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WAPA Amends Solar Contracts Amid Double-Billing Concerns, Eyes \$4M Annual Savings

Amendments to contracts with St. Croix solar farms eliminate concerns of paying twice for electricity

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V.I. Electron's Estate Petronella site on the South Shore of St. Croix on Thursday, June 28 2024. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

During Thursday's meeting, the Water and Power Authority Governing board approved amendments to contractual agreements with the company that operates two solar farms on St. Croix.?

Back in June, the board [narrowly defeated a battery storage lease agreement](#) with VI Electron over concerns that WAPA could be paying twice for electricity coming from the Estate Petronella and

Estate Hogansborg solar installations. At the time, the language in the agreement was viewed as requiring WAPA to pay an overall lease in addition to paying for the metered energy coming from those batteries. Former Executive Director Andrew Smith acknowledged that it was a major concern for the utility, saying that “we lease the battery, and there should be no charge for the energy coming out.”?

During this week’s meeting, new CEO Karl Knight said the agreement was being amended to provide clarity on the issue, ensuring that WAPA would not be double charged for the electricity coming from the solar farm. “Under no circumstance is power provided by the solar farm destined to the battery to be metered,” he declared.

Mr. Knight also reiterated that circulating rumors about the Petronella deal falling through were patently false, and anticipated that the plant could be producing three or more megawatts of power by the end of next month. Once production reaches its peak of 10 megawatts, Mr. Knight estimated that WAPA could realize savings as high as \$4 million per year over current costs.

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