

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Attorney General Claude Walker To Launch Investigation Into High Consumer Prices

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ST. CROIX -- Claude Earl Walker, the territory's acting attorney general, has been launching investigations and initiatives on multiple fronts -- from [the arrest](#) of former Governor John P. de Jongh, to [strong action being taken](#) against parents who owe child support -- and now, backed by a \$150,000 grant from the National Association of Attorneys General, Mr. Walker is set to take decisive action against businesses in the territory charging consumers exorbitant prices, including grocery stores, gas stations and other establishments.

"Virgin Islands residents have always been subjected to a higher cost of living, but the problem has grown worse," said the AG in a Department of Justice press release issued

late Tuesday. "Today more than ever the residents of the Virgin Islands are struggling to cope with the cost of daily living."

The release went on: "While mainland Americans have been able to enjoy lower costs for housing on gasoline, food, and other products, the Virgin Islands has experienced an upward trend in the price of consumer goods -- particularly with food and energy. And while Americans around the nation are uniformly experiencing lower prices, the people of this territory find it difficult to understand why consumer prices remain so untenably high. Recently, the problem has reached epic proportions for which market forces may not



Acting Attorney General Claude E. Walker.

The investigation will be launched in conjunction with the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, and will also delve into other possible causes of the price disparity, including fraud and other criminal activity.

"The hardworking people of the Virgin Islands have had enough of the high consumer prices at places such as gas stations, supermarkets and wherever basic goods and services are sold," Mr. Walker added. "We have to start to get to the bottom of this and today, we did with the award of the \$150,000.00 grant to investigate consumer fraud in the territory."