



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

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## **WAPA Issues Statement Regarding Rotational Outages in the St. Thomas / St. John District**

We recognize that this has been an extremely frustrating period of outages and would like to thank the members of the community for their patience as we worked safely and expeditiously to restore electrical service to the St. Thomas/St. John District.

Yesterday, The Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority experienced the loss of Generating Unit 23 at the Randolph Harley Power Plant (RHPP). The loss occurred after the air conditioner in the unit's control room stopped working, and subsequently led to the control equipment overheating and shutting down. The automatic shutdown of the equipment is by design so that the control system is not damaged. The control equipment cooled down last night after the Authority mobilized large cooling fans as well as replacement air conditioning. When restarting Unit 23 yesterday evening, a valve that supplies hydraulic pressure to the starting system failed. The installation of a replacement valve is underway.

Unit 23 is currently responsible for providing a significant percentage of generation capacity to the St. Thomas/St. John District, and with it offline, service was dramatically impacted and resulted in the power rotations. The power rotations, also known as load shedding, are necessary because without Unit 23, there is not enough generation capacity being supplied by RHPP and Unit 15, which is primarily operated on LPG fuel, to power the District.

Our preferred operating configuration is to have the Wartsila generators operating along with Unit 27, which is our next most efficient unit. Unit 23 is an available standby unit. If Unit 27 were in operation, rotating outages would not be necessary. However, we have been in negotiations with GE to purchase Unit 27 for several months, and an agreement was reached late last week, with the transaction expected to be completed later this week. In the interim, Unit 27 has been unavailable to us since Thursday, June 23 pending the close of the purchase. With Unit 23 now down, an agreement was reached with GE to return Unit 27 to service immediately, and Unit 27 returned to service earlier today.

We again would like to thank the community for their patience as we continue to work safely and expeditiously towards consistent reliable service for the Virgin Islands.

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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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