



Office of the Governing Board
VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER AND POWER AUTHORITY

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March 9, 2021

STATEMENT BY WAPA GOVERNING BOARD CHAIRMAN

ANTHONY D. THOMAS

There are changes taking place in the leadership of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority and I welcome an opportunity to update the public on these recent developments.

First, the nine-member governing board and the administration remain firmly committed to developing a utility that will provide more efficient, reliable, and cost-effective electrical and potable water service to the people of the Virgin Islands. Additionally, the board's sole legal mandate is to set policy and direction for WAPA.

Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Lawrence J. Kupfer's tenure at WAPA has ended. He served WAPA and our community admirably for three years and came to the Authority after more than 20 years with Hess Corporation, where he served the last six years as President and CEO of HOVENSA.

Director Kupfer's contributions and accomplishments were often undervalued and underestimated. He entered WAPA with the electrical system freshly restored from the 2017 hurricanes and at a time when WAPA was struggling to resume its monthly billing. Mr. Kupfer stabilized the Authority, saw it through some of its most difficult financial times, and to the end, was committed to a brighter financial outlook for the company. While facing the challenges induced by COVID-19, he advocated for sweeping improvements to the power generation and water distribution systems in both districts. He also empowered his staff to pursue federal funding for a host of mitigation projects that will materialize over the next few years. At this time in his life, however, Mr. Kupfer has elected to pursue other endeavors. We respect his decision and thank him immensely for his contributions to WAPA and the Virgin Islands.

Also choosing to retire and enter a new phase of his life is Chief Operating Officer of the Electric System, Clinton T. Hedrington, Jr. No words can thank Clinton for his years of dedication, commitment, and vision to the Authority. A consummate professional, Mr. Hedrington frequently pursued initiatives that placed WAPA on par with leading utilities in the nation. During the last three years, he became WAPA's go-to person on FEMA projects, federal funding, and, at times, served in the capacity as Acting CEO. Clinton is a brilliant electrical engineer and a native Virgin Islander whose contributions are immeasurable.

While the end of Director Kupfer's tenure and Mr. Hedrington's retirement are significant losses to the leadership of WAPA, the governing board is committed to a smooth transition. The board has selected Mr. Noel Hodge, currently the Chief Operating Officer of the Water System, to serve as Interim Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Hodge is no stranger to this role having served as Acting CEO on occasions in the past. He has been the COO of the Water System since October 2016. Mr. Hodge, a civil engineer, is also a former power plant maintenance manager and a former director of water distribution.

Interim Director Hodge and the transition team he has assembled will ensure the continued functionality of the services provided the public and the day-to-day operations of the Authority. At the same time, the governing board will continue efforts toward identifying permanent employees to fill the leadership roles.

The board and the Authority's management are committed to an honest, fair, and respectful engagement with our community. Nothing less than the highest ethical standards is to be expected, and our decisions will remain objective, non-political, and impartial.

Without question, there will be growing pains during this transitional period but my colleagues and I on the governing board stand ready to fully support and assist the leadership of WAPA in building a brighter future for our beloved Virgin Islands.