

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Restores Power To 100 Percent Of Eligible Customers Territory-Wide

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Ernice Gilbert **March 09, 2018**



The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) announced Friday that electricity had been restored to all eligible customers in the territory.

According to a release issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in the wake of hurricanes Irma and Maria, two Category 5 storms in September, approximately 55,000 customers of WAPA were left without service. A joint effort by WAPA, FEMA, Haugland Energy, BBC Electric, mutual aid utilities, other off-island contractors and on-island contractors led to the restoration of service to 90 percent of eligible customers within 100 days. Crews have worked since December 25 to push the restoration total to 100 percent.

As of March 8, WAPA reported that 55,584 customers able to receive energy had been connected to the system, including 25,546 on St. Croix, 3,611 on St. John, 26,290 on St. Thomas and 137 on Hassel Island and Water Island.

“This is a milestone that everyone should be proud of,” said WAPA Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer. “Although I only assumed the leadership of WAPA on March 1, as a resident of St. Croix I am mindful of the dedicated effort of everyone who assisted in restoring service to our customers. It was a herculean task to get to 90 percent in 100 days and a greater task to achieve 100 percent six months after the first winds of Irma affected the territory.”

Mr. Kupfer also recognized the critical support provided by local and federal government agencies, private sector companies and organizations that played a part in WAPA's restoration, FEMA said.

At the height of the restoration, more than 797 off-island electrical workers were in the territory restoring service. Today, just over 200 remain, augmenting local companies and WAPA in completing restoration and in performing other post-hurricane related work.