

## WAPA Reports Full Power Restoration in St. Thomas-St. John District

WAPA said power was fully restored by 6 a.m. Tuesday after a troubled Unit 27 destabilized the Randolph Harley plant, triggering outages that disrupted gov't, business and water access while senators renewed calls for audit answers and federal oversight.

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An aerial view of the Randolph Harley power plant in St. Thomas, USVI. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

As of 6 a.m. Tuesday morning, the Water and Power Authority reported that electricity in St. Thomas and St. John has been completely restored after a district-wide power outage over the weekend.

The outage, which began on Saturday evening, was caused by an [ailing generator which destabilized the entire Randolph Harley power plant](#) on St. Thomas, said WAPA CEO Karl Knight. Attempts to restart using the remaining generators at the plant failed, and a subsequent recovery on Sunday using the same troubled Unit 27 generator proved fragile when the engine went down again in the wee hours of Monday morning. During a press conference on Monday, Mr. Knight dispelled rumors that a fuel shortage was behind the outage, saying that mechanical failure was the only reason for the grid collapse.

With [major disruptions in government and private sector operations](#) caused by the outage, residents on the two islands monitored restoration efforts as crews worked to bring feeders online one by one throughout the day. The second-order effects of the power crisis also included some residents [unable to access water](#).

Lawmakers responded to the latest major outage with concern. Senator Kenneth Gittens demanded an update on the forensic financial audit of WAPA ordered by the legislature three years ago. He wrote to Inspector General Delia Thomas requesting “a detailed status report on the audit, an explanation of any factors contributing to delays, an estimate of the remaining work, and an anticipated timeline for completion.”

Senator Ray Fonseca, meanwhile, disagreed with Mr. Knight’s assessment that federal intervention is not necessary at this time. He called on his colleagues in the legislature to pass a resolution “petitioning the United States Congress to authorize federal oversight and management of the daily operations of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority.”

Federalizing WAPA, Senator Fonseca wrote, could bring “immediate and lasting relief to Virgin Islands residents.”

While the full economic impact of the outages may never be quantified, Monday’s disruptions underscored how deeply WAPA’s instability can affect government operations, public health services, waste management, legislative work and the broader economy.