



***“We want clean air, clean water, a healthy community and a healthy ecosystem, and the opportunity for a strong resilient future based in sustainability.”***

St. Croix Environmental Association (SEA), the Center for Biological Diversity, and Sierra Club, in collaboration with Natural Resources Defense Council, Vermont Law School’s Environmental Justice Clinic and The Neville Law Firm LLC, filed a legal appeal on February 3 against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) challenging the high pollution levels allowed for the Limetree Bay refinery operations and requesting better considerations for environmental justice on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. *We want EPA’s Environmental Appeals Board to review Limetree Bay’s Plantwide Applicability Limit (PAL) permit.*

**Specific problems identified with the permit:**

● **Clean Air Act Concerns**

○ Reactivation Policy – Limetree Bay should be designated a “New Source” or a “Major Modified Source” to comply with EPA’s long standing reactivation policy. It has been sitting idle too long to be a simple re-opening

○ Emissions standard - The Permit allows unacceptably high air emissions

● **Environmental Justice Concerns**

○ The EPA permit insufficiently addresses the disproportionate impact the refinery would have on vulnerable communities

● **Endangered Species Act Concerns**

○ EPA failed to satisfy the Endangered Species Act requirements to consult on the Permit’s impacts on threatened and endangered species.

**The refinery polluted St. Croix for decades.** Between 1978 and 2008, the Hovensa oil refinery, one of the largest in the world, released 42 million gallons of petroleum product into the groundwater. The refinery also released high concentrations of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, two pollutants that can have adverse impacts on human health, and are significant contributors to acid rain, smog, and haze.

**Trump-era EPA fast-tracked the reopening of the refinery.** In November 2018, nearly seven years after the refinery stopped operating, Limetree applied for a plant-wide applicability limit “PAL” air permit to reactivate the facility without conforming to new technology or updated pollution standards. At the Trump Administration’s urging, EPA issued the permit without adequate protections despite acknowledging the local community is overburdened with pollution and would suffer disproportionate impacts from reopening the refinery.

From colonization to heavy industry, this community has experienced immense harm for the benefit of others. The people of St. Croix must not suffer for a dying oil industry that contributes to the climate crisis. This community deserves better. St. Croix deserves healthier solutions, a just energy transition, and the opportunity to meaningfully engage in the decision-making process. Any outcome must prioritize justice and equity, be led by those impacted the most, and adequately address environmental injustices.