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WAPA Targets August 31 AMI Launch in Push to Reduce Estimated Bills

WAPA says its AMI system is scheduled to go live August 31, with meter installation beginning on St. John before expanding to St. Thomas and St. Croix as the utility works to reduce estimated billing and improve customer accuracy.

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The V.I. Water and Power Authority's Advanced Metering Infrastructure system is targeted to go live on August 31, 2026, with meter installation expected to begin on St. John before expanding to St. Thomas and St. Croix.

The update was provided during the Public Services Commission's May 13 meeting as WAPA officials discussed the status of the AMI project, which is intended to improve meter reading,

reduce estimated billing, strengthen customer service, and give the utility better visibility into electricity use across the territory.

According to the update provided to the PSC, WAPA is continuing system integration, testing, and network deployment work ahead of the planned August 31 go-live date. The rollout is expected to begin with St. John, followed by concurrent installation activity on St. Thomas and St. Croix. Full meter installation is expected to continue into September 2026.

The AMI project has been presented as a key part of WAPA's effort to address persistent customer billing issues, including estimated bills, meter failures, delayed adjustments, and complaints that have remained unresolved for extended periods. During the meeting, PSC staff also discussed customer complaints involving billing problems, meter issues, and delayed account corrections, while WAPA reported that it had reduced the number of open complaints and was working to improve customer service operations.

WAPA officials said the AMI system is part of a broader effort to improve billing accuracy and customer accountability. The project is expected to reduce WAPA's dependence on manual meter reading and estimated billing, which have been recurring sources of frustration for customers.

The PSC also reviewed the network infrastructure needed to support the AMI system. The discussion included the installation of composite poles and collectors, which are necessary to support communications across the system. Officials noted that some areas, including portions of the National Park, still require work or approval before installation can proceed.

WAPA representatives explained that separate poles are being installed in some areas to harden the system and reduce the likelihood of service or communications problems. The goal is to ensure that the meters, collectors, and supporting network are functioning properly before the full go-live date.

The commission also discussed delays in the FEMA-related process connected to the project, which had been expected to move sooner but was delayed and was anticipated to be completed within the next two to three weeks. Environmental and Historic Preservation approval was also identified as a remaining step before certain installation work could advance.

The AMI timeline was discussed alongside broader concerns about WAPA's customer service performance. PSC staff recommended that WAPA provide clearer timelines for promised customer account adjustments, including cases dating back to 2017 and 2021, and establish a more enforceable process for handling complaints.

PSC members also discussed the need for WAPA to post the Customer Bill of Rights on its website and include access to it on customer bills, with both English and Spanish versions contemplated.

While the AMI project is not expected to solve every customer service issue on its own, it is being treated as a major part of WAPA's effort to modernize its billing system and reduce disputes tied to meter readings and estimated usage.