

STATEMENT

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Water Supply Situation 2026

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Like every resident of these Virgin Islands, I understand the frustration and hardship many families have experienced with the current water supply. Access to a reliable supply of potable water is an essential public service, and this

Government remains fully committed to improving the system and delivering lasting solutions.

However, the public deserves more than political soundbites. They deserve the facts.

This Government inherited an ageing and severely neglected water infrastructure after years of underinvestment, including during the period when Honourable Marlon Penn served in the previous administration. Distribution lines that are decades old, deteriorating reservoirs, inoperable pressure management systems, and the decommissioning of the Sea Cows Bay Water Plant as well as the Government owned water plant at Baughers Bay have all contributed to the challenges we face today. These are longstanding issues that did not develop overnight and cannot be resolved overnight.

From the outset, based on allotted funding, this Government has made significant investments to modernise the Territory's water infrastructure. We reconstructed four reservoirs: Long Bush, Zion Hill, and the two reservoirs in Carrot Bay, and critical rehabilitation works will be undertaken on an additional five reservoirs, which are Balsam Ghut, Minton Hill, Fort Hill, Sabboth Hill and Hannah Hill, with work commencing on 21st July. Also, the aged water lines are being replaced, and improvements to the distribution network continue across the Territory.

Importantly, our ongoing road rehabilitation programme is not simply about resurfacing roads. Across the Territory, these works are being used as an opportunity to replace outdated water mains, upgrade ageing pipelines, and modernise pressure management systems that are critical to improving the reliability and efficiency of the overall network. This integrated approach ensures that we are not only rebuilding roads but also renewing the essential underground infrastructure that serves our communities.

These infrastructure upgrades are being carried out in multiple communities, and once completed, they are expected to significantly improve water distribution across the affected areas. At the same time, the Government has already

commenced discussions with water production companies to increase water production, ensuring that every available measure is being pursued to improve supply while these long-term infrastructure upgrades continue.

The current situation has also been intensified by one of the most severe droughts the Virgin Islands has experienced in recent years. Hence the demand for water is much higher. Understandably, many residents are also filling depleted cisterns as soon as water becomes available, placing extraordinary demand on an already stressed system.

It must also be recognised that water production is heavily dependent on a reliable electricity supply. When power outages occur, water production ceases until power is restored. This is a challenge I am acutely aware of, and it is why this Government is equally committed to strengthening the resilience of our electricity grid alongside our water infrastructure. Addressing these interconnected systems is essential if we are to deliver the reliable service our people deserve.

The Opposition has called for a water subsidy programme. This Government does not dismiss any proposal that aims to ease the burden on our people. However, the Leader of the Opposition is obviously aware that a Cabinet Paper is currently being worked on to address targeted relief for vulnerable households, and that this process is already underway. The subsidy programme requires careful design, clear targeting to ensure it reaches those who need it most, and a full assessment of its fiscal implications.

These are exceptional circumstances that require honesty, cooperation and responsible leadership, not attempts to politicise a national challenge that has persisted for decades.

I also wish to recognise the dedication of the Water and Sewerage Department, our technical teams, and the Territory's water producers who continue working diligently under challenging circumstances to maintain service to residents across the Virgin Islands.

While some choose to issue statements after problems arise, this Government has remained focused on addressing the root causes of those problems through sustained investment, strategic planning, and infrastructure renewal. Our objective is not simply to respond to today's challenges but to build a modern, resilient water system capable of serving the Virgin Islands well into the future. The people of these Virgin Islands deserve solutions, and that is exactly what this Government is delivering.

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Additional Documents or Media

- [statement_by_the_minister_of_communication_and_works_water_supply_situation.pdf](#)