

Plan to Upgrade Red Hill Fuel Tanks Approved

Officials of the State of Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the Navy have agreed on a plan to upgrade the facility which includes twenty (20) underground storage tanks (USTs). After five months of review which includes changes based on public comments, the Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) was signed into effect on September 28, 2015 by the DOH, EPA, DLA and Navy. The tasks outlined in the AOC will also involve the Board of Water Supply (BWS) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources and also includes the installation of additional monitoring wells. The agreement provides a plan for immediate and long-term steps to minimize future leaks and threats to potable water.

In January of 2014, an estimated 27,000 gallons of fuel leaked from Tank #5, which at that time, had just completed a routine scheduled maintenance. Tank #5 contained Jet Propulsion Fuel 8 (JP-8). Due to the components of the chemicals in this type of fuel, concern over the long term effects on drinking water arose. Wells in the area were shut down as a precaution at the time and samples of ground and drinking water in the area were collected and tested.

The Red Hill fuel storage facility was originally built in the early 1940s. Each tank is constructed of steel and encased in 2.5 to 4 feet thick reinforced concrete which is surrounded by solid basalt bedrock. Each of the twenty tanks has a storage capacity of approximately 12.5 to 12.7 million gallons. The facility has a total capacity of approximately 250 million gallons of fuel. Currently, eighteen of the twenty tanks are in use.

Pacific Biodiesel and Hawaiian Electric Sign Biofuel Supply Contract

Hawaii Public Utilities Commission regulators have recently approved Pacific Biodiesel Technologies' fuel supply contract with Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO). In December 2014, Hawaiian Electric announced they decided to end its contract with Iowa-based biofuels company, Renewable Energy Group, Inc.

The two-year contract with Pacific Biodiesel, effective November 2015, will supply between 2 and 3 million gallons of locally produced biofuel at a lower price than HECO's current biofuel contracts with out of state suppliers. The Maui-based company processes the biofuel from waste cooking oil and other local feedstocks. HECO will purchase almost half of the volume that will be produced from Pacific Biodiesel's Keaau facility located on the Big Island. This biofuel will be primarily used at the 110-megawatt Campbell Industrial Park and with the potential of being used at other Oahu power plants.

Pacific Biodiesel is currently under a contract to supply biodiesel for the State of Hawaii-owned Honolulu Airport Emergency Generation Facility. The 10-megawatt facility will be able to provide electricity to HECO's Oahu grid and also has the ability to independently power the vital needs of the Honolulu International Airport should an emergency arise.