



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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August 11, 2023

Sargassum Conditions Improve in St. Croix; WAPA Continues Efforts to Mitigate Impact

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “Authority”) would like to provide the public with an update on the sargassum impact to St. Croix’s desalination facility located next to the Richmond Power Plant and operated by the long-standing partner Seven Seas, who produces potable water from sea water via reverse osmosis water plants. The sargassum conditions began to see slight improvements yesterday as the Authority’s short-term and long-term mitigation efforts progress.

Though researchers at the University of South Florida have predicted a reduction in seaweed for the season, areas in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Florida continue to see moderate levels of sargassum this summer. Last week St. Croix began experiencing an influx of sargassum on the northcentral shoreline where the Richmond Power Plant is located along with Seven Seas.

As key initiatives to mitigate the immediate impact continued over the weekend and throughout this week, WAPA personnel have noted the need for less frequency in filter change outs, regular scheduled cleaning of membrane units, and decreased use of chlorine injections. To further assist heavily impacted neighborhoods, crews have been working around the clock flushing pipes to reduce discoloration of water.

With these efforts, the Authority continues to meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for potable drinking water, despite the continued impact of the unusual odor and discoloration.

Long-term solutions have been approved for FEMA funding to mitigate sargassum as the Authority actively coordinates with VITEMA, and other federal and local agencies. Currently, the Authority is scoping the project to determine the total cost of Phase 1 mitigation efforts.

The Authority reassures the community that it continues to take all steps to provide the highest quality potable water despite the occurrence of sargassum and have confirmed there is no current threat to water production and/or storage levels throughout the island of St. Croix.

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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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