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ODR and WAPA Sign Contract to Replace Aging Power Generation on St. Croix and St. Thomas

The project will modernize Richmond and portions of the Randolph Harley Power Plant, add temporary power and battery storage, and bring four 10-megawatt standby units to help address St. Thomas-St. John generation shortfalls this year.

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An aerial view of WAPA's powerplant in Richmond, St. Croix. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The V.I. Office of Disaster Recovery and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority have executed a contract to replace major power generation infrastructure in both the St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. John districts, a long-term modernization effort expected to address aging equipment,

capacity shortfalls and recurring service vulnerabilities across the territory.

ODR, acting on behalf of WAPA, executed a progressive design-build contract with R-G Engineering/Javelin Gramercy Ventures Joint Venture. The contractor will replace existing power generation infrastructure at the Richmond Power Plant on St. Croix and portions of the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas.

The project is part of WAPA's broader strategy to deliver more reliable and efficient power generation.

In addition to replacing thermal generation at both plants, ODR and WAPA said they have worked with the contractor to secure emergency power generation to address service interruptions that have affected St. Thomas and St. John residents because of frequent generation shortfalls.

A total of four new standby units, each with a capacity of 10 megawatts, have been purchased. Once tested and packaged, the units will be shipped to the territory and installed this year.

The power generation project will be carried out in two major phases. The first phase, preconstruction, will assess the existing facilities and define the scope of work. That phase will overlap with the construction phase, which includes the installation of temporary power, Battery Energy Storage Systems, and the procurement and installation of permanent power solutions for both districts.

The construction phase is expected to last approximately 48 months, with substantial completion anticipated in 2030.

“This project directly addresses longstanding generation challenges across the territory, including aging infrastructure, capacity shortfalls, and service vulnerabilities that have impacted our customers,” said Karl Knight, CEO and Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. “WAPA is not connected to a national grid, and having sufficient generation capacity in our power plants is essential to providing reliable service to our customers. By replacing Units 14 and 15 at Harley, fully modernizing Richmond from the ground up, and strengthening St. John's emergency capacity, this investment represents a transformational step for all Virgin Islanders.”

Under the contract, R-G Engineering/Javelin Gramercy Ventures Joint Venture will be responsible for all phases of the project, including design, engineering, procurement, construction and testing. The firm will also facilitate operator training and ongoing support.

ODR Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien said the contract reflects the use of federal disaster recovery funding to support critical energy infrastructure.

“This contract marks a significant step towards utilizing federal disaster recovery funding to provide reliable power to the people of the Virgin Islands,” Ms. Williams-Octalien said. “Thank you to FEMA for authorizing the prudent replacement of these facilities and for its continued support to execute this critical project.”

ODR said it remains committed to supporting the territory through recovery and reconstruction efforts to ensure a resilient and sustainable future.