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WAPA Announces Andrew Smith, Who Has Almost 30 Years of Electric Utility Experience, as New CEO

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Andrew Smith was announced as WAPA's new CEO on Jan. 10, 2022 By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER AND POWER AUTHORITY

The V.I. Water and Power Authority governing board has announced its choice for chief executive officer to run WAPA, after what the authority said was a four-month extensive search for the right candidate.

The board announced Andrew L. Smith as WAPA's new CEO, and Mr. Smith started his tenure at the authority today.

Mr. Smith takes the helm at a critical time for WAPA, with rising fuel and propane costs continuing to affect the authority's finances. The new chief executive must also navigate the

important work of transitioning WAPA to a more efficient utility through federal funding provided to the authority following the devastating storms of 2017.

"The critical necessity to repower the leadership within VIWAPA is evidenced by the authority's struggles, and by extension the territory's utility burdens, which have stemmed from continued underperformance at the leadership level," said WAPA Board Chairman Kyle Fleming in a statement. "This highlights the governing board's focus on establishing a foundation of diverse utility experience and financial expertise through a comprehensive leadership transformation. That leadership transformation starts at the top..."

Mr. Fleming said the board is looking forward to working with the new CEO "to chart a path that leads to the holistic relief to the territory's longstanding utility burdens."

The board said Mr. Smith brings almost 30 years of experience in the electric utility, power generation, and energy industry to WAPA. Most recently, prior to joining VIWAPA, Mr. Smith served as a consultant to the utility industry focusing on financial best practices, an area of expertise that will prove invaluable as VIWAPA strives to regain financial stability. He has balanced his financial acumen with in-depth operational engagement that enables him to diligently understand the trade-offs between investment and reliability, the WAPA board said.

Mr. Fleming continued, "Over the last 20 years utilities from Florida to Hawaii have demonstrated the capacity to innovatively evolve in ways that improve the livelihoods of their customers. It is for this reason the Governing Board is optimistic that the opportunities before us outweigh the challenges we've endured to date. Under veteran industry leadership during an unprecedented period of innovation there has never been a better time for the Virgin Islands to leverage these utility best practices for the betterment of the territory. With the announcement of the new CEO, VIWAPA proudly takes the first step in what strives to be a historic shift in the quality, affordability, and reliability of the services the Virgin Islands Water & Power Authority provides to the people of the Virgin Islands.

"The VIWAPA Governing Board requests that the community join us in extending heartfelt gratitude to Noel Hodge, Interim CEO as well as members of the 2021 VIWAPA Transition team for their dedicated leadership, hard work, and diligence during this transition period."