

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DPNR Should Study Whether Rum Fungus Is A Danger To Health, Violet Says

Health / **Published On April 26, 2015 11:50 AM /**

John McCarthy **April 26, 2015**



ST. CROIX – A local Senator wants the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) to find out if the black mold that grows West of mid-island on everything from street signs to buildings to plant life is a danger to human health.

Sen. Kurt Violet said he has asked DPNR to study what he called the “rum fungus” or “fungus *Baudoinia compniacensis*” that he said is the common name and scientific name respectively of the black mold that “feeds on the ethanol vapor released by liquor as it ages.”

Violet said the rum fungus is plainly visible on the street, directional and speed limit signs on St. Croix's highways from mid-island to Frederiksted and makes them difficult for locals and visitors to read.

"The black mold has partially and in some cases completely covered the landscape, buildings, personal property and street signs," he said. "The condition of the affected areas is aesthetically unpleasant and damaged."

The freshman St. Croix senator said it is likely that property values will go down in neighborhoods affected by the rum fungus blight, but what is more important is how the black mold affects the food we eat that is grown locally.

"Communities are affected by fungus growing on fruit and vegetable trees and plants," Violet said. "Crops cannot be consumed or sold, resulting in a decrease in food supply and income."

Violet called on DPNR to do a study of the black mold to see if a scientific link can be established between the rum fungus and local rum companies' vapors. Once a link was established, citations and fines could be levied on the companies.

He added that a DPNR study should also be done to determine the health effects of the black mold on the affected neighborhoods and estates.

Feature Image: Road sign in Estate Cane Carlton