

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Receives Long-Awaited Army Corps Of Engineers Permit For St. Thomas Propane Project

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ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority said it was elated to finally be in receipt of the long awaited permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) that allows progress to continue on the marine side of the LPG project at the Randolph Harley Power Plant, and to develop an off shore vessel mooring off of St. Thomas., a press release WAPA issued this afternoon has made known.

The permit allows WAPA to improve, enhance and convert the existing fuel pier at the Harley plant and offshore vessel mooring, to use LPG as the primary source of fuel for power generation, according to the release.

WAPA Executive Director Hugo V. Hodge, Jr. said that with the permit in hand, the Authority contacted its marine contractor Orion, authorize permission for remobilization, and commenced discussion on scheduling out the project.

“All components of the marine work that had been dependent on the permit approval will now move forward. Some of the work to be done includes the development of a permanent mooring for the very large gas carrier,” Mr. Hodge said. WAPA initially applied for the permit in December 2013. The draft was received on December 24, 2015, WAPA executed and returned a copy to ACOE on Dec. 30, 2015, and the final executed permit was received on Jan. 19, 2016. The conditions placed on the marine work, by the ACOE were consistent with the approvals WAPA envisioned.

There were no surprise conditions.

WAPA’s Chief Operating Officer and the Authority’s LPG Project Manager, Gregory L. Rhymer, said over the next three months WAPA’s marine contractor Orion will work aggressively to complete the pile driving, fendering and permanent repairs to the face of the dock at the Harley Plant, to accommodate the supply vessels.

The permanent mooring site for the very large gas carrier, the source of LPG for the Authority, was tied to this permit for St. Thomas. Prior to receiving the permit, and so as not to delay the introduction of propane to St. Croix, the Authority identified a temporary anchoring site for both the feeder fuel vessels and the VLGC offshore Aruba.

Mr. Hodge noted that based on the permit issued by the ACOE and the schedule of work that exists, he anticipates completion of work in April, begin commissioning immediately thereafter, and be fully operate near the end of second quarter 2016. Anticipating that both of these deadlines are met, WAPA will begin utilizing LPG as a primary fuel source in April.

Both Mr. Hodge and Mr. Rhymer expressed appreciation for the steadfast support of the Authority’s Governing Board, as well as to Governor Kenneth E. Mapp and V.I. Congressional Delegate Stacey Plaskett for their efforts in reaching out to the leadership of the Army Corps to expedite its review of the permit application.

“This major undertaking of the LPG conversion project, has far-reaching effects on the economy of the Virgin Islands, WAPA’s customers, and has become a source of much attention by energy companies and utilities not only in the Caribbean but across the world,” Mr. Hodge said.

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.