



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

December 6, 2021¹

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, D.C. 20350

RE: Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility

Dear Secretary Austin and Secretary Del Toro:

The State of Hawai'i faces an emergency that requires immediate and decisive action.

We request that the U.S. Navy prepare a plan to decommission the current Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility and store its fuel in an alternate location, where it cannot pose a threat to our aquifer. We also request a detailed plan for development of a water treatment facility to address current and/or future potential contamination mitigation as a result of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. Please include an estimate of the facility's date of completion and its cost.

This is a necessary and prudent plan in the event contaminants force shutdown of the Honolulu Board of Water Supply's Hālawā shaft, which is a major source of water for Honolulu.

In light of numerous leaks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam from the tanks, pipes, and associated infrastructure, we hope to improve trust between residents of Honolulu and the U.S. Navy, and to create an actionable plan between federal, state, and county agencies to preempt any further contamination of our water supply.

The threat of petroleum constituents entering our aquifer from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility is real. Data suggests that fuel that has leaked into the environment for decades has migrated through porous rock, potentially towards the Hālawā shaft, operated by the

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Honolulu Board of Water Supply. In a public report, the U.S. Navy's Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Summary (2019) identified the probability that tens of thousands of gallons of fuel may leak from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in the future.

If specific chemicals are found, the Board of Water Supply may be left with no choice but to shut down the well, leading to a cascade of issues for our community. As the Hālawā shaft constitutes over 20 percent of Oahu's water supply, residents and businesses may experience water shortages and rationing. Shutdown of a well due to contamination threatens public health and the public trust. It will impact our working-class urban communities significantly, many of which house sizeable populations of enlisted U.S. Navy members and their families. A catastrophic release will also strain future interactions between the U.S. military, our state and county governments, and our residents.

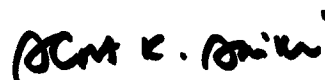
As you know, the U.S. Navy is engaged in an ongoing contested case before the Hawai'i State Department of Health. Advocacy groups, citizens, the State of Hawai'i, and the U.S. Navy may be locked in litigation for years to come. Whatever the result of the contested case or any other litigation, the threat to the City and County of Honolulu's water supply remains a serious and urgent matter requiring the immediate attention and action of the U.S. Department of Defense.

In addition to the plans requested above, it is critical that the U.S. Navy provide information to the public on the current situation and its future actions. The general public deserves to know what is happening. We must all be vigilant and take steps to secure and safeguard our collective future.

If the military believes that its presence in Hawai'i is vital, then it must take action now before it loses the support of the general public.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



SCOTT K. SAIKI
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cc: Governor David Y. Ige
Dr. Libby Char, Director of Health
U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono
U.S. Senator Brian Schatz
U.S. Representative Ed Case
U.S. Representative Kaiuli'i Kahele

¹ Letter was amended on December 9, 2021, to add two representatives who were inadvertently omitted from the original version.