

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Company Hired By H.H. Tire And Battery To Cleanup Site Of Burned Facility Submits Final Plan To D.P.N.R.

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Ernice Gilbert **June 12, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- Following [The Consortium's publishing](#) of a release issued by Senator Kurt Vialet, revealing that Mr. Vialet had written to the Department of Planning and Natural Resources urging the department to order the owners off H.H. Tire and Battery to immediately cleanup the site of its burned facility, Kevin Hensley, H.H. Tire and Battery president and owner, spoke with The Consortium late Sunday, stating that the company, for sometime now, hired V.I. Regulated Waste Management, a private firm, which has been working with D.P.N.R. on a mitigation plan to cleanup the site -- with the final plan being submitted last Friday.

Now, Mr. Hensley said, V.I. Regulated Waste Management is awaiting D.P.N.R.'s final approval, at which point it will proceed with the cleanup process, beginning with the removal of metal.

"We want to make sure that it gets cleaned up correctly so we spent our money and hired this firm [with] all the expertise to clean up the site," Mr. Hensley said.

The update from Mr. Hensley comes two days following Mr. Violet's letter, which noted that the toxic debris at the site poses a threat to the health of St. Croix residents living in the neighboring areas.

"We have entered the 2017 hurricane season and the probability of direct or indirect impacts from tropical storms and hurricanes are a great threat," Mr. Violet said in his Friday release. The senator worried that should St. Croix be impacted by a storm, the toxic waste piled up at the Castle Coakley site could contaminate the air, water and land. "This could have damaging and long-lasting effects on the residents of the surrounding areas," he said.

Mr. Hensley said V.I. Regulated Waste Management has been working with D.P.N.R. to "perfect" the plan, "and as soon as we possibly can, we're going to clean that site up. We want it gone also," he said.

Mr. Hensley said aside from the mandated responsibility of cleaning up the site, the mitigation process is a personal matter for him.

"I drive past the site everyday, it's hard to look at for me. I want to clean it up, [but] D.P.N.R. has to give me that permit," he said. Mr. Hensley said if he decided to begin the cleanup process before receiving the permit, he would be violating environmental laws. "I want it cleaned up as bad as anybody, but I can't touch the site until D.P.N.R. gives me the permit."

Aside from the cleanup, Mr. Hensley said H.H. Tire and Battery will remain at its current location across from Junie's Restaurant, at the east end of Hess Road where it meets South Shore Road, for at least two years. "Our business has been pretty good in the new place," he made known, thanking customers for their loyalty and support. The owner said it was costly to setup at the new location, so recouping some of the funds expended must first be realized before moving back to what would be a new facility on the old site.