

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Four New Generators Arrive to Add 10 MW of Standby Power for St. John

Four Cummins generators totaling 10 megawatts arrived Aug. 26 for St. John standby service. The \$8 million FEMA-funded project is expected to begin construction in September, with installation, testing and startup projected for completion by January 2027.

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One of four new 2.5-megawatt generators is loaded for shipment from Alabama to the U.S. Virgin Islands, part of WAPA's \$8 million project to add 10 megawatts of standby power for St. John. By. WAPA.

ST. THOMAS-ST. JOHN — Four new generators with a combined capacity of 10 megawatts arrived in the U.S. Virgin Islands Wednesday, advancing an \$8 million project intended to provide additional standby generation for St. John following reliability problems on the island earlier this year.

The four Cummins generator sets can each produce 2.5 megawatts. They were shipped from Alabama earlier this month and arrived August 26. The project is supported by Federal Emergency Management Agency funding and is being carried out by the V.I. Water and Power Authority in coordination with the Office of Disaster Recovery and contractor RG Engineering.

Once installed, the units are intended to provide backup generation capacity that can help maintain electric service to St. John residents and businesses when additional power is needed.

“ODR is pleased to support the Authority in marking this crucial step towards the larger goal of increasing grid reliability and resilience,” said ODR Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien. “The acquisition of these generators would not be possible without FEMA funding and their prioritization of the necessary approvals to ensure timely installation. The territory appreciates their continued collaboration to deliver innovative and suitable solutions to advance recovery efforts.”

Before installation can proceed, the generators must be transported from the Crown Bay area to the Randolph Harley Power Plant. Because of their size and weight, WAPA said specialized equipment and coordinated traffic-management measures will be required.

Temporary traffic restrictions and controlled movements may be necessary along portions of the transportation route beginning at approximately 2:30 p.m. Wednesday. WAPA asked residents to avoid Crown Bay and the designated transportation route Wednesday afternoon through early Thursday morning where possible, and advised motorists who must travel through the area to allow additional time and follow directions from traffic-control personnel.

WAPA and RG Engineering are coordinating the equipment movement with the V.I. Port Authority, V.I. Police Department and Department of Public Works.

The transportation operation is expected to continue through the night if necessary, with unloading and movement of all four generators targeted for completion within approximately 24 hours, barring unforeseen circumstances or operational limitations.

The generators have already undergone load testing, which WAPA said was completed in May. Air permits required for installation have also been secured from the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources, while the remaining building permits are still being pursued.

Construction is expected to begin in early September. Once that work starts, RG Engineering projects that installation, commissioning, testing and startup of the generators will be completed by January 2027.

“The arrival of these generators is an important milestone for St. John and a clear sign of progress. We promised results to the people of St. John earlier this year and we are

intent on keeping our promise. With the equipment now arriving in the territory, we are preparing for installation and commissioning and closer to having additional generation resources available to support our customers,” said WAPA Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Karl Knight.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. said the project follows reliability problems experienced by St. John earlier this year and forms part of broader efforts to strengthen the territory’s electrical system.

“The arrival of these generators is another important step toward our goal of building a more reliable, efficient and resilient energy system for the Virgin Islands,” Governor Bryan said. “When St. John faced serious reliability challenges earlier this year, I made clear that we needed to strengthen the system serving the island and move dedicated backup generation forward. Our administration has worked with WAPA and our federal partners to provide the support and resources needed to make that happen.

“This project is part of the broader work underway to replace aging generation, improve transmission, expand solar and battery storage, and bring more efficient energy resources onto the grid. What matters is steady progress that people can see and, more importantly, feel in the reliability of their service. These generators move us closer to that goal, and we will keep the work moving across the Territory.”

The generators were loaded onto a barge in Alabama on August 16 before beginning their journey to the Virgin Islands. Their arrival marks the start of the final permitting, construction and installation phase before the additional standby capacity is expected to become available early next year