



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Keith Kawaoka Appointed to Deputy Director of Environmental Health in Hawaii Department of Health**



HONOLULU – Keith Kawaoka, D.Env., who has been with the Hawaii Department of Health for more than 15 years, has been appointed Deputy Director of Environmental Health. Gov. David Ige recently confirmed his appointment.

Dr. Kawaoka has extensive environmental health expertise. He brings to the position more than 35 years of experience in the environmental protection field from both the public sector and private industry. Most recently, he has been the program manager with the Department of Health's Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response (HEER) Office. In that role, Kawaoka was instrumental in evaluating risks of hazardous materials to protect the health of the people of Hawaii and our fragile environment.

In the Department of Health, his experience has included direct involvement with a wide range of environmental projects, including oversight of the clean up of Pearl Harbor/Hickam Joint Base military installation and Honolulu Harbor petroleum remediation. He has also been involved in emergency response and management for natural disasters and industrial incidents, including the molasses release in Honolulu Harbor in 2013, the recent Iselle and Julio tropical storms, and the Puna lava flow on Hawaii Island.

Prior to joining the Hawaii Department of Health, he held various senior level positions in both national and local environmental consulting firms. He has been at the forefront of toxic and hazardous waste management for more than 25 years. He was involved in the country's first program to dispose of chemical and nerve agents in various obsolete munitions dating back from pre-World War II. This was a Department of Defense chemical demilitarization program, managed by the then U.S. Army Toxic and Hazardous Materials Agency.

Kawaoka holds a master's degree in public and environmental health and a doctorate in environmental science and engineering, both from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

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