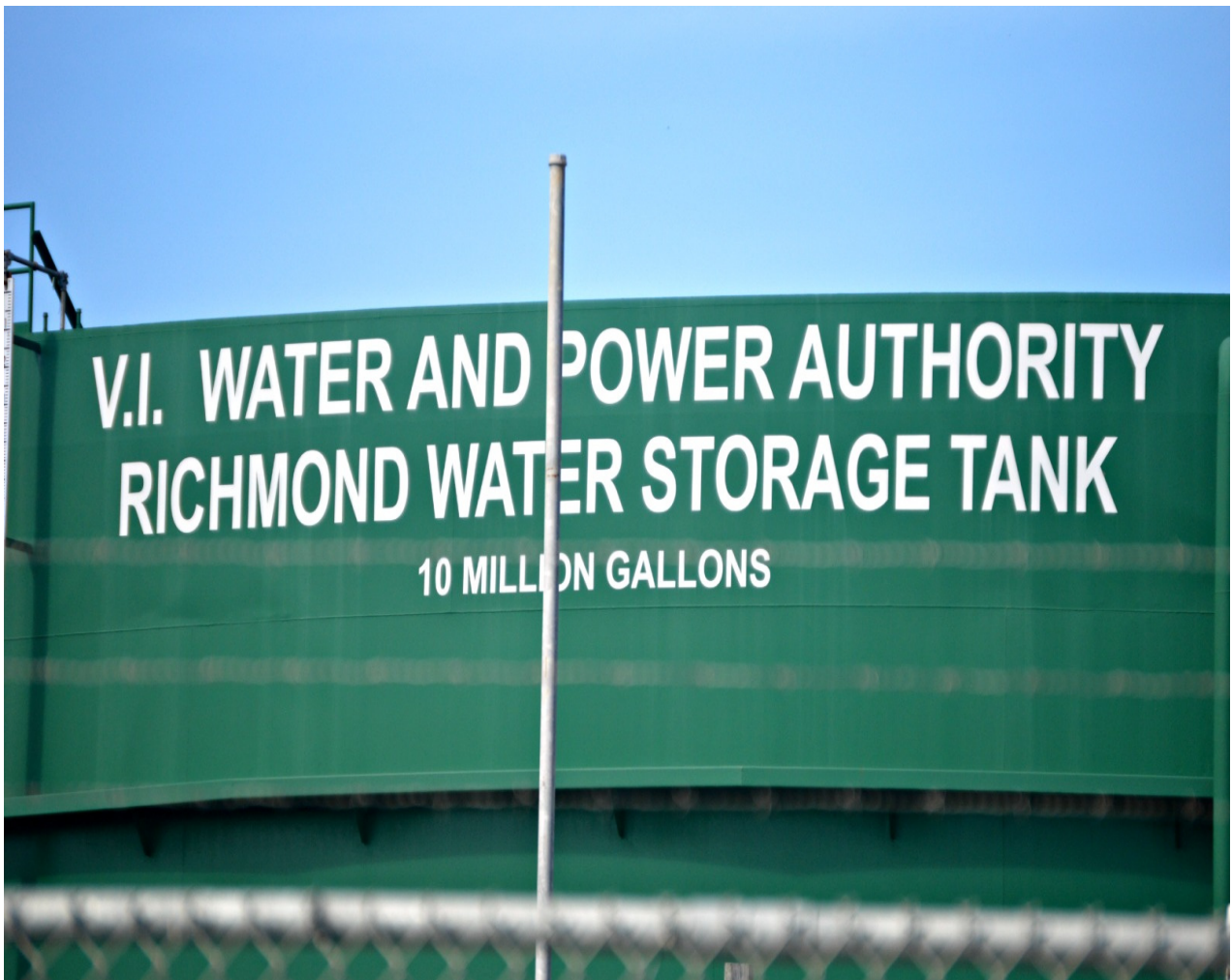


The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Blackout Brought Leaders Together, Hugo Hodge Says

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ST. CROIX -- The all day power blackout that affected St. Croix on Saturday had the effect of bringing the territory's leaders together, Hugo Hodge, Jr., the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) chief executive told *VI Consortium* in a phone interview Saturday evening.

Hodge, while giving a moment-by-moment explanation of what happened, said leaders from various tiers beginning with Governor Kenneth Mapp, along with senators and department heads united their efforts around WAPA to ensure that power was fully restored as soon as possible.

"As always the governor gave great support," Hodge said. "He came from St. Thomas, went into the plant on St. Croix to see the guys, gave morale support and stood by them."

The WAPA chief also mentioned the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) Director Mona Barnes, who he said stayed on the phone with him throughout the day. Also in contact with WAPA were old and new WAPA board members, and Senators Kurt Vialet, Clifford Graham and Neville James -- all who Hodge said called offering morale support while the company's employees worked to fully restore the island.

"It was a good community effort. It's not the type of thing you want to happen to bring everybody together, but it happens and we are appreciative of that," Hodge said.

In its latest press release following the island-wide power outage, WAPA said all feeders has been fully restored.

"The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority has restored power to all feeders on St. Croix following a day-long power service interruption on Saturday," the release, issued late Saturday night stated. "A failure in the bus circuitry which connects WAPA's power generators to the feeders and electrical distribution system on St. Croix triggered an island-wide power interruption across the island for hours today."

Governor Mapp also held a press conference to give an update on the situation, and like Hodge, said he expected that power would be fully restored on Saturday night.