



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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## **Federal Support at RHPP Tour Boosts WAPA's Commitment to Sustainable Energy In Increasingly Challenging Times**



*DOE Secretary Jennifer Granholm, left, Dean Herbert, WAPA Plant Operation Supervisor, Ashley Bryan, WAPA Interim CEO/Executive Director, and VI Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Tuesday in the Control room at the power plant on St. Thomas.*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - July 18, 2024 – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) was honored to host U.S. Department of Energy (“DOE”) Secretary Jennifer Granholm and Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett at the **Randolph Harley Power Plant** (“RHPP”) on Tuesday. This visit underscores the federal awareness of the unique challenges our community faces and highlights ongoing efforts to improve our energy infrastructure for the benefit of our customers. Focus on implementing immediate, near term, and long-term solutions were reiterated to provide affordable, reliable electricity to all Virgin Islanders.

The federal delegation's visit reflects their understanding of the critical need for reliable and sustainable energy in the Virgin Islands. Ashley Bryan, Interim CEO/Executive Director engaged in discussions with

DOE and the Delegate about current renewable energy projects, including the Petronella and Hogensborg agreements [recently approved by the Governing Board](#). These initiatives aim to reduce fossil fuel dependency, lower costs for customers, and lessen our environmental impact, contributing to a sustainable and resilient energy system for Virgin Islanders and future generations.

Our commitment to grid improvements and resilience was a key topic during the visit. Robust contingency plans are essential to ensure stable and reliable electricity, especially during natural disasters. The Authority highlighted significant progress and unexpected delays, such as the [near-completion of Phase I](#) of our composite pole project, which will strengthen our infrastructure against storm damage and the progress on the undergrounding of the electric grid territory-wide.

"The DOE and Delegate's visit emphasizes the federal commitment to addressing our unique energy challenges," noted Ashley Bryan, Interim CEO/Executive Director at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. "With their support, we are certain the advancements of renewable energy will strengthen our grid, building a sustainable and reliable future for our community."

The seamless execution of the Secretary's visit by the WAPA team was instrumental in demonstrating our ongoing efforts. Interim Plant Superintendent at the RHPP, Kevin Harrigan, and Chavanté Marsh-Bultes, Director of Project Management led the tour underlining the outdated infrastructure at the RHPP and active electric projects that will significantly improve services to customers.

Looking ahead, WAPA is dedicated to building a stronger, more resilient energy infrastructure through close collaboration with the DOE and local stakeholders.

"For far too long, energy challenges have hindered the recovery and redevelopment of our territory," said Congresswoman Plaskett. "Secretary Granholm's visit underscores the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to investing the transformation of energy systems in a way that promotes resilient, reliable, and affordable energy in communities like the Virgin Islands. I am very pleased that Secretary Granholm and her team were able to join us this week. I am also deeply grateful for the continued efforts of the professionals at WAPA who work tirelessly, under difficult conditions to keep the lights on in the territory despite our aged energy infrastructure."

We extend our gratitude to DOE Secretary Granholm and Congresswoman Plaskett for their time and support. Their visit reaffirms our shared commitment to advancing renewable energy and grid improvement projects that will benefit our community and customers.

*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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