GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# STATEMENT

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# Statement by Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye M. Rymer at the Ribbon Cutting and Official Commissioning of the Anegada Hybrid Renewable Energy and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project

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Good morning, colleagues, friends, and fellow citizens of our beautiful Virgin Islands.

Today marks a landmark moment in our collective journey toward a greener, more resilient future with the inauguration of the Anegada Hybrid Renewable Energy and Battery Energy Storage System. This facility powers the island with clean energy for more than 12 hours a day during peak usage—especially now in the height of the tourist season and following the internationally known Lobster Fest—and can run on renewables alone for up to 19 hours. It also symbolises our deep commitment to the principles enshrined in our National Sustainable Development Goals—particularly responsible consumption, climate action, and affordable, clean energy for all.

This government champions a forward-looking philosophy: first, we must be diligent stewards of our environment; second, we must embrace renewable energy

as foundational to the reliable and sustainable energy future our people deserve. Over the past year, my ministry and I have engaged with experts worldwide to learn from their experiences in overcoming challenges and harnessing the immense benefits of renewables.

Fossil fuel emissions are changing weather patterns, threatening food supplies, and forcing some communities worldwide to abandon their homes. While we may not yet face the worst impacts, we remain vulnerable and overly reliant on expensive fuel imports.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the fuel suppliers who have reliably served us over the years, ensuring energy availability despite these challenges. Your dedication has been indispensable.

Yet the realities are clear: without a decisive shift to renewable energy, escalating energy costs will hinder our economic growth and sustainability. This is why we have made the integration of renewables not just an ambition but a strategic imperative. The Anegada hybrid facility we celebrate today is the first tangible milestone toward this goal. Its 1.3 MW solar photovoltaic capacity combined with a 4 MWh battery storage system will power Anegada cleanly and efficiently, supporting peak tourist seasons and everyday life alike.

For the people of Anegada, this project delivers direct and meaningful benefits. Power will be far more reliable—fewer outages and quicker recovery after storms—because the station can operate independently of fuel deliveries from Tortola. In the rare event that fuel cannot be shipped, this hybrid system ensures Anegada can recover rapidly and maintain essential services. The island gains greater energy independence with reduced reliance on personnel and spare parts flown or shipped from Tortola for generator maintenance and repairs. Many of you who remember the old diesel station will welcome the quieter days now that much of the daytime load is carried by solar and batteries—a real improvement to daily life.

There are also economic and reputational benefits. Anegada can now proudly market itself as producing the majority of its daytime energy from renewable sources—a powerful selling point for eco-conscious visitors who come for our

pristine environment. This facility strengthens Anegada’s tourism product and helps create new local opportunities tied to sustainable tourism and services.

Premier, as Minister for Tourism, I encourage the BVI Tourist Board to seize this moment and promote Anegada as the Virgin Islands’ renewable retreat—“Anegada: The Virgin Islands’ Renewable Retreat.” Work with local businesses to adopt badges, storytelling, and visible sustainable practices so visitors know they are coming to a quiet, renewable-powered island.

This facility’s $6 million investment is not merely an expense; it is a strategic commitment that will pay dividends for our people and our economy. Each year the Territory expends over $50 million purchasing fuel for electricity generation — a major drain on household and public finances. By reducing our heavy dependence on diesel, projects like this will help lower that annual fuel bill—protecting households and businesses from global price shocks and freeing public resources for critical services. In short, this upfront cost buys resilience, stability, quieter communities, new tourism appeal, and long-term savings that benefit every Virgin Islander.

To further ease the burden this holiday season, this Government of the Virgin Islands will cover 100% of the fuel surcharge for all resident consumers for the month of December. This measure is our way of giving back to families during this special time of year.

Looking ahead, we plan to replicate and expand this model on Jost van Dyke, Virgin Gorda, and Tortola. These projects, supported by our Climate Change Trust Fund and the proactive leadership of the BVIEC Board, will progressively weave renewable energy into the fabric of our power grid, helping to reduce emissions, lower long-term costs, and create new economic opportunities aligned with our National Sustainable Development Strategy.

As a reminder, it was just August this year, 2025, that this Government approved duty-free importation of renewable energy products for the next five years. I urge residents and businesses to take full advantage of this window to invest in solar panels, batteries, and other clean technologies. While this Anegada project is commercial and community-wide in scope, our Solar Technology Energy Program

(STEP) exists so individual residents can also reap the benefits of solar. Please contact BVIEC to learn more and to sign up for STEP.

On a national level, the people of the BVI can point to this facility as an example of things to come. It demonstrates that the BVI stands shoulder to shoulder with those combating global climate change, deploying practical, scalable solutions. Projects such as this show a serious commitment by the BVI to climate action and will help unlock access to concessional financing and grants. Those resources can be used to repair coastal defences, upgrade ports, strengthen educational institutions, and expand resilient energy infrastructure across our Territory.

This facility's $6 million investment is a commitment to a healthier environment, improved quality of life, and a stronger, more resilient economy. The upgraded grid infrastructure sets the stage for future growth within Anegada's unique tourism sector and beyond.

I extend profound gratitude to every contractor, engineer, and stakeholder who brought this project to fruition. Your expertise and dedication remind us that strong partnerships drive meaningful progress. To the BVIEC Board and employees, Permanent Secretary Mrs. Elvia Smith Maduro and her team, and everyone who supports this green vision, I deeply appreciate your unwavering commitment.

I would be remiss not to thank former Premier Honourable Andrew Fahie for his visionary role in enabling this project, and our current Premier Dr. the Honourable Natalio Wheatley for steadfastly advancing our renewable energy agenda. Most importantly, I humbly recognise God's grace for empowering this journey, which we undertake together, guided by faith, determination, and hope.

Let today's ribbon cutting symbolise more than an opening ceremony: it is a beacon lighting our pathway to sustainability, prosperity, and resilience for all Virgin Islanders now and for generations to come.

Thank you for sharing in this historic moment. May we continue working together for a brighter, cleaner future.

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