



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

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**WAPA Accelerates Customer Relief Through Faster Smart Meter Rollout and Long-Term Cost Savings**

U.S. Virgin Islands (March 2, 2026) — The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) Governing Board has approved a series of actions designed to deliver faster relief to customers, strengthen system reliability, and reduce long-term operating costs across the territory.

Central to the meeting held on Thursday, February 26, 2026, was the decision to accelerate the electric meter replacement project. By deploying new meters on St. Thomas and St. Croix concurrently, WAPA will cut six months from the overall project timeline. Installation on St. John remains on schedule to begin by September of this year. To meet this accelerated deadline, the Authority is doubling installation crews and expanding the necessary warehousing, networking infrastructure, vehicles, and support resources to keep the project on track.

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Karl Knight underscored the urgency behind the move.

*“We need to get relief to our customers sooner than later,” said Knight. “Accelerating the new meter rollout allows us to improve billing accuracy, reduce estimated bills, detect outages faster, and give customers more visibility and control over their energy usage.”*

The Board also unanimously approved a cost increase for the Feeder 5A underground electrical project ensuring continued investment in grid hardening. Underground infrastructure reduces storm-related outages and strengthens long-term resilience, directly benefiting customers through improved reliability.

In another customer-focused decision, the Board approved a 10-year lease agreement at Four Winds Plaza that will consolidate customer-facing operations into a modernized, centralized location. The agreement reduces projected costs from more than \$12 million under current arrangements to approximately \$8.16 million over the 10-year term, resulting in an estimated \$3 to \$5 million in savings. Additionally, by modifying the construction plan

from a two-story to a one-story buildout, the Authority is realizing significant cost efficiencies.

Beyond the financial savings, consolidation eliminates fragmented operations and duplicated overhead expenses while improving workflow, communication, and cross-department coordination. The first phase of the new customer service buildout is expected to be completed by May 30 and will feature a dedicated customer entrance and streamlined service areas designed to enhance the customer experience.

“Consolidation is about more than rent,” stated Anthony Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer at the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. “When we reduce redundancy and bring our customer-facing teams together, we improve response times, reduce confusion, and build public trust. Operational efficiency translates directly into better service.”

Operational updates during the CEO’s report also highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen reliability. Expanded in-house vegetation management crews are now active on St. Thomas and St. Croix to address tree-related outages, particularly on St. Thomas’ northside. Following a recent 24-hour outage on St. John caused by coordination issues within advanced automation systems, engineers have identified corrective measures and are implementing adjustments to prevent similar occurrences as the Authority modernizes its grid.

WAPA has also secured contracts for traveling screens to mitigate the anticipated year after year increase in sargassum impacting generation facilities, with additional protective measures planned in a second phase. The Authority reported that February concluded with zero vehicle accidents, reflecting the results of strengthened safety training and defensive driving initiatives.

Additionally, WAPA line crews who recently assisted the restoration efforts following category 5 Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica have returned safely, and a crew comprised of linemen from St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas will deploy for a five-week assignment to continue regional support efforts.

Through accelerated modernization, strategic consolidation, and continued infrastructure investment, WAPA remains committed to improving reliability, increasing transparency, managing costs responsibly, and delivering measurable improvements for our customers.

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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.