



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

(340) 774-3552 • [communications@viwapa.vi](mailto:communications@viwapa.vi) / [www.viwapa.vi](http://www.viwapa.vi)

## **WAPA Continues to Inspire Students through STEM Engagement and Career Exploration**



*Image: High school students attending the STEM-focused summer program at St. Croix Educational Complex were engaged during a WAPA outreach event on June 23, 2025.*

ST. CROIX, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (June 23, 2025) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) continues investing in the next generation of innovators by visiting schools across the territory to expose students to career opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

Most recently, WAPA visited the St. Croix Educational Complex High School today, engaging with 21 high school students eager to learn about the vital roles STEM professionals play in powering and sustaining their community.

During the visit, students were introduced to a dynamic team representing WAPA’s Electric and Water Systems Engineering departments, linemen, interns, and members of the Authority’s Communications team. Together, the group shared their personal journeys, many of which included leaving the Virgin Islands for higher education in engineering and other STEM disciplines, then returning home to contribute their skills to the territory’s growth and resilience.

“It’s important for our students to see that careers in STEM are not only possible but essential right here at home,” said Shanell Petersen, Director of Corporate Communications at WAPA. “Many of our engineers, apprentices, and managers sat where they’re sitting now and have come back to help build a better Virgin Islands.”

The students learned about how electricity is generated, including the processes at WAPA’s generation plants, the role of reverse osmosis in providing drinking water in partnership with Seven Seas, and how renewable energy — such as solar — contributes to reducing the territory’s environmental footprint and preserving its natural resources. The team also explained WAPA’s partnerships with private and nonprofit companies, such as VIElectron, VIRAPC, Haughland VI, and Marco St. Croix, which support system improvements and long-lasting, reliable services for residents and businesses.

An interactive exercise tasked students with working in groups to repair a simulated leaky pipe, teaching them the importance of teamwork, problem-solving, and communication — essential skills for any STEM career. Students asked thoughtful questions about how solar power impacts their families and the benefits of integrating renewable energy into the grid.

The visit also highlighted career development programs at WAPA, including the annual engineering scholarship opportunity for local students pursuing higher education in engineering fields, and the Lineman Apprenticeship Program, which prepares participants for hands-on, high-demand careers in the utility industry.

WAPA remains dedicated to creating opportunities for young Virgin Islanders to build meaningful careers while helping to sustain and modernize essential services in the community.

*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.*

###

**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.