



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

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**Water and Power Authority Officials Did Not Decline to Attend Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection Hearing; Requested Deferral**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority apologizes for its absence at the September 14<sup>th</sup> 2022 *Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection Hearing* in what the Authority can only describe as a misunderstanding between company officials and the Office of Senator Carla Joseph.

In a letter to Senator Joseph on September 6<sup>th</sup>, Water and Power Authority CEO and Executive Director Andrew Smith requested the hearing be briefly deferred to October or early November as Authority officials are still in the process of gathering indications of interest and performing the necessary evaluation of the various proposals from a number of solar developers, a process that will likely continue into early October. As such, the deferment request was to ensure the Authority can present a comprehensive and accurate picture to Committee members and fully answer Committee member's questions.

The response received on September 7, 2022 from administrative staff on behalf of Senator Joseph acknowledged the Authority's request for deferment and asked that the Authority send over specific dates in October or November where testimony would be possible. The active and ongoing dialogue between Senator Joseph's office and the Authority provided the understanding that a new date was acceptable and being coordinated.

The Water and Power Authority reiterates that it remains committed to transparency and is in no way declining to appear before the committee. Instead, the Authority is proactively seeking to provide the most complete information, instead of being in a position where its only answer to questions is "The Authority is unable to answer the question until all details are known and analysis is complete." The Authority welcomes the opportunity to provide an update to the community in the very near future. This explanation for requesting the brief deferral was proactively articulated as indicated in the excerpt to Senator Joseph below:

“The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (the “Authority”) thanks you for the invitation to testify before the Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection (the “Committee”), concerning, among other things, the status of the Authority’s alternative energy source initiatives. However, the Authority is currently in the process of receiving indications of interest from a number of both global and local renewables developers. While some developers are still finalizing their scope of interest, others were invited to clarify key points in their submitted materials. Once complete, the Authority will then develop an apples-to-apples comparison of the competing proposals.”

The Authority has been vocal in highlighting that all proposals received from solar developers are not contracts, and it is not looking to execute any contracts at this stage. Transparency is paramount and all indications of interest will be discussed publicly with the PSC and the Governing Board.

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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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