

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Territory's Use Of Fossil Fuel Down 20% Since 2009, Considered Leader In Clean Energy

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Ernice Gilbert **April 04, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- The territory has reduced its dependency on fossil fuel from almost 100 percent in 2009 according to the [Department of Energy](#) (DOE), to a reduction of roughly 20 percent in 2015, and is well on track to meeting its goal of reducing fossil fuel dependency by 60 percent in the year 2025.

These findings are a direct result of a partnership between DOE, the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), and the Virgin Islands. The effort is part of the [Energy Development in Island Nations](#) (EDIN) initiative that was created to help Caribbean islands adopt energy efficient measures and deploy renewable energy technologies, with the Virgin Islands being the pilot project of the initiative.



According to DOE, the territory has seen numerous renewable energy achievements since the project began in 2009.

The following are some of the benefits already realized in the Virgin Islands:

- A solar plant installed at the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas, one of the largest photovoltaic (PV) systems in the Caribbean, saves nearly \$1,000 per day in electricity costs.
- Energy efficiency upgrades on 11 schools produced an energy cost-savings of \$1.3 million the first year and \$1.7 million the second year. As a result, the Virgin Islands government has authorized \$35 million in funding to install lighting and water retrofits in 34 more schools.
- Nearly 1,500 solar water heating and PV systems have been installed throughout the territory, and 15 MW of distributed solar PV are either in place or under construction.
- DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory has collected the wind resource data needed to develop the territory's first commercial wind farm.

As a result of its success, the territory has been recognized as a leader in the Caribbean region in clean energy, and has begun sharing best practices with other Caribbean nations, including those that make up the [CARICOM](#) body at a Caribbean Clean Energy Technology Symposium (CCETS) held at the Frenchman's Reef and Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort in St. Thomas, from March 24-27.

The Caribbean Energy Security Initiative (CESI), organized by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, is replicating DOE's model of engagement in the Virgin Islands, and its success was praised by Biden at the Caribbean Energy Security Summit held in Washington, DC on January 26, 2015.

See video footage of Biden's keynote at the summit immediately below.

[View the original embedded media](#)

DOE says it will continue to provide Caribbean entities and other stakeholders "with a proven framework, objective guidance, and technical tools and resources for transitioning to a clean energy economy that relies on local resources to substantially reduce dependence on fossil fuels."

Feature Image: The 5 MW Estate Donor Solar Project on the island of St. Thomas

Image Credit: Energy.gov

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