



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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September 22, 2023



Figure 1: CEO/Executive Director Andrew Smith speaking in the field with WAPA personnel

Authority Updates Community on Feeder 13 Power Restoration Challenges

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “Authority”) would like to provide an update to our valued community members regarding the ongoing challenges associated with the restoration of power to Feeder 13 on St. Thomas.

First, we want to stress that the situation we are facing is not normal. As previously highlighted in our [September 19th press release, damage](#) to Feeder 13’s primary cable has presented the Authority with a set of unique difficulties that WAPA personnel are actively working to address on the St. Thomas/St. John district.

A significant part of the challenge the Authority is facing resides in the fact that Feeder 13’s primary cable that was damaged runs underground. While undergrounding power lines offers increased resilience during storm season, it also introduces complexities when it comes to locating and repairing damage on the line. Since last Saturday, September 16, 2023, WAPA personnel have been repeatedly entering manholes along the impacted area from Charlotte Amalie waterfront to Subbase attempting to identify and address the damage, a task that is both hazardous and demanding in confined spaces.

Additionally, the age and brittleness of the cable have compounded the difficulties faced by WAPA's restoration teams. Each restoration attempt has been met with the unfortunate occurrence of a subsequent fault on the cable, leading to Feeder 13 tripping again.

The Authority would like to assure the community that its personnel are working around the clock to restore power to Feeder 13. In addition to internal efforts, WAPA is closely collaborating with Government House and partnering with contractors, including Haugland Group, to expedite restoration endeavors. The Authority recognizes the critical importance of reliable electric service, and no effort is being spared to resolve this situation as quickly as possible.

Currently, the Authority cannot provide an estimated restoration time for Feeder 13, due to the complexity of underground repairs, older cable, and numerous other challenging variables that make setting a definitive timeline difficult. With Feeder 13 presently out of service having sustained damage in the field, WAPA has been forced to rely solely on Feeder 12 to support the bulk of the electrical load of the district, except for distribution feeders that originate at Randolph Harley Power Plant (RHPP), such as Feeder 7A. To minimize the impact to customers, WAPA is actively managing the load with rotational outages and working diligently to keep as many customers online as possible. The community's patience and understanding are invaluable during this challenging period.

WAPA will continue to provide updates on repair progress. For the fastest information and updates, please ensure you are subscribed to WAPA alerts or sign up at: <https://www.viwapa.vi/news-information/advisory-details> or customers can download the Everbridge App. Information can also be found on our website at www.viwapa.vi and social media platforms at @USVIWAPA on Facebook and on Twitter @VIWAPA. See QR code below for YouTube video providing press release overview:



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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