

Environmental Association St. Thomas - St. John (EAST)
PO Box 12379
St. Thomas VI 00801

Virgin Islands Conservation Society
Arawak Building, Suite 3
Christiansted, VI 00820

Members of the 28th Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building, Charlotte Amalie
P.O. Box 1690
St. Thomas, VI 00804

Dear Senators,

We recognize that since the 1978 enactment of the VI Solid Waste Disposal, Resource Recovery and Desalination Facility Development Act, it has been “the intent of the Government to encourage, wherever practicable, the salvage, reuse, recovery or recycling of wastes” (VIC TITLE 19, Chapter 56, §1557(a)).

Further, pursuant to VIC Title 19, Chapter 56 §1566: “The processing of solid waste by resource recovery facilities provides a preferred method of disposing of solid waste. The recovery of resources contained in solid waste promotes commerce, industry and employment opportunities... [and] The establishment of Solid Waste Disposal and Resource Recovery Facilities and Desalination Facilities by the Government of the United States Virgin Islands through the Waste Management Authority is hereby declared to be in the public interest and a public improvement vital to the welfare of the people of the Virgin Islands.”

This statutory policy notwithstanding, the Government of the Virgin Islands has failed (and continues to fail) to implement resource reuse, recovery and recycling effectively and at scale in the territory.

With imminent closure of landfills on St. Croix and St Thomas, reuse, recovery and recycling in Virgin Islands must be a high priority for your remaining days in office and for the upcoming session of the 29th legislature. In a recent speech before the a St. Croix Rotary Club, Carl-Axel Soderberg, Director of the US Environmental Protection Agency's Caribbean Environmental Protection Division remarked that the amount of solid waste produced by residents and visitors of the Virgin Islands is nearly double the 4.6 pounds per person produced stateside.

We must do better in reducing the solid waste stream that ends up in our VI dumps, along our roadsides, on our beaches, and in our coastal waters.

A large percentage of our solid waste is made of recyclable material such as aluminum cans, glass, paper, plastics and organic matter. Currently only aluminum cans may be recycled on a daily basis by the public, and even aluminum recycling is not occurring at significant scale.

In signing the attached petition, the EAST and VICS boards and members of the VI public assert their resolve that more must be done to aggressively promote reuse, recovery and recycling in the territory. Such promotion may require amending existing VI code and/or writing of new legislation in addition to implementing existing policy. The attached New York State Returnable Container Act represents a legislative approach that has proven effective in the Empire State. We offer it as a model from which to extract ideas and language that may help the Virgin Islands more effectively recycle containers and other recyclable materials.

Our intent is to provide an economically and environmentally sound mechanism for collection of empty containers and other recyclable materials; and to foster systems of redemption which facilitate recycling and reuse of empty beverage containers; at minimal cost and with minimal inconvenience to consumers and citizens of the USVI. We support you, our elected representatives, in furthering this goal.

Thank you,

EAST and VICS Board of Directors

Cc: John P. DeJongh, Governor of the Virgin Islands
May Adams Cornwall, Executive Director, VI Waste Management Authority

PETITION

Calling for immediate administrative and legislative action to stimulate effective and widespread reuse, recovery and recycling in the Virgin Islands

I support the need for a comprehensive assessment of USVI reuse, recovery and recycling programs and enactment of legislative amendments to the VI Solid Waste Disposal, Resource Recovery and Desalination Facility Development Act of 1978, as amended, and/or new legislation, to be determined after careful review of the New York State Returnable Container Act and statutes that have proven effective in other states. We ask you, our elected representatives, to take action on this request immediately.

NAME	SIGNATURE	ISLAND
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

