



PRESS RELEASE

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Cabinet Declares Water Infrastructure a National Critical Priority

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Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye Rymer has stated that the Cabinet of the Virgin Islands has declared the water infrastructure in the Territory a National Critical Priority.

Honourable Rymer in a statement at a press conference yesterday stated that the ongoing water shortage issue is not new and that it is a burden that many families have carried for far too long. He added that it is a challenge that has persisted across decades, and while he inherited it, he is resolutely dedicated to resolving it once and for all.

Honourable Rymer acknowledged the severity of the situation stating that residents of Sea Cows Bay, Baughers Bay, Road Town, Huntums Ghut, East End and West End, and outer islands have been particularly hard hit. He assured residents in these areas their constant cries for help have not gone unnoticed.

The minister apologised for the hardships residents are facing as every failed water delivery impacts their daily lives and livelihoods, and that the government of the Virgin Islands is dedicated to making meaningful changes.

Honourable Rymer said, “Declaring water a national critical priority underscores its essential role in the health and prosperity of every community member and business. It elevates our water concerns to a national focus, ensuring we allocate the resources and coordinated action necessary to tackle current issues and secure a resilient water future.”

The minister said among the critical issues that are being faced is an alarming rate of water loss within the infrastructure. “A significant amount of water produced is lost before reaching your taps, due to leaking pipelines and aging systems. These losses are a direct contributor to the water access issues many of you experience,” he said, adding, “We know that leaks along the road persist for weeks, causing frustration and uncertainty about when relief will come. Furthermore, we have often found that repairing one leak can lead to another showing up along the same line, compounding the problem.”

Honourable Rymer also explained that the Cabinet decision translates to six (6) key action items that will equate to effective and expedited solutions to the water infrastructure in the Territory. These he said include, Prioritised Funding and Resources, Coordinated Government Action, Improved Service Reliability, Enhanced Water Quality, Community Engagement and Capacity Building, and Transparency and Accountability.

It was also announced that a team of volunteer engineers from Operators Without Borders are in the Territory conducting an assessment of the water infrastructure and will assist with technical and human resources.

The Water Optimisation Strategic Plan is already underway, and will target affected areas while empowering local talent, as well as utilising the expertise from outside the Territory to solve the water infrastructure challenges currently being faced.

The minister's full statement can be viewed on the Government of the Virgin Islands website at www.bvi.gov.vg. The press conference can also be viewed on the Government of the Virgin Islands' Facebook page at [BVIGovernment](https://www.facebook.com/BVIGovernment).

The Ministry of Communications and Works continues to ensure the continued development and maintenance of public infrastructure in keeping with international standards so that public utilities are reliable and affordable in support of an enhanced community life for every resident and visitor in the Virgin Islands.

Photo 1 (Left to right): Minister for Health and Development Honourable Vincent Wheatley, Marcel Misuraca from Operators Without Borders, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communication and Works Mrs. Elvia Smith-Maduro, Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye Rymer, Rhonda Harris and Mike Hewitt from Operators Without Borders, and Acting Director of the Water and Sewage Department Mr. Brian Davis.

Photo 2: Photo of Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye Rymer

Photo 3: Photo of Acting Director of the Water and Sewage Department Mr. Brian Davis

(Photo credit: GIS/R. Frazer)

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