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WAPA Says Rotating Power Outages Not Needed as Propane Service Comes Back Online on St. Croix With Diesel as Backup

Hurricane Season / **Published On September 18, 2022 12:08 PM /**

Staff Consortium **September 18, 2022**

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Aerial shot of the V.I. Water and Power Authority Richmond Plant. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Water and Power Authority issued a statement late Sunday morning clarifying comments made by CEO Andrew Smith that startled St. Croix residents. Mr. Smith had stated that WAPA was running low of diesel fuel and would have to implement a rotational outage structure, if propane supplier Saintnals continued to struggle to provide the authority with the liquified petroleum gas.

During this morning's press briefing at Government House, the authority provided a status update to the community and highlighted that propane supply was temporarily interrupted this morning on St. Croix, and as a result, St. Croix was operating on an existing 3-day inventory of remaining diesel. Limited diesel inventory is primarily because the authority does not normally burn diesel on St. Croix and with the authority's stressed financial situation, maintaining large reserves is financially challenging and impractical, WAPA said.

Audio-Andrew-Smith

Andrew Smith provides clarification concerning propane fuel and diesel supply on St. Croix.

Following the governor's press briefing, propane service was restored shortly before 10: 00 a.m. on the island of St. Croix, and the authority said it has immediately resumed to burning propane instead of diesel.

"In the event there was a need to continue burning diesel, options to expedite a delivery of diesel or trucking diesel to the plant would have been proactively explored, as the Authority has previously done when propane supply chain issues have arisen," WAPA said.

The authority reminded the community to stay safe as inclement weather associated Hurricane Fiona continues to pass through the territory. "The authority would further like to extend tremendous thanks to its line crew, plant crew and entire WAPA team for their hard work to maintain and restore electricity to customers," WAPA said.

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