

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Pressure Mounting On Public Works And WAPA To Repair Company Street Road

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ST. CROIX -- Pressure is mounting on the Department of Public Works and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority to commence road repair work on Company Street, above, which has been badly mangled WAPA piping work -- Phase I of the Christiansted Waterline Rehab Project.

St. Croix senators have long complained about the substandard conditions of Company Street, and Public Works Commissioner Gustav James had promised during a Senate hearing that work would have started in July.

"It is now August and there is no sign of progress," said Senator Kurt Vialet in a press release issued this afternoon.

Mr. Vialet today asked for a timetable, and also mentioned the historical bridge located before the Seventh Day Adventist School in Estate Mount Welcome that he says needs to be repaired before school resumes for the 2016-2017 school year.

"Our children and the residents of St. Croix traverse these roads daily and we need to be sure that they are safe and in good driving condition. Poor road conditions cost drivers money on car maintenance, increased tire wear and vehicle depreciation," Mr. Vialet said.

He added: "Monies have already been secured for these projects and the Department of Public Works needs to do a better job of getting these projects online."

Mr. Vialet's press release was preceded by another from Senator Neville James, president of the 31st Legislature.

"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 in a letter addressed to WAPA Executive Director Julio Rhymer, Sr. "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 his department was waiting on W.A.P.A. 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 also 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.