GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Earth Day 2026: Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution in The Virgin Islands

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As The Virgin Islands marks Earth Day 2026, Green VI and the Governor's Office extend a Territory-wide invitation for all residents to take collective action against plastic pollution.

Under the local theme 'Planet vs. Plastics', this year's Earth Week (20 – 25 April) highlights the growing impact of plastic pollution—not only on the environment, but on human health, livelihoods, and the future of the Territory. The plastic we discard every day does not simply disappear. Instead, it breaks down into microplastics that are now found in what we eat, drink, fish in and breathe. Studies show that the average person consumes approximately 5 grams of plastic each week, the equivalent of a credit card, and a single plastic bottle can take up to 450 years to decompose.

In the Virgin Islands, marine litter directly affects key industries such as tourism and fisheries, as well as the overall wellbeing of communities. However, this challenge also presents an opportunity. When communities rethink how plastic is used and managed, litter does not have to remain waste; it can become a resource for new products, new ideas, and new economic opportunities for VI residents.

Dylan Penn, Director of Operations for Green VI shared: 'Recycling is more than waste management—it's the beginning of a circular economy. Plastics don't have a natural lifecycle, so we must create one by stewarding the overwhelming amount that already exists. This isn't about producing more; it's about transforming what we already have into value, keeping it in use and out of our oceans. When we get it right, plastic becomes a resource that fuels new products, new businesses, and new possibilities for The Virgin Islands.

Through PROMAR (Preventing Marine Litter in the Caribbean)—a regional initiative implemented locally by Green VI—The Virgin Islands is taking a proactive approach to preventing marine litter at its source, while advancing circular economy solutions. PROMAR brings together government, businesses, schools, and residents

to turn everyday habits into lasting solutions that protect the islands. When recycling systems are used effectively, plastic can be reused, repurposed, and transformed into new products and materials, creating new possibilities for innovation and sustainable development.

Commenting on the initiative, Governor of the Virgin Islands, Mr Daniel Pruce said: ‘Plastic pollution doesn’t just affect our environment - it affects our people, our economy and our future. Earth Day is a reminder that each of us has a role to play in protecting the natural beauty of The Virgin Islands. By working together and making a conscious effort each day, we can create a cleaner, healthier and more resilient future for generations to come.’

As part of Earth Week, members of the public are invited to participate in community coastal cleanups and attend Green VI’s EcoPark Open House, where residents can learn practical ways to reduce waste, recycle effectively, and rethink their relationship with plastic.

Governor Pruce was delighted to visit Green VI’s EcoPark yesterday (21 April) and learn about its wide ranging sustainability work, including recycling plastic into polywood, sustainable energy and water measures, organic waste management, a vegetable garden, and initiatives to reduce mosquito borne diseases.
Earth Week reinforces a simple but powerful message: how we manage our waste is a shared responsibility. Every choice—from what we buy to how we use and dispose of plastic—has an impact on the health, environment, and future of the Virgin Islands. Every time we recycle properly, we demonstrate care not only for our surroundings, but for the wellbeing of our community and the next generation.

Residents are encouraged to register and take part in Earth Week celebrations, joining others across the Territory in collective action to tackle plastic pollution.

Register online today or ring Green VI at 346-4040 for more information.

For Additional Information Contact:

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