

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Experiences Major Power Outage as Residents Get Ready to Start the Day (Update: Power Restored)

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Ernice Gilbert **February 07, 2023**



WAPA's Richmond Powerplant. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Update: Feb. 7, 2023 at 7:42 a.m.: WAPA announced that power was restored as of 7:33 a.m.

Original Story: Residents of St. Croix getting ready to start the day were met with an electrical service interruption following a failure at the V.I. Water and Power Authority plant in Richmond.

According to WAPA, "a major electrical service interruption" has affected all customers on St. Croix "following the loss of generation capacity at the Estate Richmond Power Plant." The outage occurred just before 7:00 a.m.

WAPA said plant personnel were actively working to restore power, though the authority did not provide a timeline regarding when power would be restored aside from as "quickly as possible."

The USVI government has been seeking financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Energy to help take WAPA out of debt of nearly \$400 million, a significant portion of which is owed to Houston-based energy company Vitol. Governor Albert Bryan is in Washington this week to lobby federal officials for the funding.

The two parties — WAPA and Vitol — have locked horns over the cost of the energy company's buyout of the extensive propane-fueled generation and storage infrastructure. Vitol says WAPA owes \$145 million, a sum WAPA CEO Andrew Smith said in August of last year would "increase the authority's debt by 60 percent, which is not feasible for the authority or the territory."