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Honolulu to Upgrade Wastewater Collection System

By [AP Exchange](#)

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HONOLULU (AP) Honolulu will upgrade its wastewater collection system by June 2020 under a settlement announced Tuesday with federal and local officials.

Under the settlement, the city must pay a \$1.6 million fine to be split between the federal government and the state to resolve violations of the federal Clean Water Act and Hawaii's water pollution law.

Those violations included a water main break on March 24, 2006, that spilled about 50 million gallons of sewage into the Ala Wai Canal.

The settlement will "significantly reduce both the public health risk caused by exposure to pathogens in raw sewage and the amount of harmful pollutants entering Honolulu's vibrant marine environment," said Ignacia S. Moreno, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

It resolves lawsuits brought by three environmental groups: Sierra Club, Hawaii's Thousand Friends and Our Children's Earth Foundation. It is subject to a 30-day public comment period and final approval by U.S. District Court.

The Honouliuli wastewater treatment plant will need to be upgraded to secondary treatment by 2024. The Sand Island plant also will need to be upgraded by 2035, but the time period could be extended to 2038, depending on economic circumstances.

"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," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's administrator for the Pacific Southwest region.

Ignacia S. Moreno, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division, said.