



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 18, 2021

Media Contacts:

Jamie Link, U.S. Navy Public Affairs, 808-471-5013

Kaitlin Arita-Chang, Hawaii Department of Health, 808-286-4806

Alejandro Diaz, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 808-284-7084

Joint Signing of the Water Distribution System Recovery Plan Agreement Ceremony

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – The U.S. Navy, Hawai‘i State Department of Health and the Environmental Protection Agency jointly signed the water distribution system recovery plan agreement Friday, Dec. 17 at 11:00 a.m.

The signing of this plan is the second work product of the Interagency Drinking Water System (IDWS) Team, which is focused on efficiently and effectively restoring safe drinking water to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPH-H) military housing communities.

“The Water Distribution System Recovery Plan represents the first step toward restoring the safe drinking water for Navy water system users,” **said Hawai‘i Deputy Director of Environmental Health Kathleen Ho**. “The Department of Health will continue to ensure that all joint plans are created in collaboration with state and local partners and are protective of public health and the environment.”

“The public can be confident that the Water Distribution System Recovery Plan protects public health and the environment as drinking water lines are flushed,” **said Acting EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator, Deborah Jordan**. “The EPA is proud to contribute its technical expertise to this plan and all the work of the interagency drinking water system team.”

The plan was developed with the primary goals of protecting human and environmental health, recovering the drinking water system and quickly and thoroughly as possible. The plan was also developed in collaboration with the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources and the City and County of Honolulu.

The Navy will begin flushing water-supply lines with clean water from the Waiawa Shaft. Water flushed from the supply lines will be sent to the sanitary sewer for treatment or will be filtered using mobile Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filtration units prior to discharge into storm drains. The mobile units will be placed at designated flushing zones and attached to fire

hydrants throughout the military housing areas. Once zones are flushed, samples will be taken to confirm the drinking water meets federal and state standards.

The purpose of treating through GAC is to ensure the water being discharged to the storm drains is clean and poses no threat to human health or the environment. GAC filtration is a proven technology used to remove organic chemicals, such as gasoline, diesel and jet fuel. GAC filters are made from organic materials high in carbon such as walnut shells, wood, or peat.

Flushing of the water system in a safe and effective way required a team of scientists and engineers to take all considerations necessary to protect human and environmental health. Regulatory permits were required and obtained to legally discharge from the water distribution system to surface waters.

The Navy obtained a Clean Water Act-required National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Hawaii State Department of Health. The Navy obtained a Notice of General Permit Coverage, under Hawai'i Administrative Rules, Chapter 11-55, Appendix D. Hawai'i State Department of Health enforcement staff will monitor flushing activity.

Joint U.S. military personnel, alongside both local and federal agencies, continue to leverage all available resources in order to restore safe drinking water and safeguard the environment.

The Joint Water Distribution System Recovery Plan and enclosures finalized yesterday included pictures and maps which contain details that, if released, could make critical infrastructure systems vulnerable. Staff have removed only those details from the pictures and maps to make the plan releasable to the public. With the exception of these narrow exceptions, the plan is unchanged.

###