

# Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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The Honorable  
**Angel Bolques, Jr.**  
Senator-At-Large  
35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands

**CHAIRMAN**  
Committee on Culture, Youth, Aging, Sports, & Parks

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**  
Committee on Economic Development & Agriculture

**MEMBER**  
Committee on Rules & Judiciary  
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice & Public Safety  
Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunication  
Subcommittee on Energy & Infrastructure Development

## **MEDIA PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Senator-At-Large Angel Bolques Jr. Stands Against the Unjust Water Rate Increase and Calls for Accountability**

**Virgin Islands** – Senator-At-Large Angel Bolques Jr. has voiced his strong opposition to the recent 22% increase in the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause (LEAC) rate for water, which has raised the rate from \$7.82 per 1,000 gallons (kGal) to \$9.53 per kGal at the request of the Water and Power Authority (WAPA). Senator Bolques Jr. believes that this rate hike raises serious concerns for the residents of the Virgin Islands, particularly low-income and moderate-income families and the residents of St. Croix who have experienced severe issues with water quality.

#### **Can Low-Income Families Afford This Rate Hike?**

Senator Bolques Jr. is deeply concerned about the impact of this rate increase on low-income and moderate-income families. He questions whether these families can shoulder the burden of higher water bills, especially in the face of rising living costs. This rate hike threatens to place an undue financial burden on those who can least afford it.

#### **Why Should the People of the Virgin Islands Pay LEAC for Water When Handled by a Private Company?**

The Senator also raises a critical question about the process itself. Why should the people of the Virgin Islands pay a LEAC for water when a private company is managing it? This issue calls for a thorough examination of the professional relationship between WAPA and the private entity responsible for water services and whether the people's interests are being adequately protected.

### **Condemnation of Poor Water Quality**

In addition to concerns about the rate increase, Senator Bolques Jr. condemns the distribution of poor water quality throughout the Virgin Islands. Reports of brown/orange-colored water with a foul odor are deeply troubling. Residents should not have to endure such substandard water quality. Senator Bolques Jr. is committed to taking action to address this pressing concern. He firmly believes that every resident paying for waterline extension services deserves access to clean and safe water, and he will work tirelessly to hold accountable those responsible for providing water services in the Virgin Islands.

### **Urging a Full Assessment Before Permanent Rate Increases**

In conclusion, Senator Bolques Jr. calls for a full comprehensive assessment of water tanks and the integrity of water line systems across the territories islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John as a matter of immediate concern and a vital step toward ensuring the long-term sustainability of our water infrastructure. Encompassing crucial factors such as equipment age, maintenance, and overall condition is paramount in addressing the current water quality crisis and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the water infrastructure in the Virgin Islands. Clean, safe, and reliable water is a fundamental right that we cannot compromise. Therefore, I also urge the Honorable Governor Bryan Jr. to seriously consider my colleague, the Honorable Senator Samuel Carrion, request to impose a state of emergency on the Water and Power Authority regarding the water integrity issue. It is imperative that we support a complete and transparent assessment of water lines, tanks, and all other water extension equipment before any permanent increase in water service rates is permanently imposed. The well-being and quality of life of the people of the Virgin Islands must remain our top priority. The time for action is now.

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