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KE KIA'AINA O KA MOKU'AINA 'O HAWAII



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In reply, please refer to:
File:

March 27, 2024

Vice Admiral John Wade
Joint Task Force – Red Hill
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[via email only: john.f.wade2.mil@us.navy.mil]

Rear Admiral Stephen Barnett
Navy Closure Task Force – Red Hill
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Dear Vice Admiral Wade and Rear Admiral Barnett:

SUBJECT: DOH Concurrence on JTF-RH Defueling Obligations Completed

This letter affirms VADM Wade's presumption, in his letter dated March 19, 2024, that the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) concurs that the Joint Task Force – Red Hill (JTF-RH) has completed its defueling obligations under the May 2022 Emergency Order (EO).

On behalf of the DOH, I am writing to personally thank and congratulate the JTF-RH for safely removing over 104.7 million gallons (gal) of fuel from the Red Hill Facility. When the DOH ordered the defueling and closure of Red Hill after the 2021 releases, we knew that defueling a facility of this size and age would be a great challenge, but also a necessary task to protect our environment for future generations. Over the last year and a half, the JTF-RH has risen to the occasion and demonstrated exceptional competence, resilience, and most importantly, accountability to the community for completing its obligations. Countless things could have gone wrong during defueling. Thus, the DOH carefully monitored and oversaw the JTF-RH's work, and at every opportunity, the JTF-RH willingly addressed our concerns. Because of the JTF-RH team's outstanding organization, problem solving, and communication with the regulators, defueling was completed safely in January 2024, six months ahead of schedule. To put it simply, the JTF-RH's actions have earned the DOH's trust and respect, and for this, we thank you for your service.

The DOH's 2022 EO defines the requirements of the Defueling Phase and Closure Phase of the Closure Plan but does not divide responsibilities between the JTF-RH and Navy Closure Task

Force – Red Hill (NCTF-RH). The *Defueling Plan* and its associated supplements identify the tasks required to complete the Defueling Phase. As discussed in *Defueling Plan Supplement 3*, all additional work needed to finish residual fuel and sludge removal will be part of tank cleaning and system disposition, and is now the responsibility of the NCTF-RH, as is the rest of the Closure Phase of the Closure Plan. In addition, we understand that the outstanding items listed in the enclosures to VADM Wade's March 19, 2024 letter will be managed by the NCTF-RH moving forward.

We are hopeful that the NCTF-RH will rise to the important task of closing the underground storage tank (UST) system in a timely manner without incident, while considering the community's concerns. Although we concur that the JTF-RH's defueling obligations are complete, there is still much work to be done to permanently close the Red Hill Facility and remediate the environment. The NCTF-RH must complete the remaining requirements of the DOH's EO, including:

- Removing approximately 4,000 gal of residual fuel and approximately 28,000 gal of sludge noted in the JTF-RH and NCTF-RH's *Acknowledgement of Red Hill Defueling Status*, dated March 8, 2024;
- Removing approximately 900 gallons of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) concentrate noted in the NCTF-RH's *AFFF Concentrate Line Draining CONOPs Brief*, dated March 8, 2024;
- Cleaning the Red Hill tanks, surge tanks, and sumps, in accordance with the DOH's January 18, 2024 conditional approval;
- Identifying historical infrastructure previously abandoned and emptying any hazardous substances contained, as requested in the DOH's January 30, 2024 letter to the JTF-RH;
- Identifying and removing infrastructure that is no longer necessary, such as the fuel pipelines, to prevent future storage of hazardous substances;
- Obtaining the DOH's approval on the method of disposition for the 20 main fuel tanks, four surge tanks, and associated appurtenances; and
- Completing site assessment, investigation, and remediation of the entire UST system that includes the Red Hill Facility.

We look forward to seeing the NCTF-RH execute these tasks in a manner protective of human health and the environment. The DOH thanks the JTF-RH for taking the time to pass on its best practices to the NCTF-RH, and we wish each member of the JTF-RH the best in their future endeavors.

Vice Admiral Wade and Rear Admiral Barnett
March 27, 2024
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Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Ms. Kelly Ann Lee, Red Hill Project Coordinator, at (808) 586-4226 or kellyann.lee@doh.hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Ho

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Deputy Director for Environmental Health

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