

**VIRGIN ISLANDS WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY  
STATEMENT BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES, CONSUMER AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
AUGUST 22, 2016**

1 Good evening, Honorable Chairman Harrigan, other Honorable Members of the Senate  
2 Committee on Government Services, Consumer and Veterans Affairs and the 31<sup>th</sup> Legislature,  
3 and to the viewing and listening audience. For the record, I am Steven Aubin, Interim Executive  
4 Director of the VI Waste Management Authority (Authority or WMA). With me tonight is our  
5 Solid Waste Director for the STT/STJ/WI district and we are here to provide testimony and answer  
6 questions regarding the impact of limited vehicle barge services between St. John-St. Thomas  
7 with respect to the Authority's services.

8  
9 Directly stated, the WMA has been impacted this year by the reduced number of operating  
10 barges that provide transportation service of vehicles between St. John and St. Thomas on a daily  
11 basis. The WMA's greatest challenge with respect to this issue has been the daily transportation  
12 of municipal solid waste from St. John to the Bovoni landfill on St. Thomas. Although other WMA  
13 divisions are impacted, the aforementioned service is at the forefront. We applaud the efforts  
14 the barge companies that have done their best to maintain services with the available fleet of  
15 barges. I would also like to thank our staff on St. John as well as both solid waste hauling  
16 contractors for being creative and minimizing delays of all WMA services with respect to this  
17 issue.

18  
19 The Authority transports all municipal solid waste generated on St. John to the Bovoni landfill on  
20 St. Thomas with the exception of green waste, earthen and concrete/asphalt waste products. In  
21 the 1990's the landfill located adjacent to the Susannaberg Transfer Station was permanently  
22 closed and all waste was therefore required to be transported to the Bovoni landfill for final  
23 disposal. No other disposal facility is currently available for municipal-level waste disposal on St.  
24 John.

25  
26 The Authority utilizes two methods to collect and transfer solid waste to St. Thomas. First, both  
27 commercial and residential waste can be brought to the Susannaberg Transfer Station. All waste  
28 streams are accepted there including scrap metal, bulk waste, and special wastes such as used  
29 motor oil and electronic waste (the latter two are for residential items only). The WMA currently

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30 loads incoming solid waste directly into 30 and 40-cubic yard roll-off bins for daily transport to  
31 St. Thomas. Green waste, earthen fill (soil, rocks), crushed concrete, milled asphalt, etc are  
32 stockpiled, the latter three eligible for reuse. A stationary compactor machine is located there  
33 as well and is being repaired and upgraded at this time to increase the efficiency of transporting  
34 waste to St. Thomas.

35  
36 Second, the WMA operates several bin sites that are stationed around St. John along the  
37 roadways that use roll-off bins or rear-load bins to provide waste collection for residents. These  
38 are collected daily. Filled roll-off bins are transported individually to St. Thomas on a daily basis  
39 via a contractor, Penns Trucking Inc. The rear-load bins are emptied typically daily (depending  
40 on the route) into a single waste collection truck and the truck discharges its waste directly at the  
41 Bovoni landfill. This service is performed via a contractor, YES Inc. Per the VI Code, the  
42 aforementioned bins are for residential waste collection only.

43  
44 By far, the greatest impact of reduced barging capacity has been to the solid waste roll-off bin  
45 services. On a daily basis, several roll-off bins are transported to St. Thomas for waste disposal.  
46 The contractor utilizes several trucks to facilitate this activity in an efficient manner. Each round  
47 trip can take several hours on a normal day. During periods of reduced barge services, the  
48 number of trips are limited based on available space upon the barges. This has resulted in  
49 delayed pickups of the filled bins at the bin sites and Susannaberg Transfer Station, whereby  
50 waste remains in the bins for more than one day.

51  
52 To minimize the impact to the community and the environment, the Authority and its contractors  
53 have performed the following actions:

- 54 • Pressed down waste within roll-off bins to create additional capacity and to contain the  
55 waste until pickup;
- 56 • Redirected customers to other bin sites that may have been serviced that day or that are  
57 not filled to capacity; and

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- 58           • In conjunction with the Administrator and the barge companies, special barge trips have  
59           been coordinated after-hours whereby numerous bins were transported to St. Thomas  
60           for disposal.

61  
62 The rear-loader collection service has not been impacted to the same degree as the  
63 aforementioned roll-off collection service. A single rear-loader truck travels to St. John once per  
64 day to collect all rear-load bins along a route. Although it has been challenging for the truck to  
65 travel daily between both islands during periods of reduced barge services, typically the trip is  
66 achieved, however often at the expense of waiting additional hours on both docks. There have  
67 been some occasions where the truck could not make the trip or remained overnight on St. John  
68 due to extreme waiting times on the docks.

69  
70 In terms of other divisions, there have been some challenges with respect to the issue. There  
71 have been some occasions where the wastewater and enforcement divisions' tasks were delayed  
72 due to crowded waiting lines at the docks and the trucks could not travel across. I will say for the  
73 record that the barging companies have been very cooperative with the Authority to make all  
74 efforts to move its trucks (and those of its waste contractors) as quickly as possible and we are  
75 thankful for that.

76  
77 In closing, the lack of a final disposal site or facility to store several days of collected waste on St.  
78 John in an environmentally sound manner is a challenge to the Authority whenever vehicle barge  
79 services are reduced or shut down. The Authority makes all efforts to ensure the movement of  
80 solid waste on a daily basis. The Authority is moving forward with various projects and initiatives  
81 to reduce and recycle waste streams in order to minimize the volume required for transfer off of  
82 St. John. At this time, we remain available to answer any questions this body may have regarding  
83 this matter.

84  
85 END