

## **U. of Hawaii Fined \$1.2M for Waste Violations**

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EPA Approves \$1.2 Million in Environmental Projects for Settlement with University of Hawaii

SAN FRANCISCO - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Hawaii Department of Health today announced approval of the University of Hawaii's proposal for spending nearly \$1.2 million on environmental projects as part of a February 2001 settlement for hazardous waste violations at the university.

EPA and Hawaii Department of Health inspectors began investigating two facilities on the Manoa campus of the University of Hawaii in October 1997. Inspectors found improperly stored and labeled chemicals including flammables, corrosives, poisons, mercury and hundreds of other unknown chemicals. The Department of Health continued to inspect other facilities within the university system and found similar violations at the Kauai Agricultural Center and the Waiakea Agricultural Experiment Station in Hilo.

The settlement with the EPA and the Hawaii Department of Health required the university to perform the \$1.2 million in environmental projects within three years as part of a total \$1.7 million settlement. The university also paid a \$505,000 cash penalty. Under the terms of the settlement, \$120,000 was paid to the U.S. government and \$385,000 was paid to the state.

"These projects will make the university a model for reducing pollution and waste," said Jeff Scott, the director of hazardous waste programs in the Pacific Southwest. "They will result in increased safety for students, staff and faculty, as well as the entire community. We are very pleased with the activities the university has undertaken, and hope they will inspire other institutions to do the same to increase safety, reduce wastes and save costs."

"The implementation of these projects show the university's commitment to improve their environmental practices," said Tom Arizumi, chief of the Hawaii Department of Health's Environmental Management Division. "The students, faculty, and staff of the university will benefit greatly from these pollution prevention projects. We encourage all of the regulated community to learn from the university's example and look to pollution prevention as a way to improve their practices, save money, and protect the environment."

The university has completed a \$288,000 project to identify pollution prevention and waste minimization projects throughout the university system and performed a compliance audit of its facilities throughout the system. The largest of the approved environmental projects, costing approximately \$502,000, involves the conversion of undergraduate organic chemistry curriculum to microscale at the University of Hawai'i Manoa and Hilo campuses and several community colleges. Microscale chemistry uses

smaller quantities of chemicals and reagents and special glassware to demonstrate the basic concepts in organic and inorganic chemistry which results in less waste, less student exposure, and fewer chemical purchases. Labs can cut chemical use and waste generation by more than two-thirds by converting from traditional macroscale to microscale experiments.

The university will spend \$207,000 to convert the Honolulu Community College print shop to a digital printing system. This will eliminate nearly all printing-related wastes, including silver-based developers, inks and solvents. The university will also spend \$47,000 to establish a program to remove and replace mercury-containing equipment to mitigate the potential for mercury spills and improve safety for university faculty and staff.

The Manoa campus and four community colleges will spend \$110,000 to adopt new techniques and equipment to improve paint spray efficiency in auto body repair classes. These techniques will reduce paint and solvent use, waste generation, and air emissions of volatile organic compounds, reducing exposure to teachers, students and the community. The university instructors will make the methods available to auto body professionals in Hawaii through demonstrations and workshops, in order to transfer these best practices to the industry. Auto body repair facilities using these techniques can cut their air pollution by 30 percent, and their paint use by 25 percent. Other projects approved include hiring a coordinator to oversee all the projects, and testing alternative methods for conducting genetic experiments.