



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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## **WAPA Invites Government Officials to Tour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**



*Image: WAPA CEO/Executive Director Karl Knight wearing a white hard hat on the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) site visit with Governor Albert Bryan Jr., several senators from the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature, and other members of the Authority.*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – September 10, 2024 – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) had the honor today of welcoming representatives from both the legislative and executive branches to tour its newly commissioned Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the Randolph Harley Power Plant (RHPP) on St. Thomas. Attendees included Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Senate President Novelle Francis, Senator Milton Potter, and Senator Ray Fonseca, who were given a first-hand look at the innovative system aimed at enhancing grid stability and energy resilience for the community.

The BESS marks a significant milestone for the Authority, offering backup power during peak demand and enabling greater integration of renewable energy into the grid. By storing excess energy and releasing it when needed, the BESS helps to stabilize the grid, reduce energy costs, and minimize the likelihood of outages.

"Today marks a new chapter for WAPA as we bring forward the Battery Energy Storage System, a game-changer for our energy landscape," said CEO/Executive Director Karl Knight for the Virgin Islands Water

and Power Authority. “We’re excited to showcase this state-of-the-art technology to our government officials, demonstrating our charge to solutions that not only stabilize our grid but also lower costs and boost our resilience. This is just the beginning – we’re geared up to keep pushing forward with sustainable energy initiatives for the Virgin Islands.”

During the tour, presenters Ashley Bryan, Interim COO of Electric, and Kevin Harrigan, Interim Plant Superintendent at the RHPP, shared insights on the operational benefits of the system and explained how it modernizes our power infrastructure, allowing for more efficient power generation for the Territory.

"The members of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature welcomed the opportunity to have toured the RHPP today, which unfortunately was impacted by heavy rains, thunder and lightning. On the tour, we were very encouraged to see the improvements and the installation of the new Battery Energy Storage System, as well as receiving an update from the new CEO, Karl Knight and the management staff on some of the successes and challenges that continue to be experienced by the Authority," said Senate President Novelle Francis of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature. "There is a clear indication of a concerted effort by WAPA to upgrade their infrastructure which in turn will contribute to the sustainability of electricity in the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix districts.

Looking ahead, WAPA remains focused on future investments in sustainable energy solutions that meet the growing needs of the community. The commissioning of the BESS marks the beginning of a broader strategy to improve grid resilience and environmentally friendly power for generations to come.

*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.