

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Limetree Bay Says it Will Reinstate Air Monitoring Program Following EPA Clean Air Act Violation Notice

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Limetree Bay on the south shore of St. Croix By. LIMETREE BAY

Limetree Bay Energy announced Wednesday that it has voluntarily agreed to reinstate the facility's legacy ambient air monitoring program.

The announcement follows an Environmental Protection Agency Clean Clear Act violation notice against Limetree Monday. The agency said Limetree failed to operate five sulfur dioxide (SO₂) monitors in the surrounding communities of Christiansted on St. Croix and the associated weather tower on the facility grounds.

“EPA issued this notice of violation to protect the people who live near and work at this refinery, and we have also deployed a team of experts to St. Croix and are working to assess Limetree Bay’s compliance with environmental laws,” EPA acting Regional Administrator Walter Mugdan [said](#) Monday. “Many residents are justifiably concerned about recent incidents at this refinery and have questioned if it is operating in accordance with requirements. In fact, the measurement of sulfur dioxide in the atmosphere is key as it helps us assess air quality, and the data are used to oversee regulated facilities to ensure that appropriate control measures are in place to reduce people’s exposure to the gas.”

Limetree Bay CEO Jeff Rinker said the company would reinstate the monitors. “Limetree Bay has voluntarily agreed to reactivate the five area monitors that were put in place prior to our ownership of the refinery to detect sulfur dioxide in ambient air,” he said. “Over the last several weeks, our leadership team has met with community leaders, and government officials, including the EPA. While Limetree Bay is not required to perform this air monitoring under our existing permits, we are committed to being a responsible part of the St. Croix community and believe this investment will help build trust in our operations.”

The EPA said its notice to Limetree Bay found that the company has failed to operate five ambient SO₂ monitoring stations, two to the west of the refinery and three to the north of the refinery, as required by EPA’s Prevention of Significant Deterioration and other regulations. The company also failed to operate a meteorological tower, the EPA said.

A major source of air pollution, such as Limetree Bay, is subject to controls under its air permits, the EPA further stated. Limetree Bay may be liable for civil penalties and required to take actions to correct the violations specified in the Notice of Violation (NOV) issued to it on April 30, 2021. Limetree Bay has been informed that it has the opportunity to request a video conference to discuss the NOV, and that 30 days following the issuance of the NOV, EPA is authorized to take further actions in response to the violations.

Governor Albert Bryan also commented on the matter. “I am pleased that Limetree Bay responded to the Government’s request to activate the area monitors, which will provide further assurance to the local community about their air quality,” he said. “Working together, we can assure the health of our people and the economic viability of our territory.”

Limetree Bay said it will initiate reinstatement immediately. The company also said it would provide additional information on the timeline to repair and restore the air monitors, once a full assessment of their condition is complete.