

Wastewater Testimony

First, please recognize that the State and the County have a problem. Maalaea and Poipu are the only two places left in the State of Hawaii with a high concentration of injection wells near the ocean. The Supreme Court has said that discharging sewer effluent into an injection well is the same as piping it directly into the ocean. Maalaea wastewater plants produce only primary sewage treatment at 1970's standards. We are pumping pathogens and nutrients into the ocean.

There are 14 State issued Underground Injection Control Permits for injection well systems on Maui. Three are for the County at Kahului, Kihei and Lahaina, where higher quality secondary treatment is provided. The other 11 are all in Maalaea. As the court case works its way through the issues, there will certainly be repercussions for Maui County at Maalaea. We pump sewage with only primary treatment into the ocean.

A Maalaea Village Association survey of the AOA Boards four years ago found that the number one concern was their aging, failing and outdated wastewater systems and the effect on the health of Maalaea Bay. Several condos have already been ordered to replace their wastewater systems. All new permits from the Department of Health for wastewater in Maalaea now have a requirement to shut down and connect to a regional wastewater system as soon as one becomes available. So, you can see where the thinking is at the State level.

The MVA organized a well-attended Town Hall Meeting on this topic. The panel included Sina Pruder, the head of the Dept of Health Wastewater Division, Assistant Attorney General Ted Bohlen, a wastewater expert from the Pukalani Plant, and a clean water expert from Maui Ocean Center.

Three years ago, a community steering committee and a task force was organized. Our first move was to commission and pay for a Brown and Caldwell Feasibility study for a regional WWTP in Maalaea. Through the efforts of Kelly King, and the Maui County Council, the County paid for an addendum to our feasibility study that included the costs and feasibility of building a conveyance system from Maalaea to Waikapu and connecting to the Maui County wastewater

RECEIVED AT CARE MEETING ON 01-05-2

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infrastructure. The community and the County Council have both worked toward a solution.

By default, all ten Maalaea condos are in the wastewater business. All ten have wastewater plants on the properties. All ten have contributed to a survey that studied our actual costs to treat wastewater on our own at each property. We found that a regional plant can process our sewage cheaper than we can do it for ourselves. The R-1 water from a regional plant can be sent back to the condos for landscaping purposes. This lowers the fresh water needs of the community, it provides a cost savings, and it further safeguards Maui's fresh water supplies, especially in times of drought.

The Community of Maalaea is being very proactive. We are working with several plant manufacturers to find solutions. We are looking everywhere we can to find funding. We found one supplier who is willing to build a plant with no up-front costs and create a "wastewater as a service" business model for less than we can do this for ourselves. But the one missing link, for all of this to work, is the need for a conveyance system to get our sewage from the condos to the regional plant. We need 3.8 to 4 million dollars to accomplish this. We are hoping that the County will help because this as a County wide problem. Maalaea Bay is an economic engine for all of Maui. Maalaea Bay, the corals, the shells, the limu, the fish, are all dying. This has been documented by the State Division of Aquatic Resources.

Roz Baker, our state senator, has made the Maalaea Regional Wastewater Plant one of her top four priorities in the next legislative session. Mahi Pono has generously offered the perfect ten acres of land at \$1.00 per year for 99 years. Please, Maui County Council, Maui County, help us to find a solution.

Thank you.