



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
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San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Sent Via: Electronic Mail

Ramzi Mansour, Director  
County of Hawai'i  
Department of Environmental Management  
345 Kekūanāo'a Street, Suite 41  
Hilo, HI 96720  
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**Re: Revised Administrative Order on Consent  
EPA Docket No. SDWA-UIC-AOC-09-2017-0002  
Pāhala and Nā'ālehu Large Capacity Cesspool Closure Projects  
Nā'ālehu Preliminary Engineering Report**

Dear Director Mansour:

On August 31, 2023, in accordance with Paragraph 31.b. of the above-referenced Administrative Order on Consent (Consent Order),<sup>1</sup> the County of Hawai'i (the County) submitted for the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approval its Nā'ālehu Preliminary Engineering Report (the PER). The PER, which was prepared by Brown and Caldwell, in association with Engineering Partners, Inc., details the County's technical analysis of the two-wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) options and two individual wastewater system (IWS) options that the County determined were feasible to implement to facilitate closure of the three large capacity cesspools (LCCs) that serve approximately 164 housing lots in the community of Nā'ālehu.<sup>2</sup>

Pursuant to Paragraph 31.b. of the Consent Order, the PER shall "describe the project details for each feasible option, including the planning area description, planning period, description of construction phases, owner and operator of the facilities, and location of facilities (including a map); the design parameters for each feasible option; and project costs for each feasible option." Based on EPA's review of the PER, EPA has determined that the preliminary information concerning project details, design parameters, and project costs, for each feasible option fulfills the requirements of Paragraph 31.b. EPA therefore approves the County to use of the preliminary information provided in the Nā'ālehu PER for its Environmental Review.

As detailed in Paragraph 31.c of the Consent Order, the County shall conduct its Environmental Review in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq., and document the review process in an Environmental Information Document

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<sup>1</sup> The Consent Order was first issued June 22, 2017 and was revised August 22, 2022. The Consent Order can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/uic/sdwa-uic-aoc-09-2017-0002-closure-cesspools-pahala-and-naalehu-administrative-order-consent#aoc>.

<sup>2</sup> The following four project options were evaluated: (i) package plants and new collection system; (ii) package plants connected to the existing collection system; (iii) a maintenance contract model individual wastewater system program; and (iv) an operating permit model individual wastewater system program.

(EID) that addresses the following components: “i) a description of the purpose and need for the project; ii) identification of the preferred project and funding status; iii) description of the affected environment, including baseline conditions that may be impacted by the proposed project; iv) analysis comparing the feasible project options and the no action alternative; v) a description of the environmental impacts and mitigation measures for each feasible project option; vi) a description of consultation activities and coordination with state and federal agencies; vii) a description of public engagement in preparation of the EID; viii) a list of preparers; and ix) a list of references.” The Nā‘ālehu EID is due within **365 days** of receipt of this letter.

EPA appreciates the effort the County is putting forth to address its unique challenges concerning wastewater management and looks forward to continuing working together to ensure the successful implementation of the Nā‘ālehu LCC closure project. If you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact Jelani Shareem at (415) 972-3095 or via email at [shareem.jelani@epa.gov](mailto:shareem.jelani@epa.gov). Legal questions should be addressed to Kimberly Wells at (415) 972-3056 or [wells.kimberly@epa.gov](mailto:wells.kimberly@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

Amy C. Miller-Bowen, Director  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division

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