



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION**

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Thursday, February 5, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

**I. NOTICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DPNR)
DEVELOPMENT OF A TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) DOCUMENT FOR THE ST. THOMAS
EAST END RESERVE (STEER)**

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) has developed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) document for the St. Thomas East End Reserve (STEER), pursuant to Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act and the Water Pollution Control Act, Title 12, Chapter 7 of the VI Code.

II. DATE OF NOTICE: February 6, 2026

III. DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL PERMIT VIGSA0000

The STEER is a 3.7 square mile collection of marine reserves and wildlife sanctuaries that includes the last remaining mangrove lagoon on St. Thomas. STEER is widely recognized as one of the USVI's most significant nursery grounds for commercially- and recreationally-important fisheries. STEER is comprised of Mangrove Lagoon, Benner Bay, Compass Pt. Salt Pond, Nazareth Bay, Cowpet Bay, and Great Bay. The STEER watershed is comprised of 6.2 square miles of upland area that drains directly to these waters.

This Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) document focuses on the impacts observed in the St. Thomas East End Reserve (STEER) and presents the extent and basis of the pollutant impairments. This document details what is known about the sources of the pollutants, outlines the degree to which pollutant sources need to be reduced to meet water quality standards (WQS), identifies the source control practices that could reduce pollutant loadings, and describes the range of pollutant reductions that can be achieved from the practices. STEER assessment units include impairments caused by enterococcus bacteria, dissolved oxygen (DO), turbidity, and temperature. Previous TMDLs have been developed and approved for Benner Bay Lagoon Marina and Mangrove Lagoon for fecal coliform and DO.

IV. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Document for the St. Thomas East End Reserve (STEER) are available for public inspection online at [Water Quality Management Program - Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources](#).

To submit comments, contact:

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DPNR is allowing a 60-day period for soliciting public comment on its intent to finalize the TMDL for the STEER. Comments must be submitted by email to mary.stiehler@dprn.vi.gov, on or before **Tuesday, April 7, 2026**.

V. DPNR'S RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Following the close of the 60-day comment period, a written response to comments and petitions will be developed as soon as possible. Comments must be submitted to DPNR at the above-mentioned address by email on or before April 7, 2026. All comments received during the public notice period will be considered. This response to comments will be available to the public in the same manner as today's notice.