



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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Figure 1: Don Gregoire, Director of Water Distribution at the Authority, attends workshop last week to discuss prudent replacement project with FEMA and local stakeholders on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Authority Meets with FEMA and Local Stakeholders to Discuss Master Plan for St. Croix's Water Distribution System

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “Authority”) recently concluded a two-week long workshop last week with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other local stakeholders, where key components of the prudent replacement for St. Croix’s potable water system were discussed.

In mid-2022 FEMA approved grant funding to replace St. Croix’s entire underground potable water distribution system and provided WAPA with a \$30M sub-award to contract master planning and conceptual design. Much of St. Croix’s water distribution network consists of outdated pipes that result in frequent water disruptions to many of the island’s communities. Based on FEMA-approved codes, a hydraulic model was built. A hydraulic model can be used to determine which aspects of the current system do not meet industry standards and need replacement.

As part of the project’s master planning, which is slated for completion early 2024, attendees visited all WAPA’s pump stations and storage tank sites, and Carollo Engineers, an environmental engineering firm, began collecting data that will be plugged into the hydraulic model to help ensure accuracy. “One of the primary purposes of the recent workshop was to initiate discussions on the prioritization and execution of projects,” notes Don Gregoire, Director of Water Distribution at the Authority. “A critical piece of the master plan is to include SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) as part of the infrastructure, which will provide data in real time, such as pump run times, power usage, pressure and flow data that can optimize operational efficiency and reduce overhead costs.”

Stakeholders involved included, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEM)A, Department of Agriculture (DOA), VI Economic Development Authority (VIEDA), VI Fire Service, and VI Housing Authority, who provided feedback on current and future development plans that will impact water distribution system demands. Feedback from these agencies is crucial, as it helps ensure the new water distribution system is accurately sized to accommodate the future needs of the island. The agreed upon timeline for completion of the development of Scope and Cost of the system replacement is at the end of August 2023.

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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