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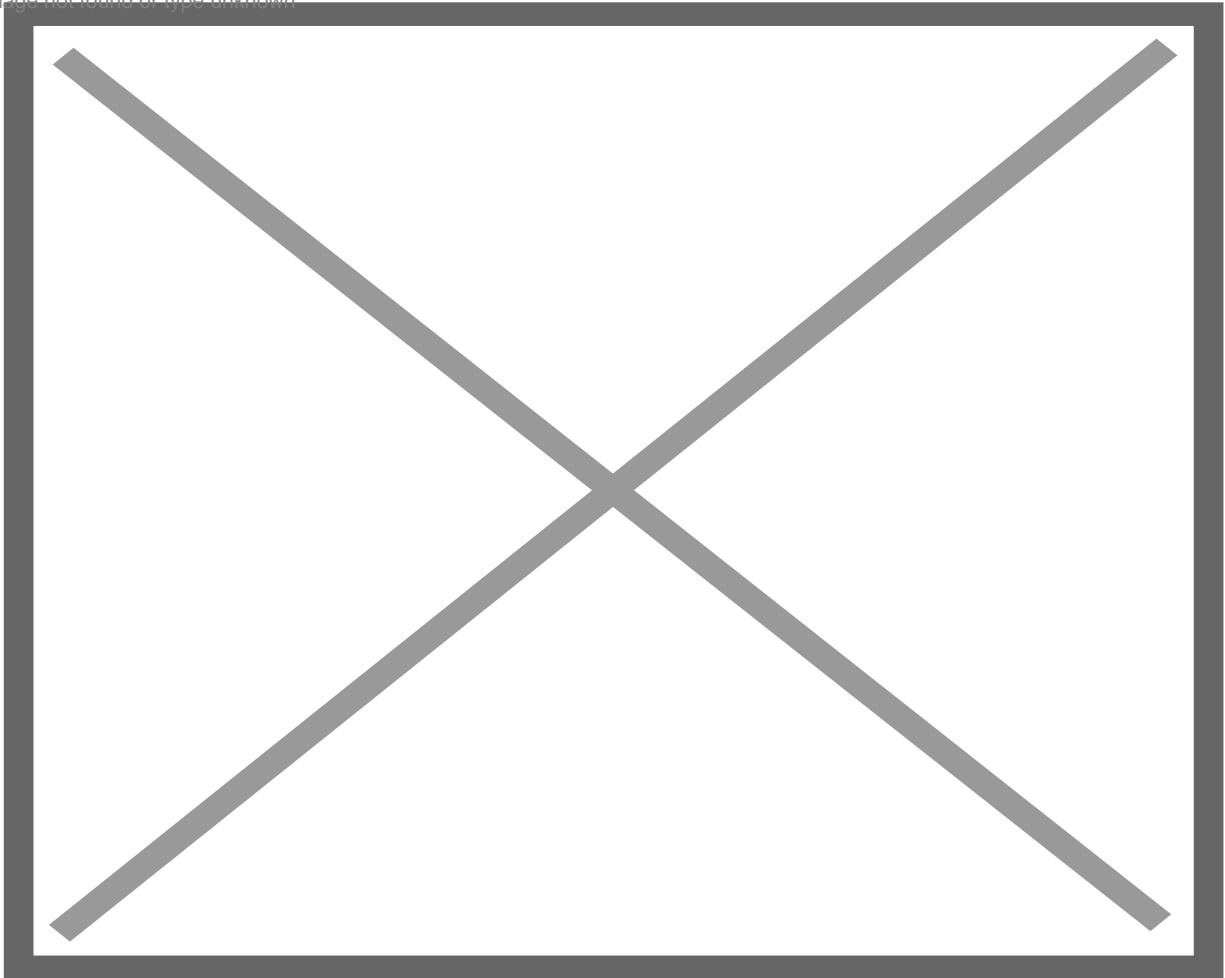
Bryan Announces Lifting of "No Drink Advisory" for St. Croix's Water System

St. Croix's water advisory lifted after rigorous analysis

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In his sixth State of the Territory Address on Monday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced the lifting of the "No Drink Advisory" for the public water system in St. Croix. This decision comes after extensive water sampling and testing confirmed that there is no system-wide contamination of lead and copper.

The advisory was initially issued in October following the detection of alarming levels of lead and copper in the Water and Power Authority's water distribution system, as reported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In response, WAPA and the Department of Planning and Natural Resources undertook thorough measures to verify these findings. According to Gov't House, despite WAPA's history of compliance with EPA testing protocols, which consistently

showed no widespread contamination, the advisory was put in place as a precaution.

To facilitate a comprehensive reevaluation and access federal assistance, a State of Emergency was declared. Subsequent testing by the EPA, adhering to established protocols, indicated significantly lower levels of lead and copper than initially reported. This testing concluded that the public water system in St. Croix did not have a system-wide issue with lead and copper, and the higher readings were localized to individual homes due to specific plumbing fixtures.

Governor Bryan clarified, "We now know that the initial testing used incorrect methodology leading to erroneously high readings. Subsequent testing, using proper methodologies that included sampling directly from household faucets, provided accurate and reassuring results."

Further water sampling by DPNR and WAPA has corroborated the EPA's findings and WAPA's regular compliance testing, confirming the absence of a widespread contamination issue in St. Croix's public water system, the administration said.

Addressing the issue of discolored water in certain areas of St. Croix, Mr. Bryan highlighted WAPA's ongoing infrastructure projects, such as the Clifton Hill waterline rehabilitation and initiatives in Estates Campo Rico and Hannah's Rest. These projects aim to replace old metal pipes with more reliable PVC pipes as part of a larger strategy to improve the water system.

"As your governor, I assure you of our unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of our community," Mr. Bryan said. "We remain vigilant and proactive in upgrading our water infrastructure for the benefit of all residents."