Our reefs are **DECLINING IN HEALTH** due to **CLIMATE CHANGE**, **DISEASE**, **UNSUSTAINABLE TOURISM & RECREATION**, **UNSUSTAINABLE FISHING**, **VESSEL GROUNDINGS**, **IRRESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT & RUNOFF**, **STORMS**, **MARINE DEBRIS**, **CLIMATE CHANGE**, **DISEASE**, **TOP THREATS**

### Reef Value

- **$187 million**
- **up to 97%**

### Top Threats

- **IRRESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT & RUNOFF**
- **VESSEL GROUNDINGS**
- **UNSUSTAINABLE FISHING**
- **STORMS**
- **UN Sustainable Tourism & Recreation**
- **CLIMATE CHANGE**
- **DISEASE**
- **MARINE DEBRIS**

### How DPNR & Partners Protect and Restore Our Reefs

- **Development and implementation of the territory’s first coral restoration plan, including innovating techniques to grow corals on land and underwater to restore degraded reefs.**
- **Development of watershed management plans to mitigate land-based sources of pollution to nearby coral reefs.**
- **Facilitation of a group of community-based conservation organizations focused on outreach and education.**
- **Funding for removal of derelict vessels and marine debris from territorial waters.**
- **Management and enforcement of territorial and federal Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).**
- **Creation of laws protecting coral reefs such as the single use plastic straw ban, sunscreen ban, and building and zoning best management practices.**

### Highlights of These Activities Include:

- **Funding for removal of derelict vessels and marine debris from territorial waters.**
- **Management and enforcement of territorial and federal Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).**
- **Creation of laws protecting coral reefs such as the single use plastic straw ban, sunscreen ban, and building and zoning best management practices.**

### How Senators Can Help

- **Consider coral reefs and possible connections to each policy/decision and whether it will affect the health of our coral reefs. Support reef-friendly policies, comprehensive land and water use planning, and enforcement of best practices.**
- **Create a sustainable funding mechanism that generates funds through tourism to protect coral reefs.**
- **Draft and advocate for legislation naming USVI coral reefs as a priority protected habitat accompanied by funding for coral reef research, outreach programs, and protections.**

### How Senators Can Help

- **92% agree that coral reefs are important to USVI’s culture.**
- **79% swim.**
- **78% recreate at the beach.**
- **45% snorkel.**
- **> 40% fish or gather marine resources.**

### Our USVI Coral Reefs...

- **ARE WORTH $187 MILLION ANNUALLY,** which includes values from tourism, recreation, culture, amenities, commercial fisheries, and coastal protection.¹
- **SERVE AS NATURAL BREAKWATERS,** diminishing wave energy by up to 97% and providing $47 million in annual fixed protection benefits to people, properties, and economic activity.²
- **97% of USVI residents are aware that coral reefs protect the USVI from erosion and natural disasters.³**

As a result of Earth’s changing climate, scientists predict more frequent and severe storms in the coming years. Without the protection provided by reefs, more money will be needed for infrastructure repairs in coastal areas, which will be increasingly costly to the territory.

### As A Result Of The Loss Of Reefs...³

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