



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

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WORK ON ST. JOHN UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC PROJECT
COMMENCES WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday, July 14, 2021, the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority will begin work on a project to underground electrical equipment in Cruz Bay, St. John. The project is one of several funded by the federal government and designed to mitigate damage from windstorms and hurricanes.

"We have secured the permitting, easements and other approvals necessary for the first phase of the project," said Interim Executive Director Noel Hodge. "This is an exciting time for WAPA and our customers as we get shovels in the ground and begin work to create a more efficient and resilient electric system in the territory," he added.

The undergrounding of electrical equipment is one of several enhancements to the electrical system funded by FEMA and HUD in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricanes. The projects are aimed at strengthening the overall efficiency and reliability of the power production and distribution capabilities in the territory. Other components include the installation of composite poles where undergrounding is not feasible, new generation for the power plants, the addition of microgrids at strategic locations across the territory and installation of renewables in the form of solar and wind along with battery storage capabilities.

The project on St. John will be carried out by Haugland Energy on WAPA's behalf with project management provided by FX Bonnes. The initial work will begin near the existing electrical substation in Frank Bay and continue to Seagrape Street. The first of three phases of the St. John project will see the replacement of overhead lines and equipment with underground facilities. The project will affect traffic flow within the Frank Bay area from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily and flaggers will be on site to assist with traffic flow.

"We ask for the patience and cooperation of St. John residents and the motoring public while we continue to build a brighter future for the Virgin Islands," Hodge added. When completed, a significant portion of customers currently on St. John Feeder 7E will receive electrical service from underground facilities. More significantly, restoration time following a major disaster will be significantly reduced. St. John remained without electrical service for more than 50 days following Hurricanes Irma and Maria four years ago.

The St. John electrical undergrounding project is funded 90% by FEMA with a 10% local match. WAPA continues to pursue HUD monies to satisfy the match requirement which would make the project 100% federally funded.

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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.