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Limetree Bay's Oil Storage Terminal Operation to Continue; Company Acknowledges EPA Shutdown Order of Refining Units

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Limetree Bay said Friday night that it has acknowledged the EPA's 60-day shutdown order of its oil refining operations, stating that it voluntarily shutdown the refinery portion of the plant two days ago on Wednesday, following a massive flare incident [captured by the Consortium](#) that sent plumes or smoke mixed with oil particles billowing west of St. Croix.

The EPA said Friday it [took the major step](#) to shutdown refining at the facility "due to multiple improperly conducted operations that present an imminent risk to public health."

In its release Friday evening, Limetree said it would focus on cleanup to impacted communities while continuing to investigate the incident. "As was announced previously, the Company

voluntarily shut down the refinery on Wednesday, May 12, following the flaring incident caused by an upset at the Coker unit,” said Jeff Rinker, Limetree Bay CEO. “Our current focus is on investigating and cleaning up areas of the community affected by the incident and cooperating with the EPA in preparing the refinery for a safe and environmentally-compliant restart.”

Limetree noted that the EPA’s order does not impact its terminal operations.

We are committed to operating a safe facility. We sincerely apologize for any concern or inconvenience this has caused,” added Mr. Rinker.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan, who [on Wednesday criticized](#) the recent incident at Limetree Bay and deemed it unacceptable, said an already overburdened community should not be subject to such repeated occurrences with risks to health and wellbeing.

“These repeated incidents at the refinery have been and remain totally unacceptable. Today, I have ordered the refinery to immediately pause all operations until we can be assured that this facility can operate in accordance with laws that protect public health,” said Mr. Regan. “This already overburdened community has suffered through at least four recent incidents that have occurred at the facility, and each had an immediate and significant health impact on people and their property. EPA will not hesitate to use its authority to enforce the law and protect people from dangerous pollution where they work, live, and play.”

Since February of this year, the refinery has experienced multiple major mishaps resulting in significant air pollutant and oil releases. EPA said it is working to lend relief and assistance to the surrounding St. Croix community, many of whose members have been sickened by some of the releases. Working with the USVI government, EPA is committed to ensuring that the facility operates in compliance with the law without jeopardizing people’s health and the environment.