



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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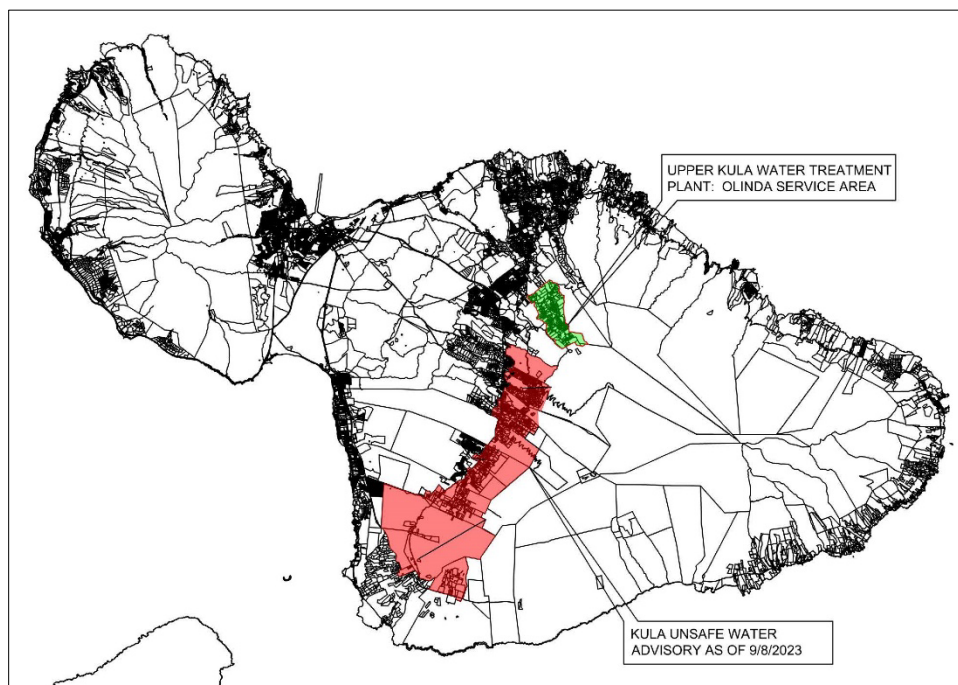
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Trace amount of toluene detected in Upper Kula water system**

HONOLULU – Toluene has been detected for the first time in water samples collected at Upper Kula Treatment Plant, which is part of Maui Department of Water Supply's (MDWS) Upper Kula water system (Public Water System HI0000215) and serves part of the Upcountry area on the island of Maui.



Toluene detections were confirmed in lab reports, dated August 14, 2023, and August 16, 2023. MDWS notified the Department of Health (DOH) of the results on August 28, 2023. The Method Reporting Limit (MRL) is the lowest amount (minimum concentration) of a chemical detected in a sample that can be considered reliable. The MRL for toluene is 0.5 parts per billion (ppb). The detected level for toluene at the Upper Kula Treatment Plant was less than the MRL and well below the federal and state Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 1,000 ppb. The federal and state standards are set to avoid health risks based on a lifetime of consuming water containing that level of contaminant.

Toluene is predominantly used as an industrial feedstock and a solvent. It is the main component of paint thinner, permanent markers, contact cement and certain types of glue. It may be discharged from petroleum factories. The presence of toluene was detected after the Upper Kula Wildfire in August of 2023. This strongly suggests its presence was an artifact of the wildfire impacting the surface water source for the Upper Kula Treatment Plant. Further monitoring is planned by MDWS at the Upper Kula Treatment Plant.

To date, the Upper Kula water system is, and continues to be, in compliance with federal and state toluene standards for drinking water.

This news release is issued in accordance with Hawai'i Revised Statutes Section 340E-24, which requires the drinking water system to notify DOH of any previously undetected contaminant within seven days of detecting the contaminant. DOH then has 14 days to notify the public through the media.

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