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LBJ Gardens Residents Face Sewer Crisis on Labor Day, Call For Permanent Fix

Raw sewage floods neighborhood for the third time in two weeks; residents demand a permanent solution as Waste Management Authority estimates two days of repairs

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A burst sewer main sends odiferous material through a resident's front yard. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

When other Virgin Islanders were waking up to the prospects of a leisurely Labor Day holiday, residents of LBJ Gardens were confronted by an all-too-familiar stench: that of raw sewage. For the third time in about two weeks, the sewer line on the main road had ruptured.

“The first two times it was so bad that it flooded out two neighbors yards,” said Pedrito Encarnacion Jr., who told the Consortium on Monday that he was born and raised in the community. “They came, they fixed it – next day, it leaked again. Now, it start again.”

?Crews from the Waste Management Authority were once again mobilized to repair the ruptured pipes. However, Mr. Encarnacion wants a more permanent fix to a problem that has festered for decades.?

On Tuesday, the V.I. Waste Management Authority issued a press release notifying the public that the LBJ pump station is currently offline “due to a rupture on the force main line.” The authority estimates that repairs at the pump station will be completed, and the facility back online, in two business days.

?Mr. Encarnacion says however, that the acute problem is masking deeper issues of neglect and broken promises. “Nobody is manning the plant,” he alleged. “They used to have a workman working down there and managing the plant. They don’t have nobody down there now doing that. They just going and checking and that’s it.”

Local reports indicate that the community has experienced sewer line ruptures dating back to 1999 and earlier. Mr. Encarnacion mentioned that government officials had announced last year that funds had been secured to relocate residents for public health and safety reasons, but he said an update on the matter, which was promised, is now nearly 12 months overdue.

As they have in the past, WMA is advising the public to “avoid any standing water in the area.” They have, however avoided any mention that said standing water may be contaminated with raw sewage.

As of press time, Waste Management Authority officials have not yet responded to our requests for comment.