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WAPA's New Wärtsilä Generators Offline for Repairs; Karl Knight Trusts in "God's Goodness" for Grid Stability

Three of WAPA's recently commissioned Wärtsilä generators are out of service. While repairs are covered under warranty, WAPA CEO Karl Knight assured the PSC that other units are supplying power and expressed confidence that outages will be avoided.

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Three of the new Wärtsilä generators at the Randolph Harley power plant on St. Thomas, promising reliable power, fuel savings, and shorter outages for the Virgin Islands. By. WAPA

Three of the four [recently commissioned Wärtsilä generators](#) are currently offline awaiting warranty repairs, Water and Power Authority CEO Karl Knight told members of the Public Services Commission on Tuesday.

“It seems like we have some mechanical issues that we're working through with Wärtsilä regarding the deployment of the liquid propane,” Mr. Knight explained. “Their availability in the last couple of weeks has not been what he had hoped for.”

Despite them having been officially commissioned last month, Mr. Knight reminded that the generators have been providing power to the grid “going back to October of last year.”

Repairs will be done by a technical team, which Mr. Knight expects to be in the territory by next week to inspect the damage to the generators caused by component failures. “Each of the engines – five, six and seven – based on the observations the engines have to be dismantled,” advised Lemuel Lavinier, WAPA's Chief Operating Officer.

While assuring commissioners that all the repairs would be covered under warranty, Mr. Knight said that at this time, he could not say when the generators would be able to be put back into service. That indication would come after the external team from Wärtsilä arrives and assesses the situation. “The repair is one thing, but to make sure it's not a recurring failure, we want to make sure that we don't have the same challenges once we get outside of the warranty period,” Mr. Knight said, promising to keep commissioners updated as the repair project unfolds.

Asked what impact the loss of generation capacity would have on WAPA, Mr. Knight provided a cautiously optimistic outlook. “We never anticipate blackouts,” he began, noting that other units were providing power, including the “notoriously unreliable” Unit 23.

“We anticipate that we'll be able to keep on the current situation until the technical team arrive?” asked PSC Chair Pedro Williams. “My God is good. He's going to hold everything intact until we can get the technical team in here and solve those issues,” Mr. Knight responded.