

Image not found or type unknown

New Rebate Program Launched to Support Battery Storage Adoption in USVI

The VIBES program offers financial aid for battery storage systems to help mitigate the impacts of erratic power supply from WAPA

Renewable Energy / **Published On May 31, 2024 12:59 PM /**

Staff Consortium **May 31, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



A Tesla powerwall battery mounted on a home.

The V.I. Energy Office on Friday, May 24 began accepting applications for the Virgin Islands Energy Storage (VIBES) Rebate Program, a new initiative funded by the State Energy Program Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (SEPIL).

This program offers up to \$4,000 in rebates for the installation of new residential or commercial battery storage systems, accompanied by either an automatic transfer switch or a smart critical load panel.

The initiative comes in response to the frequent operational disruptions and blackouts experienced by the V.I. Water and Power Authority, affecting residents across the territory. Stand-alone battery energy storage systems act as uninterruptible power supplies, providing homes and small businesses with a reliable power source during outages. The VIBES program is designed to make these systems more affordable, thereby enhancing community resilience to utility disruptions, the V.I. Energy Office said.

Eligibility for the rebate requires applicants to be full-time residents who own a property and have an active WAPA bill. The battery systems must also have a capacity between 3 kWh to 14 kWh and must be purchased from, and installed by, a local vendor registered with the VIEO.

This program is part of the territory's broader environmental sustainability efforts aimed at reducing reliance on portable generators and enhancing energy resilience through innovative solutions, the Energy Office said. By promoting the adoption of distributed battery storage, the VIEO said it aims to help WAPA integrate the latest advancements in electrical power generation that are proving effective in rural areas from Vermont to Puerto Rico.

In places like Puerto Rico, where utility LUMA anticipates power supply shortfalls, residential batteries can dispatch stored energy to stabilize the grid, preventing blackouts and reducing dependency on fossil fuel power plants. These grid-interactive systems allow utilities to manage energy demand dynamically, drawing on stored energy during peak times or reducing load when alternative resources are sufficient.

Residents interested in the VIBES program can find more details and application procedures on the VIEO website at energy.vi.gov. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. For additional support, residents can contact the VIEO offices at (340) 714-8346 on St. Thomas/St. John or (340) 713-8436 on St. Croix.