



CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

No. 23 - 70

RESOLUTION

URGING THE U.S. NAVY AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO IMMEDIATELY IMPLEMENT WEEKLY TESTING OF NAVY RED HILL MONITORING WELLS AND THE RED HILL SHAFT FOR PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES ("PFAS") AND RELEASE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE HONOLULU BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY IN ITS LETTER TO THE U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DATED JANUARY 10, 2023.

WHEREAS, O'ahu's groundwater must be preserved in as close to pristine condition as possible to accommodate the drinking water needs of O'ahu's residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, contaminants infiltrating into groundwater and spreading through the aquifers create uncertainty regarding the supply of available drinking water, and the difficulty and high cost of cleaning up contaminated aquifers may lead to the shutting down of wells and the permanent reduction of O'ahu's drinking water supply; and

WHEREAS, the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility ("Facility"), which is operated by the U.S. Department of the Navy ("Navy"), stores up to 187 million gallons of fuel per day, has a total capacity of 250 million gallons, and is located only 100 feet above a sole-source aquifer from which the Honolulu Board of Water Supply ("BWS") provides drinking water to residents from Moanalua to Hawai'i Kai; and

WHEREAS, numerous fuel release incidents at the Facility have been documented over the years, including the release of approximately 27,000 gallons of jet fuel in January 2014, the releases of undetermined amounts of a regulated substance in March 2020 and June 2020, the release of approximately 1,000 gallons of fuel on May 6, 2021, the release of approximately 14,000 gallons of a fuel-water mixture on November 24, 2021, and the release of approximately 1,300 gallons of aqueous film forming foam ("AFFF") on November 29, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has adopted the following resolutions addressing the Facility's potential threat to O'ahu's drinking water supply:

- Resolution 14-110, adopted on June 4, 2014, Urging the State Department of Health to Take Immediate and Decisive Actions to Mitigate Potential Adverse Impacts to Groundwater Resources from Leaks or Spills at the United States Navy's Red Hill Underground Fuel Storage Facility;



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- Resolution 15-84, CD1, FD1, adopted on April 22, 2015, Requesting the Board of Water Supply, State Department of Health, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and United States Navy to Expediently Implement Recommendations of the Red Hill Fuel Storage Facility Task Force;
- Resolution 15-162, CD1, FD1, adopted on July 8, 2015, Urging the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Hawaii State Department of Health to Require the Immediate Implementation of Corrective Actions as Part of the Administrative Order on Consent in the Matter of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility;
- Resolution 18-266, CD1, adopted on March 8, 2019, Urging the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Hawaii State Department of Health to Reject the Approval of a Single Wall Tank Upgrade Alternative Option for the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility and to Reject the Conclusions Presented in the Groundwater Protection and Evaluation Considerations for the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility Report Dated July 27, 2018;
- Resolution 19-270, CD1, adopted on November 6, 2019, Reaffirming the Council's Position, as Set Forth in Resolution 18-266, CD1, Adopted on March 8, 2019, Relating to the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility Upgrade Alternative Options; and
- Resolution 21-276, FD1, adopted on December 15, 2021, Urging the Immediate Defueling, Permanent Removal, and Relocation of the U.S. Navy Red Hill Bulk Storage Facility Underground Storage Tanks; and

WHEREAS, on November 29, 2022, approximately 1,300 gallons of AFFF concentrate liquid leaked from a fire suppression system at the Facility into the environment, causing the potential release of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") into the groundwater, and, more recently, the BWS became aware of the Navy's detection of PFAS in groundwater samples taken in 2020 and 2021 in the Navy's water distribution system; and

WHEREAS, PFAS are also known as "forever chemicals" because they break down very slowly, and they have been used in synthetic firefighting foams, including AFFF; and



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WHEREAS, on January 10, 2023, the BWS requested, via letter, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A, that the U.S. Department of Defense instruct the Navy and other military entities, as appropriate, to immediately implement weekly testing of all Navy Red Hill monitoring wells and the Red Hill Shaft for PFAS and provide the BWS with the requested information and data related to AFFF and PFAS; and

WHEREAS, the Navy's apparent inability or unwillingness to implement testing and provide the information requested by the BWS is of grave concern and potentially places at risk O'ahu's drinking water resources, because the BWS needs accurate and timely information in order to allow it to address potential threats to those precious resources; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it urges the U.S. Department of Defense ("Department of Defense"), the U.S. Department of the Navy ("Navy"), and other military entities as appropriate, to immediately implement weekly testing of all Navy Red Hill monitoring wells and the Red Hill Shaft for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") and to provide the Honolulu Board of Water Supply with the information and data it requested in its letter dated January 10, 2023 related to aqueous film forming foam ("AFFF") and PFAS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Defense, the Navy, and other military entities as appropriate, are urged to act in accordance with the Department of Defense's policies regarding PFAS testing and AFFF releases, address transparently the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility's potential threat to O'ahu's drinking water supply, and provide in a timely fashion all relevant information to all stakeholders and the community; and



RESOLUTION

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense, Secretary of the U.S. Navy, the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the members of Hawai'i's congressional delegation, the Governor, the Mayor, the Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Health, the Manager and Chief Engineer of the Board of Water Supply, the President of the Hawai'i Senate, and the Speaker of the Hawai'i House of Representatives.

INTRODUCED BY:

Radiant Cordaro

Val A. Okiura

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

APR 24 2023

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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January 10, 2023

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Manager and Chief Engineer

ERWIN M. KAWATA
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The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

Subject: The Navy's Lack of Transparency in Response to Recent PFAS Releases at Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, Honolulu, Hawaii

I write to express the Honolulu Board of Water Supply's (BWS) grave concern regarding the U.S. Department of the Navy's (Navy) lack of transparency in response to (1) the November 29, 2022 release of around 1,300 gallons of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) concentrate liquid at its Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (Red Hill) and (2) the Navy's detection of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in groundwater samples taken in 2020 and 2021 in the Navy's water distribution system. In response to these events, the Navy not only withheld vital water quality information from the public and the BWS, but also seemingly failed to comply with Department of Defense guidance regarding PFAS reporting and AFFF spill response handling. Accordingly, the BWS requests that the Department of Defense instruct the Navy, and other military entities as appropriate, to immediately:

1. Conduct weekly testing of all Navy Red Hill monitoring wells and the Red Hill Shaft for PFAS;
2. Provide the BWS with copies of all past and future PFAS testing results in laboratory-provided electronic data deliverable (EDD) format;
3. Disclose all past AFFF uses and releases at Red Hill;
4. Disclose any and all information indicating whether Red Hill had complete containment, capture, and proper disclosure mechanisms in place to ensure that no AFFF was released into the environment prior to November 2022;
5. Release all sampling/monitoring plans and results for all testing related to the November 29, 2022 AFFF release;
6. Release all videos and photographs of the November 29, 2022 AFFF release and cleanup;

EXHIBIT A

7. Release any and all groundwater sampling data collected at Red Hill (in unredacted form) since 2016 that indicates that presence of PFAS; and
8. Release any and all groundwater sampling data collected at any former or current Department of Defense installations located on the island of Oahu, including but not limited to:
 - a. Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam,
 - b. Schofield Barracks/Fort Shafter,
 - c. Marine Corps Base Hawaii,
 - d. Tripler Army Medical Center,
 - e. Kunia Regional SIGNIT Operations Center,
 - f. Wheeler Army Airfield,
 - g. Bellows Air Force Station,
 - h. Kuahua Peninsula (a.k.a. Diesel Purification Plant),
 - i. Hickam POL Annex (Kipapa), and
 - j. Hickam POL Annex (Waikakalaua).

As the largest municipal drinking water utility in Hawaii, the BWS has a constitutional public trust responsibility to protect the water resources it manages and to preserve the rights of present and future generations in the waters of Hawaii. To do so, the BWS needs accurate and timely information regarding potential threats to the natural resources it manages and protects. We are deeply concerned that by withholding key information, the Navy is further endangering Oahu's irreplaceable drinking water resources. The Navy has repeatedly represented to the BWS that it would be forthcoming and transparent concerning releases and release responses with the potential to impact Oahu's critical drinking water resources. The BWS asks that the Navy fulfill its promises by providing the information requested without further delay.

Recent PFAS Releases at Red Hill

As you are well aware, the people of Oahu are still coping with what the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) aptly described as "a humanitarian and environmental disaster" caused by November 2021 fuel releases from the Navy's Red Hill facility that resulted in the contamination of Oahu's drinking water supply and the pollution of this island's irreplaceable, EPA-designated, sole-source groundwater aquifer. This is in addition to numerous other historic fuel release incidents at Red Hill that have had a devastating impact on Hawaii's natural resources and its people's health and welfare.

Recently—primarily through the reports of investigative journalists—the BWS became aware of additional, serious issues relating to AFFF releases at Red Hill and PFAS detections in drinking water at Red Hill Shaft. Although certain details remain scarce, the BWS understands that on November 29, 2022, approximately 1,300 gallons of AFFF concentrate liquid leaked from a fire suppression system at Red Hill into the environment, causing the potential release of PFAS to the underlying soil and

groundwater. Alarming, the Navy released very limited information concerning the incident, and it has even declined to publicly release a video documenting the release.

Further, we recently learned that the Navy detected PFAS in groundwater samples collected from its RHMW2254-01 well (Red Hill Shaft or Red Hill drinking water well) on December 20 and 27, 2021. We are also aware that the Navy report PFAS detections in their water system in their 2020 and 2021 water quality reports (NAVFAC, 2021 and NAVFAC, 2022). Copies of these reports are included in **Attachment A**. The 2021 Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Water System Water Quality Report presents sampling results for the system as a mixture (samples were collected from three sample points – Halawa Shaft Chlorinator, Waiawa Shaft Chlorinator, and Red Hill Shaft Chlorinator), yet the PFAS results displayed on the report do not distinguish what PFAS concentrations were identified at each sampling point. The 2022 Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Water System Water Quality Report presents sampling results for only the Aiea-Halawa Shaft Chlorinator. The BWS would appreciate clarification as to whether the other sampling points were likewise sampled and, if so, why such results were not included in the water system water quality reports. These reports indicate the presence of five (5) PFAS compounds from samples collected in 2020 and six (6) PFAS compounds from samples collected in 2021. A total of 18 PFAS compounds were tested for in 2020 and 2021, with perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) identified each year at concentrations that exceed the PFOA and PFOS health advisory levels set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in June 2022 (0.004 parts per trillion [ppt] and 0.02 ppt, respectively) (Federal Register, Volume 87, No. 118, June 21, 2022). Additional information regarding these PFAS detections is critical for understanding the potential threats to our drinking water.

In letters to the EPA and DOH, the BWS asked, among other things, that the Navy disclose all past AFFF uses and releases and provide copies of future PFAS testing results to the BWS. So far, the regulators have only committed to encourage the Navy to take these important steps towards transparency. The Navy itself has not provided the requested data and information; instead, exhibiting a disturbing pattern of reluctance to work transparently with the BWS and the public. Given that the Red Hill facility will be permanently closed and that our data request generally seeks release history information and environmental sampling results that do not implicate critical infrastructure security information, there is no reasonable basis upon which to continue to withhold such information from a water utility, like the BWS, that has a compelling need to understand regional water quality in real time. Accordingly, we reiterate our request for this critical information so that the BWS can fulfill its mission to manage and protect Oahu's irreplaceable drinking water resources.

Department of Defense Policy

The Department of Defense itself recognizes the potential dangers associated with releasing PFAS-containing substances into the environment, as well as the associated potential detrimental impacts to groundwater. For example:

- In 2014 the Navy issued a memorandum for naval operations concerning PFAS and safe drinking water (Schregardus, 2014). There, the Navy stated its commitment to “ensure all men, women, and children who live or work on [Navy] installations and facilities are protected from environmental contaminants and receive safe drinking water.” To that point, the Navy directed its operations department to “identify all known and suspected sites where [certain PFAS chemicals] may have been released on active and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) installations” and to ensure that a system of PFAS testing and reporting was implemented. It is unclear whether Red Hill was identified during this process.
- Similarly, in 2016, the Navy circulated a memorandum regarding the risk of PFAS drinking water contamination at its installations, as well as the need for testing and reporting in response to a new EPA lifetime health advisory (Ohannessian, 2016). The Navy detailed “sampling requirements for potential at-risk drinking water systems in the U.S.” The policy directed sampling for PFAS “on all installations” covered by the memorandum and to report any “exceedances of the EPA lifetime health advisory levels.” Again, it is unclear whether drinking water at Red Hill was sampled and if it was sampled, whether the results were reported to either the Navy headquarters or federal and state regulators.

In April 2022, the Department of Defense issued additional memoranda regarding its policy towards AFFF use and the public disclosure of PFAS testing results (McAndrew, 2022) (McAndrew, 2022a). The Department of Defense acknowledged that AFFF is known to contain certain PFAS chemicals and stated that it is investing in discovering PFAS-free substitute (McAndrew, 2022). In the meantime, its policy was that “AFFF will not be used for training personnel or testing of equipment unless there are complete containment, capture, and proper disposal mechanisms in place to ensure no AFFF is released into the environment.” Further, it required the reporting—within 24 hours—of “any AFFF usage, or spill that is above 10 gallons of AFFF concentrate or 300 gallons of mixed foam” to the Department of Defense. The policy states that any reports should include information regarding the spill, as well as the “[r]oot cause of ... [the] spill” and a “[s]ummary narrative of AFFF ... spill.” Additionally, a report regarding planned response actions must be submitted within 45 days of any spill.

As to the April 2022 policy PFAS testing results, the Department of Defense committed to “[p]ublicly disclose a final result of testing drinking water for PFAS,” and to provide “local notification prior to any testing of PFAS in drinking water...” (McAndrew, 2022a).