

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Senator Vialet Commends Gas Stations For Lowering Prices

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ST. CROIX -- Senator Kurt Vialet, one of the more vocal lawmakers on the issue of gas prices in the territory, has commended local gas stations around the territory for lowering the price of gas per gallon below \$3, a move he says will be good for local businesses as consumers will have more money to spend.

Currently, the average price for a gallon of gas in the territory is \$2.69 per gallon. Mr. Vialet said while that price is still above levels in the U.S., he says the current average is reasonable.

Mr. Violet had [criticized gas stations](#) here for what he said amounted to the "ripping off" of residents.

"On St. Croix and St. Thomas the gas stations are making more than a dollar a gallon," Violet said in late August. "When we had the increase of gas prices, the gas stations said they were paying more for electricity so they had to increase their rate. The cost of fuel was also more. Now, the cost of fuel has gone down, electricity has gone down by 50 percent but the prices [of gas] haven't gone down."

He went on: "The same thing for the supermarkets, they said they had to raise the price on a lot of goods in the supermarkets because they were paying an enormous cost for electricity. But the cost of electricity has literally been reduced by 50 percent yet we're not seeing a corresponding drop in goods across the Virgin Islands and gas stations."

After multiple stories from The Consortium, and incessant calls by Mr. Violet, gas prices saw a slight decrease from \$3.39 to \$3.07. Residents, however, seeing the noticeable difference between prices here compared to the U.S., bucked at the decrease and complained that consumers were still being overcharged.

And Mr. Violet wasn't the only lawmaker to commend gas stations for lowering gas prices. Senator Neville James, president of the 31st Legislature, said he was encouraged by the decrease.

"At a time when your local economy is at its most fragile state, the people of St. Croix could really use the extra dollars. The income gain from the pump, in addition to the job creation from the highly anticipated reopening of the refinery, will help jumpstart consumer confidence and eventually circulate back to businesses through sales and transactions," Mr. James said.

Feature Image: Shuama Gas Station.

Image Credit: VIC.