



**VIRGIN ISLANDS
WATER AND POWER
AUTHORITY**

PO Box 1450
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00804-1450

Good afternoon Honorable Members of the 36th Legislature,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Maurice K. Muia, and I serve as Chairman of the Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA). I am honored to testify regarding the pressing operational and fiscal challenges facing The Authority, and to share a path forward that requires our collective resolve and strategic collaboration.

Let me begin by acknowledging the concerns you have raised that are both valid and urgent. These issues are not peripheral; they are central to the future of WAPA and the economic stability of the Virgin Islands. We must move beyond fear-driven narratives and toward solution-oriented governance. This is a pivotal moment for WAPA, and it demands bold leadership, transparent accountability, and a shared commitment to reform.

I urge this body to invest in strengthening the governance framework of the Board of Directors. Effective governance is the cornerstone of institutional resilience. It ensures that management is held accountable and that the Board remains actively engaged in steering The Authority toward a sustainable trajectory. The Governing Board's time and expertise cannot be limited. Subject matter experts are negatively affected in executing their responsibilities by the rate cap. My request is that the cap be removed, and the Board is allowed to set reasonable rates for the opportunity cost that are present on a respective cost basis.

The Legislature of the Virgin Islands secured the services of Ernst & Young to develop a turnaround plan for The Authority. Earlier this year, you received the final submission of the turnaround report from Ernst & Young. That report contains actionable recommendations to streamline operations and responsibly reduce debt, to name a few. This plan details a phased approach guided by the direction of the Governing Board.

I am eager to understand your priorities for community stability and long-term economic growth. WAPA is uniquely positioned to be a catalyst for both. By modernizing our infrastructure and operations, we can significantly reduce the cost of living and improve the quality of life for all Virgin Islanders—residents and visitors alike. However, implementation requires more than technical fixes—it demands a cultural shift. Succession planning, for example, is not just a staffing issue; it is a strategic imperative. Like the Government of the Virgin Islands, WAPA faces challenges in attracting and retaining talent. Building a career pipeline within The Authority is essential as we rebuild our electric and water systems.



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Recommendations

Board Governance Enhancements

- Expand the Board of Directors to a maximum of nine members
- Implement the Ernst & Young Turnaround Advisory Committee
- Institute term limits: three terms of three years each
- Repeal the rate statute to allow the Board to set reasonable compensation

Board and Management Collaboration Priorities

1. Strategic Planning: Develop a new Integrated Resource and Strategic Plan to guide future energy investments and operational decisions.
2. Infrastructure and Energy Security: Support federal investments and fortify the LPG supply chain through advanced modeling and stakeholder coordination.
3. Distributed Energy Resource Deployment: Accelerate the deployment of onsite resources such as energy storage and microgrids to enhance grid reliability and customer resilience.
4. Workforce Development and Training: Launch training programs to cultivate a skilled local workforce capable of maintaining and advancing modern energy systems, thereby ensuring long-term operational resilience and creating high-quality jobs.

My overarching objective is threefold:

- To build a sustainable Governing Board structure that endures beyond current leadership.
- To embed succession planning into the DNA of The Authority.
- To foster a culture of excellence—one that demands the highest quality work and responds to errors with empathy and accountability.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to the future of the Virgin Islands. I look forward to working with you to transform WAPA into a model of public utility excellence.

Respectfully,

Maurice K. Muia, Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority – Chairman