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DLCA Calls for Price List Submissions as 2024 Hurricane Season Begins

DLCA mandates monthly hurricane price list submissions from businesses to prevent price gouging

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As the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season kicks off, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) is reminding businesses in the U.S. Virgin Islands of the critical requirement to submit their hurricane price lists by June 1. This regulatory measure is designed to safeguard consumers by preventing price gouging during emergencies and ensuring that essential supplies remain affordable and accessible.

DLCA Commissioner Nathalie Hodge emphasized the importance of these submissions, which are due on the first of each month until the end of the season on November 30. Businesses affected include retailers, wholesalers, and providers of crucial services such as food, water, medical

products, and construction services. The initiative targets those goods and services most necessary for hurricane preparation and recovery.

Failure to comply with these regulations could result in fines of up to \$200 for each item sold or service provided in violation of the law. Businesses can download a sample price list form from the DLCA website and submit their lists via email to consumerawareness@dlca.vi.gov.

The price list submission requests following a forecast by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicting an 85% chance of above-normal hurricane activity this year. The Climate Prediction Center's outlook for the Atlantic season suggests a range between 17 to 25 named storms, with 8 to 13 likely to escalate to hurricane strength, including 4 to 7 that could become major hurricanes.

This year's increased hurricane activity is attributed to factors such as near-record warm ocean temperatures, the onset of La Niña conditions, and reduced wind shear, which collectively create a conducive environment for storms. NOAA also highlights the role of a robust West African monsoon in potentially enhancing the strength and sustainability of storms crossing the Atlantic.

NOAA plans to bolster its forecasting and communication capabilities to better serve the public during hurricane threats. New technologies and updated operational strategies will be deployed, including expanded Spanish language advisories, an experimental inland storm threat graphic, and the use of advanced data collection tools like Sailydrones.