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WAPA Drops Illegal Mask Mandate at Sunny Isle Office After Customer Complaints

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WAPA's Sunny Isle office. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Water and Power Authority on Thursday dropped an illegal mask mandate the authority had in place for all of 2022, even after Governor Albert Bryan and later the federal government lifted their masking requirement almost 10 months ago.

The masking requirement at WAPA's Sunny Isle office prevented customers from entering the office to conduct business such as paying bills. The situation came to a head on Thursday, when several customers refused to abide by the illegal rule.

Shanelle Petersen, WAPA's director of corporate communication, told the Consortium that the mask requirement was dropped Thursday afternoon. "Customers shouldn't have any more

problems coming in. It's been lifted. It was one of the things that was just never removed once the governor" had made the announcement, she said.

Since [April 18 the federal mask mandate was dropped](#), and Governor Albert Bryan had taken similar action regarding the U.S. Virgin Islands [about a month earlier](#).

However, up until Nov. 17 — yesterday — the V.I. Water and Power Authority was requiring that customers wear mask to be allowed entry into the office. Meanwhile, WAPA's own employees have not been following this requirement, as employees were not required to under the illegal mandate.

"It's indicative of how this agency thinks," said one customer who refused to abide by WAPA's illegal mandate. "You have the audacity to impose an illegal mandate on people and your own employees are walking around without masks."

Meanwhile, USVI residents are facing [rotating blackouts](#) during the holidays following Vitol's decision to suspend propane supply to WAPA over a \$150 million debt dispute. The authority said it is in talks with several other suppliers to fill the gap, and Governor Albert Bryan [has indicated his willingness](#) to work with Vitol to find a solution.