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PHRT Reaffirms Commitment to Safe Restart of St. Croix Refinery

Officials stress safety and environmental compliance, clarify that the restart is not immediate. The Consortium has also learned that the Man Camp is being prepared to host security personnel later this month ahead of President Biden's visit

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The refinery and oil terminal on the south shore of St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Officials from Port Hamilton Refining & Transportation (PHRT) reiterated their intentions to safely restart the St. Croix refinery, emphasizing ongoing work and compliance with environmental standards. The statement, delivered Thursday night, follows public remarks [on a VI Consortium Facebook livestream](#) by Fermin Rodriguez, PHRT's Vice President and Refinery

Manager, who announced preparations at the PHRT Village — commonly known as the St. Croix Man Camp — to accommodate workers ahead of the refinery’s potential reopening.

The refinery, previously known as Limetree Bay Energy, has been [closed since May 2021](#) after [a flare incident](#) released plumes of smoke and oil particles over parts of St. Croix. Following bankruptcy proceedings, the refinery portion of the facility came under the ownership of PHRT. Assets were split between Limetree Bay Terminals (now Ocean Point Terminals) and PHRT.

In its statement, PHRT clarified that current activities, including maintenance, repairs, and preparations at the Man Camp, do not signal an immediate restart. Officials assured that the restart process would take several months to complete and would adhere to strict safety and environmental guidelines.

“We have consistently conveyed to EPA, the Virgin Islands DPNR, and other government officials that we intend to restart the refinery in the near future,” PHRT stated. They emphasized their commitment to operating the facility safely and in compliance with federal and territorial regulations.

PHRT also noted that preparations align with agreements made with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR). This includes commitments under a consent decree established with the refinery's previous owners. While PHRT is seeking judicial clarification on one aspect of this decree, officials confirmed they are committed to meeting all legal obligations, including installing additional air monitoring systems before operations resume.

The company also addressed public speculation regarding the refinery’s condition. Claims of mold and asbestos issues were dismissed as “fabricated and distorted” reports aimed at undermining their efforts. PHRT attributed some of these allegations to “disgruntled contractors” and “unfounded rumors.” Officials explained that the facility has remained idle for several years and acknowledged that significant work remains to prepare for a safe restart.

PHRT expressed a desire for transparency and open dialogue with the Virgin Islands community. “We understand the public curiosity surrounding the refinery’s restart plans, and we intend to be transparent and candid about those plans,” they stated. They also highlighted the refinery’s potential to revitalize St. Croix’s economy, pledging to be “good stewards for the environment and a lifeline to the economy.”

As preparations at the refinery continue, the Consortium has also learned that, alongside repairs and maintenance work for the facility's potential restart, the Man Camp is being readied to accommodate dozens of guests later this month who are expected to be part of the security detail for a major political figure. Late Thursday, we reported that President Joe Biden [will spend his final year-end holiday as president on St. Croix](#).