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Hotel and Tourism Association Seeks to Learn Impact of Sargassum on Local Businesses and Use Data to Secure Federal Funding for Mitigation

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Sargassum invasion at Margaritaville Vacation Club. By. THE USVI HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

The USVI Hotel & Tourism Association on Friday called on business owners territory-wide to provide feedback regarding the socio-economic impact of Sargassum on the tourism industry.

The move comes as the association seeks to secure federal funding for Sargassum mitigation. To that end, it has released a survey to both member and non-member businesses in the territory aiming to gather as much data as possible.

“It is essential we collect ample feedback from businesses within the territory so we have the data to support our request for funding,” said USVIHTA President Lisa Hamilton. “The financial repercussions of the Sargassum invasion over the last ten years have been substantial, and we need to act now.”



Sargassum invasion at Sapphire Bay Marina, St. Thomas (Credit: USVI Hotel & Tourism Association)

Business owners within the territory can take the survey at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sargassum>. The association is asking for feedback by Aug. 25.

The association said that since 2011, Sargassum events have resulted in excessive seaweed-stranding biomass, causing considerable damage to the environment, human health and the local economy of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Caribbean region. Sargassum events continue to strengthen every two to three years with multiple contributing factors and ever-growing consequences.

If you have any questions about the survey, reach out to Lisa Hamilton at lisa@usvihta.com or USVIHTA Environmental Committee Co-Chair Valerie Peters at blueflagusvi@gmail.com. USVIHTA thanks businesses in advance for their participation.

Correction: Aug. 21, 2021

A previous version of this story mistakenly included the wrong description for the photo placed in the article. We've updated the story to reflect the correct information.