



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA's Virtual Energy Fair Sparks Community Dialogue on Energy Future



Image: Screenshot of live Microsoft Teams view of WAPA's Virtual Energy Fair held on Friday, October 31, 2025 (clockwise from top left): Moderator Shanell Spencer, Director of Corporate Communications, WAPA; Jozette Walker, CPM, COR, GPM-RCA, Assistant Commissioner and Chief Procurement & Sustainability Officer, DPNR; Reza Mirghasemi, CMIT, LEED GA, CCM, PMP, Lead Project Manager/Project Director, MCN Build; and Juan Guarín, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP, CPHC, Sustainability Specialist, Perkins Eastman.

U.S. Virgin Islands (November 3, 2025) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) successfully hosted its first Virtual Energy Fair on Friday, October 31, 2025, bringing together more than 100 residents, business owners, and community leaders to help shape the territory’s energy future.

Held under the theme “*Empowering Our Islands, Building a Sustainable Energy Future*,” the fair offered a space for collaboration and learning, highlighting how innovation, education, and partnerships can advance the territory’s energy landscape. Participants engaged in live polls, submitted questions to panelists, and joined trivia games for prizes, making the event both interactive and informative.

The Virtual Energy Fair came at a pivotal moment as the Virgin Islands advances toward a cleaner, more modern energy system. The event sparked open dialogue on renewable integration, grid modernization, conservation, and workforce readiness. It also closed out Energy Awareness Month, building on social media highlights and community activities that showcased WAPA’s team, infrastructure improvements, renewable initiatives, and ways residents can contribute through conservation.

Highlights included:

- **A Renewable Path Forward** – Strategies for transitioning to renewable power, integrating battery storage, and strengthening grid resilience (Panelists: Belgrave Stedman, Electrical Engineer IV, WAPA; Shamade Burke, Plant Superintendent, WAPA; and Clinton Hedrington, Jr., President, SIMS Energy Consulting Group, FXB, Inc.)
- **Sustainability and Conservation** – Energy-efficient building design for the tropics and practical approaches to conservation across island communities (Panelists: Jozette Walker, CPM, COR, GPM-RCA, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Procurement & Sustainability Officer, Department of Planning and Natural Resources; Juan Guarín, LEED AP BD+C, WELL AP, CPHC, Sustainability Specialist, Perkins Eastman; and Reza Mirghasemi, CMIT, LEED GA, CCM, PMP, Lead Project Manager/Project Director, MCN Build)
- **Tech Talk: Smart Businesses and Smart Choices** – Emerging technologies and partnerships driving smarter energy solutions in island territories (Panelists: Eric Sonnier, Executive Director, UVI Research and Technology Park; Kyle Fleming, Director, Virgin Islands Energy Office; and Greg Guannel, Director, Caribbean Green Technology Center)
- **Workforce and Career Development** – Investing in local talent, creating inclusive pathways into energy careers, and aligning skills with future industry needs (Panelists: Sabrina King-Léonce, Director of Human Resources, WAPA and Rosalie Drago, Vice President of External Affairs and Strategic Engagement, Haugland Group)

WAPA Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Karl Knight thanked participants for their collaboration, noting, “Today’s dialogue connected key players across the U.S. Virgin Islands’ energy sector. While much focus is often on the utility, the success of the industry depends on many partners working together. WAPA will continue collaborating, engaging the community, and helping customers understand where our energy sector stands, where it’s headed, and how we can get there together.”

The Authority looks forward to continued community engagement as efforts toward energy transformation move forward.

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.