



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2023

23-155

**Department of Health and EPA Secure Federal Funding to
Increase Supply of Safe Drinking Water**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) has partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to secure up to \$75 million for use by the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS). Among the potential uses for this funding is that BWS can resume use of its Hālawā Shaft for drinking water production. DOH sent BWS a letter informing it of this opportunity yesterday.

After the November 2021 fuel spill at the Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, BWS decided to close the Hālawā Shaft out of an abundance of caution. If test results show that the water from the Hālawā Shaft is not currently safe to drink, the federal funds can be used for a treatment system that will enable BWS to bring the Hālawā Shaft back into service, adding a resource of 10 million gallons per day (MGD).

"The BWS' decision to raise water rates by about 50% may create a hardship for many residents. It's important for the BWS to take advantage of available federal funding to reduce the costs it passes on to O'ahu residents," said Governor Josh Green, M.D. "My administration is focused on partnerships and solutions, and I appreciate DOH's efforts to secure this federal funding opportunity."

"While DOH monitors the Navy's aquifer remediation efforts, these federal funds provide an opportunity to increase the supply of safe drinking water in the near term and potentially avoid the need to construct a new replacement well," said State Health Director Dr. Kenneth Fink. "Similar treatment systems have already been installed in Mililani and at the 'Ewa Shaft treatment facility to provide safe drinking water to O'ahu residents."

DOH identified potential funding through the emerging contaminants provision in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). A project is eligible for this funding if it addresses any contaminant that does not currently have a set federal minimum contaminant level (MCL) and appears on any of the Drinking Water Contaminant Candidate List (CCL). Based on what's known about the Red Hill contaminants, this project would seem to qualify. The BIL funds are provided through 2026 and are 100-percent forgiven.

In its letter to BWS, DOH identified, in addition to the reopening of the Hālawā Shaft, other BWS projects that would qualify for the federal funding opportunity. Click [here](#) to read DOH's letter.

###