

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Fails To Complete Power Restoration In St. Croix On Saturday; Hodge Promises Sunday Completion

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Ernice Gilbert **August 30, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Executive Director Hugo Hodge, Jr. told journalists in a phone conference this evening that the semi-autonomous entity had completed 90 percent restoration work here, and promised to fully restore the island by Sunday.

"We will achieve 90 percent restoration tonight and we will wrap this up on Sunday," Hodge said at a news briefing this evening. Yesterday, Hodge [told The Consortium](#) that 100 percent work would be completed today.

Hodge reported that two line crews and a pole setting crew had arrived from St. Thomas to assist in the recovery, bringing to ten the number of crews here aiding in the restoration effort. He also listed the affected areas currently being remedied.

"Crews have been deployed in Estates Rattan, Princesse, Diamond Ruby, Catherine's Rest, Sion Farm, Hannah's Rest and Stony Ground at this time. Two crews have been dispatched to Christiansted and Frederiksted towns as well," Hodge said.

The Consortium asked Hodge about the prospects of moving the territory's electrical infrastructure underground. However, he said the project would include an overhead cost of 14-16 times the amount compared to installing poles. Pressed on why it would cost so much, the executive director pointed out the cost of the lines and other materials involved in constructing a successful underground infrastructure, and noted the high cost of the equipment needed to perform the work.

Yesterday, Hodge explained to this publication that during power restoration efforts, the most tedious work is usually left for last, which brings to the fore the reason some residents experience long down times.

"Usually, when you do restoration you get the first bank setup in good time but the last 10 percent can be really tedious work for limited returns, and the same work you may do today to get a hundred customers up, you may do the same 3-4 hour work tomorrow to get one or two customers up," Hodge said. He also acknowledged the frustration of WAPA customers and expressed a desire to "reunite" families through power restoration.

"We definitely understand," Hodge went on. "We're going to push hard and we apologize for the inconvenience, but we're going to get power restored in the fastest, safest manner."

Restoration on St. Thomas, St. John and Hassel Island were completed on Friday night. A crew was deployed to Water Island earlier today to address two trouble calls.

Hodge also urged residents with continued service interruptions to contact WAPA's emergency call center at 773-2250, option 5 or can report their service interruption via the WAPA website, www.viwapa.vi.