



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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GOVERNOR DE JONGH: VIRGIN ISLANDERS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET SOLAR WATER HEATERS

Gov. John P. deJongh Jr. said Tuesday there will soon be three separate programs which will allow residents to receive financial assistance for the purchase and/or installation of solar water heaters.

The programs, made possible with funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, are Renewable Energy Rebates, the Solar Thermal Revolving Loan, and the Solar Thermal in Moderate Housing Communities. The funds, commonly called stimulus funds, are being administered by the V.I. Energy Office.

DeJongh said, "Residents interested in getting a solar water heater with no money down and willing to finance the purchase and installation costs, may be eligible for an instant \$1,000 rebate, and up to \$3,500 in loans." This program will target 1,000 residents to benefit from a combination of renewable energy rebates and revolving loans. One million dollars has been set aside in rebates and \$3.5 million in revolving loan funds. "More money may be added to this program through an Energy Alliance Program which is currently under development," deJongh said. Adding, "The program has not yet started but residents can monitor the website at www.vienergy.org to get the starting date."

According to Energy Office Director Bevan Smith, "Another program being initiated by the Energy Office is the Solar Thermal in Moderate Housing Communities. This program offers incentives for the V.I. Housing and Finance Authority to install solar water heaters in 130 units." Up to \$600,000 is budgeted for this program which is presently being finalized.

Smith adds, "Besides these stimulus funds, there is another \$401,000 in our regular rebate program that can be tapped for all renewables and energy efficient appliances."

These programs will run in concurrence with mandates established in Act No. 7075, which deJongh signed into law earlier this year. A section mandating the installation of solar water heaters in new developments stated that the "developer shall use energy-efficient solar systems for providing not less than 70% of water heating." DeJongh said the programs that have been initiated are consistent with the dual objectives of achieving energy efficiency and reducing the cost to the ratepayer. "Our focus continues to be in putting in place programs that educate the community on ways they can reduce energy costs and then having the means to take advantage of the opportunities, especially during these financially difficult times. The success of this initiative is further reflected in the focus on training and employment opportunities for our young people provided by the Departments of Education and Labor," deJongh added.

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