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Ritz-Carlton Resort to Pay \$30,000 Penalty for Clean Water Act Violations, Announces EPA

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Ernice Gilbert **July 26, 2023**

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Discharge points at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in St. Thomas, USVI By. EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced a settlement against the Ritz-Carlton Resort in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands for failing to adhere to regulations specified under the Clean Water Act. The resort's violations include neglecting to monitor and report its discharges of treated wastewater over nearly five years, according to the agency.

The Ritz-Carlton is expected to pay a civil penalty of \$30,000 for the violations. The company has reportedly addressed the issues causing the violations and will be initiating a supplemental environmental project (SEP), projected to cost approximately \$27,000. The project aims to protect a local wetland and enhance the water quality in Turquoise Bay.

EPA Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia emphasized the importance of corporate compliance with environmental regulations. "The Ritz-Carlton is required to monitor its discharges into the ocean under the conditions of the Clean Water Act permit. EPA will hold companies accountable when they violate critical laws that protect public health and the environment," she said.

The permit issued under the Clean Water Act mandates the resort to monitor its wastewater discharges for specific pollutants and report the findings. This monitoring forms the crux of the EPA's ability to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act.

In its violation, the Ritz-Carlton failed to carry out its responsibilities under the permit, leading to significant environmental non-compliance. The EPA's review discovered insufficient monitoring of treated wastewater discharges from the resort's desalination operations, marking a breach of the resort's permit.

The Ritz-Carlton's upcoming SEP will consist of installing an oil and water separator and sediment trap to reduce the discharge of oil and sediment into Turquoise Bay. Additionally, a second sediment trap will be installed to minimize the discharge of sediment into a wetland on the resort's property.

These improvements are designed to enhance the health of the waters, benefiting the local community and wildlife.