

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senator James Requests WAPA Timeline on Project Delaying Downtown Christiansted Road Improvements

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ST. CROIX – In a letter sent to Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) Executive Director Julio Rhymer on Thursday, Senate President Neville James inquired about the status of contracts executed between the authority and its contractors regarding the repair of roads in downtown Christiansted.

The letter was a follow-up correspondence to the Wednesday, July 13, Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection hearing held on the island of St. Thomas. The letter specifically requested information on the closeout of Phase I of the Christiansted Waterline Rehab Project and the continued deterioration of the road on Company Street, as well as other streets throughout the downtown area.

"The current condition of the road makes it very difficult to commute daily through the area where much of the work has taken place," Mr. James wrote. "It seems that the authority has ceased activity in the area, yet the roads affected by the work zones are still in poor condition."

Mr. James informed Mr. Rhymer that after receiving many calls from St. Croix constituents, he had spoken with Governor Kenneth Mapp about their concerns. The public works commissioner indicated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) was waiting on WAPA to complete the piping project in order to repave the road.

"The stagnancy of this project is negatively affecting business in downtown Christiansted in an already trying economic time. There must be movement in a forwardly direction prior to the holiday season," Mr. James said.

Mr. James requested a timeline from WAPA, as to what stage the piping project is currently on, who is the designated contracting company assigned to repave the road upon completion of Phase I, and what their projected timeframe for completion is.

"I believe WAPA's effort to replace all of the cast iron piping throughout the entire distribution system will serve as a solution to the many problems residents have been struggling with for years in regards to potable water," Mr. James said. "Moreover, I look forward to the increased economic activity and viability of Christiansted for its businesses, visitors and residents alike which the road improvements will bring."