



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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PRESS RELEASE

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) – Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has released the draft 2024 Integrated Water Quality Report for public review. This federally required report, submitted every two years under the Clean Water Act, evaluates whether CNMI's waters are safe for recreation, aquatic life, and other important uses.

The 2024 report is significantly shorter –117 pages compared to more than 350 in 2022– making it easier for the public to understand while still meeting federal requirements.

Highlights from the 2022-2024 cycle include:

- **Stable Conditions Overall** – Water quality has held steady since the last reporting cycle.
- **Improvements Documented** – 12.3 miles of coastal waters were removed from the impaired list for nitrate due to improved water quality, and 32.1 miles on Saipan and Tinian were removed from the list of pH after faulty measurements were confirmed.
- **Expanded Stream Monitoring** – Four new Saipan stream systems were surveyed. Upper reaches showed strong aquatic life support, though urbanized lower channels remain impaired.
- **Persistent Challenges** – Enterococci bacteria, nutrients, heavy metals, wetland alterations, and legacy debris continue to drive impairments.
- **Ongoing Action** – CNMI is carrying out its federally approved bacteria reduction plan, investing in wastewater system upgrades, stormwater controls, and watershed management projects to protect public health and the environment.

The draft report and supporting data are available at [BECQ's News Page](#). Public comments are invited before the report is finalized later this year, and may be submitted to BECQ in-person, by mail, or by email to cnmi.waterquality@gmail.com.