

Community Impact Survey // Resident's Descriptions of Impacts

This Community Impact Survey found extensive environmental and health impacts from the troubled restart of the Limetree Bay Refinery (formerly HOVENSA). The survey was organized by Professor David Bond (Bennington College), Frandelle Gerard (CHANT), Sommer Sibilly-Brown (VI Good Food Coalition), and Jennifer Valiulis (SEA). Results from the survey can be found: www.bennington.edu/Limetree.

Sample of Descriptions of Impacts

“There was a period leading up to the time when the refinery closed where every single day was difficult to breathe. It was as if we were inhaling oil with each breath.” (resident of Frederiksted)

“The inside of our home was filled with visible dense ‘fog’ that hung on everything.” (resident of Whim)

“In April I was affected by the smell of oil and sulfur that caused headaches and nausea, In May, specifically May 12th and 13th, the smell was overwhelming causing me to cough, have severe headaches and difficulty breathing. Because I live in Whim, it affected me at night but during the day at my work in downtown Frederiksted, it was even more severe.” (resident of Whim)

“Our cistern has been contaminated, and multiple people in our house have thrown up from the gaseous fumes.” (resident of Williams Delight)

“Cistern water smelled of petrol and sulfur.” (resident of Hannah's Rest)

“My experience came from being at work in different parts of Frederiksted. I was overcome by fumes on May 5, 2021 that I had to wait minutes to drive my car to get to fresher air. This incident landed me in the urgent care unit. I had severe dizziness and thought I was about to pass out.” (resident of Mars Hill)

“My smaller plants are still dying off. And my house and bedroom still smells like fuel.” (resident of Profit)

“The H2S emissions were so bad after 5 pm I had to close all the windows in the house and turn on the air conditioning- still could smell the rotten egg smell - all the plants in my garden had oil on them and the leaves firmed spots and died - any vegetables had to be thrown away - the flare explosion was the worst.” (resident of Enfield Green)

“There has been a nauseating and noxious sulphuric smell in the area. The smell has been impacting myself and my family, making our eyes, noses, and throats burn. In addition to this it causes dizziness and makes it hard to breathe. Our cistern water has been impacted and following an episode of rain that followed a flaring event, there were gelatin-like black globs in our water. We can no longer use our water for cooking or brushing our teeth. The water irritates my daughter's skin, who is affected significantly because she is allergic to sulphur. I am a farmer and I am concerned about my crops and my animals. I now have to purchase water, sometimes several times weekly, for uses that normally I would use my cistern water for.” (resident of Williams Delight)

“Feels like I'm choking. It's hard to breathe. The smell is unbearable. Dizziness, headaches, scratchy throat.” (resident of La Grange)

“On several occasions in February, April and May of this year, I have smelled that odor outside my home, inside my home and also while driving on Melvin Evans Highway to work. I'm on instance the odor was so

strong I couldn't go outside without a mask. On May 7, 2021, it was difficult to breathe and I closed all my windows to prevent it from getting in the house.” (resident of Frederiksted)

“My fruit trees (namely mango trees) were impacted badly,tea bush (namely Lemon Grass),tomato trees,green peppers,& spinach were very much impacted.Especially my mango trees were full of a whitish colored fungus and ever since the release of the toxic chemicals by Limetree Refinery my trees & items in my backyard yard garden aren't the same.” (resident of Mon Bijou)

“Headaches, nausea, vomiting at times, difficulty breathing, lethargic. My 2 dogs and cat have also been impacted too, very lethargic at times, runny eyes, itchy skin. I had to bring them inside. When the refinery was fully operation something was going on between 1am and 3 am, I would be awoken with coughing and gagging, and a severe headache. My sinus would also be irritated. I would have to wash my face with cold water and rinse my nostrils out for relief. On occasion I had to use my inhalant.” (resident of Adventure Hill)

“We experienced dizziness and nausea. I was light headed and generally ill. Once it rained, it intensified the smell and I was going to pass out. We had to cover our faces with towels just to be able to walk around. My cat experienced diarrhea and irregular symptoms that day that I believe are an effect of the poisonous gas.” (resident of Frederiksted)

“Strong vapors that caused headache, sore throat, tight chest, coughing. Even the animals were having symptoms.” (resident of Mars Hill)

“Called administrator's office just before reports of 'oil rain! Because my eyes were irritated, orders were strong , and my sleep was being disturbed by orders. March 9th went to see my cardiologists as heart rate became irregular and elevated . Did not subside with new medication added until late April. Have since stopped new medication as Rate returned to and remained normal since mid- May.” (resident of Sion Hill)

“Watched flare blow up, scared the shit out of me. Never seen the flames shoot that high from the flare, and then seemed to explode. A green orange smoke came out of flare. I was working across the street with a construction crew, and we ran for our lives.” (resident of Negro Bay)

“I was woken up in the middle of the night by the odors and had a headache for multiple hours and unable to get back to sleep.” (resident of Prosperity)

“Smell an odor that makes you nauseous. I thought I left the stove on, propane smell.” (resident of La Grange)

“The kids lay on the ground in my room complaining about headaches and stomach pain. They do not want to go outside whenever it's happening. I also do a lot of fishing and can only imagine how much is getting in the ocean. Fishing from shore has been terrible like nothing is there.” (resident of Two Williams)

“There has been fumes and the rain has seemed strange at times. The taste and smell of cistern water has changed, gaining a chemical taste.” (resident of Betzys Jewel)

“I live west on a hill with direct view of the refinery. I watched nightly the gas burn off and the smell was off and in for months. We had sore throats headache sinus drainage and fatigue. The smell was so intense I would close up the house. No one should have to live like that.” (resident of Jealousy)

“I woke up in the middle if the night coughing. My throat was sore. I tried to breathe through my pillow. A strong metallic odor prevailed early around 4 a.m. My trees leaves turned yellow along with the fruit. Some

fruit had black spots. The water in my toilet bowl from the cistern has black sediment on the bottom.” (resident of Whim)

“Although my home is upwind from the refinery. My work place is not. At work near the refinery, the stench was so bad we had to leave work early for several days in a row. My first experience with Lime Tree was on New Years Day, me and my son were walking our dogs along the Molasses Pier which is down wind and almost adjacent to the refinery. I smelt something and thought it was my truck at first. Once, I parked, lifted the hood and saw nothing amiss. ON our way home. I sped through the area. To avoid throwing up while driving. That is how bad the smell was.” (resident of Tide Village)

“I had to avoid going to multiple areas on the island. I stopped patronizing businesses downwind of the refinery because toxic refinery emissions made it dangerous. I stopped exercising downwind of the refinery. I changed the route I would drive which only reduced my exposure but there aren't enough roads and the island isn't wide enough to avoid exposure. Changing my route meant I was further from the worst exposure but still facing unhealthy levels of exposure. It also meant I did not stop the car so I did not go to businesses or see people in those impacted neighborhoods where I normally would have spent money and visited. I also had to spend time and resources to consider impacts on my own business and community. As a hotel owner, I received calls from impacted residents trying to flee from the toxic disaster. I had to create policy on what to do if toxic plumes forced thousands of residents to flee their homes and consider how many people we could shelter. And I had to wonder, why wasn't the refinery coordinating and funding an evacuation plan? Why was I, as a small business owner, left trying to mitigate huge impacts from a dirty billion dollar oil refinery?” (resident of Northside)

“On the date that the large flare up occurred, I had to drive through the refinery en route to the highway to drive home. By the time I reached my home, my windshield and car was covered in black spots everywhere. Immediately, I washed my car thoroughly. But, I cannot imagine what people in the immediate neighborhood have had to endure on a daily basis.” (resident of Slob)

“The odor was overpowering and nauseating. It was very frightening. I suffer with allergic rhinitis and it exacerbated my condition. Made me feel powerless.” (resident of Frederiksted)

“There were a few days just before they shut down there was a chemical odor that caused my throat and lungs to burn. I had to leave the area by going further north to escape it. Since the shutdown of the refinery, I haven't experienced any of these problem.” (resident Two Brothers)

We smelt very strong sulfur smells several times for a couple weeks. Both my wife and I had headaches and I had problems breathing during this time.” (resident of Hannah's Rest)

“One episode made me feel very nauseas. Made me think my gas tank was leaking. The smell of propane was in the whole neighborhood.” (resident of Carlton)

“I'm concerned about the impact to our personal health, the water, the garden. Early May 2021 I woke up at 2:30 in the morning because I was smelling "rotten eggs". I thought someone was sabotaging my gas tanks. Then I realized it was Limetree.” (Sprat Hall Beach)

“The individual human toll is enough to shut it down forever, and the larger toll on an island that relies on agribusiness, ecotourism, historical culture, necessitates the permanent closing & cleanup.” (resident of Mt Washington)