

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Sen. Barnes Calls On Bryan To Activate National Guard To Bring Relief To Residents Affected By WAPA's Water Woes. WAPA Says Problems Will Be Fixed Soon.

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Alicia Barnes in a release issued Monday afternoon called on Governor Albert Bryan to activate the National Guard to bring immediate relief to mid-island and west-end residents affected by the low water pressure problems that have persisted for about two weeks.

"Specifically, the Virgin Islands National Guard water purification unit can be activated to set up a water distribution point to supply our affected residents with potable water," Ms. Barnes said. "The V.I.N.G. water purification unit can produce up to 55,000 gallons of

potable water per day. Although this may not be a permanent fix, it is an interim measure to bring immediate relief to affected residents.”

Ms. Barnes said while the Water and Power Authority has installed additional pumps at their Richmond and Contentment pump stations, the increased pressure has revealed leaks in the system which has further hindered the authority's efforts. She said the use of the V.I.N.G. resources would bring immediate relief to residents while W.A.P.A. works towards corrective measures and repairs.

The Consortium on Monday contacted WAPA Director of Corporate Communications, John Greaux, for a response to Ms. Barnes's release. Mr. Greaux said there were no significant problems and that additional pumps were coming online. However, though WAPA said in a release issued late Sunday that the water problems would be resolved [yesterday](#), in a release issued late Monday, the authority said "steady progress" was being made while leaving out a timeline relative to when the problems would be fixed.

According to WAPA, on Monday morning, new pumps were activated at the Richmond and Concordia pump stations increasing the volume of water being pumped into the five million gallon storage tank at Kingshill. WAPA said the tank was gaining at minimum 6-7 feet of water storage is paramount to the restoration of normal service from mid island to west end, including Frederiksted town.

“There are three new pumps installed at the Contentment pump station, however, WAPA is awaiting a technician from the manufacturer on Wednesday to fully activate the pumps. Our crews continue to closely monitor both the distribution system and the flow into the storage tank. We have gained outflow from the additional pumps and we expect a positive effect on the storage capacity of the Kingshill tank,” said WAPA CEO Lawrence Kupfer, according to the release.

WAPA said as of late Monday, customers in lower elevations were seeing improved water service while those at the higher elevations were seeing a restoration of low pressure water service.

Mr. Kupfer said WAPA remains confident that with the additional water flow into the Kingshill tank, the means by which potable water is provided to the island's west end, “the challenges of the last week will be behind us and we will continue to build storage capacity at Kingshill.

On Monday evening, the Kingshill tank storage stood at six feet, with no major leaks reported in the distribution system, WAPA said.