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Governor Bryan Says Interior Department Grants For WAPA, GVI Vehicle Transitions is Advent of GO FLEET

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Applauding the $2.15 million in grants awarded by the Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) to the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority to advance their efforts toward electrifying their vehicle fleets, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. said the funds mark the beginning of the "Government Operations Fleet Efficiency & Electrification Transformation," or GO FLEET, which is part of the Bryan-Roach Administration's overarching initiatives toward alternative energy, cost-efficiency in government and protecting the environment.

OIA awarded $1.15 million to the GVI, which already has purchased a new Nissan Leaf electric car for the Office of the Governor in each district, and $1 million for WAPA, which said it will use to begin developing hybrid and electric fleet vehicles that include bucket and pick-up trucks as well as associated vehicles used to regularly maintain the territory's electric grids.

"These grants signify the start of a new direction for government vehicles that aligns with our bigger-picture initiatives of transferring to alternative energy sources in the Territory," Governor Bryan said. "Moving away from fossil fuels in our fleet of vehicles is not only more cost-effective and a responsible approach to helping protect our environment, it also helps us reduce our carbon footprint even as we face the increasing effects of global warming on our fragile island ecosystem."

Among the goals of the Administration's Vision 2040 plan for the Territory's future is that renewable sources of energy will represent 75 percent of total energy consumption 20 years from now.

“Electric vehicles do not require costly and emission heavy gasoline or diesel fuels for operation, and as the energy mix in the Virgin Islands continues to transition to more locally sourced renewable energy, the Territory’s transportation landscape is primed to become fully self-sustainable,” Governor Bryan said.

V.I. Energy Office (VIEO) Director Kyle Fleming said the funding from OIA will also be used to support the development of a network of charging stations throughout the Territory and comply with Act 7075, which mandates that the Government of the Virgin Islands adopt an energy-efficient fleet management plan.

“To that end, the VIEO in collaboration with the Department of Property and Procurement’s Transportation and Sustainability teams have been assessing the current fleet inventory and developing optimized vehicle procurement standards,” Director Fleming said. “To drive this initiative further, the VIEO has sought out a number of strategic partnerships with multiple industry leaders.”

Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Secunda Family Foundation, and the Electrification Coalition will support the VIEO to develop a Territory-wide transportation electrification road map and the broader electrification of the territory’s transportation sector, the Director said.

“Transportation electrification is a primary conduit to energy resiliency in the Virgin Islands, and the Territory is well-suited to leverage the rapidly developing technology and infrastructure within the industry,” Director Fleming said. “As a remote island nation, reducing the dependence of imported and volatile fossil fuels is critical to bolstering economic and societal sustainability.”

To complement the transition of the GVI vehicle fleet toward electrification, the Department of Property and Procurement also has developed a digital vehicle-tracking system that is has begun using to develop cost-cutting strategies for how and when the vehicles are used. The transition to electric vehicles also allows for deeper digital integration with tracking vehicle and electric fuel use.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is investing in the Territory’s people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit transparency.vi.gov

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