

EPA Approves U.S. Virgin Islands' List of Waters Facing Pollution Threats; New Pollutants Included for Christiansted Harbor, the Offshore Southgate Subwatershed and Mangrove Lagoon

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(St. Croix, USVI) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the 2010 list of waters in the U.S. Virgin Islands that are considered either impaired or threatened by pollution. **An impaired water body is one that does not meet water quality standards even after pollution controls have been put in place.** A threatened water body is one that is expected to be impaired within two years. The list helps to set priorities for addressing current water pollution threats. The Clean Water Act requires states to assess the quality of their waters and to report their findings every two years to EPA. The list is compiled by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) and is a valuable tool for reaching the Clean Water Act goal of "fishable and swimmable" waters for the entire territory.

"The protection and restoration of waters throughout the Virgin Islands are critical to people's health and the economy of the Virgin Islands," said Judith Enck, EPA Regional Administrator. "The list of impaired and threatened waters in the Virgin Islands helps governments, businesses and concerned citizens create the best plans for eliminating the pollution that threatens water quality."

The list specifically includes impaired waters for which the development of a total maximum daily load (TMDL), a budget for water pollution, is necessary. TMDLs define the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. They are developed by states and approved by EPA once the Agency determines that the TMDL will allow the water body to achieve water quality standards.

The Virgin Islands and state governments throughout the U.S. designate the use of local waters for a range of activities including drinking water, swimming and recreation, and fishing. The 2010 list of impaired and threatened waters in the Virgin Islands identifies 204 instances in which a pollutant is causing an impairment of a water body that keeps it from supporting its designated use. The most common cause of the pollution problems are cloudiness in the water (turbidity), dissolved oxygen and bacteria.

The list also notes the sources of water pollutants. The most common sources include erosion and sedimentation; discharges from boats at marinas; and highway, road and

bridge runoff. A pollutant may come from more than one source.

U.S. Virgin Islands waters are assessed every two years for the presence of pollutants. In 2010, pollutants that had not previously been present in Christiansted Harbor, the Offshore Southgate Subwatershed, Mangrove Lagoon and other waters were identified in these waters. EPA will continue to build partnerships throughout the territory to ensure that impaired waters receive proper attention.

The complete list of impaired waters is available at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region02/water/waterbodies>.

- [U.S. Virgin Islands 2010 Impaired Waters List](#) | [EPA Fact Sheet](#) [PDF 22 KB, 3 pp]

[Please note that there were over 200 beaches in the USVI which were classified by the EPA as “impaired” in 2010, (based on data from 2007)

DPNR’s water tests taken during 2008 and 2009 were rejected by the EPA, which should have been immediately retaken in 2010. See the DPNR report attached.

Nonetheless, with only data from 2007, showing 204 of our beaches as being “Impaired” the EPA did not do any update, as required, even in 2011 or 2012, despite all the documented hundreds of millions of gallons of extra dumping in 2010-2011.

The EPA has finally started collecting data in September, 2013. Those tests, taken 7 years after the 204 impaired beaches, have not been shared with the people who swim in those waters].