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WAPA Board Authorizes Negotiation of Contracts for Post-storm Work Aimed at Rebuilding and Restoring Electric Grids

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The governing board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority has authorized the negotiation and execution of contract arrangements for post-disaster services, WAPA said Monday.

In an emergency meeting on Friday, the board authorized Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer to enter into agreements to secure services for emergency line crew and equipment to facilitate post-disaster restoration of electrical service, major disaster assessment of the damages to the electric system, and collection and disposal of hurricane-related debris.

According to the release, Kupfer and management staff advised board members that the emergency line crews, and equipment will ensure immediate, safe, effective, and competent restoration of the electric grid in the event of severe weather-related events or other emergencies. Kupfer will secure contracts with two on-island contractors, Haugland Virgin Islands and Fortress Electric, and two off island contractors, BBC Electric and Bird Electric.

The damage assessment service providers will help facilitate the expeditious reconstruction of the electric grids after hurricanes or other natural disasters. Formal arrangements will be negotiated with: Haugland Virgin Islands and Integrated Solutions Consulting.

The board also approved issuance of contracts to Haugland Energy and SLSCO, Ltd. for the removal of hurricane generated debris for the 2020 and 2021 hurricane seasons at a cost not to exceed \$20 million. Hurricanes and other major disasters generate significant amounts of rubble such as poles, wires, electric equipment which must be disposed of in accordance with federal regulatory standards. Funding expended on debris removal is eligible for FEMA reimbursement, WAPA said.

Board members present included: Chairman Anthony D. Thomas, Vice Chair John JedHope, Secretary Juanita Young, Cheryl Boynes Jackson, and Noel Loftus. Hubert Turnbull, Elizabeth Armstrong, Directors Kyle Fleming and Joel Lee were excused.