GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
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Contract Signed For Solar Technology Energy Programme

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Premier and Minister of Finance, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley has stated that the Solar Technology Energy Programme (S.T.E.P.) initiative is a major step towards sustainable energy in the Virgin Islands.

The S.T.E.P. (Solar Technology & Energy Programme) is an initiative by the Ministry of Communications and Works and was designed to help reduce the energy costs of the consumer. Through this initiative, high quality solar panels and an inverter will be installed at the property of the selected customer. This system is grid-tied, allowing the customer to receive credits for excess energy sold back to the BVI Electricity Corporation’s grid.

Premier Wheatley addressed a contract signing ceremony for recipients of the Solar Technology Energy Programme initiative on Thursday February 6.

The Premier said “This groundbreaking initiative is designed to reduce electricity bills by up to 50% for participating residents, aligning with the government's commitment to fostering cleaner and more sustainable energy solutions.”

Minister for Communications and Works and subject minister, Honourable Kye M. Rymer stated that the government is invested in this new chapter to revolutionise the Territory’s energy landscape.

"We are proud to invest $1 million in this initiative. This is not just about reducing costs. It is about embracing a sustainable future by decreasing our reliance on fuels," he explained.

Honourable Rymer also challenged the corporation to explore more solare technologies. He said, “Let’s expand S.T.E.P. to include all solar technologies that cut energy costs and usage. There are solar water heaters, solar-powered air conditioning units and energy-efficient appliances. These innovations exist, and I am challenging our BVIEC team to explore integrating them into future phases of this S.T.E.P. initiative.”

Meanwhile, General Manager for the BVI Electricity Corporation, Dr. Neil Smith said that the BVI Electricity Corporation will cover all upfront costs for equipment and installation, ensuring accessibility for homeowners creating substantial savings on

electricity bills. Energy consumed directly from the solar system will incur only a minimal demand charge of $.10 per kilowatt-hour.

Group respondent, Mr. Wade Tobin, said that he chose to participate in the program, because he believes in the transformative power of renewable energy.

Mr. Tobin said, “By engaging in this programme, the participants and I aimed to gain knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to a greener future, for ourselves and the generations to come.”

During the ceremony, plans were announced to integrate additional solar technologies such as solar water heaters and energy-efficient appliances into future phases of S.T.E.P. To register interest or learn more about the programme, persons can visit the BVI Electricity Corporation’s website at www.bvielectricity.com.

The Ministry of Communications and Works is committed to the ongoing development and maintenance of public infrastructure, ensuring that utilities are reliable and affordable, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all residents and visitors in the Virgin Islands.

1) Officials Signing L-to-R: Premier and Minister of Finance, Hon. Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley; Minister for Communications and Works, Hon. Kye M. Rymer; BVIEC Chairman of the Board, Mr. Sheldon Scatliffe; BVIEC General Manager, Dr. Neil Smith; Group Respondent, Mr. Wade Tobin.
2) Group Photograph: Recipients and Government Officials

3) Group Respondent: Mr. Wade Tobin

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