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Limetree Bay 'Confident' Latest Odor Affecting Container Port Area Not From Refinery

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Container Port on St. Croix. By. ERNICE GILBERT/VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — Limetree Bay on Thursday afternoon expressed certainty that an odor that affected the Container Port and Molasses Pier area on St. Croix's south shore did not emanate from the refinery.

The Consortium [on Wednesday reported](#) that V.I. Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe during a board meeting Wednesday said 19 employees of A.T. Construction, which is performing construction work for VIPA in the area, had fallen ill and had visited the hospital after inhaling a foul-smelling gas. Mr. Dowe mentioned Limetree Bay during the meeting as one possible source, though he quickly said he had no evidence to backup the claim.

Limetree Bay in its statement Wednesday was clear. "We are confident that Limetree Bay Refinery is not the source of the reported odors affecting the construction project at Molasses Pier," the company said. "Over the past several weeks, our environmental specialists have made repeated visits to the site and provided the Port Authority with a continuous monitor for detecting odorous gases, including hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide. These visits and our thorough investigation of activities at the refinery have given absolutely no indication that Limetree is the source of the odors."

The company added, "Limetree Bay Refinery is presently removing hydrocarbons from the refinery equipment in preparation for indefinite shutdown under a strictly controlled, EPA-approved procedure and in the presence of an EPA-approved independent observer. We welcome a thorough investigation by the appropriate authorities of the reported incident at the Molasses Pier."

Mr. Dowe said during the board meeting that VIPA has contacted the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and Limetree Bay requesting that additional monitors be added near the site. He said an environmental team from Limetree along with VIPA employees visited the site Saturday. The Environmental Protection Agency has also been made aware of the incidents.

On Wednesday, an agreement was reached for additional monitors to be installed in the southeast region of the Container Port and the Molasses Pier, "where we believe these emissions might be coming from," Mr. Dowe said.

Mr. Dowe pointed to a possible propane leak as one potential cause of the odor. He spoke of an additive that is usually included in residential propane that carries an odor. "The actual propane in the plant [Limetree Bay] you should not be able to smell it," he said.

Mr. Dowe said the incident has slowed a project currently ongoing at the Container Port. "It is a significant issue because the last week and a half we are looking at our project down there and it literally had to come to halt," the executive director said.