

## KIUC Submits EA; Awaits Action on Water Lease

*Līhu'e, Kaua'i, HI – 07/26/2019* - Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative has submitted an environmental assessment (EA) to the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR): an important step in obtaining a water lease for continued use of two water diversions in the Wailua watershed.

In addition to submission of the EA, KIUC has provided requested information to the department and has completed other tasks required before a lease could be approved.

“This is a critical step in the application process,” stated KIUC’s President and Chief Executive Officer, David Bissell. “We will await additional guidance from DLNR on the steps moving forward.”

KIUC uses water from diversions at North Fork Wailua and Waikoko Stream, collectively referred to as the “Blue Hole Diversion,” to maximize production from its Waiahi hydropower plants. The Upper and Lower Waiahi plants have been in operation for nearly 100 years. Use of power from these hydro facilities allows the utility to avoid the burning of 675,000 gallons of diesel a year, and are among the cooperative’s lowest cost sources of electricity: saving members an estimated \$1.7 million dollars a year when operating at full capacity.

“Keeping the Waiahi plants in operation is good for the environment and good for our members’ pocketbooks,” stated Bissell. “With the 100 percent renewable energy mandate adopted by the State of Hawai'i, we need to build a diverse portfolio of renewable resources that can be used responsibly to provide safe, reliable power to our members.”

“This week’s island wide outage and subsequent generation shortages have shown that it’s important to keep every renewable resource available,” said Bissell. “Reaching the state’s goals while continuing to provide reliable power will be challenging.”

KIUC has been using water from the Blue Hole Diversion since the cooperative was formed in 2002 via a revocable permit issued annually by the Board of Land and Natural Resources. In 2004, the cooperative applied for a long-term lease.

(more)

“We have done extensive studies, resolved a contested case filing, restored stream flow and have collaborated with numerous agencies at the local, state and federal level over the past 15 years in pursuit of the lease,” stated Bissell. He noted that while the state still has not fully defined the process and timeline for issuing water leases, he is hopeful that action on the EA can be taken prior to the end of 2019.

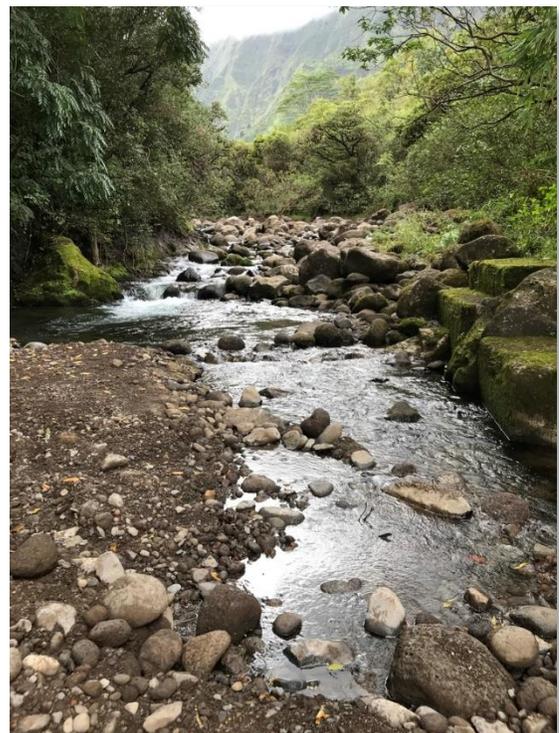
The EA document includes cultural, flora and fauna and socio-economic studies. It will be published by the Office of Environmental Quality Control in the Environmental Notice once it is submitted by DLNR.

More information on the Waiahi hydros can be found in the “Renewables” section of KIUC’s website: [www.kiuc.coop/renewables](http://www.kiuc.coop/renewables).

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The Lower Waiahi hydro plant generates power and returns water to Waiahi stream



Water flows past the spillway of the North Fork Wailua diversion structure in January 2019