



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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Federal and Local Partnerships Showcased During HUD Secretary's Visit to WAPA



Figure 1: HUD Secretary Adrianna Todman at the head of the table meets with WAPA CEO, management, and Chairman on St. Croix. Photo by Terell Giordani Santos, HUD's Audiovisual Production Specialist.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (November 21, 2024) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) welcomed U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Adrianna Todman to its St. Croix Business Office today for a detailed review of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded projects.

During the visit, WAPA provided updates on several critical initiatives aimed at improving the reliability and resilience of the territory’s utility infrastructure. These include the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the Richmond Power Plant, tank stabilization efforts, and the ongoing development of renewable energy sources. Secretary Todman’s visit underscores the importance of federal partnerships in addressing infrastructure challenges and advancing disaster recovery.

WAPA has made significant progress toward enhancing energy reliability and affordability, highlighted by the acquisition of the Vitol propane terminal through the CDBG-Mitigation program. This transition strengthens WAPA’s control over the propane supply, reduces reliance

on external operators, and positions the Authority for long-term fuel cost stability and improved reliability by 2025. Concurrently, WAPA is advancing grid stabilization projects, including a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the Richmond Power Plant to improve voltage regulation and outage recovery, and the Tank Stabilization Project, which is awaiting HUD approval for geotechnical studies and design to support future infrastructure improvements.

WAPA's Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, Karl Knight, emphasized the significance of the collaboration, "Today's visit by Secretary Todman highlights the critical role that federal and local partnerships play in driving the success of infrastructure projects. We are proud to showcase the progress we've made and remain dedicated to leveraging these collaborations to deliver reliable, sustainable services to the Virgin Islands community."

Secretary Todman commended WAPA's leadership and staff, noting the expertise of key team members during the visit. The CDBG program has been instrumental in funding projects that address the territory's recovery and energy stability needs, including the Richmond Power Plant upgrades and the Phase II Wärtsilä project in St. Thomas. The Authority continues to work closely with HUD, VIHFA, and other stakeholders to ensure efficient use of disaster recovery funds and timely completion of these essential projects.

CEO Knight added, "It's sobering to reflect on how much progress the Authority has made with the federal and local backing. The acquisition of the propane terminals—lifelines for the territory—has brought us more efficient, lower-cost fuel and infrastructure that we now control. For the first time, we will source LPG on the open market, ensuring greater flexibility and reliability for our customers. We are deeply grateful for the means to achieve this accomplishment for the territory."

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.

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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.