



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

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WAPA, VITEMA, VIEO and Key Partners Conduct Temporary Power Pre-Capstone Exercise Across the Territory



Image: Key agency representatives discuss community driven solutions for possible gaps regarding Atlantic Hurricane Season

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS (May 21, 2026) – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA), in coordination with the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) and the Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO), participated in a territory-wide pre-capstone exercise on Thursday, May 14, 2026, focused on temporary power operations and emergency coordination ahead of the 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Season.

The exercise was conducted simultaneously at the Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) on St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John, with agencies also participating virtually. The tabletop discussion brought together government agencies, healthcare partners, first responders, and private sector stakeholders to review emergency power priorities, identify operational gaps, and strengthen coordination under Emergency Support Function #12 (ESF-12), which addresses energy restoration and fuel operations during disasters.

Led by Eliji Mondesir, Chief Engineer, Office of the Governor Virgin Islands Energy Office, the exercise focused on reviewing critical facility generator requirements, identifying top priority locations for temporary power support, clarifying agency roles and responsibilities, and assessing fuel, equipment, and generator capacity needs in the event of a major storm or disaster.

Participants included representatives from WAPA, VITEMA, the Virgin Islands Energy Office, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, VIFEMS, Bureau of Information Technology (BIT), Department of Public Works, Department of Property and Procurement, the

Virgin Islands Port Authority, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and additional public and private sector partners.

“This exercise is about ensuring the Territory is prepared before an emergency happens,” said VITEMA Director Daryl Jaschen. “The collaboration between agencies during these planning sessions helps us identify gaps, improve coordination, and strengthen our readiness ahead of hurricane season.”

As part of the exercise, agencies reviewed updates made throughout the past year, discussed outstanding needs that fall under ESF-12 responsibilities, and evaluated procedures for temporary power deployment and fuel support for critical infrastructure.

“Eliminating gaps and validating our priorities now allows us to respond faster and more effectively when storms threaten the Territory,” said Chief Engineer Mondesir. “Preparedness is not a one-week effort, it requires continuous coordination and planning throughout the year.”

Under ESF-12, the Virgin Islands Energy Office serves as the lead agency responsible for coordinating emergency energy operations, while WAPA provides technical expertise related to power restoration, generation capacity, feeder status, fuel inventories, and infrastructure damage assessments during emergencies.

WAPA Director of Corporate Communications Shanell Spencer emphasized the importance of year-round preparation as hurricane season approaches on June 1.

“As hurricane season approaches, exercises like these strengthen coordination and ensure lead agencies are equipped with timely, accurate information before, during, and after an emergency,” stated Director Spencer. “Clear communication and information sharing are critical to effective preparedness and response efforts.”

The pre-capstone exercise serves as preparation for the Territory’s larger Capstone Exercise scheduled for June 1–5, which will further test coordination, response capabilities, and emergency operations across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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.