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## WAPA Board Reverses Empire Gas Deal, Orders New Search for Long-Term Propane Supplier

In a swift reversal, WAPA's governing board has rescinded its July approval of a two-year Empire Gas propane contract, citing procurement and capacity concerns, and will now seek a new long-term supplier through a fresh request for proposals.

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The governing board of the V.I. Water and Power Authority has voted to reverse its decision on the Empire Gas contract and restart the procurement process for a long-term propane supplier.

In an emergency meeting on Friday afternoon, the board retreated almost immediately into an hours-long executive session, emerging only to report the results of several key votes.

WAPA has been trying to exit its arrangement with Vitol as its supplier for propane, hoping to lower its costs with a better deal on shipping. After a [first request for proposals foundered](#), CEO Karl Knight approached the board for authorization to enter into direct negotiations, which resulted in his recommendation that a [two-year contract be issued](#) to Empire Gas, a major player in the Puerto Rico market. Board members overruled their chair's desire to wait for more information and approved the contract in late July.

Concerns about the procurement process and the capability of the supplier to meet the territory's needs were raised almost immediately, and [came to the fore through a letter](#) sent to WAPA's chair and CEO from Senator Angel Bolques Jr. Despite the lawmaker [walking back some of his allegations](#) after Consortium journalists reported on the letter's contents, board members during Friday's emergency meeting decided against moving forward with the contract.

Some of the same board members who initially voted in favor of the contract – Hubert Turnbull, who moved to authorize the request, Juanita Young, and Cheryl Jackson – joined Chairman Muia in now voting to rescind the July 24 authorization. Energy Office Director Kyle Fleming, the board member who in July voted alongside the chair in favor of waiting for more information, on Friday voted against cancelling the contract.

Board members also voted unanimously to authorize a short-term emergency contract, though it was not specified whether this would extend the Vitol agreement or involve a new supplier. In a separate 3–2 vote, the board approved issuing a new request for proposals (RFP), with Mr. Fleming and Ms. Young opposing the measure. No timeline for the new RFP was provided.

“I hope everyone understands our decisions,” said Mr. Muia, before asking for a motion to adjourn.