



SVG LOCAL

VINLEC Fuel Surcharge Rises 9 Cents – Tips for Businesses to Cut Energy Costs

Electricity customers will see a higher fuel surcharge on their July bills, despite a subsidy of EC\$734,959 applied by VINLEC. The surcharge has risen to \$0.8320 per kilowatt-hour, up from \$0.7378 in June 2026 – an increase of approximately 9 cents per kWh.

VINLEC states that the fuel surcharge is a pass-through charge that enables the company to recover the cost of fuel used in electricity generation, and that it does not profit from this charge. The steady increase in the surcharge in recent months has been attributed to rising global oil prices driven by ongoing geopolitical tensions.

Business Tip: Energy Efficiency First

With electricity costs continuing to rise, businesses can take practical steps to reduce consumption and protect their bottom line. Energy consultant Dr. Erwin Edwards, who recently facilitated a workshop for local MSMEs in SVG, emphasised that energy efficiency should come before renewable energy. He explained that if a business is wasting 20% of its energy, transitioning to solar without addressing that wastage means simply powering the waste with clean energy. By conducting an energy audit first, businesses can reduce consumption by up to 40% and then size a solar system to match the reduced need, saving significantly more.

Practical Energy-Saving Tips for Businesses:

- Conduct an energy audit: Identify where energy is being wasted – older equipment, inefficient lighting, or poor insulation.
- Upgrade to LED lighting: LED bulbs use up to 75% less energy than traditional bulbs and last longer.
- Power down equipment overnight: Turn off computers, printers, coffee machines, and display lights during non-operating hours.
- Install thermostats and timers: Heat or cool only the rooms that are in use, and set timers to turn off systems during quiet hours.
- Consider solar PV with storage: Once efficiency improvements are made, solar can reduce reliance on the grid, with excess energy potentially sold back to VINLEC.
- Monitor your usage: Track energy consumption regularly to identify spikes and adjust behaviour accordingly.

The Chamber encourages members to explore energy audits and efficiency measures as a first step toward reducing operating costs. The secretariat can connect members with information on local energy consultants and solar providers.



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Vincientian Entrepreneur Builds Thriving Business in Taiwan

A story of Vincentian ambition and resilience: Alshika Latham, who grew up in New Grounds and later moved to North Union, has built a successful baking business in Taiwan. Starting with a small household oven that could bake only 12 cupcakes at a time, Latham launched Shika's Treats nearly a decade ago.

Her breakthrough came at her first Christmas market in 2016, where she sold nearly 250 cupcakes within the first hour. Today, Shika's Treats serves customers from diverse backgrounds, offering custom cakes, cupcakes, banana bread, black cake, and other traditional Caribbean desserts.

The story, produced by a Vincentian journalism student in collaboration with the Embassy of SVG in Taiwan, highlights the potential of Vincentian enterprise on the global stage.



OECS

OECS Leaders Advance Proposal for Regional Airline

Discussions are continuing among OECS leaders on the establishment of a regional airline to improve the movement of people and goods, strengthen trade, and support economic growth throughout the subregion.

Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew of St. Kitts and Nevis provided an update on the proposal, noting that inadequate and unreliable air transportation continues to limit trade, tourism, and business development in the Eastern Caribbean. Drew indicated that any OECS-owned airline would need to be operated using sound commercial and management practices, serving the transportation needs of member states while providing connections beyond the subregion where feasible.

The proposal forms part of wider regional efforts to improve air and maritime connectivity, with the OECS previously identifying harmonised regulations, open-sky arrangements, and reduced barriers to travel as important components of a stronger regional transportation network.



CARICOM

Regional Leaders and Private Sector Agree on Affordability Measures

Against the backdrop of rising cost-of-living pressures across the Caribbean, CARICOM Heads of Government, the CARICOM Private Sector Organisation (CPSO), and the OECS Business Council (OBC) agreed on a series of practical measures to improve affordability during a high-level breakfast dialogue on July 6, 2026.

Key outcomes include:

- Regional ferry service: Leaders agreed on a September 2026 deadline for establishing the regulatory framework needed to support a private sector-operated regional ferry service. In the interim, a pilot ferry initiative will be pursued using a vessel offered by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.
- Non-tariff barriers (NTBs): A "pairwise" approach was adopted to tackle the 57 NTBs identified by the private sector as restricting intra-regional trade. Countries implementing barriers will work directly with affected states to develop time-bound solutions.

- Import diversification: The region stands to save approximately US\$2 billion through diversification of a portion of non-fuel imports.
- Tripartite compact: Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley called for a formal tripartite compact among governments, the private sector, and organised labour covering a basket of essential products, with private sector businesses accepting lower profits on essential goods to ease the burden on consumers.
- Executive Air Cargo: The meeting welcomed the start of operations by Executive Air Cargo, which has begun transporting agri-food products between CARICOM member states.
- Working groups: Participants agreed to establish working groups with defined timelines and measurable targets to monitor implementation of the commitments.



INTERNATIONAL

IDB Invest and ANSA McAL Announce US\$500 Million Strategic Partnership for Caribbean Growth

IDB Invest, the private-sector arm of the IDB Group, and the ANSA McAL Group, one of the Caribbean's largest and most diversified conglomerates, have announced a strategic partnership to support investments in key productive sectors across the region.

As part of the partnership, IDB Invest has approved financing of up to US\$500 million for ANSA McAL, with an initial commitment of US\$200 million. This includes US\$150 million from IDB Invest (a US\$100 million term loan and a US\$50 million revolving credit facility) and US\$50 million from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) through its Trust Fund Achieving Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (TADAC). This is IDB Invest's largest-ever financing in the Caribbean.

The financing will support investments in manufacturing, logistics, recycling, distribution, and supply chain infrastructure across the region, generating employment opportunities and enhancing competitiveness. IDB Invest and ANSA McAL will also collaborate on initiatives focused on circular-economy solutions, digital transformation, sustainability reporting, and energy efficiency. While the primary impact is in Trinidad and Tobago, the partnership is expected to deepen regional trade linkages and create a platform for future collaboration across the Caribbean, potentially benefiting SVG businesses through expanded supply chains and investment opportunities.



Member Spotlight: Gale Branch Appointed President of SVG Conservation Fund – Brings Chamber Leadership to the Role

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Conservation Fund (SVGCF) has appointed Gale Branch as President of its Board of Directors, effective July 13, 2026. Branch, who has served on the Board since February 2025 and previously held the position of Treasurer/Secretary, steps into the role following the tenure of Gideon Nash.

Chamber connection: Branch is also the Chamber's representative on the Conservation Fund Board, strengthening the link between private sector leadership and environmental stewardship. Her appointment ensures that the Chamber's voice is represented in decisions

affecting SVG's biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

As President, Branch will provide strategic leadership and governance oversight as the Conservation Fund continues to invest in initiatives that protect biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience, and empower communities through sustainable, locally driven solutions.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SECRETARIAT UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS



LOGISTICAL 2026 – International Transport and Logistics Exhibition

The 9th International Exhibition of Transport and Logistics (LOGISTICAL 2026) will be held from November 17–19, 2026 in Algiers, Algeria. The event is organized by the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI) in collaboration with the Algerian Society of Fairs and Exports (SAFEX). LOGISTICAL 2026 provides a platform for exploring cooperation and exchange of expertise between Algerian and foreign companies in the fields of land, sea, naval, air, and rail transport, as well as logistics, storage services, and supply chains. The Exhibition will also showcase technological solutions and innovative services related to these activities. SVG companies interested in participating are invited to complete the registration form available at <https://registration.safex.dz/login>. Further information can be found at <https://logistical.dz> or by contacting the organizers at 00213 660 84 99 43/45.

SECRETARIAT UPDATES



OECS Services Sector Training Workshop – July 20–23, 2026

The Foreign Trade Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Foreign Investment and Diaspora Affairs successfully hosted the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Specialised National Services Sector Training Workshops at the National Insurance Services Conference Room from 20 to 23 July, 2026. During the opening ceremony, Honourable Dwight Fitzgerald Bramble, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Foreign Investment and Diaspora Affairs stated: "The Government will continue to provide opportunities and create the space necessary to demonstrate our commitment to being a business government. I can assure you that you have our full support." Mrs. Delores Francis of the OECS Commission also emphasised the initiative's importance in equipping participants to navigate international trade in services. Over the four-day workshop, participants engaged in sessions on trade in services, regulatory reform, and e-commerce, concluding with a focus on market intelligence and the servicification of manufacturing.



CARICOM IMPACS Stakeholder Consultation

A member of the secretariat represented the Chamber at a consultation on the socio-economic assessment of unplanned explosions at state-owned explosive storehouses. Agro-Processing Stakeholders Forum – The Centre for Enterprise Development (CED) hosted a forum on June 24, 2026. Chamber members in food production, processing, packaging, and distribution were encouraged to attend.



Chemile Connel Completes WTO Trade Facilitation Training

Chemile Connel, a member of the Chamber secretariat, is currently participating in the OECS Specialized Training Programme for National Trade Facilitation Committees. The sixth module, titled "Understanding the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement – Part 1," explores 13 of the 36 provisions of the Agreement, focusing on measures aimed at enhancing transparency, promoting transit, and fostering collaboration between customs administrations across different countries. The module includes 18 videos, a handbook, and a series of quizzes and a final exam. Chemile's participation ensures that the Chamber remains informed on trade facilitation issues that affect SVG businesses, including customs procedures, border management, and regional trade efficiency. The Chamber will continue to engage with regional training opportunities to strengthen its capacity to support members on trade and policy matters.

Do you have a notice, job posting, or event you would like to share with the Chamber membership?

Submit details to svgchamber.industry.commerce@gmail.com

SVG Chamber of Industry and Commerce

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