



**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 13, 2023

23-159

## **Weekly Kula Air Sampling Continues to Show Good Air Quality**

HONOLULU – Weekly air sampling conducted by the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) in Kula continues to show good air quality.

“We will continue to sample weekly in Kula to ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Phase II dust mitigation measures are effective,” said Deputy Director of Environmental Health Kathleen Ho. “We will continue to protect public health by taking a multi-layered approach to install continuous particulate monitors, conduct regular air sampling, and continue community outreach.”

Air monitoring and sampling in Kula will be continued by the DOH throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Phase II debris removal work to ensure debris removal activities do not significantly impact air quality in the area of Kula. Air sampling is conducted 24 hours a day for specific contaminants. After the sampling is completed, samples are sent to a certified laboratory for analysis.

Similar air monitoring and sampling will be conducted in Lahaina by the DOH when Lahaina Phase II removal activities begin.

Air monitoring, sampling, and testing are being conducted for PM 2.5, PM 10, asbestos, and metals, including antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, lead, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, thallium, vanadium, and zinc.

Air monitoring and sampling conducted between November 16, 2023 and November 22, 2023 shows good air quality.

- There were no asbestos sample results above the laboratory's detection limit, indicating asbestos fibers were not present in the sampled air.
- Some heavy metal sample results were below the laboratory's detection limit. Extremely low levels of other heavy metals were detected, but all are below the public health screening levels indicating that the detections do not impact human health.
- Particulate matter screening levels were elevated at one Kula sampling point, which can be attributed to high winds and the operation of woodchippers and the spreading of woodchips on, and adjacent to, the property where the air monitor is located. The exceedances are not attributable to the USACE Phase II debris removal activities.

Please see Kula air sampling data attached. Following this news release, weekly updates on Kula air sampling will be posted at <https://health.hawaii.gov/mauiwildfires/environmental-hazard-concerns/>.

DOH and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have installed 58 real-time air monitors in Lahaina and Upcountry Maui—data from these monitors is available at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>. The real-time monitors measure for PM 2.5, particulate matter that is 0.0025 millimeters and smaller in size (about 30 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair) that can be a component of ash, dust, smoke, and air pollution.

Contaminants of concern, such as metals like lead or arsenic, stick to the pieces of ash and dust that register as PM 2.5. Because of this, air monitoring for PM 2.5 can be used as an indicator for contaminant monitoring. If PM 2.5 measurements are not above typical baseline levels, then ash and dust from the impacted areas, with their associated contaminants, are not in the air in any measurable amount that would be considered harmful. Elevated PM 2.5 readings could also be attributed to car exhaust, chimney smoke, outdoor cooking/smoking of food, and activities like yard work and wood chipping.

###