



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawaii Department of Health fines Department of Agriculture for illegal discharge of wastewater into Halawa Stream

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health has issued a Notice of Violation and Order against the Department of Agriculture for unlawful discharge of animal and human wastewater from their Halawa facility to Halawa Stream. For failing to comply with Hawaii water pollution laws that prohibit the discharge of pollutants such as sewage to state waters, the Department of Agriculture is ordered to pay a penalty of \$465,000 and take corrective action to prevent future sewage discharges from their Halawa campus.

“The Department of Agriculture has been sustaining its operations at Halawa with a wastewater system that is in dire need of modernization,” said Keith Kawaoka, deputy director of Environmental Health Administration. “An emergency stand by power source and a warning system, among other corrections, must be in place to prevent future spills and protect the environment.”

The order requires corrective actions that include upgrading the Department of Agriculture’s wastewater system and adding alarms to notify the department’s management of impending spills. The agency may contest the order and request a hearing within 20 days.

Background

The Department of Agriculture operates offices and an animal quarantine facility in Halawa Valley, Aiea on Oahu. As part of its Halawa campus, the department operates a wastewater pre-treatment facility which treats animal and human wastewater before it is pumped into the local sewage system. On June 13, 2016, the campus experienced a power outage causing the

pre-treatment facility's pump system to cease operating. Without power, wastewater overflowed from the pre-treatment facility into Halawa Stream until August 15, 2016, when temporary pumps were installed and water was shut off.

Hawaii Water Pollution laws, along with the Federal Clean Water Act, prohibit discharging pollutants to state waters unless authorized by a state discharge permit. The Department of Agriculture is not authorized to discharge wastewater to Halawa Stream.

Department of Health, Clean Water Branch

The Hawaii Department of Health's Clean Water Branch mission is to protect and restore inland and coastal waters for the benefit of people and the environment. The Clean Water Branch accomplishes this mission through statewide water quality surveillance and watershed-based environmental management efforts that leverage permit issuance, water quality monitoring, investigation and enforcement, partnership and outreach efforts. More information about the DOH Clean Water Branch and access to water quality data and permit information is available at <http://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/>

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