

WAPA Sees Repair Progress at Harley Plant as Emergency Generation Is Pursued for Rotating Outages

Knight told the WAPA board that repairs to Units 27 and 15 are advancing as the authority pursues emergency generation for St. Thomas-St. John, offering guarded optimism that daily rotating outages tied to the Harley plant could begin easing soon.

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During an emergency meeting of the Water and Power Authority Governing Board on Wednesday, Executive Director Karl Knight expressed guarded optimism about repairs to malfunctioning generators at the Randolph Harley Power Plant. A series of cascading failures have left residents of St. Thomas and St. John [grappling with daily rotating blackouts](#) as WAPA struggles to meet demand for power with reduced generation capacity.

Mr. Knight shared some “positive updates” with board members regarding the progress being made. “We’re going to start repairs on Unit 27 this afternoon,” he said, noting that a technician had been dispatched on a flight to retrieve the needed part to expedite the process. “Shipping would have taken us about two weeks,” Mr. Knight noted.

While the part was being acquired, other WAPA technicians were doing the groundwork to ensure that repairs on Unit 27 could take place as soon as it arrived. “We’re kind of prepped and ready to go, and we should have that unit back in service by hopefully this weekend,” Mr. Knight told board members.

Unit 15, whose [mechanical failure in mid-March](#) triggered the current cycle of rotating outages, is also slated for repair. “That’s the most expeditious path to restoring stability to the Harley plant,” Mr. Knight said. “We have good progress on both fronts.”

WAPA is also looking into acquiring emergency generation capacity, “which is some smaller units just to help us meet the peak and fix this generation capacity shortfall that we’ve been experiencing since Thursday, March 19,” Mr. Knight said. At least one offer from a reputable vendor has been received to establish emergency generation on St. John, and several others have been received for medium-term temporary generation to supplement the capacity of the territory’s two power plants as WAPA goes through a prudent replacement process on both St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Mr. Knight promised the board a “clear plan of action” by April 8. According to board chair Maurice Muia, “this plan will be from a dedicated team regarding emergency temporary generation for St. Thomas-St. John district...I know it’s a tight timeline, but in this case, a tight timeline is necessary.”