



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA Response to Tropical Storm Ernesto Impact to Services Territory-wide



Image: Line crew working in the field on a pole.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – August 14, 2024 – As Tropical Storm Ernesto swept through the Virgin Islands, the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) remained steadfast in our commitment to maintaining essential services and ensuring the safety of our communities. We are working diligently to assess and address the impacts of the storm, with a focus on restoring power to all affected areas as quickly and safely as possible.

St. Thomas/St. John District:

At the Randolph Harley Power Plant (RHPP) we successfully maintained power to critical facilities across the St. Thomas/St. John district throughout the night and into today. Critical infrastructure, including the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital, Cyril E. King airport, and several business centers such as WICO, Havensight, and Yacht Haven Grande, continue to receive power. The feeders that remained active throughout the storm were 5A, 9B, 10B, and Yacht Haven Grande. However, we are aware of the isolated outages that are impacting some customers on the above feeders listed.

Early this morning, our line crews began assessing damage across the district. However, restoration efforts were delayed due to the current weather conditions, as Tropical Storm Ernesto continued to intensify while passing through the area. With improved weather conditions, restoration efforts are now fully underway.

St. Croix District:

St. Croix experienced an island wide outage due to a loss of generation at the Richmond power plant at approximately 9:00 p.m. last night. WAPA Plant personnel have completed troubleshooting to bring along Unit 20 and Unit 17. Unfortunately, the plant experienced intense flooding that is currently being pumped out to access the substation prior to restoration. In collaboration with the Department of Public Works (“DPW”), our line crews have been actively clearing large, older trees that were uprooted during the storm, specifically impacting Estate Strawberry Hill and Barren Spot areas. In some critical areas, the debris has impeded our ability to clear lines, adding complexity to the restoration process.

Water customers are currently experiencing service interruption territory wide. On St. John, we have loss power to the Cruz Bay pump station; WAPA Water Personnel are redirecting the system to improve the St. John water pressure from St. Thomas. Water operators are currently making rounds on St. John to assess damages.

WAPA remains committed to restoring power and water to all customers as swiftly and safely as possible. We thank our community for their patience and understanding as we work through these challenging conditions caused by the impact of Tropical Storm Ernesto. Further updates will be provided as restoration efforts continue.

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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