

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

-----0-----

VIRGIN ISLANDS ENERGY OFFICE

No. 45 Mars Hill
Frederiksted, V.I. 00840-4474

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Don Buchanan
Media Information Specialist
Office (340) 773-1082
Fax (340) 772-0063
E-mail: dbuchanan@vienergy.org

April 29, 2009

Energy Office Schedules Public Hearings on Stimulus Funds

The Virgin Islands Energy Office is holding three public hearings to inform residents about funds received under American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The U.S. Department of Energy has made available about \$31 million dollars for formula based grants.

The funds are divided in three categories – State Energy Program, \$20.7 million; Weatherization Assistance Program, \$1.4 million; Energy Efficiency Conservation Block grants, \$9.6 million.

The hearings will be held on each of the main islands in their respective senate buildings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. St. Croix hearing is May 5. St. Thomas is May 6 and St. John is May 7. A short presentation will be made and then Energy Office staff will be available to answer questions.

The stimulus act which gives preference to activities that can be started and completed expeditiously has several goals

- To preserve and create jobs and promote recovery
- To assist those most impacted by the recession
- To provide investments needed to increase economic efficiency by spurring technological advances in energy

The purpose of the Weatherization Assistance Program is to increase the energy efficiency of dwellings owned or occupied by low-income persons,

reduce their total residential expenditures, and improve their health and safety. The priority population for the Weatherization Assistance Program is persons who are particularly vulnerable such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, families with children, high residential energy users, and households with low incomes.

The goals under the State Energy Program are

- Increase energy efficiency to reduce energy costs and consumption for consumers, businesses and government
- Reduce reliance on imported energy
- Improve the reliability of electricity and fuel supply and the delivery of energy services
- Reduce the impacts of energy production and use on the environment

The Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants will focus on the development and implementation of energy efficiency practices. This effort will include building audits, financial incentives, grants to government and non-profit agencies, and programs to conserve energy in transportation.

This is the first year the Virgin Islands has been eligible for grant money under the Weatherization program. It is expected that funding will continue on an annual basis. However, the rest of the funds are just a one-time effort.

Anyone wishing for more information about the hearings are asked to call the Virgin Islands Energy Office, a division of the Governor's Office, at 773-1082 on St. Croix or 774.3320 on St. Thomas or St. John.