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WMA Announces Temporary Halt on Waste Disposal Fines for Christiansted Businesses

Moratorium announced after the Consortium highlights economic stress and lack of awareness among business owners regarding waste disposal laws

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Tsehai Alfred **June 19, 2024**

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Downtown Christiansted, St. Croix is a bustling business zone with everything from restaurants to jewelry stores By. GETTY IMAGES

The V.I. Waste Management Authority announced on Monday that the authority is enacting a moratorium on the [waste disposal citations](#) issued to Christiansted businesses—relieving financial stress caused, according to the business owners, by the citations and associated \$1,000 fines. The moratorium will last until until July 29th, according to VIWMA.

The citations, first issued in May, were given to business owners who violated VI Code Title 19, subsection 1563, which mandates that either businesses dispose of their waste at the Anguilla Landfill themselves, or hire a designated business trash hauler. After business owners told the Consortium that they were unaware of the law and unable to pay the fines due to the lack of business traffic caused by road closures and repairs in Christiansted, St. Croix Administrator Samuel Sanes [advocated for the charges to be dropped](#) and proposed an educational campaign on waste disposal regulations.

Acceding to Mr. Sanes's requests, WMA will carry out a "media campaign" along with the moratorium to better inform the public on the regulations. "Sometimes people do not understand the statutes. They don't read the Virgin Islands Code and we want to make that available for everyone," said Lorna Minkoff, communications director for VIWMA.?

According to Ms. Minkoff, the business owners' claims that they were given the citations despite being unaware of the law were a primary factor in enacting the moratorium. "Any time in a community where you see people are trying to learn and understand the rules that are in place, you give everybody the best chances," Ms. Minkoff told Consortium journalists, describing the moratorium as an opportunity for an "even playing field."

While the director of enforcement for WMA, Anderson Poleon, previously said that the authority held town hall meetings during which business owners were cautioned to comply with the regulations before they were enforced, Ms. Minkoff said that the upcoming campaign will include virtual meetings as well as radio and television notices for greater accessibility.

Ms. Minkoff advised business owners and residents who believe the code should be amended—arguing that the regulation is unnecessary for small businesses who produce little waste each week—to contact their local senators. "Ask them about the laws and how you can change it for the betterment of the community," Ms. Minkoff recommended.