

# Caneel Bay contamination puts residents' health at risk: Part 2

Oct 23, 2020



David R. DiGiacomo

*The following is the second part of an edited version of a letter written to Gary Engle of CBI Acquisitions, LLC dba as Caneel Bay Resort; Stan Smith, regional director, South Region, National Park Service; Peter Lopez, regional director, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Nigel Fields, superintendent of the Virgin Islands National Park and Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. The full letter, including pertinent documents, can be accessed at [www.virginislandsdailynews.com](http://www.virginislandsdailynews.com).*

Dear Editor,

CBIA and EHIA have claim they are not responsible for environmental contamination at the Caneel site and they should not be responsible for remediation. However, there is no evidence of due diligence when they took over the Caneel property or that there was any subsequent environmental assessment.

Your contributions to the past and present depositing, handling, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous waste on the property may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to health and the environment. The property soil as identified in the environmental reports likely remains contaminated and is located next to beaches and waterways used by humans and wildlife.

Further activities can release harmful soil contaminants into the air in the form of dust that can be inhaled and ingested and into the water. The users of this site, include tourists and residents and may include infants, children, the elderly, pregnant and nursing women, and people with chronic illnesses who are all particularly vulnerable to the effects of toxic exposures.

Most, if not all, of the contaminants identified in the engineering reports can have serious adverse health effects. Your actions fail to ensure adequate safeguards and threaten human health and the environment. I assert the following deficiencies as there has been:

- No full waste characterization of all toxic substances and their leachates to determine the presence of a hazardous waste or waste constituents
- No health and air or water quality assessments of the dispersion of all toxic substances present on site in the form of dust that can be released during excavation and movement of contaminated soil;
- No health and water quality assessments of the discharge of all toxic substances present on site in storm water runoff that can occur presently or during excavation and movement of contaminated soil
- No assessment of health impacts of exposures to all toxic substances present on site via inhalation, skin contact, or ingestion for site workers, nearby residents, or visitors and staff
- No assessment of health impacts on persons vulnerable
- No comprehensive surface water quality or subsurface assessment of all toxic substances where groundwater flows into the protected ocean
- No comprehensive assessment of the potential effect of allowing toxic substances, the full extent of which is unknown, to remain on the site where a new resort or support infrastructure is planned. Anticipated construction will likely release soil contaminants

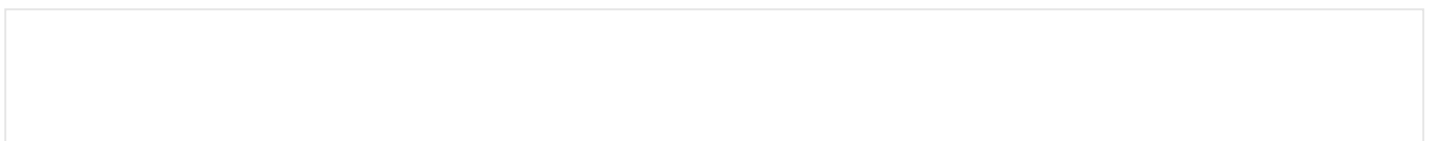
into the air and water. These activities could have devastating health effects on residents, visitors and workers employed in construction activities at risk of toxic exposure. To avoid the possible endangerment, I urge you to immediately announce suspension of further activities on the Caneel site in order to:

1. Consider a “no build” option as an alternative to the currently contemplated rebuilding of the Caneel structures
2. Ensure full compliance with RCRA, CERCLA and the Clean Water Act
3. Undertake a comprehensive and thorough hazardous waste determination of soil, surface and groundwater on the property and allow for split sampling with the EPA and a representative approved by the undersigned
4. Rigorously analyze alternatives for safe and effective environmental remediation of the site, including all risks and benefits reasonably presented by these alternatives
5. Present the alternatives and the plan for protecting residents of St John, the public and the adjacent waters from the threat of toxic exposure to contaminants on this property
6. Convene an open and transparent public process in the decision-making regarding plans for handling contamination and any proposed development on the property
7. Select the best alternative and plan of action that protects human health and the environment.

I have undertaken the giving of this notice without compensation or remuneration of any kind. This notice is not given on behalf of any organization or individual other than me.

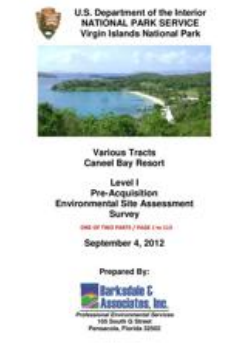
I remain available to discuss a speedy, safe and just determination of the issues identified in this notice which could include a negotiated mutual agreement thereby avoiding litigation.

— *David R. DiGiacomo resides on St. John.*





Level II ESA Report, Caneel Bay Resort  
Oct 22, 2020



Environmental Site Assessment  
Oct 22, 2020

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RCRA Notice to CBI and EHI and Engle  
Oct 22, 2020



Removal site evaluation  
Oct 22, 2020