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Read My Lips: 'WAPA Will Be Fixed By The End of My Term,' Bryan Declares Confidently

Governor Bryan promises reliable power, lower bills, and increased renewable energy solutions as key initiatives progress to address WAPA's longstanding challenges

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr., standing center-left beside Senator Novelle Francis (left), toured the Randolph Harley Power Plant in St. Thomas earlier this month. By. GOVERNMENT HOUSE

“I think by the end of my term in office, WAPA will be fixed.” That was the assurance coming from Governor Albert Bryan Jr. during Monday’s press briefing on St. John. “Fixed means that the power stays on. It’s constant. We have good renewables, you can rely on the bill that you’re reading, and your bill is cheaper than it is today,” he clarified. “By the time I leave office, that’s

going to be a fact.”

Governor Bryan’s confidence comes from the progress currently being made on several initiatives tailored to address the Water and Power Authority’s operational and financial challenges. The much-touted Wärtsilä generators should be online by November, but before that, “we’re going to be turning on Petronella – that’s a 16 megawatt solar [installation],” he said. That is anticipated to come online next month. Before the end of the year, the other solar farms on St. Croix may also come online.

Even more funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is on its way, which will allow officials to “rent some more power generation for both St. Thomas and St. Croix,” Governor Bryan said. This will “help us switch out the generators that we’re replacing” under the FEMA-approved [prudent replacement project](#) for WAPA’s power plants.

Mr. Bryan also anticipated that generation issues on St. John would be resolved “within the next year.” Currently, assessments are being conducted to ensure that the issues affecting the stability of the power supply to the island are correctly identified, he disclosed.

However, the “real problem with WAPA,” according to the governor, is the utility company’s chronic difficulties with cash flow. “I don’t like giving WAPA money because every dollar I give them is \$1 less for other things like paving the roads, fixing the schools...but it is just a priority right now.”?

Being able to afford sufficient quantities of fuel is the critical issue, one compounded by the impending drydock of the ship that brings propane into the territory. “There’s only a couple of those ships so we have to buy extra fuel again” to ensure an adequate supply while that particular vessel is out of service, the governor noted.

While acknowledging that isolated incidents could still occur that result in power supply interruptions, the seemingly never-ending barrage of outages, interruptions and fluctuations will soon be at an end. “It’s going to be consistent, it’s going to be cheaper. I have no doubt about that,” Governor Bryan assured. “Read my lips.”