



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

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The Authority Addresses Viral Video: Aging Waterlines in the USA

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “Authority”) would like to address the recent video circulating on Facebook that has captured the attention of many, highlighting the pressing issue of aging waterlines across the United States. Although we have not confirmed that this is a WAPA pipe, the video, though visually disturbing, reflects the reality faced by the water crews across the territory and in the nation.

In 2020, it was revealed that the average age of water and sewer pipes in the U.S. is 45 years old, affecting approximately 1.6 billion miles of water infrastructure. The Authority acknowledges this challenge and is committed to addressing it head on.

Over the past three years, WAPA has completed more water rehabilitation projects than in the last decade, in large part due to the funding provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

The Territorial Drinking Water Capital Improvement Program funded the completed Clifton Hill project with installation of 3,500 ft of 10" PVC Pipe; 7,500 ft of 6" PVC Pipe; 3,500 ft of 4" PVC Pipe; and 500 ft of 2" SCH 80. All fire hydrants have been installed. Meter boxes and waterline valves were encased in concrete and all customers were transferred to the new system. This project was a \$4.4 million investment into the water distribution system in St. Croix.

The Campo Rico project approximately 70% completed is an estimated \$7.3 million investment in the water system on St. Croix. This project is replacing the Campo Rico community's existing old Ductile Iron waterlines with approximately 21,500 linear ft of new PVC pipes, valves, meter boxes, and hydrants. Last month, the governing board extended the scope and budget to expand and improve the services to additional customers in the area.

In the queue, the Hannah's Rest project estimated at \$3.3 million will also replace the existing old Ductile Iron waterlines with PVC pipes, valves, meter boxes, and hydrants. While in the St. Thomas/St. John district, there are rehabilitation projects in review with

the Department of Planning and Natural Resources to improve water quality and expand services to additional customers.

Further, to combat the issue of aging waterlines, the Authority has been approved for \$1 billion with the Prudent Replacement Program through FEMA prioritizing the overhaul of the entire St. Croix water distribution system, including 168 miles (887,040 linear footage).

We want to assure the community that the Authority and its local and federal partners are dedicated to ensuring the safety and quality of water across the territory.

We appreciate the community's understanding and support as we diligently address this vital issue.

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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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