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DLCA Cites 60 of 90 Businesses for Expired Products; DOJ Pursues 16 Gas Retailers Over Subpoenas

Sixty of 90 businesses inspected by DLCA were cited for expired products, while 16 St. Thomas-St. John gas retailers remain under DOJ pursuit over subpoenas. The agency is also expanding enforcement and studying short-term rentals, gas, food and housing.

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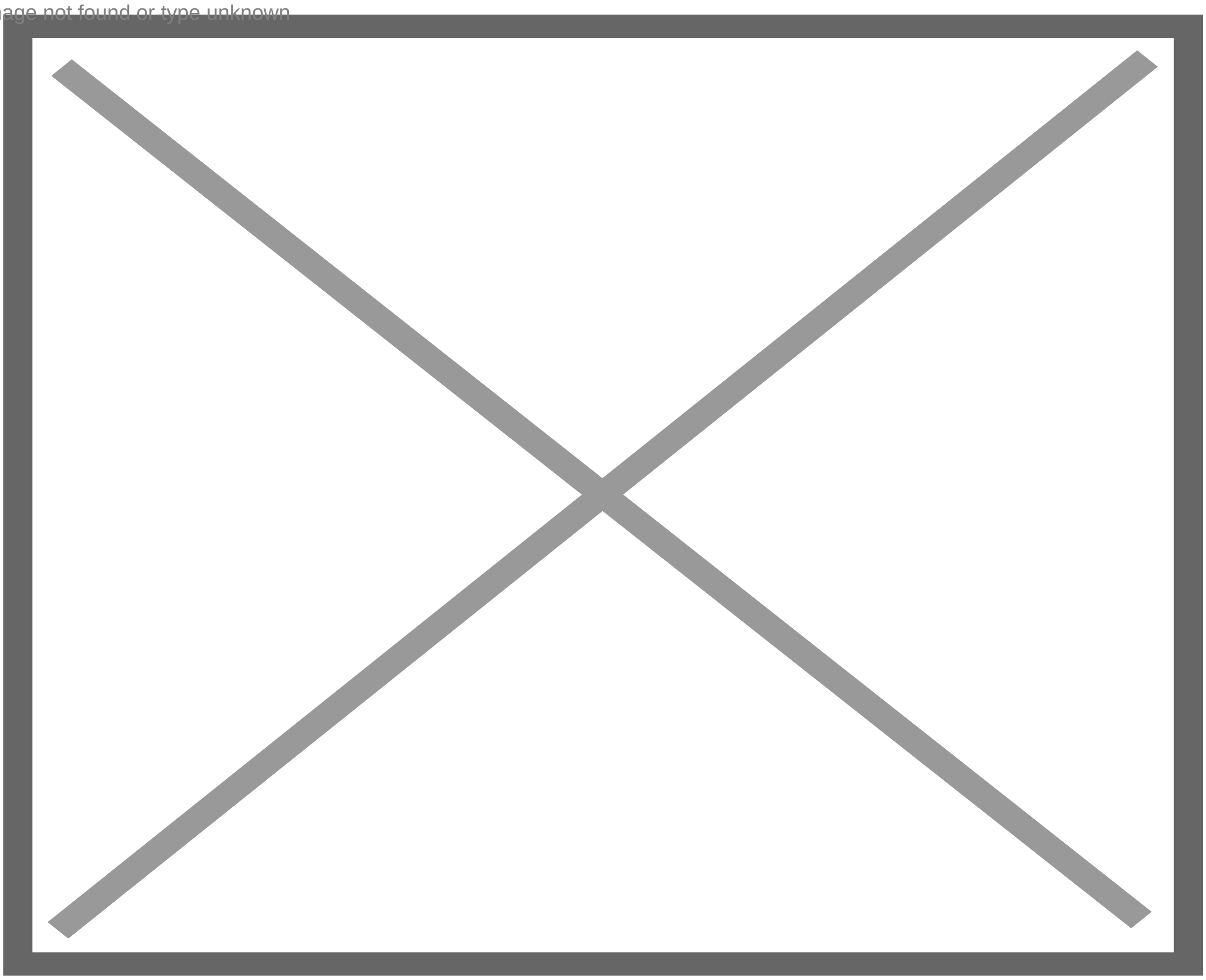

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs told lawmakers that 60 of 90 businesses inspected territorywide were cited for expired products, while the Department of Justice continues pursuing 16 gasoline retailers in the St. Thomas-St. John District as DLCA prepares to expand enforcement and complete studies of short-term rentals, fuel, food and housing.

Those initiatives form part of the department’s fiscal year 2027 priorities, which also include improving the collection of unpaid citations.

DLCA is requesting $6,566,712 from the General Fund for FY2027 and another $700,000 from the Consumer Protection Fund.

A $323,888 increase to the department’s revised fiscal year 2026 General Fund appropriation will finance the short-term rental market study. Commissioner H. Nathalie Hodge said the review is expected to identify “licensing and compliance gaps…” and that its findings will guide enforcement and “any necessary legislative or regulatory recommendations.”

DOJ Pursuing Gas Retailers Over Subpoenas

DLCA is also moving forward with its gas, food and housing study and completing its fuel market analysis.

As part of that work, all 63 gasoline retailers in the territory were subpoenaed. Hodge testified that 48 complained and three inactive retailers were exempt.

All gasoline retailers on St. Croix have complied, but DOJ is still pursuing 16 retailers in the St. Thomas-St. John District, she told Sen. Hubert Frederick.

Sen. Marvin Blyden commended DLCA for resorting to legal action.

“I've been advocating for that for some time because it's critical that they do their part and be part of this community and follow all applicable laws.”

Enforcement Expected to Increase

Expanded enforcement is another central component of DLCA’s fiscal year 2027 strategy.

Hodge said a decline in the value of Consumer Protection citations during FY2026 “reflects staffing shortages and fleet maintenance issues that limited proactive field inspections.”

Despite those challenges, “high risk complaints” were prioritized, and enforcement is expected to increase “as staffing and operational capacity improve in FY 2027.”

During FY2026, the Division of Enforcement assessed $48,050 in civil penalties. Hodge’s testimony did not identify the specific period covered by that amount.

DLCA has also identified a “gap between citation issuance and collection” because “no dedicated process consistently monitored payments, payment plans, delinquency, and escalation.”

The department has since established a “collection tracking function.”

Between October 2025 and June 2026, DLCA collected $135,116 from $167,013 in penalties assessed during the same period.

To expand enforcement capacity, the department is requesting an additional enforcement officer for the St. Thomas-St. John District and another Weights and Measures inspector for St. Croix.

Hodge is also asking lawmakers to preserve a $150,000 appropriation for overtime and nighttime differential.

That funding allows DLCA personnel to inspect bars, nightclubs and other establishments selling alcohol during evenings and weekends, “when those businesses operate, and compliance concerns are most likely to arise,” she explained.

60 Businesses Cited for Expired Products

DLCA’s enforcement activities extend beyond alcohol establishments and gasoline retailers.

Reviewing fiscal year 2026 activity, Hodge told senators that the Weights and Measures Division inspected 90 businesses territorywide and found that 60 were “cited for expired products.”

Twenty-eight of those businesses were on St. Croix, 30 were on St. Thomas and two were on St. John.

The figures concerned Blyden.

“It says a lot about our health and what we are buying and eating from these businesses.”

Rum Exports Increase

Sen. Kurt Vialet, meanwhile, focused on data showing that DLCA tracked 16,241,273 gallons of rum exports between October 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026.

Assistant Commissioner Horace Graham confirmed that the figure is “slightly up” from the previous fiscal year.

Vialet projected that the amount of proof gallons could reach 21 million by the end of the fiscal year.

“Which would be good for us because that's more rum cover over [and] more money for the retirement system.