

Protect Choctawhatchee Bay

A request for evidence, enforcement and a public deadline

Prepared for Doug Liles | Destin City Council remarks | October 19, 2026

Councilmembers: Our shared bay deserves measurable protection. I am raising concerns about development runoff and possible persistent chemical contamination reaching our estuary. Those concerns require a documented investigation and a public response.

Destin's published stormwater program includes illicit-discharge detection, construction-runoff controls and long-term stormwater treatment for new development. I ask the council to translate those commitments into four specific actions:

- 1. Publish the compliance record.** Direct staff to identify the relevant outfalls within city jurisdiction and publish applicable permits, drainage maps, inspection findings, monitoring results and outstanding corrective actions.
- 2. Investigate suspected contamination.** Commission an independent, scientifically designed investigation of suspected discharge pathways. Include PFAS sampling where warranted, qualified laboratories, documented quality controls and public results.
- 3. Establish the fish-consumption facts.** Request a written Department of Health assessment identifying available fish-tissue testing by species, location and contaminant, remaining evidence gaps, and whether additional testing or consumption guidance is needed.
- 4. Require a public report within 30 days.** Name responsible officials, identify compliance gaps, specify available enforcement measures and propose a funded corrective-action schedule. Refer matters outside city jurisdiction formally to Walton County or the appropriate state agency and request coordinated follow-through.

For pending development within city authority, require the stormwater evidence and findings applicable law demands before approval. Ask the city attorney to identify lawful interim protections wherever documented risks justify them.

Insurance coverage and litigation defense do not establish environmental compliance. Please enter these requests into the public record and identify the next agenda date for council action.

LEGAL AUTHORITY & EVIDENCE LIMITS

Florida Statutes §403.412 provides a potential injunction route for environmental-law violations and failures to enforce. Ordinarily, a verified agency complaint and 30-day response opportunity precede suit. The statute preserves temporary restraining relief for immediate, irreparable harm, but bars actions under this section against operations covered by valid permits and complying with them. Relief requires case-specific legal review.

A PFAS-based fish-consumption advisory for Choctawhatchee Bay, source-specific contamination, and insurer misconduct were not verified in this preparation. Untreated runoff alone does not establish an unlawful discharge. Destin and Walton County have different jurisdictions.

Sources: [City of Destin: NPDES Phase II Stormwater Program](#); [Florida Legislature: §403.412](#). Official sources checked October 19, 2026.

Prepared by ChatGPT from Doug Liles's concerns and official sources | v1.0 | October 19, 2026, 9:22 a.m. CDT (request time)