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February
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Plastics recycling initiative launches in US Virgin Islands



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Plastics recycling initiative launches in US Virgin Islands

The Ocean-Bound Plastics Recycling Program, a joint venture between the Island Green Living Association and Michigan-based recycling company Padnos, launched earlier this month to jumpstart recycling of single-use plastics on St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The program will accept rinsed polyethylene terephthalate, high-density polyethylene and polypropylene plastics to be recycled by Padnos. U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Albert Bryan Jr., Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett and Senate President Donna Frett-Gregory joined Island Green Living President Harith Wickrema and Executive Director Kelly McKinney at the ribbon cutting.

Similar to Island Green Living's Aluminum Recycling Program, the collected plastics will be sorted and baled and then shipped to Padnos for recycling. The recycling company has committed to purchasing and transporting (using deadheaded shipping containers, or containers that otherwise would have returned empty, when possible) the aluminum and plastics Island Green Living collects, the nonprofit notes in a news release about the partnership.

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Padnos provided [Island Green Living](#) with a baler that has been installed inside a converted shipping container, so the processing operation is fully self-contained. It also has contributed funds toward a new pickup truck and will soon provide bins that will be placed at key trash sites throughout the island. Island Green Living says it will start collecting plastics and aluminum at these sites in addition to accepting material at its site on Giffit Hill Road just off Centerline, which has served for years as a collection point for aluminum cans. It also is offering a paid collection service to local bars and restaurants.

During the Feb. 18 ceremony, Wickrema said, “While recycling is what we are forging ahead with today, it is vital to remember that recycling should be the last step. Rethink before you purchase single-use plastic. If there is no other option, reduce wherever possible. Next reuse existing plastic and finally—let’s recycle. With the help of our governor, Department of Education and our elected officials, we can spread the message of the importance of source separation and emulate the best practices of a sustainable circular community.”

McKinney added, “The circular economy is the future. We must start thinking about the end of a product’s life in a more sustainable manner than sitting unproductively in a landfill. Recycling is an important cog in the wheel of sustainable materials management. Single-use plastics should be avoided, but once plastic is part of the waste stream, the Ocean-Bound Plastics Recycling Program aims to mitigate and reclaim this material that would otherwise pollute our territory’s waterways and overwhelm our landfills.”

“We are honored to be representing Padnos at this dedication,” Gary Barnett, director of plastics at [Padnos](#), said. “Since 1905 Padnos has been living our purpose statement: Continue to find ways to innovate, lead and make a positive impact in this world. Today is no different. This production center represents the innovation of a 42-year Padnos veteran, Bob Herweyer, and the Padnos IXL Fabrication Team.”

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