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EPA Awards \$500,000 to U.S. Virgin Islands for Climate Pollution Reduction Planning

Federal funding aims to identify and enhance energy efficiency and green house gas reduction

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Sargassum at the Divi Carina Bay Resort on St. Croix in July 2022. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency is taking more steps toward supporting the U.S. Virgin Islands' efforts to combat climate change through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). EPA Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia, along with V.I. Energy Office Director Kyle Fleming and other dignitaries, announced a \$500,000 grant awarded to the VIEO under the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program.

This funding, part of the IRA's initiatives, is earmarked for the development of a comprehensive climate action plan for the USVI. The plan aims to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction across critical sectors such as electricity generation, industry, transportation, buildings, agriculture, natural and working lands, and waste management. The grant seeks to enable the USVI to pinpoint GHG reduction opportunities and assess the benefits of energy efficiency programs.

Garcia expressed her enthusiasm for the project, highlighting the unique position of Caribbean islands in the climate change battle. "People living in the U.S. Virgin Islands understand the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emission sources, and this funding is an important step forward in our joint efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change," she stated.

Echoing Garcia's sentiments, Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett lauded the grant as a transformative move for the territory's climate change fight, praising the commitment of VIEO and Mr. Fleming in securing this essential funding.

Discussing the immediate and severe consequences of climate change faced by the US Virgin Islands, Mr. Fleming emphasized the necessity of strategic planning and pollution reduction strategies for the territory's sustainable development. He views the CPRG planning funds as a vital catalyst in protecting the ecosystem while ensuring economic viability and cultural heritage preservation for future generations.

The announcement also highlighted the upcoming opportunity for further funding through the Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grants, part of the CPRG program's second phase. Launched in September 2023 with a \$4.6 billion competition, this phase aims to implement projects identified in the Priority Climate Action Plans developed by CPRG planning grant recipients. The Virgin Islands, having opted for the planning grant, are in a position to benefit from approximately \$300 million reserved for territories and Indian Nations under this initiative.

For more information on the CPRG Program, including available training, tools, and technical assistance, interested parties are directed to visit the EPA's dedicated webpages [here](#) and [here](#).