



**The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority
Corporate Communications
NEWS RELEASE**

Contact: Jean P. Greaux, Jr., Director of Corporate Communications
340-774-3552 extension 2147 or 340-244-7330
communications@viwapa.vi / www.viwapa.vi

March 28, 2020

**WAPA REITERATES COMMITMENT TO NOT DISCONNECT
DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS DURING COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY**

The governing board and executive director of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Saturday reaffirmed that the utility will not disconnect delinquent electrical and potable water service accounts for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

In a joint statement Saturday, Board Chairman Anthony D. Thomas, who is also Commissioner of the Department of Property & Procurement, and Executive Director Lawrence J. Kupfer said WAPA fully understands the concern in the community about the uncertainties surrounding the Coronavirus and its effect on all our lives. "While customers have received a sixty day bill this month as the Authority catches up on its billing, WAPA will not compound these uncertain and challenging times with the fear of disconnection of customers, who are simply unable to pay due to disruptions caused by the pandemic."

Although WAPA will not disconnect for nonpayment during this emergency period, customers who can pay their bills are encouraged to do so. WAPA relies on revenues from the sales of electricity and water to pay for fuel and other fixed costs to maintain constant electric and water service to residents of the territory.

WAPA issued sixty-day bills this month to allow the Authority to collect for service that has already been provided but not yet billed. While customers have received a bill each month, the number of days, from the day their meter was read to the day the bill was issued, was unavoidably increased each month since May 2019. This problem stems from our hurricane ravaged automated metering system having not been fully restored to pre-hurricane functionality.

"We again reiterate that WAPA will not disconnect electric or potable water service for any customer because of their inability to pay as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The non-disconnect policy, which actually took effect the week of March 16, will remain in place until further notice."

"As regards the Coronavirus, WAPA has taken steps to ensure continued service to our customers while ensuring the health of our employees. Our management team continues to monitor the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and react swiftly as the situation evolves. We urge all customers visiting our offices to follow the guidelines that have been established to protect both our employees and the public," the joint statement said.

#

About WAPA: The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.