

# Committee on Rules and Judiciary

Nominee to the Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Water  
and Power Authority

TESTIMONY OF  
XAVIER ACEVEDO

**Committee on Rules and  
Judiciary  
September 8, 2025**

**Nominee to the Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Water and  
Power Authority**

**Testimony of Xavier Acevedo**

Chairwoman Senator Carla J. Joseph, Vice-Chair Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, members of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, members of the 36th Legislature, and the listening and viewing audience:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to Governor Albert Bryan Jr. for his confidence in nominating me to serve on the Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. This moment is both humbling and pivotal in my journey as a dedicated servant of this community.

I am Xavier Acevedo — a proud native Virgin Islander, father, successful entrepreneur of 25 years, real estate investor, retired employee of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority, and former Union President of the Professional and Technical Employees Union. Today, I serve as Project Manager at the Virgin Islands Architecture Center for Built Heritage and Crafts, where I lead impactful projects that reflect our community's values, meet funding goals, and promote lasting sustainability

Because of my deep roots in this community and my professional experience that spans every level of WAPA's operations, from labor to leadership, I bring a unique perspective. I understand stakeholder concerns, organizational culture, and operational standards, and it is my belief that I can be an invaluable asset to the Governing Board—and a catalyst in unlocking the path to meaningful service improvement.

The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is unlike any other utility in the United States. Its challenges are unique, and so too must be its solutions. Having recently retired after 20 years of dedicated service, I bring first-hand knowledge of WAPA's inner workings. I have served as President of the P and T Union, led labor negotiations, and worked as an Engineer Technician, Project Manager, and Draftsman. I have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with WAPA employees during hurricane restorations, outages, equipment failures, and emergency repairs. I have witnessed their resilience, their sacrifices, and their unwavering commitment to serve our people—often under difficult circumstances and sometimes without compensation. I also know what it takes to challenge the status quo and deliver change, having contributed to significant shifts in resource distribution, internal management, and oversight during my career.

Yet, despite the dedication of its workforce, WAPA is at a breaking point. Change is urgently needed. Over the years, some concerns of Virgin Islanders have not been fully addressed, which has contributed to a gradual decline in public confidence. One such example is estimated billing. Not long ago, I had to explain to my own mother why her water bill had remained the same for nearly two years. As a former employee, I could explain the practice of estimated billing, but to her—as to many residents—it was confusing and unacceptable. This is not simply a billing issue; it is a trust issue, and one that demands immediate correction.

Meaningful reform cannot happen in isolation; it requires the combined efforts of the Governing Board, executive management, and WAPA's dedicated employees working together to rebuild credibility across our territory. Together, these partners must promote financial stability, operational effectiveness, and customer service excellence, while safeguarding the Authority's assets and maintaining the highest standards of environmental health and safety. Achieving this will depend on consistent community engagement and a strong partnership with the Government of the Virgin Islands.

I understand that the Governing Board's principal responsibilities include establishing policies, monitoring the utility's overall performance, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, and approving the appointment of other key officers. In turn, the Executive Director is tasked with implementing the Board's policies, keeping the Board informed of progress, managing day-to-day operations, and remaining accountable for the organization's performance.

My objective today is not to criticize WAPA or its workforce, but to reaffirm that I believe wholeheartedly WAPA can be stabilized and improved. This will require decisive action, transparency, and accountability. I have both an actionable plan and the practical experience to ensure it is implemented effectively, even when faced with foreseeable and unforeseeable obstacles.

My goal is to address five immediate priorities:

1. **End back-to-back billing estimates.** Require actual meter readings and provide customers with simpler, more transparent bills.
2. **Improve and expand communication.** Strengthen WAPA's public presence with consistent updates on outages and billing via social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and TikTok.
3. **Revitalize the solar energy program.** Launch a community solar initiative utilizing rooftops and battery storage maintained by a dedicated Solar Energy Division.
4. **Establish an Underground Utility Infrastructure Division.** Begin planning, surveying, and design now, so that underground systems can be managed effectively, safely, and in compliance with regulations.
5. **Expand workforce development and succession planning.** Extend opportunities beyond engineers to include linemen, plant technicians, electricians, and

administrators. Build a long-term, data-driven talent pipeline to strengthen our local workforce.

These priorities are not abstract ideas; they are practical steps that reflect both the immediate needs of the community and the long-term vision required to transform WAPA. My commitment to this mission is not just professional—it is personal, grounded in decades of service and a lifelong investment in the Virgin Islands.

I have dedicated my life to public service, and that commitment has been demonstrated through both my work and my willingness to share resources for the betterment of this community. I am a man of my word, and a man of conviction. If confirmed, I will devote my full time, attention, and impartial perspective to this role. I will work to align WAPA's Strategic Plan with the urgent recommendations of the Ernst & Young organizational assessment and audit report. Both documents highlight modernization, renewable energy expansion, billing reform, and workforce investment. My focus will be on transforming these priorities into measurable outcomes, clear timelines, and transparent reporting.

WAPA's challenges are real and significant, but they are not insurmountable. With the right leadership, and renewed accountability, we can restore trust, improve service reliability, and build a utility system that is modern, resilient, and worthy of the people of the Virgin Islands.

I stand ready to serve, and respectfully ask for your support in confirming my nomination. I am prepared to address your questions and to demonstrate my readiness to work on behalf of this community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Xavier Acevedo