



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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Authority Provides St. Croix Sargassum and Potable Water Update

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 Authority’s long-standing partner Seven Seas, who produces potable water from sea water via reverse osmosis water plants.

Though experts have predicted a reduction in seaweed for the season, several areas including areas in the Caribbean, Mexico, and South Florida continue to see moderate levels of sargassum. Sargassum is generally not a threat when floating out at sea, however when it reaches land and begins to decay, it is more than an inconvenience for water production. On Tuesday, St. Croix began experiencing an influx of sargassum on the northcentral shoreline where the Richmond Power Plant is located along with Seven Seas.

Within the past 24 hours, several key steps have been taken to reduce the impact to water quality and production from the Authority and Seven Seas:

- Increased frequency of filter change-outs;
- Additional cleaning of membrane units scheduled;
- Increased Chlorine injections to reduce microorganisms found in sargassum; and
- Activation of coordinated efforts and communication with VITEMA, local and federal partners.

Though these efforts will continue over the weekend to ensure the Authority meets Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for potable drinking water, customers may experience an unusual odor and discoloration.

The Authority reassures the community that all steps are being taken to provide the highest quality potable water despite the occurrence of sargassum. Should additional sargassum continue to impact the ability to capture and produce fresh potable water, potential water interruptions island-wide could occur, as the Authority works to effectively manage supply.

The Authority will continue to diligently monitor and evaluate the sargassum situation as it evolves, and is working with VITEMA, alongside local and federal partners to develop long-term solutions to proactively combat the growing prevalence of sargassum.

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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.