



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

(340) 774-3552 • communications@viwapa.vi / www.viwapa.vi

WAPA Deploys Second Line Crew to Support Jamaica Restoration Efforts and Strengthen Storm Preparedness



Image: From left: Bevron M. Goodwin, Certified Lineman 1st Class; Anthoni Gonzalez, Lineman Apprentice I; Collin G. Brown, Transmission and Distribution Director; Jonathan J. Gonzalez, Lineman Apprentice I; Roy Freeland, Line Supervisor; Gerry Simon, Assistant Director of Safety; Judah B. Alexander, Line Supervisor; Charles E. Isles, Jr., Line Supervisor; Paul Gumbs, Line Superintendent; and Juan A. Velez, Jr., Certified Lineman 2nd Class. Photo credit: Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority.

U.S. Virgin Islands (March 8, 2026) — The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) announced that a second crew of lineworkers arrived in Jamaica today to assist with ongoing power restoration and electrical system repairs following the devastating impact of Hurricane Melissa.

The additional deployment builds on the efforts of the initial WAPA delegation that traveled to Jamaica for five weeks earlier this year to support recovery efforts after the powerful storm caused widespread damage across Jamaica. WAPA’s continued support reflects the strong spirit of regional cooperation among Caribbean utilities when communities face major disasters.

This second crew led by Supervisor Charles E. Isles, Jr. is comprised of eight members from across the Territory—St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix—bringing together a diverse group of experienced and apprentice lineworkers and a senior safety officer. The team will work alongside Jamaican utility crews for approximately five weeks to safely restore damaged electrical infrastructure, including powerlines, poles, and related equipment.

In addition to the crew that will be providing hands-on restoration support, this delegation also includes Transmission and Distribution Director Collin Brown and Line Superintendent Paul Gumbs of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. During their three-day delegation, Director Brown and Superintendent Gumbs will observe the field restoration work of the crews and will also hold discussions with their Jamaican counterparts before returning to the territory.

These discussions will focus on lessons learned throughout the ongoing restoration following Hurricane Melissa, including operational successes, challenges encountered, and strategies for strengthening grid resilience.

“This opportunity allows our team not only to lend a helping hand to our Caribbean neighbors, but also to bring valuable insights back to the territory,” said Lemuel Lavinier, Chief Operating Officer of Electric at WAPA. “By learning directly from the extensive restoration efforts underway in Jamaica, we can continue strengthening our own preparedness and response strategies as we approach the upcoming hurricane season.”

For WAPA’s operational leadership, the visit represents an important opportunity to exchange knowledge with utility professionals leading recovery efforts following one of the strongest hurricanes on record in the Atlantic Basin, according to the National Hurricane Center. The insights gained will help inform WAPA’s ongoing efforts to enhance storm preparedness and response planning across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

While supporting Jamaica’s recovery, WAPA will continue to maintain operational readiness in the Territory to ensure reliable service for customers throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Authority extends its appreciation to the employees volunteering their time and expertise to support this regional recovery effort and wishes the team a safe and successful mission as they assist in restoring critical infrastructure for communities in Jamaica.

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.

###

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.