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Port Hamilton Furloughs Workers Amid Staffing Review, Citing Efficiency Goals

With the refinery shut since 2022, Port Hamilton has furloughed staff in a move aimed at improving efficiency. Governor Bryan has called its reopening vital to regional energy and local economic security.

Economy / **Published On April 22, 2025 06:36 PM /**

Staff Consortium **April 22, 2025**

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

Port Hamilton Refining and Transportation has furloughed a portion of its employees in what the company says is a reevaluation of its staffing needs. The company said the move is part of its ongoing efforts to ensure that operations remain efficient and cost-effective.

Specifics were not provided in the Tuesday announcement, with PHRT Vice President and Refinery Manager, Fermin Rodriguez, indicating "temporary changes to human resources" as part of this reevaluation. Fewer than half of the company's employees were furloughed, a company executive told the Consortium.

News of the furloughs spread quickly across the island, as many view the refinery's potential reopening as a key opportunity to boost St. Croix's economy. "Port Hamilton continues to carefully monitor its idle refinery to ensure it is maintained in a safe and environmentally compliant manner, consistent with its regulatory obligations," the PHRT announcement reads.

During the 2025 Interagency Group on Insular Areas (IGIA) meeting in February, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. [highlighted the potential benefits of reopening](#) the St. Croix refinery, which has historically contributed \$25 million annually in tax revenue and provided significant employment opportunities. The refinery has remained closed since 2022 due to regulatory challenges, despite substantial private investments aimed at revitalizing its operations.

"Reopening the refinery would not only restore jobs and tax revenue for the Virgin Islands but also strengthen energy security for the broader region," Mr. Bryan explained. "We are committed to working closely with federal agencies to ensure the refinery can reopen responsibly and sustainably."