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Hackers Lock EDA Systems, Demand Over \$300,000 in Ransom

The breach, confirmed by Governor Bryan, has left EDA systems locked as officials assess whether beneficiary-submitted information was compromised, while insurers coordinate with the FBI to address the \$300,000-plus ransom demand.

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The V.I. Economic Development Authority has been hacked and is currently the target of a ransom demand exceeding \$300,000, with authorities and insurers working to assess the scope of the breach and secure the agency's systems, several well-placed sources confirmed to The Consortium. Governor Albert Bryan Jr. subsequently confirmed the incident.

In an interview with this publication, Governor Bryan said officials are still determining what may have been accessed.

“The latest is that right now they're trying to assess exactly what information may have been compromised,” he said.

He confirmed that EDA maintains information submitted by beneficiaries, including tax-related documentation, but said it remains unclear whether any of that data has been exposed.

“At this time, that's most of the information we have. The EDA does have information that beneficiaries submit, but at this time I don't know if that info is in any Jeopardy,” he said.

Governor Bryan said the agency recently secured cybersecurity insurance and is now working through its insurer as part of the response effort.

“The good news is that the EDA does have insurance for hacking,” he said. “So what they're doing is they're dealing with their insurance company who is cooperating with the FBI, as well as figuring out how to get that information unlocked.”

When asked whether the systems were currently locked, Governor Bryan responded, “at this point they are.”

He added that officials are focused on restoring operations while protecting data integrity. “We're hoping to get it resolved as quickly as possible and make sure that we have the integrity of our information,” the governor said.

When questioned about reports that the agency obtained cybersecurity insurance only recently, Governor Bryan said he could not confirm whether it was two weeks ago but indicated that the coverage had been secured recently.

The Consortium reached out Wednesday to EDA Executive Director Wayne Biggs by phone and text message, but no response had been received at the time of publication. Attempts to contact EDA Board Chairman Kevin Rodriguez were unsuccessful.

The situation remains under review as officials continue to assess the breach and work with federal authorities and insurers to address the ransomware incident.