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WAPA Extends Fuel Contract as it Seeks Time to Explore 'More Cost-Effective Solution' to Supply Diesel

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Aerial Shot of WAPA's Christiansted power plant By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

The governing board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority on Wednesday extended an existing contract with Glencore, Ltd., the company which provides No. 2 fuel to WAPA's power plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix, according to a release the authority issued.

The extension is for a six-month period while management explores other potentially more cost-effective solutions to supplying diesel fuel. At issue with the current vendor is the lower volume of fuel WAPA is purchasing as the utility increases its use of lower cost and cleaner burning propane fuel at both power-producing facilities, WAPA said.

In other action, board members approved:

- A no-cost time extension of an existing contract with Fortress Electrical to continue work on upgrading electrical equipment at the Estate Richmond Power Plant on St. Croix. The extension, through March 2021, will allow additional time to complete the work scope.
- A cost increase and time extension to a contract with Samuel Holdings, LLC for ongoing water system rehabilitation work in Christiansted and Frederiksted, St. Croix. The additional time is required to cover delays in the projects brought on by hurricane preparedness shutdowns earlier in the year, effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lack of available asphalt for road paving. The increases cover additional rock excavation which became necessary for the projects to be completed. For the Christiansted project, the board approved a 64-day extension and an increase of \$36,975. A \$54,306 increase and 67-day extension were approved for the Frederiksted water project. Work should be completed on both projects by the end of March 2021.
- Authorization for the executive director to enter into a lease agreement for the utility's customer service location at The Marketplace on St. John.

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