

The Virgin Islands Consortium

AT&T Down In Certain Parts Of St. Croix For 3 Days And Counting, Yet Not A Word From The Company (Update)

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Update 2: Jennifer Matarangas-King, Viya vice president of public relations and governmental affairs, maintained in a phone response that she had not been informed of any involvement of Viya in the downtime being experienced by AT&T.

Update: August 17, 2019 at 8:43 a.m. -- Following a request for comment, AT&T told The Consortium moments ago, "A fibre cut in the local service provider's network may be affecting wireless service for some customers in parts of St. Croix. We are engaged with them as they work to repair the damage and restore service."

The local service provider AT&T is referring to is Viya. During a Senate hearing on Friday, Jennifer Matarangas-King, Viya vice president of public relations and governmental affairs, said she was unaware of Viya being at fault for the AT&T issue, and that she would look into it. "Our team is usually responsive so... that needs to be confirmed," Mrs. Matarangas-King said.

Original Story: ST. CROIX -- AT&T's cellular service in certain parts of St. Croix long known to have coverage -- including the Christiansted town area, Golden Rock and a number of other locations -- have been without service for three days and counting, but the company has yet to notify its customers of the problem or when service is expected to be restored.

From Gallows Bay headed into the Christiansted town, to Golden Rock and even some mid-island areas, AT&T's service is nonexistent, or spotty at best, with calls failing to connect and internet service unavailable.

The Consortium has reached out to the carrier and is awaiting a response.

During a Senate hearing in the Committee on Housing, Transportation and Telecommunications on Friday, Senator Novelle Francis asked AT&T executives about the issue, and whether the firm had notified its customers. Salvatore Casale, area director of legislative and external affairs for AT&T of P.R. and the V.I., said he wasn't sure whether customers were updated, but he was told that Viya, the territory's other major telecommunications firm, was the cause.

"To be honest, because of the fact that I'm here right now, I don't have that information, but I just recently got a communication saying that the problem in St. Croix was due to a problem with a Viya cable. So that's the latest information that I just got right now," Mr. Casale said.

"In terms of communication, I don't know what has been done right now," he added.

The territory's three major communications firms -- AT&T, Viya and Sprint -- were in the Senate hot seat on Friday fielding questions about their current condition since being affected by the 2017 storms, and plans in place for potential hurricanes this year.

Mr. Francis asked Mr. Casale whether customers who have been affected by the AT&T outage would receive a credit on their accounts.

"The way that is worked is those are individual case-by-case appreciation. Because of the mobile nature of the service provided, it's very difficult to determine so it has to be on a case-by-case approach," Mr. Casale said.

Jennifer Matarangas-King, Viya vice president of public relations and governmental affairs, said she was unaware of Viya being at fault for the AT&T issue, and that she would look into it. "Our team is usually responsive so... that needs to be confirmed," Mrs. Matarangas-King said during the hearing Friday. A call placed to Mrs. Matarangas-King this morning was not returned at time of writing.