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USVI Power Grid Slated for Major Upgrade With Wartsila Project Completion in August

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**New Wartsila generation units at the Randolph Harley Power Plant, St. Thomas, USVI.
By. WAPA**

The V.I. Water and Power Authority has announced that it has made strides towards improved energy efficiency and resilience, with the successful energization of Wärtsilä Generation Unit 5, a critical component of the St. Thomas Randolph Harley Power Plant New Generation Project.

The Wärtsilä Unit 5 is one of four energy-efficient generators being installed at the Randolph Harley facility. This upgrade, scheduled for completion in August 2023, will significantly improve the territory's power capacity and efficiency, delivering approximately 30 percent more efficiency than WAPA's older generators. The project is fully funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development.

The new Wärtsilä generators, capable of operating on both diesel and propane, promise to enhance the territory's fuel resilience, reducing fuel consumption and costs. Following the initial operation on diesel, a swift transition to propane operation is expected.

These state-of-the-art generators, combined with a newly implemented battery energy storage system (BESS), are designed to quickly adapt to changes in power demand, ensuring optimal performance and reliability, particularly during peak energy usage times across the territory, according to WAPA. The BESS acts as a substantial buffer for the electric system, absorbing potential disruptions.

WAPA CEO Andrew Smith expressed satisfaction at the project's progress, calling it a "significant and positive step for the territory." He thanked various stakeholders, including HUD, Government House, the Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority, the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery, and Wärtsilä, alongside WAPA's hardworking staff and third-party service providers.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. echoed these sentiments, heralding the energization of Wärtsilä Unit 5 as a "transformative moment" in the region's pursuit of a more sustainable and resilient energy future. "The new Wärtsiläs will not only enhance the territory's power generation capacity, but also lay the foundation for a cleaner and more efficient energy landscape to benefit generations to come," he said.

Dayna Clendinen, the interim executive director and chief disaster recovery officer at the V.I. Housing Finance Authority, highlighted the project's expected impact on power reliability, while Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, director of the Office of Disaster Recovery, emphasized the importance of the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in bringing this federally funded project online.