

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Crew In Bahamas To Assist With Power Restoration Following Hurricane Joaquin

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ST. CROIX -- Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Executive Director Hugo Hodge said today that a five-man line crew, consisting of employees from here and the St. Thomas/St. John district, are in Nassau, Bahamas, to assist with electrical restoration in wake of Hurricane Joaquin, WAPA announced through a press release this afternoon. On Friday, October 9, the BVI [government](#) deployed workers from the territory's Department of Disaster Management and the BVI Electricity Corporation, to help Bahamas regain its footing.

WAPA's personnel travelled to the hurricane-ravaged island in response to a request for assistance from the Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC).

BEC and WAPA are both members of the Organization of Caribbean Electric Utilities (CARILEC), according to the release. As members of CARILEC, as well as the organization's Lineman Program, WAPA and BEC are taking advantage of the mutual-aid program administered through CARILEC. The program allows member utilities to request assistance through the organization, when restoration efforts are required. In times of need, members of these organizations recognize the importance of prompt restoration, and are ready and willing to assist in the efforts.

Hodge said he received notification from Kevin Basden, General Manager of BEC, through the Caribbean Electric Utilities Organization (CARILEC) disaster restoration program, that the country needed assistance to restore basic electricity service. "Basden indicated that the islands electrical system received some damage from Hurricane Joaquin and his crews would need assistance to fully restore their system," Hodge said, adding, our line personnel are always willing to participate in this type of program for which WAPA has received similar assistance during past post-hurricane restoration efforts. Hodge noted that the effect of a Category Four hurricane can be devastating and the destruction to the electrical transmission and distribution system in the Bahamas is perhaps widespread.

As the Chairman of CARILEC, Hodge hailed the mutual aid program as being a key element of support for power utilities up and down the Caribbean. "It is reassuring to know that in time of recovery and restoration, the various power companies, WAPA included, have a pool of resources across the Caribbean that can be tapped to restore electrical power in a more timely fashion."

"While the extent of damage to the island's electrical system is still unknown, the linemen are prepared to do all they can to stabilize and restore the electrical service for the residents whose lives were already disrupted by the hurricane," said Clinton Hedrington, WAPA's director of Transmission and Distribution.

The members of WAPA's restoration team include: Dwayne Carr, Luisito Frederick, Rey Belardo, Jr., Mark Thomas and Eugene Estridge. Before their departure, the team was encouraged to do their best while keeping each other safe.

Hurricane Joaquin left 13 dead, 17 missing, 20 injured and 574 persons homeless and millions of dollars in damage.