

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Milestone: WAPA Receives First Shipment Of Propane Fuel As St. Croix Project Nears End

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority and its propane conversion contractor, VITOL, received the first inventory of liquefied petroleum gas at the Estate Richmond terminal on Wednesday, signifying the two-year project as edging one step closer to the finish line, a press release WAPA issued this afternoon revealed.

"It was just about 8 a.m. today when the feeder fuel ship, Epic Curacao, pulled up alongside WAPA's fuel dock near the Richmond power plant with a load of LPG that will be used for commissioning and testing of the storage and delivery systems ahead of WAPA's generating units burning propane to generate electricity for customers on St. Croix," said WAPA Executive Director/CEO Hugo V. Hodge, Jr.

Hodge said the day is historic as another significant milestone on the journey away from fuel oil and to the lower priced propane to power this island is witnessed.

"We have arrived at a most important point in this project's timeline...introducing propane to the storage and delivery systems and eventually to the utility's generators," Mr. Hodge said.

Over the next few days, VITOL will final-test and commission various components of the storage and propane delivery systems prior to introducing LPG to the generators for power production.

"The arrival of the first inventory of LPG to the Virgin Islands marks the beginning of a process that will see a continuous movement of LPG product from a very large gas carrier to St. Croix until all storage tanks are filled," Mr. Hodge went on. He added that the move away from the dependency on fuel oil to propane in the generation of electricity will be transparent to WAPA's customers.

"I thank VITOL and the men and women of WAPA who have worked tirelessly to move this project forward and meet critical deadlines. My gratitude is also extended to the general public that has been patient and supportive of WAPA's bid to bring about changes to the manner in which electricity is generated at our two power plants," Mr. Hodge continued.

While the St. Croix terminal project edges closer to completion, WAPA continues to work with the Office of the Governor and the office of Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett to ensure that the pending permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is finalized so that the remaining marine work, including a permanent mooring for the very large gas carrier, can be completed and the St. Thomas terminal can be brought on line. All indications are that the permit may be issued within the next thirty days, according to the release.

Today's arrival of the initial shipment of LPG to St. Croix follows an on-site inspection and demonstration of the fire protection system in and around the LPG terminal.

"We had the opportunity to bring in officials of the VI Fire Services on Tuesday to demonstrate the extensive and redundant firefighting systems that are in place on the site. Fire inspectors, firefighters and others were on hand to watch the simulated activation of the fire detection and firefighting systems," Mr. Hodge concluded.

Feature Image: Epic Curacao, ship carrying first delivery of propane fuel to WAPA, arrives as the semi-autonomous entity's Christiansted dock.

Image Credit: WAPA.

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