

**Testimony to the 36th Legislature | COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS**  
**RE: TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

Good afternoon, Honorable Chairman Marvin A. Blyden; Honorable members of the Committee on Housing, Transportation, and Telecommunications; Honorable Senators present; testifiers; and the listening and viewing audience. My name is Lemuel Lavinier, Chief Operating Officer – Electric Systems of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA), which I may later refer to as “WAPA” or “the Authority,” appearing today on behalf of Executive Director and CEO Karl Knight. Joining me today is Dionne Sinclair, General Counsel of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on our interactions with the telecommunications sector.

WAPA actively supports the Territory’s telecommunications infrastructure by providing access to its utility poles and underground ducts with qualified telecommunications providers. To date, WAPA has executed a Pole Attachment License Agreement For Distribution Poles with Broadband VI LLC and Liberty Mobile USVI Inc., more commonly known collectively as Liberty. Similar agreements are currently in progress with One Communications and ADM Technologies, Inc. These agreements establish standardized terms for pole attachments, ensuring safety, reliability, and equitable cost-sharing among utilities.

Joint use agreements are a critical component of infrastructure efficiency in the Territory. By enabling multiple providers to utilize existing utility poles, WAPA helps reduce the need for redundant infrastructure, lowering deployment costs, and minimizing environmental and visual impacts.

WAPA also integrates telecommunications infrastructure in its undergrounding program by installing two 4-inch ducts along main roads and one 2-inch duct along lateral routes. This “dig-once” approach ensures that telecommunications capacity is built concurrently with electrical infrastructure, avoiding costly future excavation and service disruptions. The use of these ducts is coordinated through WAPA’s partnership with the Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (viNGN). This collaboration ensures that available capacity is strategically utilized to expand broadband access, particularly in underserved communities.

WAPA’s core mission is to provide safe, reliable electric and water service to the residents and businesses of the Virgin Islands. Increasingly, this mission is directly tied to the strength and resilience of the Territory’s telecommunications systems. Modern utility operations depend on advanced communications networks to support real-time grid management, outage response and detection, advanced metering infrastructure, cybersecurity, and customer engagement. Therefore, investments in and support for the Territory’s telecommunications sector are essential to the effectiveness and modernization of WAPA’s operations.

Thank you, Chairman, and honorable Senators, for your attention and for the opportunity to provide updates on telecommunications. We welcome discussions and questions you may have within this sector.

