



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

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*Figure 1: Interim Director of Transmission & Distribution Cordell Jacobs provides update to community on Composite Pole Project progress.*

## **Authority Announces Almost 90% of Total Composite Poles Installed Throughout US Virgin Islands**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority’s (“WAPA” or “Authority”) ongoing efforts to improve grid reliability continue with its Composite Pole project at 88% completion territory-wide. Recognizing the critical importance of a robust and resilient power infrastructure, WAPA began the Composite Pole Project in 2017. The project is 90% funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Program, with a 10% match being provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Composite poles, made of advanced materials, possess exceptional durability, withstanding extreme weather conditions, including high winds and corrosive environments and offer a host of advantages over traditional wooden poles. They are also more resistant to rot, decay, and termite damage, ensuring longevity and significantly reducing maintenance costs for the Authority in the long-term. In less densely populated areas, composite poles offer an advantage over undergrounding because installation typically involves easy replacement of an existing pole, whereas undergrounding involves extensive excavation and more lengthy construction times.

As part of the Composite Pole project, the Authority has subcontracted Barkley Technologies for project management and design support services, with RS Poles, PECO and Trident Industries supplying composite poles and AWG providing supplies hardware. On St. Thomas and St. Croix, composite pole installation is being performed by Haugland VI, while on St. John BBC Electric performed installations.

On St. Croix a total of 3,351 composite poles have been installed, 81% of its total. 2,330 composite poles have been installed on St. Thomas, 99% of its total. 1,711 composite poles have been installed on St. John, 87% of its total. Water Island is at a 100% completion with 200 composite poles installed.

“With almost 90% of the total composite poles successfully installed, we are significantly enhancing the reliability of our grid throughout the US Virgin Islands. Our focus continues to remain on providing our residents and businesses with a dependable and resilient power supply that supports the growth and development of the USVI, particularly given the unique challenges of our region, including hurricanes and tropical storms,” highlighted Cordell Jacobs, Interim Director of Transmission and Distribution at the Authority. “The implementation of composite poles will not only improve uninterrupted power supply, but also reduce maintenance costs and improve the overall sustainability of our system.”

As a final note, the Authority kindly requests that community members do not post any materials or notices on utility poles. While posting materials such as flyers, signs, or advertisements on electrical poles may seem harmless, it poses significant risk to both lineworkers and the utility poles themselves. WAPA’s lineworkers often perform their duties during the early morning hours or at night when visibility is reduced, and staples or nails used to attach materials to utility poles can snag lineworkers’ clothing and/or gear potentially causing injuries or accidents. Adhering items to the pole can also compromise structural integrity over time.

The Authority’s commitment to reliability and overall improved service has been a driving force behind this project. WAPA extends its thanks to the community for its support and patience throughout this crucial infrastructure upgrade. To watch updates from Cordell Jacobs, Interim Director of Transmission and Distribution at the Authority on YouTube, please scan QR code below or visit WAPA’s YouTube page at <https://youtu.be/sG5RZ1FuMak?si=vXek5YrCJoUPDrcg>.

*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.

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