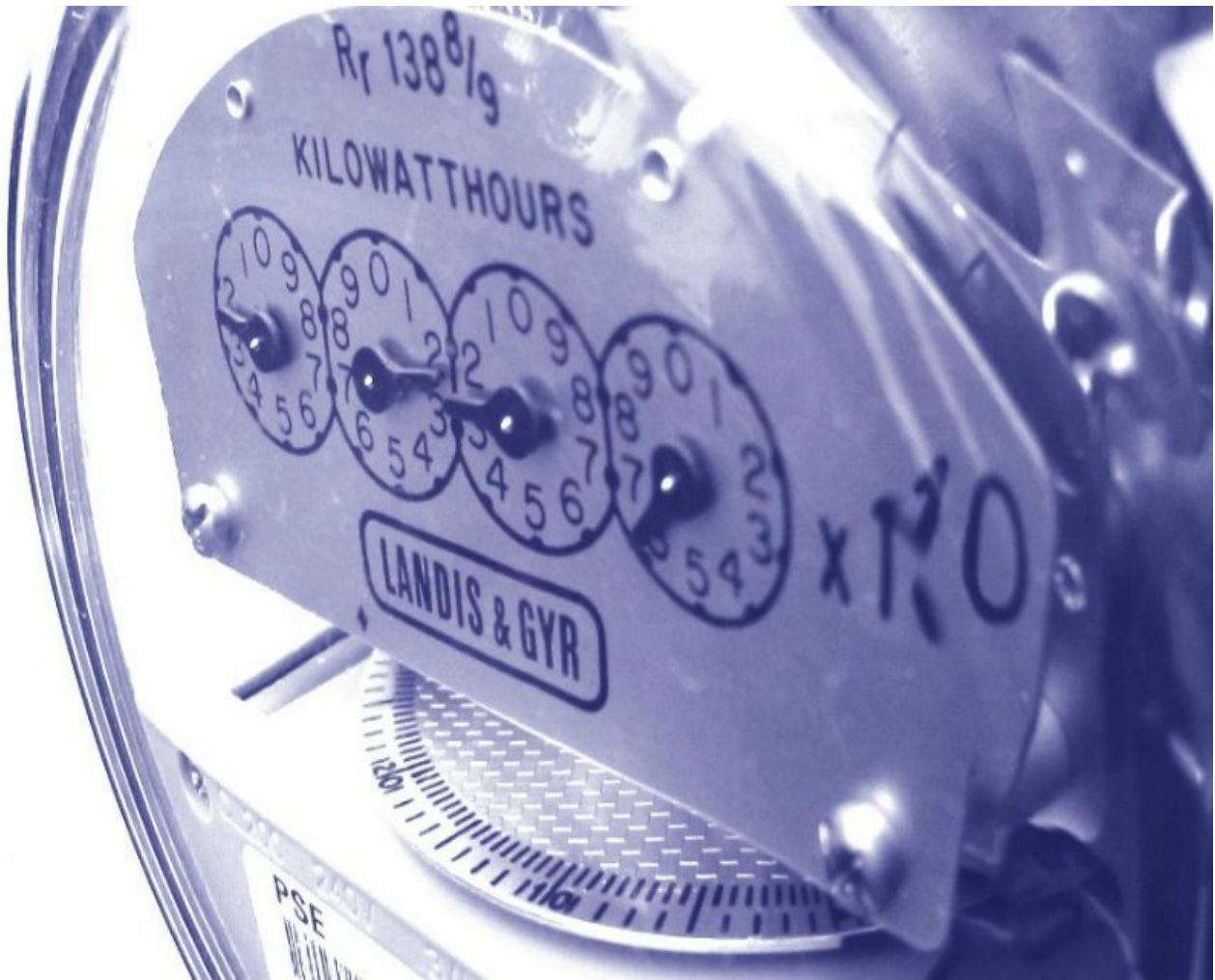


The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Offering Payment Plan for 60-Day Billing Cycle in Wake of Coronavirus Pandemic

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The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority on Tuesday said that while it has offered an installment plan to all customers whose March utility bill covers an approximate sixty-day service period, a slight modification to the plan makes it more convenient to establish the payment plan, and make the installment payments over the next three months.

The authority said that although it would prefer for customers to pay the entire sixty-day bill when due, in consideration to its customers, both residents and businesses, WAPA will automatically enroll customers in the installment payment plan once the one-half bill payment is made in March. The customer will then be obligated, per the terms of the plan, to make the remaining balance in equal installments, along with their regular

monthly bills, in April, May, and June, respectively, the authority said.

Chief Financial Officer Debra Gottlieb explained, as an example, a customer who receives a March bill for \$600 must pay $\frac{1}{2}$ of the bill total, or \$300, by the March due date. The customer will then exercise the installment plan and pay \$100 per month for the next three months to satisfy the remaining \$300 balance. In addition to the installment payment, the customer is required to pay their regular bills that will be issued in April, May, and June, WAPA said. Utilizing this payment plan, by the July billing period, the balance of the March sixty-day bill will have been paid off.

If a customer does not make the first $\frac{1}{2}$ payment of the March bill by the due date, the account is subject to disconnection, WAPA said. Payment of the delinquent amount and a reconnection fee will be required for service to be reestablished. Installment payment plans will not be extended to customers who fail to make payment on their March bill. Similarly, if customers fail to pay their regular bills plus the installment amounts in April, May, and June, their accounts will also be subject to disconnection of service.

Customers enrolled in Autopay are reminded that unless they arrange with a customer service representative before the bill due date to enter into an installment plan, the Autopay service will debit the full amount of the March bill on its due date.

WAP said the sixty-day bill was issued to allow it to capture lost billing days and cycles. "These bills are issued for services that have long been provided but unbilled. The Authority must normalize its billing functions and collect approximately \$23 million in unbilled revenue. This is a step in that direction," Gottlieb said.

Additionally, the automatic engagement of the payment plan for all customers is a means of limiting the number of customers required to visit the Authority's customer service offices.

Since Monday, WAPA has offered only limited service at Customer Service offices territory wide. The authority is encouraging online and telephonic business transactions. Cashiers remain available for limited payment transactions. Limiting the interaction of our customer service representatives with the public is one of many steps the Authority has taken in an abundance of caution of the coronavirus and its uncertainty.