STACEY E. PLASKETT
VIRGIN ISLANDS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515

October 25, 2026

Mr. Hubert Turnbull
Chairman, Governing Board
Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority
P.O. Box 1450
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00804

Dear Chairman Turnbull and Members of the Governing Board:

I write to urge the Governing Board of the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) to submit an application to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) requesting an emergency order under Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act. Aside from the Governor of the Virgin Islands, only the utility, WAPA, may make this request.

The Governing Board is well aware of the current conditions surrounding the power utility in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The territory's generation system cannot reliably meet demand, and repeated outages have disrupted daily life throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands. In the face of this crisis, WAPA has not pursued all avenues of federal support. I have recently learned that earlier this year, DOE offered WAPA the support of an emergency order under Section 202(c). In 2024, the then-Secretary of Energy gave a detailed report offering technical and other support, which WAPA never agreed to accept. You have kept all of these interactions and offers of support away from myself and indeed the public, who are at the mercy of the utility.

Given the repeated outages and the lack of adequate reserve capacity, it is unconscionable that WAPA has not submitted an application to avail itself of this support. Each Member of the Board knows that after this many failures, this is not a routine maintenance problem, and the measures taken to date have not restored reliable service. Residents have lost food and medicine, homes have lost running water, and government operations and businesses have been disrupted. The Governing Board has a fiduciary responsibility to act with haste.

An emergency order is designed for precisely the kind of crisis we are now facing. Section 202(c) is a temporary emergency authority the Secretary of Energy may use when a shortage of generation threatens reliable service. Such an order could allow the emergency operation of existing generators that face regulatory or operating restrictions, facilitate the use of customer-owned backup generation at hotels and businesses to reduce demand on WAPA's system, improve transmission reliability through vegetation management, and direct temporary generation. While an order is not a long-term solution, it would provide much-needed short-term technical assistance and support for WAPA as it works on long-term resolutions.

There is clear precedent for this request. In August 2026, the Guam Power Authority applied for an emergency order after the loss of a major generating unit forced rotating outages, and the DOE waived operating restrictions on additional units to increase available capacity. Since May 2025, DOE has used its emergency authority under Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act to help stabilize Puerto Rico's grid, an effort that has provided the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority

(PREPA) direct access to the DOE's technical experts. Those orders directed PREPA to dispatch the generation necessary to close a shortfall and to improve transmission reliability through vegetation management.

I urge the Governing Board to direct WAPA management to complete and submit the application without delay. WAPA and the Governor have the authority to provide immediate support for the people of the Virgin Islands through the Department of Energy. We need to use every tool that has been made available to us from our federal partners. The people of the Virgin Islands deserve swift action, and I am hopeful the Board will provide it. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

cc:
The Honorable Albert Bryan, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands
The Honorable Milton E. Potter, Senate President, Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Mr. Karl Knight, Chief Executive Officer, Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority