of two parts: a field tour and a meeting with the community's floodplain management team. During the field tour, FEMA and state officials examine the community's Special Flood Hazard Areas to observe new developments and check for compliance with floodplain regulations.

During the territory's CAV, FEMA identified several concerns, all of which were addressed during the visit. However, the Paul E. Joseph Stadium required further discussion because its location is in a FEMA-designated floodway. This designation necessitated additional reviews, resulting in the need for a no-rise certification, a deep-pile foundation, and a site elevation to bring the facility into compliance.

As the agency responsible for flood plain and watershed management, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources led the coordinated effort to review all plans and bring the project into compliance. DPNR submitted a Corrective Action Plan necessary to address the CAV findings and to ensure the Territory meets the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements. Failure to comply with the findings of the CAV could have resulted in the territory's loss of access to the National Flood Insurance Program for residents.

Since the project's location was in an identified floodway, FEMA required additional studies and analysis, such as a Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) study, Riverine – Hydrologic Engineering Center's River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) review, Wave Height analysis, and evidence of compliance with the Endangered Species Act. DPNR submitted the request for a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) along with the required supporting documentation, analyses, and studies, to allow the project to continue construction. The territory received the final CLOMR from FEMA in 2021.

The receipt of the CLOMAR was FEMA's formal confirmation that the plan revisions brought the construction of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium into compliance. The ODR's role in supporting the project was complete. Throughout this process, the Department of Public Works has remained and still is the designated authority responsible for managing the construction of this facility. Honorable Senators, this concludes my testimony. I remain available to respond to any questions you may have.