

2023 Maui Wildfire Recovery

ISSUE SUMMARY:

EPA provides recovery support to our federal partners and the County of Maui through a FEMA Mission Assignment for a Sustainability Advisor. The County of Maui and the Hawaii Department of Health face significant capacity constraints, so EPA is providing support for Maui's long-term recovery by assisting with planning for a sustainable recovery and providing technical guidance to support water infrastructure rebuilding.

UPCOMING MILESTONES:

Sustainable Community Planning: Recovery Community Planning meetings are ongoing and an expedited permitting is in place for residential properties.

Solid Waste: Ash and debris removal of non-hazardous material by the Army Corps of Engineers from residential and commercial properties should be complete by January 2025.

Wastewater: Environmental planning/permits to provide sewer service to the Wahikuli neighborhood (replacing cesspools) is expected Spring 2025.

Stormwater: Green infrastructure design and hydraulic modeling expected in Spring 2025.

Drinking Water: Maui is seeking infrastructure funding to increase water supply and build back a resilient system.

BACKGROUND:

On August 8, 2023, high winds and dry weather led to wildfires in Lāhainā, Upper Kula, Pūlehu/Kihei and Ka'anapali on the island of Maui. These wildfires affected approximately 1,550 parcels, 2,200 structures and were one of the deadliest U.S. wildfires in the past 100 years. EPA personnel responded to Maui immediately to work with federal, state, and local government partners on response and recovery efforts. FEMA tasked EPA with mission assignments under Emergency Support Function (ESF) 10 (hazardous material removal and debris management) and ESF3 (assessment and isolation of damaged and contaminated wastewater and drinking water infrastructure), and sustainability assistance during the recovery process. The EPA hazardous material removal work was completed 30 days early and \$20 million under budget on December 21, 2023 removing 200 tons of hazardous waste by hand.; the wastewater and drinking water response work was completed on time and on budget in July 2024, allowing Maui County to lift the Drinking Water Advisory.

EPA's Ongoing Involvement: EPA is continuing to provide long-term support for Recovery efforts as long-term support is anticipated by the County and the State. The Sustainability Advisor Mission Assignment serves as part of the FEMA Interagency Recovery Coordination Team. This work is being funded by FEMA and will enable EPA and our contractors to provide technical support for community visioning, resilient planning, and community engagement related to recovery efforts.

Regarding water infrastructure, EPA is working with the county and state to support the use of State Revolving Fund (SRF) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to support rebuilding or rehabilitating the drinking water and wastewater systems on Maui. EPA is also providing technical assistance to Maui on priority water infrastructure projects.

EPA Staffing: EPA has recruited two staff to support these efforts. In coordination with Maui and FEMA, the Land Chemicals and Redevelopment Division and Water Division will continue to provide long-term technical support on community planning and redevelopment and water infrastructure recovery moving forward.

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

- ☒ Congress ☒ Industry ☒ States ☒ Native HI ☒ Media ☒ Other Federal Agency
- ☒ NGO ☒ Local Governments ☒ Other (Kapuna)

MOVING FORWARD:

EPA will continue to work with the county, state, and federal partners to support institutional capacity building and project-specific deliverables for rebuilding. Specifically, EPA will pursue opportunities to accelerate infrastructure rebuilding through the SRF program and support the county in long-term water resource management and resilient and sustainable community design.

Region 9 points of contact: Claire Trombadore, Land Chemicals and Redevelopment Division Director and Tomás Torres, Water Division Director

LEAD OFFICE: REGION 9

OTHER KEY OFFICES: OW/OP