

logo not found or type unknown

Bryan Says Government Subsidizing WAPA to Keep Electric Bills Low; Progress Being Made on Energy Transformation in USVI

Government / **Published On April 14, 2022 05:51 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **April 14, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



Governor Albert Bryan said this week that while gas prices have risen by at least 50 percent, the cost of electricity for V.I. Water and Power Authority customers have remained unchanged because his administration has been subsidizing those costs — essentially paying WAPA the difference so that the additional cost isn't passed onto consumers. Mr. Bryan also provided an update on his [major initiative to transform the USVI from fossil fuel consumption for power to renewable energy sources](#).

"We have been subsidizing WAPA now for the last couple weeks in order to make sure we keep residents' fuel costs low, [so that] we don't have to have a rate increase by the Public Services Commission or anybody else," Mr. Bryan said Monday in response to a Consortium question

seeking an update on his renewable energy plan. "You know gas prices have increased at least by 50 percent since the war in Ukraine but your light bill is still the same. That's not magic, that's hard work being done by me and my friends trying to make sure that we keep that light bill low."

"Longterm we have to get a solution that smooths out our energy spikes and that allows us to stop buying fuel," he said. "I got a lot of calls from people at WAPA concerned about their jobs, believe me there's plenty of work to be had. We have a lot of solar work do, a lot of renewable work to do."

Relative to his renewable energy push, which will begin on St. Croix, the governor said progress has been made. "We actually have a joint committee of sorts between the Public Services Commission, Gov't House" and the V.I. Energy Office director Kyle Fleming.

"They are sitting down now thinking of the best way to do it. We've spoken to a couple of different firms small and large about getting it done, and it's coming in a little high so we have some ideas about how we want to move forward," the governor said. "But there were some phone calls this weekend; I had a meeting with the PSC chair and the WAPA CEO Friday, and I'm supposed to get some more updates today on how we're going to move forward on this."

He added, "But whatever happens, we're going to move forward 100 percent."

The governor sought to clarify that he didn't say the renewable energy transformation on St. Croix would be completed in 90 days. "I said in 90 days we will have something out — whether an RFP (request for proposal) or whatever, we're going to get this done and get it up as quickly as possible."

Regarding why St. Croix was chosen as the island to start the energy transformation, the governor said, "That's an easy answer: St. Croix has available land, plenty the government owns [that is] flat, much easier to get a permit in and get it going. So where ever we get the fuel savings, it doesn't matter, the whole Virgin Islands get it. Remember, together, that's how we stand."