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Limetree Bay Halts Production Following Incident That Sent Oil Droplets Traveling West; EPA, Bryan Call Occurrence Unacceptable

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Flare incident at Limetree Bay during the afternoon of Wed. May 12. The flare appears to have damaged the upper portion of the unit, though it was unclear the extent of the damage. **By. VI CONSORTIUM**

Limetree Bay on Wednesday afternoon activated its Incident Command in response to an upset in the refinery at Flare Unit #8. This incident resulted in a release of oil droplets which traveled directly west, the refinery said.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that there has been an impact to the Enfield Green community, as well as some industrial sites, according to the release. Residents in Enfield Green

are asked to disconnect downspouts to cisterns if accessible. Residents are also asked not to consume the water. Water distribution will be established for affected communities.

In response to today's incident, Limetree Bay said it has decided to temporarily suspend production activities until further notice. All processing units will be brought to a safe, stable condition.

Limetree said it will continue to assess the impact and advise if additional neighborhoods are affected. If you think you may have been impacted by the release, please contact Limetree's Incident hotline at (340) 692-3199.

The company said applicable regulatory agencies were notified at the time of the incident, and Limetree's top priority is the safety and well-being of its personnel, the community and environment.

In a [tweet](#) following the incident, EPA Administrator Michael Regan said the repeated occurrences at the facility was unacceptable. "The Limetree Bay facility in the USVI has informed EPA it is temporarily suspending production," he said. "The repeated incidents at the refinery are unacceptable. EPA has a team on St. Croix and is committed to taking all necessary action to ensure people's health and safety is protected."

Governor Bryan issued a statement early Thursday, he too calling the occurrences unacceptable. "The flare incident that occurred at the refinery today is totally unacceptable and is a clear indicator that there are issues with the restart of refinery operations at Limetree Bay.

"Lieutenant Governor Roach and I both have been in contact with the executive team at Limetree Bay and have expressed our concern and frustration with the recent releases that have threatened the health and safety of the residents downwind of the refinery and urged Limetree to step up its efforts to guarantee the safety of its employees and the residents downwind from the refinery.

"As a result of those conversations, Limetree agreed to halt refining operations while they work to address the operational issues that may be responsible for the emissions. It is my sincere hope that they can rectify whatever the issues are and resume operations in a manner that protects the health and wellbeing of its employees and the residents of our community."