


Honolulu reaches settlement over Clean Water Act violations

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HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - A comprehensive settlement has been reached to address federal Clean Water Act compliance at Honolulu's wastewater collection and treatment systems. The joint announcement was made Tuesday by the US Justice Department, US Environmental Protection Agency, state attorney general's office, state Department of Health and three environmental groups.



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The settlement resolves lawsuits brought by the Sierra Club, Hawaii's Thousand Friends and Our Children's Earth Foundation. Included in the settlement is a comprehensive compliance schedule for the city to upgrade its wastewater collection system by June 2020.

"This settlement will lead to significant improvements in water quality for the people of Oahu, and for the visitors to the island's world-class beaches. It calls for aggressive actions in the near term to upgrade the city's sewage collection system, and set out a longer term schedule for construction of secondary treatment at the Sand Island and Honouliuli plants," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's Administrator for the Pacific Southwest region.

The Honouliuli wastewater treatment plant will need to be upgraded to secondary treatment by 2024. The agreement calls for the Sand Island treatment facility to be upgraded by 2035 or 2038 if the city can demonstrate economic hardship.

The city agreed to pay a fine of \$1.6 million to be split between the federal government and the state of Hawaii to resolve violations of the federal Clean Water Act and state water pollution laws, such as the 2006 Waikiki force main break that spilled approximately 50 million gallons of sewage into the Ala Wai Canal.

State officials say that the coming infrastructure improvements will prevent such catastrophic spills from happening in the future. The settlement is subject to a 30-day public comment period and final court approval.

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