



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA Provides Update on Generation Units and Ongoing Restoration Efforts

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (March 30, 2026) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or “the Authority”) is providing the community with an update on recent generation challenges and the work underway to stabilize the electrical system following a series of fluctuating outages over the past several days.

“Across our islands, we all know how much we rely on steady, dependable power,” said CEO and Executive Director Karl Knight of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. “Our teams have been working nonstop to stabilize the system, and we remain fully committed to restoring consistent service to every resident and business.”

WAPA currently operates 10 generation units in the St. Thomas–St. John district. Three of these—Units 27, 23, and 15—are legacy, heavy-duty turbines that produce large shares of power critical to maintaining stable service. The remaining capacity is supported by smaller, more modern Wärtsilä units, which together provide approximately 57 megawatts of generation. For the system to operate reliably, at least one of the larger legacy units must be online at all times.

Over the past year, the unavailability of two of these major units has placed significant strain on the system. Unit 23 has been offline since May 2025 after sustaining major gearbox damage. The repairs are complex and costly but are funded in the current fiscal year, and the process is underway. Unit 27 later experienced damage during a weather event in December 2025, and several key components required fabrication off-island. Those parts were ordered weeks ago, are expected to arrive the first two weeks of April, and the unit is projected to be back in service by early May.

With Units 23 and 27 unavailable, Unit 15 has been running continuously since September 2025 to carry the system. Because it was the only large unit available, WAPA was unable to remove it from service for routine maintenance without risking wider outages. After months of continuous operation, Unit 15 unexpectedly shut down several days ago when an electrical fault occurred within the unit. The failure caused added mechanical and electrical damage, including issues with the grounding transformer.

Crews completed emergency repairs and returned Unit 15 to service on Friday evening, where it operated without incident for approximately 24 hours. On Saturday evening, however, a separate issue developed within the unit’s electrical system, causing another shutdown. Technicians identified the malfunctioning electronic component and are addressing replacement.

These components became obsolete in 2021 and so it has been difficult to source replacement parts as they are no longer being manufactured. This unit is also part of the FEMA Prudent Replacement program.

In the meantime, the system operates at times up to 5 megawatts less capacity than is typically required during peak demand. This shortfall will require temporary rotational service interruptions throughout the day to prevent a full system outage. If rotations are necessary, feeders will be restored gradually to avoid sharp load swings that could trip additional units and prolong outages. This may delay restoration upwards of 30 minutes as portions of feeders are restored.

At the same time, crews identified a fault on one of the transformer cables which has been isolated to prepare for St. John restoration. The Authority is prioritizing restoration on St. John as we regain capacity at the power plant.

WAPA understands the frustration and disruption these outages have caused for residents and businesses. Crews, engineers, and support staff have been working around the clock to secure parts, complete repairs, and restore reliable service as safely and quickly as possible. The Authority continues to coordinate closely with regional and local partners to expedite shipments and technical support.

The community will continue to receive periodic updates as repairs progress and additional generation capacity is restored.

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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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