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## **The Republic of Palau Adopts the World's Strictest National Sunscreen Standard**

**Palau is the first country in the world to ban all active sunscreen ingredients and preservatives known or suspected to be reef-toxic.**

In 2018, President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., of the Republic of Palau, signed The Responsible Tourism Education Act of 2018 into law, which prohibited sunscreens containing ten ingredients from being imported, distributed, sold, manufactured, or brought into the Republic starting January 1st, 2020. Pursuant to that law, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment, and Tourism has just promulgated new regulations that tighten existing restrictions on sunscreens by adopting a precautionary approach that bans all active sunscreen ingredients and preservatives known or suspected to be reef-toxic.

The adoption of these *Regulations Prohibiting Reef-Toxic Sunscreens* strengthens a national standard that was already the strictest in the world by, among other things, adding to the list of banned ingredients in the regulations. The updated list substantially increases the number of banned ingredients and, as of the time of adoption, essentially limits legal sunscreens to those that exclusively use zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide as their active ingredients and do not contain parabens, triclosan, triclocarban, or phenoxyethanol. These additions to the list of banned ingredients align with a determination made last year by the US Food and Drug Administration that of the currently marketed active ingredients in the United States, only zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are “generally regarded as safe and effective” for use in sunscreens.

The new regulations also adopt a groundbreaking regulatory approach for sunscreens based on the precautionary principle. Instead of waiting for scientific studies to conclusively prove an ingredient is reef-toxic before banning it, MNRET has decided to prohibit any sunscreen ingredient suspected of being reef-toxic. Furthermore, to ensure that the new regulations remain responsive to scientific advancements, MNRET may also amend the list to remove banned ingredients if scientific research studies definitively reveal that ingredients prohibited by these regulations are not reef-toxic.

Apart from contributing to the protection of the Palau's pristine environment, these regulations further establish Palau as a destination that educates tourists about responsible tourism and the protection of the environment.