

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
CONSUMERS AND VETERANS AFFAIR

**BILL NO. 33-0043**

**Thirty-Third Legislature of the Virgin Islands**

**March 25, 2019**

An Act amending title 27, chapter 9 of the Virgin Islands Code by adding a section 305h providing for a ban on the retail sale or offer for sale, and the distribution or importation for retail purposes of topical sunscreen products containing oxybenzone and octinoxate

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**PROPOSED BY:** Senators Marvin A. Blyden and Janelle K. Sarauw

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1       **WHEREAS**, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands finds that two chemicals, oxybenzone  
2 and octinoxate, contained in many sunscreen and personal-care products, have significant  
3 harmful impacts on the Virgin Islands' marine environment and ecosystem, including coral  
4 reefs that protect the Virgin Islands' shoreline;

5       **WHEREAS**, oxybenzone and octinoxate cause mortality in developing coral, increase  
6 coral bleaching that indicates extreme stress, even at temperatures below 87.8 degrees  
7 Fahrenheit, and causes genetic damage to coral and other marine organisms;

8       **WHEREAS**, these chemicals have also been shown to inhibit recruitment of new corals  
9 and degrade corals' resiliency and ability to adjust to climate change factors;

10       **WHEREAS**, oxybenzone and octinoxate appear to increase the probability of endocrine  
11 disruption and scientific studies show that both chemicals can induce feminization in adult  
12 male fish and increase reproductive diseases in marine invertebrate species, e.g., sea urchins';



1 vertebrate species, e.g., fish such as wrasses, eels, and parrotfish; and mammals, in species  
2 similar to the bottlenose dolphin;

3 **WHEREAS**, the chemicals have also been found to cause deformities in the embryonic  
4 development of fish, sea urchins, and coral, and induce neurological behavioral changes in  
5 fish that threaten the continuity of fish populations;

6 **WHEREAS**, species that are listed on the federal Endangered Species Act and inhabit  
7 Virgin Islands' waters, including sea turtle species, coral species, marine mammals, and  
8 migratory birds, may be exposed to oxybenzone and octinoxate contamination;

9 **WHEREAS**, elevated levels of oxybenzone and octinoxate have been detected at  
10 popular swimming beaches and critical coral reef areas throughout the Territory, including  
11 Trunk Bay, Hawksnest Bay and Buck Island;

12 **WHEREAS**, the Legislature further finds that environmental contamination of  
13 oxybenzone and octinoxate persists in the Virgin Islands' coastal waters, as the contamination  
14 is constantly refreshed and renewed daily by swimmers and beachgoers, and swimming and  
15 other water activities cause these chemicals to pollute Virgin Islands' waters, unless they are  
16 actively mitigated;

17 **WHEREAS**, sewage contamination of coastal waters is another source of oxybenzone  
18 and octinoxate environmental contamination, as these chemicals are not removed by the  
19 Territory's wastewater treatment system and oxybenzone and octinoxate are also discharged  
20 to the ground and surface waters from functioning septic systems, leaking septic systems, and  
21 municipal wastewater collection and treatment systems; and

22 **WHEREAS**, the purpose of this legislation is to seek to preserve marine ecosystems,  
23 including coral reefs, by, beginning January 1, 2021, restricting the sale, offer for sale, and  
24 distribution in the Virgin Islands of topical sunscreen products containing oxybenzone and



1 octinoxate to licensed pharmacies or drug stores to be dispensed by prescription only from a  
2 licensed healthcare provider; Now, Therefore,

3 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:*

4 **SECTION 1.** Title 27, chapter 9 of the Virgin Islands Code is amended by adding a  
5 new section 305h to read as follows:

6 **“§ 305h. Prohibition on the sale, importation and distribution of sunscreen and**  
7 **personal-care products containing oxybenzone or octinoxate**

8 (a) For purposes of this section:

9 (1) “oxybenzone” means the chemical (2-Hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)-  
10 phenylmethanone under the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry  
11 Chemical Nomenclature Registry, that has a Chemical Abstract Service Registry  
12 Number 131-57-7, and whose synonyms include benzophenone-3, Escalol 567, Eusolex  
13 4360, KAHSCREEN BP-3, 4-methoxy-2-hydroxybenzophenone and Milestab 9, and is  
14 intended to be used as protection against ultraviolet light radiation with a spectrum  
15 wavelength from 370 nanometers to 220 nanometers in an epidermal sunscreen-  
16 protection personal-care product.

17 (2) “octinoxate” means the chemical ((RS)-2-Ethylhexyl(2E)-3-(4-  
18 methoxyphenyl)) prop-2-enoate under the International Union of Pure and Applied  
19 Chemistry Chemical Nomenclature Registry, that has a Chemical Abstract Service  
20 Registry Number 5466-77-3, and whose synonyms include ethylhexyl  
21 methoxycinnamate, octyl methoxycinnamate, Eusolex 2292, NSC 26466, Parsol MOX,  
22 Parsol MCX and Uvinul MC80, and is intended to be used as protection against  
23 ultraviolet light radiation with a spectrum wavelength from 370 nanometers to 220  
24 nanometers in an epidermal sunscreen-protection personal-care product.



1           (3) “Licensed healthcare provider” means a physician or osteopathic physician  
2 licensed pursuant to chapter 1, subchapters I and II of this title, or an advanced practice  
3 registered nurse licensed pursuant to chapter 1, subchapter IV of this title.

4           (4) “Prescription” means an order for medication that is dispensed to or for an  
5 ultimate user. Prescription does not include an order for medication that is dispensed  
6 for immediate administration to the ultimate user, such as a chart order to dispense a  
7 drug to a bed patient for immediate administration in hospital but includes an order for  
8 sunscreen.

9           (5) “Sunscreen” means a product marketed or intended for topical use to prevent  
10 sunburn. Sunscreen does not include products marketed or intended for use as a  
11 cosmetic, as defined in section 301(i) of the Federal Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act, title  
12 21, chapter 9, subchapter II of the United States Code, for use on the face.

13           (b) Unless prescribed by a licensed healthcare provider and imported, distributed and  
14 offered for sale by a licensed pharmacy or drug store as defined in 27 V.I.C. § 141, it is  
15 unlawful to:

16           (1) sell, offer for sale, or distribute in the Virgin Islands any sunscreen product  
17 that contains oxybenzone or octinoxate, to include lotions, pastes, balms, serums, or  
18 ointments;

19           (2) import into the Virgin Islands for sale any sunscreen product that contains  
20 oxybenzone or octinoxate, to include lotions, pastes, balms, serums, or ointments; or

21           (3) bring into, use or possess, while in the Virgin Islands, any personal-care  
22 products that contains oxybenzone or octinoxate, to include lotions, pastes, balms,  
23 serums, or ointments.

1 (c) After notice and an opportunity to be heard, the Department of Licensing and  
2 Consumer Affairs shall fine any person or entity found to have violated subsection (a), (b), or  
3 (c) of this section \$1,000 for the first offense and \$2,000 for each subsequent offense.

4 **SECTION 2.** This Act becomes effective January 1, 2021.

5 **Bill Summary**

6 This Bill bans the sale, offer for sale, distribution and importation of oxybenzone and  
7 octinoxate in the Virgin Islands after January 1, 2021, unless prescribed by a licensed  
8 healthcare provider.

9 **BR19-0160/March 18, 2019/SLR/Reviewed by EEM**