The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Calls for Rate Relief, Meter Accuracy, and Financial Reform in Final Push to Fix WAPA

In his final State of the Territory Address, Governor Bryan outlined seven years of efforts to stabilize WAPA, urged near-term rate relief, emphasized accurate billing through new meters, and said lasting reform depends on fixing the utility's finances.

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WAPA's Richmond power plant.

Now firmly within the final year of his administration, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. is racing against the clock to fully deliver on one of his boldest promises to the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands: that the Water and Power Authority will be “fixed” by the end of his term.

It came as no surprise, then, that the seven years of efforts to stabilize and modernize the troubled utility provider were highlighted during his final State of the Territory Address on Monday. He recalled the composite pole project, the energy-related state of emergency, and the investment of American Rescue Plan Act dollars to "purchase new generation equipment." The GVI, again with federal support, also purchased VITOL's propane assets. Governor Bryan noted the use of the government's Rainy Day Fund to "clear more than $11 million in past-due balances owed by semi-autonomous agencies."

He was pleased that the government is "paying its WAPA bills on time" and seemed buoyed by solar projects that will soon come online in St. Thomas.

Amid his enthusiasm, Mr. Bryan failed to acknowledge recent power outages on St. Thomas. He did, however, attempt to advocate on behalf of local ratepayers.

"Tonight, I call on WAPA and the Public Services Commission to immediately take steps to lower the rate within the first quarter of this year so that families can feel some relief," Governor Bryan said, as the camera panned to WAPA's chief executive officer, Karl Knight.

It's a mandate that the PSC may have been happy to take up were it not for an agreement to keep rates steady until the middle of 2026.

The Public Services Commission has long signaled its desire to provide rate relief to utility consumers by lowering the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause on electricity bills. Months before, in December 2024, consultant Jamshed Maden noted that "WAPA's ratepayers have been waiting nearly a decade for more level and efficient generation-associated rate relief."

In June 2025, the PSC voted to reduce the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause on electricity bills from 22.22 cents per KWh to 17 cents. At that meeting, then-PSC Chair Raymond Williams and Commissioner David Hughes commented on what they perceived as WAPA's "overcollection" of revenue to cover outstanding bills and deferred fuel costs.

The authority countered in a subsequent press release, stating that the PSC decision to lower the LEAC was "not only irresponsible, but harmful to the public interest." They petitioned for reconsideration, asking that the LEAC be maintained in order to give them the opportunity to recover deferred fuel costs. A month later, the PSC officially agreed, and in August 2025, WAPA's wish was granted. The Public Services Commission agreed to hold LEAC rates steady until June 30, 2026.

With Governor Bryan's appeal for rate reductions on a faster timeline, the two entities must work in tandem to realize that request.

Whenever rate relief for residents is realized, Governor Bryan acknowledged, however, that a reduction of the LEAC will "mean nothing" to ratepayers if WAPA cannot "accurately bill customers."

WAPA, he said, will therefore work on "rolling out its new automated metering infrastructure to accurately read meters." Chronic estimated billing has long antagonized ratepayers who say the authority is charging more than they are owed.

Governor Bryan hopes that new meters will “cure the excessive estimating and erratic billing that has become far too common.” He hopes that a lower LEAC and accurate meter readings will leave “more discretionary income” for “struggling families.”

Fixing WAPA will require more than these two actions, however. On Monday, Governor Bryan also acknowledged the elephant in the room. The “final fix” for WAPA, he said, will only be achieved “when we solve its financial problem.”

“We can harden the system and modernize generation, but we must also fix the balance sheet,” he said. Governor Bryan is calling on the Legislature, which often acquiesces to requests relating to WAPA, to “join me in passing the reforms and tools we need to put the utility on solid financial footing.”

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