

Government of the United States Virgin Islands



VIEO, VIWAPA, DPNR: NEB - ELECTRICIAN CERTIFIED SOLAR INSTALLATIONS

Dear Virgin Islands Renewable Energy Community:

The Virgin Islands Energy Office (VIEO) in partnership with VIWAPA and DPNR have worked diligently in alignment with the Bryan/Roach administration's vision to create a sustainable renewable energy industry within the territory. Thus far, community engagement with the Net Energy Billing program has been promising. Applications continue to be submitted and have navigated through the various stages of the permitting workflow. We continue to strive to ensure that the permit process is streamlined and efficient for all who have and will submit applications. To that end, we have identified that many applications have not been able to navigate the permitting process to completion despite multiple months of processing. Additionally, it is clear that a significant amount of installations have continued to persist throughout the territory. In recognizing these challenges the VIWAPA, VIEO, and DPNR team has collaborated to creatively address the issue.

Beginning in **June 15th 2021**, Net Energy Billing applications will require a Certifying Letter and Installation Checklist from the Licensed Electrician associated with the project. Relative to the permitting workflow, the submission of the Certifying Letter and Installation Checklist will replace the following steps: **DPNR Electrical Plan Review, the DPNR Electrical Inspection, and DPNR Final Electrical Inspection**. The goal of the accepting the Certifying Letter and Installation Checklist is to expedite the DPNR approval process and ensure that applications will efficiently navigate the permit process to completion. The Certifying Letter and Installation Checklist must be signed and stamped by the Licensed Electrician associated with the project and uploaded to the project within the Net Energy Billing Portal or submitted within the Virgin Islands Energy Office. The template for the Certifying Letter and Checklist will be provided by the VIEO and made available for in office and/or download on the VIEO website energy.vi.gov.

The use of the Certifying Letter and Installation Checklist will function similarly to the "Electrical Certifications for Power Connections" that was implemented following the 2017 storms to ensure timely reconnection of weather heads throughout the community. The waiver of the **DPNR Electrical Plan Review, the DPNR Electrical Inspection, and DPNR Final Electrical Inspection** is a special consideration that has been granted to the Virgin Islands community. As a result, participation is **REQUIRED** from all non-registered grid interconnected Solar and Solar plus Storage installations throughout the territory. Strict enforcement protocols will be implemented for intentional non-compliance.

This joint communication serves to remind unregistered distributed energy stakeholders that the Net Energy Billing program is **NOT** a voluntary program. We expect all currently installed, non-Net Meter, and future grid-connected distributed energy installations to be registered within the program. The VIEO is in the process of scheduling in office walk-throughs of the online permitting portal, and we invite installers, electricians, and property owners to call 340-713-8436 to schedule an appointment on St. Croix and St. Thomas.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Fleming".

Kyle Fleming, Director

Government of the United States Virgin Islands



ELECTRICAL CERTIFICATION for the APPROVED INSTALLATION OF SOLAR SYSTEM within the Net Energy Billing Program

DATE: _____

TO: _____

FROM: _____

I, _____,

License No. _____ have assisted in the installation and inspection at

Plot No. _____ Estate _____

for (Home Owner) _____.

The Renewable Energy System installed at the above location has been completed in

accordance with the (_____) National Electrical Code and is ready for grid-

interconnection to the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority. If you have any

questions, please contact me @ _____ - _____ - _____.

Thank You.

Electrician Signature _____



THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF BUILDING PERMITS

**SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC GENERATION
INSTALLATION CHECKLIST
NET ENERGY BILLING PROGRAM**

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STX

PROJECT INFORMATION

Owner	Date	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Property Address	Contact Numbers Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____	
Dealer/Installer - Name & Address	Contact Numbers Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____	
VI License No.:	Electrician's License Number:	
Electrician		
Reviewer - Department Use	Date of Final Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Electrical

SYSTEM CHECKLIST

◆ Please complete **Part A** for our records.

Yes	No	A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
		1. Is a Copy of Equipment Data submitted with Application?
		2. Has a approved One Line Electrical Drawing been submitted with Application?
		3. Has the Net Energy Billing Application been submitted through VIEO's Online Portal?
		4. Does the Installed Solar and Energy Storage system match the values submitted with the Application?
		5. For installation of panel on roof, if the roof has more than 15 years useful life; is the load capacity of the roof certified to support the installation?
		6. Does DC, AC, & Grounding electrical configurations meet all local and current NEC Codes?
		7. Has a manual disconnect switch been installed?
		8. Does the manual disconnecting switch, installed between the customer's renewable/alternative energy system and the alternating current (AC) electrical system System, meet Local and latest NEC?
		9. Is manual AC disconnecting switch accessible to VIWAPA Personnel/First Responders? (Disconnect must be accessible and location clearly identified with the appropriate signage)
		10. Does all the alternative/renewable energy equipment satisfy the UL Certification requirement?
		11. Has signage been applied throughout the installation in alignment per NEC Article 690 and 705?
		12. Identifying marking (green paint) on mast head or weatherhead cap above 15ft?
		Owner Education
		13. Owner understands basic system operation?
		14. Owner knows whom to call in the case of an emergency?
		15. Owner understands proper shut-down and start-up procedure?

<p>Inverter:</p> <p>Manufacture: _____</p> <p>UL Number: _____</p> <p>Model Number: _____</p> <p>Serial Number: _____</p> <p>KW - Output: _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that the general requirements listed above have been met.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Electrician Signature & Stamp Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Owner Signature Date</p>
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Government of the United States Virgin Islands

VIRGIN ISLANDS ENERGY OFFICE

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

To whom it may concern,

The Net Energy Billing (NEB) Program is officially one year old. In the past year, the VI Energy Office – together with the VI Department of Planning & Natural Resources (DPNR) and the VI Water and Power Authority (WAPA) – has been listening to you, our Solar PV system installers and owners. We have been using your feedback to continually make adjustments where possible. With only a few systems fully registered in that time we decided to redesign the NEB application and enrollment process. These changes have greatly increased efficiency and ease of use, and decreased processing time.

A Simpler Application

We have made 3 changes that will impact the process of applying to the NEB Program. The first is that there is no longer a distinction between systems by size, instead all new systems will use the standard application. Secondly, systems on St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island will be separated from those on St. Croix. This will avoid steps being assigned to people who cannot complete them. Finally, we have reduced the number of fields on the application to include information needed by DPNR and WAPA and information that is not included on the uploaded system specification sheets.

A Faster Process

The biggest impact to processing time will come from the changes to the workflow. We have reduced the number of steps by thirty to fifty percent, reducing the number of people that need to handle an application. We have also adjusted the process so that multiple steps can be completed at the same time instead of only one. This change alone should double the processing speed. Importantly, we have reduced the number of payment steps. Where previously there were 3 steps requiring the applicant to pay a fee, now there is one optional step and one required step. When the NEB Application Fee and the DPNR Application Fee are charged, they can be paid, but payment is not required until after the DPNR Permit Fee is charged. This allows applicants to pay less in processing fees.

Electrician Certification for Previously Installed Systems (APPIS)

During the Amnesty Period, unregistered systems that are already installed will be able to submit an Electrician Certification & Checklist (EC). This document, signed and sealed by the electrician of record, certifies that the system has been installed in accordance with all applicable electrical and building codes, and places the responsibility of that system on the electrician. APPIS will use a separate application and will bypass DPNR's plan review and final inspection steps. Both the application fee and permit fees will still need to be paid however, and both the permit and final certificate will be issued. Any applications for APPIS which have not had their final inspections can submit an EC and progress beyond that point.

The VIEO thanks you for your patience over the past year. We hope this announcement will leave you with renewed excitement for the program. We also thank you for joining us in our commitment to making the Virgin Islands a safer, more sustainable community.

Sincerely,

Kyle Fleming
Director