

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WAPA Says It's Having Trouble Restoring Power-Generating Units, Prolonging All-Day, Island-Wide Outage On St. Croix (Update)

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Ernice Gilbert **September 15, 2019**



Update: WAPA Director of Communications Jean Greaux told the Consortium at 12:41 p.m. that power had been restored to most of the island.

Original Post: ST. CROIX -- When St. Croix WAPA customers lost power at 7:05 a.m. Sunday, WAPA said the outage was a result of generation capacity at the Estate Richmond Power Plant being lost "shortly after 7 a.m." At the time, the authority said plant personnel were "working to rebuild generation capacity ahead of restoring service to customers."

This story, however, was published at 12:20 p.m., and WAPA had yet to restore power to a single feeder on St. Croix.

According to an alert issued at 11:40 a.m., WAPA said it was encountering challenges restoring the units: "An island-wide electrical service interruption continues to affect all customers on St. Croix. Personnel at the Estate Richmond Power Plant are experiencing challenges restoring the two generating units. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to restart the units throughout the morning. Restoration of service to customers cannot commence until at least one of the two units are online and generation capacity has been rebuilt at the power plant," reads the WAPA alert.

WAPA did not say how much more time it would need to restart the units, nor did the authority explain what has been causing the constant, almost daily capacity failures.

WAPA did solicit help from the New York Power Authority, and said leaders of both authorities had met ahead of developing solutions.

"Working alongside WAPA operations personnel, the NYPA team will gather relevant technical and historical information in an effort to determine the root cause of the power disruptions and come up with both short and long-term plans to address the identified issues," said Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer.

"I assure our customers that everyone at WAPA understands the frustrations that the repeated outages have caused. For all of us at WAPA, having one customer without electrical service, is one customer too many. The men and women of the Authority are working each day to resolve these challenges and return WAPA to providing reliable electric service to our customers. We now have subject matter experts from NYPA available to us to remedy these challenges. We will keep the public updated on the progress we are making," he said.

The St. Croix power failure follows numerous similar outages on St. Thomas last week, and residents territory-wide have taken to social media to air their grievances.

Some have called for privatization, others say a state of emergency should be declared. There's even [a new song lampooning the authority](#) that has gone viral in the USVI.