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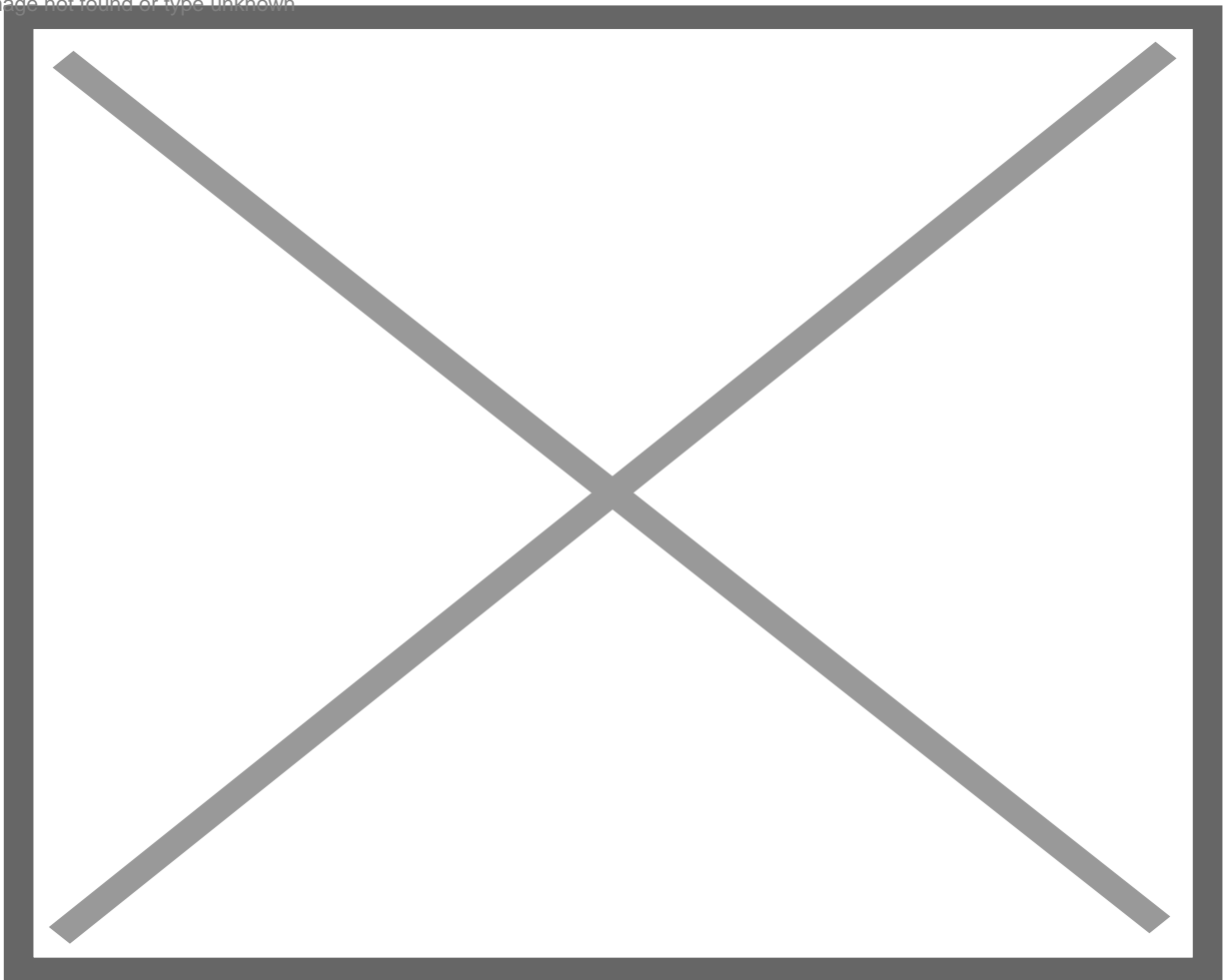
## Karl Knight To Begin As WAPA CEO On July 29

**Knight's leadership at WAPA, reported by VI Consortium a month ago, begins July 29 amidst operational and financial challenges**

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Janeke Simon **July 26, 2024**

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**Karl Knight, left, speaks as Governor Bryan listen during a Bryan-Roach transition team meeting back in 2019. By. FILE PHOTO**

In a board meeting on Thursday, the Water and Power Authority confirmed what had been [reported last month](#) by Consortium journalists: that Karl Knight, formerly chief of staff to Governor Albert Bryan Jr., had been appointed executive director to the V.I. Water and Power Authority.

Mr. Knight takes over from former CEO and Executive Director Andrew Smith at a time where WAPA is fighting to maintain its ability to [keep the lights on](#) across the territory, with critically low levels of operational funds hindering the timely purchase of fuel and the performance of

critical maintenance tasks. As a result, residents have been grappling with unplanned outages and rolling blackouts for months.

A [state of energy emergency](#) declared by Governor Bryan has given WAPA some breathing room, channeling funds long-owed to the utility by similarly struggling government-supported entities into WAPA's coffers. Federal grant funds [recently transferred](#) to settle the outstanding deal with Vitol also signal a major financial burden lifted from WAPA, and a greenlit [battery storage agreement](#) with VI Electron signals the advancement of the utility's sustainable energy goals. These developments, WAPA officials have been signaling for some time, are expected to reduce the cost of power generation in the territory, a large portion of which is tied to the market rate for diesel.?

Amid these positive developments, Mr. Knight struck an optimistic tone for WAPA's future. "My commitment is to take proactive measures to enhance our services, ensuring we meet the highest standards of reliability for our community," he remarked. His emphasis as CEO will be on public engagement, Mr. Knight says, ensuring that the public is kept aware of WAPA's progress towards sustainability. "Transparency and accountability will be the cornerstones of my leadership, as we work diligently to serve the needs of all Virgin Islanders and support the success of local businesses," Mr. Knight said.?

Mr. Knight, who has a long prior work history with WAPA, begins his tenure as CEO/Executive Director on July 29.