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WAPA Board Approves Contract With J. Benton Construction for Undergrounding Project on St. Croix

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Underground cable routing Spanish electricity to the French network in the Pyrenees
By. EURACTIV

WAPA on Thursday evening announced that its governing board authorized Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer to negotiate and contract with J. Benton Construction for the authority's fourth electrical undergrounding project on St. Croix.

The Wilfred "Bomba" Allick Port & Transshipment Center at Krause Lagoon Underground Project has an estimated price tag of \$2.5 million which will be completely funded by the federal government, at no cost to WAPA or its customers, said the authority.

The approval Thursday follows the board's green light earlier this year to three similar underground projects for St. Croix.

The project, to be completed within 90 days from WAPA's issuance of a notice to proceed, will provide the more commonly referred to container port with dedicated and reliable electric service through underground facilities, WAPA said. These facilities are less prone to windstorm-related damage and allows for more efficient and timely service restoration. Critical facilities to benefit from the underground service include the Gordon A. Finch Molasses Pier and associated buildings, V.I. Port Authority dock and warehouse facilities, O'Neale's Transport, and the Limetree Training School.

The governing board also approved the execution of an amendment to WAPA's agreement with VITOL allowing the fuel supplier to incorporate a truck rack at the Harley power plant for the sale of liquid LPG. Allowing the operation of an LPG truck rack for residential and commercial use will also assist in lowering the cost of propane to the St. Thomas St. John community, said WAPA. The amended agreement also addresses the repayment of past due amounts to VITOL. Further amendments were also adopted to provide for the good order and administration of the VITOL contract which was first executed in July 2013.

Other board action included:

- Approval of a \$3.5 million contract with Leumas Engineering for completion of the Clifton Hill Water Line Rehabilitation Project which will significantly improve water quality and reduce line loss. The project will be funded through an award from the territory's Drinking Water Capital Improvement Grant Program through the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.
- Approval to contract with Ethos Energy for the reassembly and startup of Unit 20 following routine inspection and repairs. The contract total is \$887,134. and runs through December 31, 2020. A contingency was also authorized in the event unanticipated work is required to complete the restoration of the twenty-megawatt unit at the Estate Richmond Power Plant on St. Croix.

The board received an overview of potable water operations by Don Gregoire, WAPA's Director of Water Distribution on St. Croix.

In his monthly report to the board, Mr. Kupfer provided an overview of the electric and water systems. "On the electric system for the second month in a row, generation topped 80 megawatts. In the month of August, 75% of power generation was provided by propane with 25% by No 2 oil," he said. "With Unit 20 on St. Croix down for repairs, we are not quite in a position to increase our use of LPG." Water storage inventories remain in good shape, in the month of August, water production was at about 72% of capacity."

Board members in attendance included: Chairman Anthony D. Thomas, Vice Chairman Jed JohnHope, Secretary Juanita Young, Directors Kyle Fleming and Joel Lee, Noel Loftus, Cheryl Boynes Jackson, Elizabeth Armstrong, and Hubert Turnbull.