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WAPA Positions New Generating Units in Preparation for Installment at St. Thomas Powerplant. They Won't Be Online Until 2023.

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Wartsila generator offloaded from transport vessel at Crown Bay homeport dock By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER AND POWER AUTHORITY

The four new generating units that recently arrived in the territory and [are not expected to be online before February 2023](#) are being positioned at the Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas, WAPA has announced. Once installed, these new units will provide more reliable electrical service to the St. Thomas – St. John district, according to the authority.

The acquisition of the new 9-megawatt units marks the second round of generators purchased from Finland-based Wartsila and represents the first time since the mid-1990s that new units have

been purchased and added to the power generation fleet at the Krum Bay plant, WAPA said. The two sets of Wartsila units are owned, operated and maintained by the authority.

“This is indeed a significant milestone for WAPA as the utility moves to smaller, more efficient and reliable generation,” said Noel Hodge, interim executive director/ CEO. There are many positive attributes with this acquisition. Aside from operational efficiencies, the units will allow for 100% power generation using cleaner burning LPG fuel and the units can burn two fuel types to generate electricity. These units, coupled with the original three Wartsila generators and a battery energy storage system, will provide enough generation capacity to meet peak power demand of our customers.”

Governor Albert Bryan said the installation of the new units is a key component of the territory’s continuing recovery and a foundation of the Bryan-Roach administration’s larger efforts toward energy sustainability and independence.

“The much-anticipated arrival of these Wartsila units signals a new beginning with the promise of more reliability and efficient electric service in the St. Thomas-St. John District,” Mr. Bryan said. “But in the bigger picture and for the future of the territory, it’s a vital step toward our long-range goal of moving WAPA towards distributed energy from renewable energy sources, while helping all Virgin Islanders achieve energy independence.”

Hodge also explained that smaller units have less impact on customers should a unit trip which is an added benefit for the power plant’s operations, according to the release.

Hodge said the purchase and installation of the units comes at no cost to WAPA or its ratepayers. “Through the hard work of the Office of Disaster Recovery, the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority (VIHFA) and U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the acquisition and installation of the new units is 100% federally funded. Neither WAPA nor its customers will have any burden to bear in our bringing these modern units into service.”

He thanked WAPA’s partners on this project but specifically praised the VIHFA. The agency not only worked tirelessly to secure the 100% HUD funding for the new units, but redoubled efforts to allow WAPA to utilize HUD grant funding as the local match for many of the planned mitigation projects in the territory. Hodge said these are significant outcomes for WAPA and its customers, WAPA said.

Purchased through the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Program, the Harley Power Plan Project cost a total of \$95 million.

“The V.I. Housing Finance Authority is equally proud of this milestone. What an opportunity for the territory to stabilize and modernize our energy infrastructure,” said VIHFA Executive Director Daryl Griffith. “We certainly look forward to our continued relationship with WAPA and other partners as we work collaboratively to bring reliable power to our community.”

The acquisition of the new generators and the battery storage system are one component of a major transformation plan the Authority is undergoing that will utilize significant federal funding provided in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricanes. The plan calls for new generation, additional renewables, installation of composite poles and the undergrounding of electrical service.