



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

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**WAPA ANNOUNCES START OF CONSTRUCTION OF FIRST UNDERGROUND
ELECTRICAL PROJECT ON ST. CROIX**

WORK AT "CONTAINER PORT" BEGINS TUESDAY

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority announces the commencement of work on St. Croix's first electrical underground project on September 21, 2021.

Undergrounding of equipment in and around the Wilfred "Bomba" Allick Port and Transshipment Center (Container Port) at Krause Lagoon is a \$2.5 million federally funded project with financial resources provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD). J. Benton Construction Inc is the contractor on the project which aims to provide critical facilities on the southside Container Port with electrical equipment that is less vulnerable to hurricanes and windstorms. The work entails trenching and conduit installation.

Interim Executive Director Noel Hodge said Friday, the Authority is excited about beginning construction on this very important mitigation project on St. Croix. "The undergrounding of facilities in critical areas is key during storm restoration and other emergencies. The ports are critical to the movement of materials and supplies into the territory after a disaster and providing facilities that can lead to more efficient power restoration, bodes well for the future."

Hodge explained that in April, WAPA broke ground on this and two similar underground electrical projects, in Golden Grove and Midland, and we are now set to proceed with the start of construction on Tuesday. Upon completion, facilities such as the Gordon A. Finch Molasses Pier and associated buildings, V.I. Port Authority docks and warehouses and other nearby facilities will be serviced by underground electrical equipment.

As with similar electrical undergrounding across the territory, the Container Port project will replace existing overhead electrical lines and equipment with underground equipment. "This lessens damage from future hurricanes and windstorms and also ensures more efficient service restoration in the aftermath of a natural disaster," Hodge said.

Motorists are advised that beginning Tuesday, the impacted areas begin at the intersection of the Melvin H. Evans Highway, turns onto the Container Port Road and runs southward on Route 75. The flow of traffic will be affected along the Container Port Road. Motorists traversing the work areas should be mindful of and adhere to posted directional signs. Additionally, flaggers will be present along the roadway to assist with traffic control.

Similar electrical undergrounding projects are slated for St. Thomas and St. John as part of a larger strategic transformation of the territory's electrical and water utility.

WAPA thanks the public for its patience and cooperation as we build a brighter future, together.

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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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