



By email: ziltaleslie@wascosaintlucia.com

4th March 2025

Mrs Zilta Leslie
Chief Executive Officer
WASCO
St Lucia Water and Sewerage Company
La Clery
Castries
St Lucia

Dear Mrs Leslie,

The Saint Lucia Hospitality and Tourism Association (SLHTA) writes in our capacity as the representative of a coalition of private sector stakeholders in the **northern region of Saint Lucia**, which is home to the island's highest concentration of tourism-related investments.

Our clients—who collectively contribute significantly to Saint Lucia's GDP, employment, and foreign exchange earnings—have been grappling with severe and recurrent disruptions in water supply, which now threaten the viability of their operations and the reputation of the nation's tourism industry.

This correspondence serves as a formal request for immediate intervention by WASCO to rectify these disruptions and to provide transparent, measurable commitments to ensuring a consistent and reliable water supply.

Empirical data gathered from industry stakeholders reveal the extent of the financial harm inflicted by WASCO's failure to provide consistent water supply:

- Businesses in the northern hospitality sector reported water trucking expenditures ranging from **US\$5,000 to over US\$250,000** in 2024 alone—a manifestly unsustainable cost burden.
- Many establishments have suffered **profit margin contractions, reputational harm, and increased guest complaints**, resulting in refunds, compensation claims, and declining bookings.
- The **absence of a definitive and transparent water distribution schedule** has rendered business planning impractical, exposing investors to operational risks and unnecessary expenses.

- There is a **profound lack of transparency in the management and utilization of the desilting levy**, raising legitimate questions as to whether these funds are being used for their stated purpose or misallocated in ways that do not advance water security.

Given the material damage sustained by businesses under WASCO's purview, your institution may be exposing itself to claims of negligence and failure to uphold its obligations as a public utility provider. We therefore seek immediate and corrective action to mitigate further economic harm.

In light of the foregoing, the private sector respectfully proposes the following measures:

1. **Immediate Remedial Actions:**

- Establish and publish a **binding and enforceable water distribution schedule**, ensuring predictability in supply to commercial and residential consumers alike.
- Implement a **stakeholder consultation mechanism** to facilitate direct engagement between WASCO and the affected business community.
- Provide **temporary government rebates or tax incentives** to businesses forced to incur excessive costs due to WASCO's supply failures.
- **Suspend the desilting levy with immediate effect** pending a full independent audit and the implementation of transparent reporting mechanisms to account for its disbursement and impact.

2. **Strategic Infrastructure and Legislative Reforms:**

- Develop and communicate a **comprehensive national water security plan**, inclusive of pipeline upgrades, redundancy measures, and sustainable water management.
- Expand investments in **alternative water sources** such as desalination and large-scale rainwater harvesting to reduce reliance on vulnerable supply systems.
- Amend the **Water and Sewerage Act** to enshrine legal protections ensuring businesses and residents have equitable access to potable water and to impose accountability measures on WASCO for service failures.

The private sector hereby requests an urgent stakeholder meeting within the next **fourteen (14) days** to discuss these matters and to obtain firm commitments from WASCO on how it intends to address these failures. Continued inaction will only exacerbate economic losses and compel affected businesses to explore all available legal and regulatory recourses to seek redress.

We trust that WASCO will recognize the gravity of this matter and will take swift corrective action. Kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter and confirm the proposed date for engagement.

Yours sincerely



NOORANI M AZEEZ
Chief Executive Officer



ERWIN LOUISY
President

CC:

Trevor Louisy - WASCO Chairman
Donalyn Vittet - PS Tourism
Lenita Joseph - PS Infrastructure
Ross Gardner – President, Chamber of Commerce
Paula James – President, St Lucia Manufacturers Association
Vern Gill – President, St Lucia Employers Federation
SLHTA Board of Directors