



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

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January 25, 2024

**WAPA Expresses Gratitude to Customers and Partner Agencies
for Successful Water Filter Distribution**

ST. CROIX, US VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) extends heartfelt appreciation to its valued customers for their overwhelming support during last week’s water filter distribution initiative on St. Croix. The three-day event held at the parking area adjacent to the Midre Cummings playground in Frederiksted witnessed an enthusiastic turnout at drive-up and walk-up distribution lines, underscoring the Authority’s commitment to ensuring access to clean drinking water for all residents. Each eligible customer received both a sink and pitcher filter for use in their homes and businesses. Informational handouts in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole were included.

The filter distribution was made possible by the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) Safe Drinking Water Fund after testing last October indicated elevated levels of lead and copper in the water taken at the distribution meters. This was inconsistent with the water quality results of WAPA’s regularly scheduled testing and in November sequential sampling by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) verified minimal levels of lead and copper in the water found at the tap in 119 samples. One sample above the action level had been taken from water that was stagnant for approximately four days.

While the Authority and its customers found the more accurate results to be relieving, WAPA supports continuing awareness of water quality for its water customers and particularly Virgin Islands residents who rely on cistern water in their homes and businesses. According to WAPA’s CEO Andrew Smith, this initiative to distribute water filters was in support of its enhanced public education campaign about ways to access clean, safe water. Both the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) support point-of use-filters as a viable and responsible option for improving taste, removing contaminants, and protecting health.

Over 900 customers were issued filters last week which included the Virgin Islands Housing Authority and the Department of Human Services Meals on Wheels program to forward to their clientele. For those who were not able to participate in last weekend’s distribution, an evening distribution is planned from February 5-9, 5pm-6pm at the Sunny Isle Business Office.

According to Chief Operating Officer of Water Noel Hodge, in its mission to upgrade St. Croix's potable water system over the last several years, water line replacement has been underway and, to date, the system has been rehabilitated in Estate Clifton Hill and in Christiansted and Frederiksted towns. Campo Rico water rehabilitation project is approximately 70% completed. Work will begin in Hannah's Rest in February, all funded by the EPA's Drinking Water Capital Improvement Fund. With FEMA funding of up to \$1.5B, it is anticipated that the island's entire public water system will be fully replaced. The Authority is also planning a similar initiative for St. Thomas and St. John.

WAPA is particularly grateful to its partner agencies and their staffs for their unwavering support in making this initiative a success including VITEMA, Department of Health, DPNR, Department of Human Services, V.I. National Guard, Bureau of Information Technology, V.I. Police Department, EPA, FEMA, and the hard-working WAPA employees, noted Smith.

WAPA remains steadfast in its commitment to providing reliable and essential services to the residents of the Virgin Islands, including providing free lead and copper testing to businesses and residences. To sign up, please email communications@viwapa.vi or call 340-712-6673. Visit www.cleanwaterusvi.com for updates.

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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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