



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA Shares Progress and Strategic Process for FY2024 Budget at Senate Hearing

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “Authority”) appeared before the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands on Tuesday to present its Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget and provided a comprehensive review of its FY2023. During the session, the Authority shared its commitment to responsible financial planning, demonstrating a thoughtful and strategic bottom-up approach to the budget.

As part of the presentation, the Authority acknowledged its focus on delivering quality service and noted it is diligently working to fill critical vacancies. By employing a comprehensive recruitment strategy and prioritizing employee satisfaction, WAPA aims to attract and retain a skilled workforce dedicated to serving the residents and businesses of the U.S. Virgin Islands. To this end, WAPA shared the recent revisions to its health care insurance premiums, designed to increase employee retention and remain a competitive option in the job market. Under the new Gold Health Plan, employees now see an 80 percent/20 percent split for dependent coverage, at a minimal 1.1 percent increase in annual premium for the Authority, or less than \$70,000 per year.

“I am proud of the progress the hardworking men and women at the Authority have made over the past fiscal year. Together, we have successfully implemented various initiatives aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our utility services,” noted Andrew “Andy” Smith, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. “With the strategic plan steering the way, there is indeed light at the end of the tunnel.”

The Authority further outlined its commitment to reducing reliance on month-to-month property leases for office space, with an aim to streamline its operations, reduce costs, and ensure a more efficient use of resources and optimal resource allocation. The Authority acknowledged the Senators willingness to assist WAPA in the search for commercial properties, noting inventory that complies with federal and local guidelines is increasingly limited throughout the Territory.

As it relates to the Authority’s potable water services, WAPA shared with the Senate the current grant funding initiatives aimed at improving the water quality and distribution systems on both St. Croix and St. Thomas. By leveraging federal funding, like the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsored Prudent Replacement Grant currently in progress, WAPA aims to replace the antiquated infrastructure and address system vulnerabilities, to enhance the water supply system for Virgin Islanders.

The presentation underscored WAPA's unwavering commitment to ensuring fiscal responsibility and the residents of the Virgin Islands.

To view the Fiscal Year 2023 recap video, visit WAPA's YouTube page at https://youtu.be/X_ShytYM_2I.

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Communication's department is committed to reaching, informing, and connecting with the youngest members of the community to the eldest, through meaningful, transparent and effective communication.

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About WAPA: The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.

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