



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Department of Health warns public about contaminated water in  
Kaohaoha Gulch near 'Ō'ōkala Town, Hawai'i**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is warning the public to stay out of Kaohaoha Gulch below Mamalahoa Highway in 'Ō'ōkala, Hawai'i. Storm water within Kaohaoha Gulch was contaminated with animal waste due to discharge this morning from a lagoon at the Big Island Dairy facility.

The DOH is advising the public to avoid contact with water within Kaohaoha Gulch in areas between Big Island Dairy and the shoreline east of 'Ō'ōkala Town. The contaminated water is expected to reach coastal waters via storm water flows through Kaohaoha Gulch. Warning signs have been posted in the affected areas.

Owners of Big Island Dairy reported the discharge to DOH at 9:10 a.m. today, and estimated approximately 800,000 gallons of wastewater is expected to be discharged during pumping activities throughout the day. The lagoon is being pumped down to maintain the structural integrity of the lagoon and prevent an uncontrolled discharge into Alaialoa Gulch, which runs through 'Ō'ōkala Town.

The dairy is required to submit a written report to DOH documenting the cause of the spill. The DOH Clean Water Branch will continue to oversee the situation and investigate the wastewater spill as the discharge of animal waste to State waters is strictly prohibited.

The DOH Clean Water Branch responds to sewage spills which reach state waters. The Clean Water Branch protects public health and the environment by prohibiting discharges which impair water quality, keeping Hawaii's waters fishable and swimmable for everyone. Owners and operators of wastewater systems must comply with environmental regulations that are in place to protect the public. Failure to do results in legal action by the state, federal partners and/or private citizens.

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