

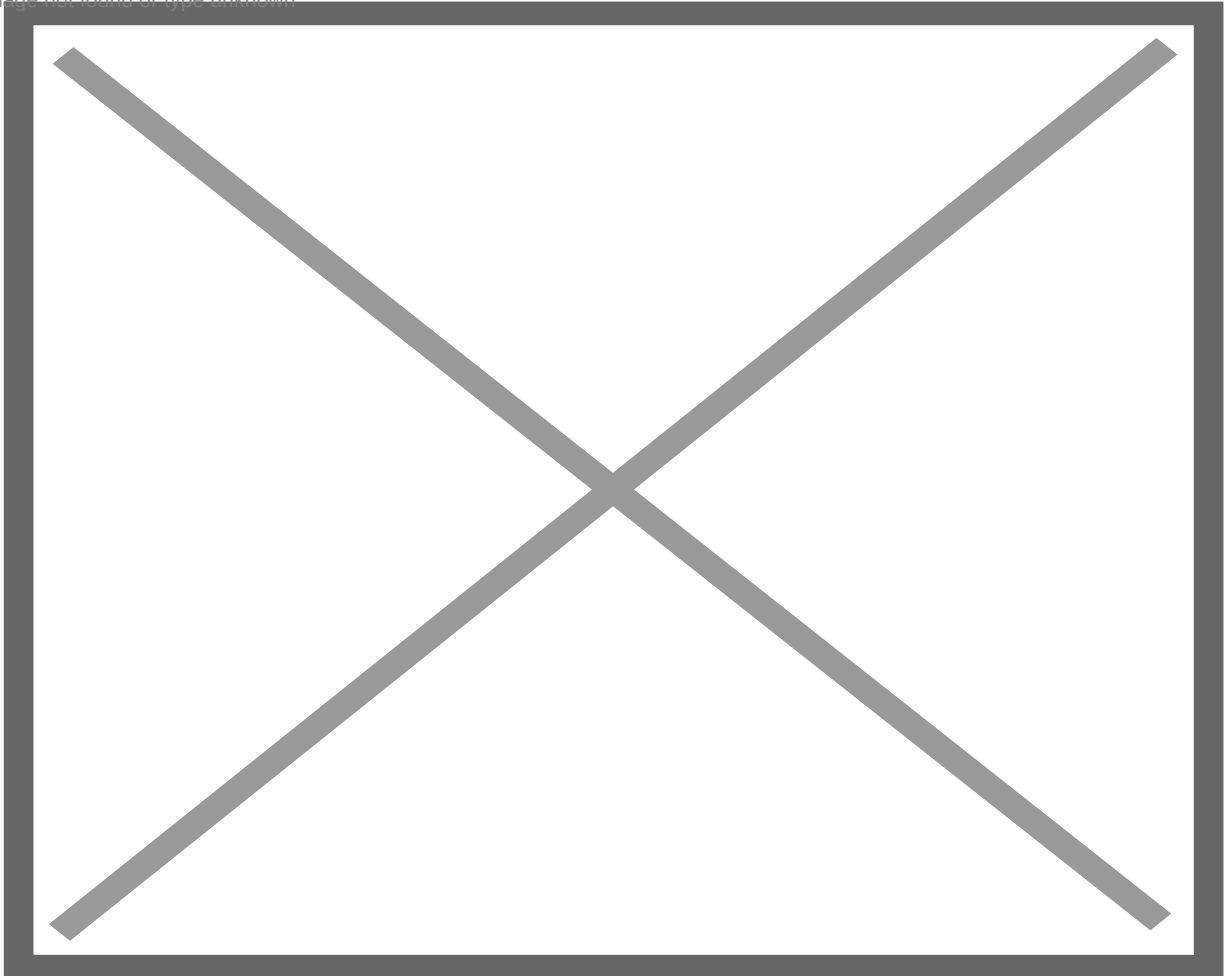
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Bryan Issues 'No Drink Advisory' for WAPA Water on St. Croix Following Discovery of Lead

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In an urgent response to recent water quality concerns, Governor Albert Bryan Jr., acting in an "abundance of caution," has issued a "no drinking advisory" for the entire potable water system on St. Croix, advising residents to refrain from consuming tap water until its safety can be confirmed.

The backdrop to this significant action was last weekend's unsettling revelation. Contrary to prior assurances regarding the safety of the brown water in St. Croix, tests on 53% of 66 water samples [unveiled elevated levels of copper and lead](#). In light of these findings, WAPA presented several precautionary measures. Residents were advised to let their water run for a few minutes before using it, a measure believed to help in flushing out harmful chemicals which might stem from stagnation in pipes. Further recommendations included the use of filters and a stark warning that boiling does not eliminate lead. Additionally, in areas like Diamond, Castle Burke, Colquhoun,

and Mon Bijou, where high metal levels persist, residents were counseled against consuming tap water.

The advisory from Governor Bryan, disseminated by Government House on Monday night, expanded the precautionary reach beyond the communities initially pinpointed by WAPA. Until a green light is given regarding the water's safety, the populace is being encouraged to use bottled water or other confirmed safe sources for cooking and drinking purposes.

In their endeavor to ensure public safety, WAPA, in collaboration with the government of the USVI, remains engaged with the Environmental Protection Agency to hone testing protocols for utmost accuracy, according to Gov't House.

At a press briefing on Monday afternoon by Government House, Communications Director Richard Motta Jr. hinted that more details from a Joint Information Centre dialogue would be unveiled in due course. Subsequent to this, WAPA announced a planned system flushing in the Colquohoun area through a Facebook post, a process expected to stir up sediment temporarily.

The challenges plaguing the St. Croix water distribution system aren't new; they span from brown water complaints to sargassum odor issues, frequent leaks, and now the emergence of potentially toxic chemicals. Against this backdrop, WAPA reemphasized its long-term vision – an overhaul of St. Croix's entire water distribution infrastructure, encompassing 681 miles of ductile iron pipes, as part of the Prudent Replacement program.