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US Department of the Interior and EHI Acquisitions, LLC agree to re-enter lease negotiations and continue environmental assessment at Caneel Bay Resort

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior) and EHI Acquisitions, LLC (EHI, an affiliate of CBI Acquisitions, LLC, the current operator of Caneel Bay Resort), announced today they have reached an understanding to move forward with negotiations toward a long-term lease for Caneel Bay Resort, and for the National Park Service (NPS) to begin the next phase of environmental site assessments at the property.

“Through our shared understanding, we can in good faith continue our work to rebuild Caneel Bay and re-enter negotiations toward a long-term lease of this treasured resort,” **said Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Rob Wallace**. “I am hopeful our recent discussions will provide a path to successfully negotiate a lease and support the rejuvenation of the island in a way that benefits the community and future visitors to St. John National Park.”

“We are gratified by this significant step and the positive progress toward rebuilding Caneel Bay, helping return St. John to a world-class destination, and the important economic engine this will provide to St. John,” **said Gary Engle, President of EHI**. “We share the National Park Service’s commitment to rebuilding Caneel Bay in a manner that protects and preserves the island’s natural and cultural resources.”

Caneel Bay Resort closed following Irma and Maria, the back-to-back Category 5 hurricanes that devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2017.

This good faith understanding is an important next step for both parties toward a long-term lease for the future operation of the property and subsequently the future of tourism and prosperity in the local economy. In addition to the recovery and reopening of the resort, addressing environmental stewardship remains a top priority. The parties will work cooperatively and in good faith to define and develop any necessary actions concerning environmental matters at Caneel Bay. Following Interior and EHI reaching this agreement, the NPS will now resume environmental site assessments at the property to evaluate appropriate next steps, including whether and to what extent cleanup and remediation may be necessary.

This work, while needed to meet environmental stewardship and safety responsibilities, is necessary to inform details of a future lease. As we continue this work, public information will be available on [NPS.gov](https://www.nps.gov).

While details of a future lease remain open to discussion, [Public Law 111–261](#), authorizes the NPS to enter into a non-competitive lease with EHI for the operation and management of Caneel Bay Resort. All terms and conditions would be consistent with [applicable laws and policies](#) governing leasing and commercial use in national parks.

Virgin Islands National Park was established in 1956 and encompasses about 60 percent of the island of St. John. Land for the park was gifted to the federal government by Laurance S. Rockefeller for the purpose of establishing a national park.

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 422 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov, and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

ABOUT CANEEL BAY RESORT

Caneel Bay has been an alluring escape for loyal guests since its founding by Laurance Rockefeller in December 1956. Set on 170 acres in the Virgin Islands National Park on the island of St. John, the resort's pristine natural surroundings and low-key luxury are its coveted signatures. One hundred and sixty-six charming guest rooms blend seamlessly into the landscape in close proximity to any of seven white-sand beaches that frame the resort. Prior to its forced closure by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, Caneel Bay Resort was the largest employer of St. John residents, who greeted more than 15,000 guests a year. Caneel Bay Resort has been operated by CBI Acquisitions since 2004.