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Bryan Says St. Croix Refinery Has National Energy Value as Federal Action Highlights Refining Security

The governor said St. Croix's refinery location, deepwater access, storage capacity and fuel logistics role make it a strategic American asset, but stressed that any restart must meet modern environmental standards and protect nearby residents.

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Aerial view of the oil refinery (idled) and storage terminal on the south shore of St. Croix.
By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. says recent federal energy determinations strengthen the case for a responsible restart of refinery operations on St. Croix, arguing that the facility should be viewed not only as a local economic asset, but as part of the United States' broader energy security and

fuel logistics infrastructure.

Government House said the Presidential Determinations, issued under Section 303 of the Defense Production Act, recognize domestic petroleum production, refining, fuel logistics, large-scale energy infrastructure and related capabilities as essential to national defense, energy security and the economic strength of the United States.

The determinations also acknowledge that financing risks, permitting delays, infrastructure limitations and supply chain challenges have weakened the nation's ability to expand critical energy capacity.

According to Governor Bryan, those findings mirror many of the same issues that have affected efforts to restart refining operations on St. Croix and reinforce his long-held position that the refinery has strategic value beyond the territory.

“For years, I have said that restarting the refinery on St. Croix is not just a local economic issue. It is a matter of national importance,” the governor said. “The United States needs stronger, more resilient refining and fuel logistics capacity, and St. Croix can and should be part of that solution.”

Government House said the federal action sends an important signal to investors, operators, federal agencies and industry partners that domestic refining and energy infrastructure remain central to national readiness and economic security.

“The refinery on St. Croix was once among the most important energy facilities in the Western Hemisphere,” Governor Bryan said. “Its location, deepwater access, storage capacity and role in regional fuel logistics make it a strategic American asset, especially at a time of global uncertainty, volatile energy markets and supply chain risk.”

The governor has repeatedly argued that the St. Croix facility's location and existing infrastructure make it relevant to larger conversations about energy resilience, supply chain stability, maritime commerce and defense readiness. Since taking office, his administration has met with investors, refinery operators, energy developers and infrastructure partners on opportunities tied to refinery restart, fuel storage, marine logistics and broader industrial redevelopment.

Governor Bryan has also continued advocacy in Washington, D.C., including discussions with the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Energy, members of Congress and other federal stakeholders.

A responsible restart, the governor said, could bring benefits to Virgin Islands residents and businesses, including jobs, new economic activity, stronger port and logistics operations, and a broader industrial base for St. Croix.

“A successful refinery restart can help address the cost pressures our residents feel every day,” Governor Bryan said. “Lower fuel and logistics costs can support lower power generation costs, reduce transportation and shipping expenses, and make it easier for businesses to grow. Energy affordability is economic affordability.”

The governor also emphasized that any future operation must address environmental and public health concerns tied to the facility's past. He said a restart must protect the health, safety and quality of life of St. Croix residents, particularly those living closest to the refinery.

“We are clear-eyed about this,” he added. “The mistakes of the past cannot be repeated. Any future operation must meet modern environmental standards, include strong monitoring and safeguards, and protect the people who live closest to the facility. Economic development and environmental responsibility must move together, or they should not move at all.”

Government House said the governor has also worked to strengthen the territory’s broader energy platform through port modernization, renewable energy expansion, fuel logistics opportunities and policies aimed at improving reliability and affordability across the Virgin Islands.

“This is the moment to recognize St. Croix for what it is: a critical American location with the infrastructure, geography and workforce potential to help strengthen national energy security,” Governor Bryan said. “My Administration remains committed to supporting a refinery restart that is safe, responsible, job-creating and beneficial to the people of the Virgin Islands.”

Governor Bryan said he remains prepared to work with federal partners, industry, labor, local stakeholders and the St. Croix community to ensure that any restart effort proceeds safely, responsibly and in full compliance with modern environmental and operational standards.