



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA GOVERNING BOARD APPROVES PURCHASE CONTRACT FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES

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The Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority approved a purchase contract for electric vehicles at today's Board of Directors meeting.

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority will shortly receive a fleet-upgrade of 8 electric Tesla SUVs worth approximately \$500,000, procured entirely through an Energizing Insular Communities grant of approximately \$1 million from the Department of Interior. The Teslas represent much more than just new vehicles.

"This purchase doesn't just mean the Authority has new SUVs. Viewed on a wider perspective, it means less resources spent on not only fuel, but maintenance as well," said Kyle Fleming, chairperson of the Authority's Board. "With the adoption of electric vehicles we can begin fueling our vehicles from a resource we produce – electricity". Director Fleming also noted that other government agencies will be purchasing additional Teslas in the coming months with the Virgin Island's Energy Office being awarded a similar \$1.2 million grant.

According to Fleming, who is also the director of the Virgin Islands Energy Office, having electric vehicles is part of an overall strategy to transform the Authority away from fossil fuels. Both solar and wind power generation are already a part of the Authority's current and future generation plans with the goal of eliminating, to the fullest extent possible, reliance on fossil fuel.

He also noted the Virgin Islands has a natural advantage over many stateside utilities regarding its immediate ability to utilize electric vehicles. Due to the relatively small size of the islands and the short distances driven, range anxiety, or the concern about running out of battery charge before being able to recharge, will not be a problem.

"As Director Fleming noted, not only will the new Teslas reduce our operating cost and start to transition our company to an electrified vehicle fleet," said Andrew Smith, the Authority's CEO, "but the purchase of the Teslas also came about through the innovation of our team. The grant was originally designated for electric pickup trucks; however, commercially produced electric trucks are in high demand and very few are being produced. The Authority originally approached Ford to acquire the new electric F-150 Lightning, but Ford already had a 200,000 truck backlog with expected delivery over two years away. The team pivoted to the alternative of the Tesla SUV, successfully modified the grant, and the new Teslas will be in service for the Virgin Islands soon."

Mr. Smith also noted that the approximately \$500,000 remaining under the grant is earmarked for acquiring hybrid bucket trucks, and that the purchase process is well underway.

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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.