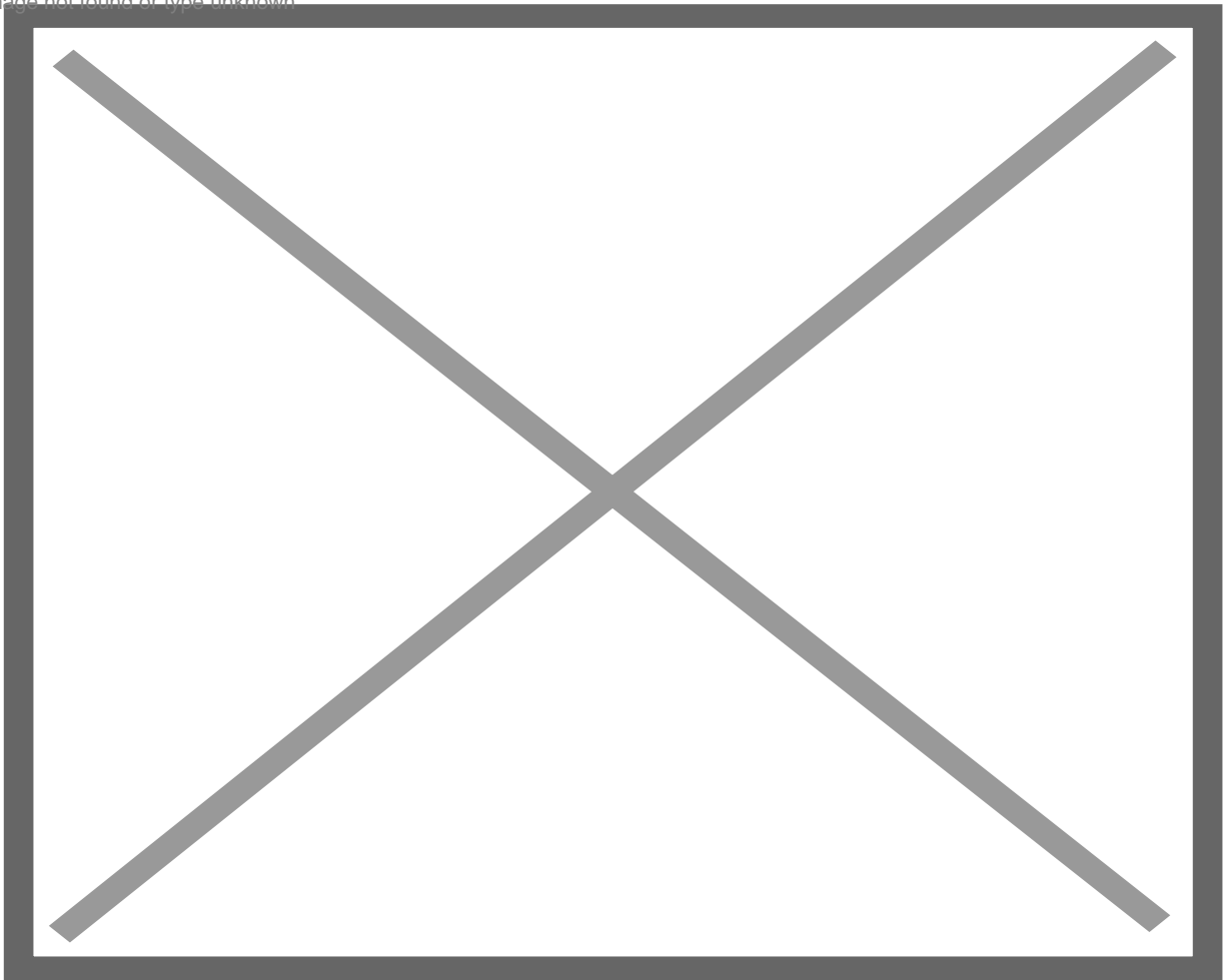


# Lawmakers Support Frett-Gregory-Sponsored Bill Calling For Turnaround Company to Assess WAPA While Providing Measure to Reduce Cost of Electricity

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**Aerial view of WAPA's Christiansted power plant. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VIC**

Senator Donna Frett-Gregory has expressed gratitude to her colleagues for supporting Amendment No. 34-164 that calls for a turnaround company to provide an assessment on the true state of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, and provide measures on how to reduce the cost of electricity and water to the ratepayers.

According to a release from Ms. Frett-Gregory's office, amendment No. 34-164 was offered to Bill No. 34-0021, a collaborative bill sponsored by Senator Janelle K. Sarauw, was initially passed in the 33rd Legislature as Bill No. 33-0055 but vetoed by Governor Bryan. The bill follows the

advice of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court and grants the V.I. Public Services Commission regulatory oversight of the V.I. Water and Power Authority and other utilities in the Virgin Islands. It also allows consumers to file complaints regarding telecommunication companies with the PSC. After the hurricanes of 2017 and the global pandemic of 2020, it has become increasingly evident that access to reliable telecommunications is a necessity of life.

The amendment requires the Governing Board of the Water and Power Authority to hire a turnaround company to provide an assessment and to implement what the company deems necessary to right what is askew at the authority. Further amendments to Bill 34-0021, which provides regulatory oversight power to the Public Services Commission is expected to be offered prior to the next regular legislative session Senate President Frett-Gregory stated.

The 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands for the first time created subcommittees to work on solutions for long-term issues that continues to plague the territory and negatively impact residents and the economy. The Subcommittee on Energy and Infrastructure Development is tasked with address issues with WAPA and has been meeting regularly. It is expected that once the subcommittee submits its final report to the body, that further legislation will be vetted and adopted. Frett-Gregory stressed the importance of working collectively with a unified purpose of adopting viable solutions to improve the quality of life of all Virgin Islanders.

“It is clear there are systemic issues at the Water and Power Authority, and we cannot continue to kick the can down the road. The people of the Virgin Islands must understand the true state of the Water and Power Authority, we need a starting point, a base from which to make reasoned decisions. Further, on more than one occasion, information provided to the people via testimony given to the Legislature by leadership at WAPA, has been opaque at best. We need transparency and clarity, amendment 34-164 offers this to the people of the Virgin Islands and I thank my colleagues for their support,” said Ms. Frett-Gregory.