



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA Advances Projects to Strengthen Water and Power Services Across the Territory

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (Sept. 19, 2025) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) is moving forward with several projects designed to bring meaningful improvements to the daily lives of Virgin Islanders. At yesterday’s board meeting, approvals were granted to rehabilitate aging waterlines in Blackbeard Hill and Mahogany Estate on St. Thomas, advance undergrounding efforts in Hannah’s Rest and along Queen Mary Highway/Centerline Road, and replace critical equipment at the Estate Richmond Substation on St. Croix. These projects, while highly technical in nature, have a very simple goal—making sure families, businesses, and communities have reliable access to safe water and electricity.

In Hannah’s Rest and along Queen Mary Highway, the ongoing undergrounding will reduce the frequency of outages, especially during storms. The upgrades to the Estate Richmond Substation transformer will strengthen the grid and prevent a single point of failure from impacting thousands of households. While the approval of the no-cost change order with Wartsila North America resolves several outstanding issues and moves the Wartsila Phase II project closer to completion.

WAPA also took steps to increase safety across all districts by approving a new contract for professional security services at its facilities on St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. This ensures that staff, contractors, and customers are protected while federal and local security regulations are fully met.

The past couple weeks have tested the resilience of our community, as the Authority faced a shortage in generation capacity that led to rotating outages across the St. Thomas/St. John district. Yesterday, outages particularly on St. Thomas and St. John were due to water intrusion into the unit at the Randolph Harley Power Plant, while isolated customers scattered throughout St. Croix also faced interruptions yesterday also tied to inclement weather, primarily caused by lightning strikes. Repairs to Unit 27 has brought some relief to the St. Thomas/St. John district, but challenges remain as WAPA works through deferred maintenance on older units.

Despite these challenges, progress continues. WAPA CEO and Executive Director Karl Knight acknowledged the strain customers have endured and reaffirmed the Authority’s commitment to long-term solutions. “We know these outages have been really tough—for families trying to get through the day, for businesses keeping their doors open—and we’re truly sorry for the inconvenience and interruptions,” said Knight. “The work we’re doing right now, whether it’s expanding battery energy storage systems, moving lines underground, or preparing new generation sites, is about more than just fixing today’s challenges. It’s about building a utility that our islands can count on for the long run.”