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Additional Comment Period for Waiahi Hydro Environmental Assessment Opens

Līhu'e, Kaua'i, HI – 11/25/2019 – A draft environmental assessment (EA) in support of Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative's application for a long-term water lease for its Waiahi hydropower plants has been published for a second 30-day comment period as of November 23.

The EA was originally published by the State of Hawai'i Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) on October 8, and the 30-day comment period expired on November 7. The document is being re-published due to a procedural issue in transmitting the document to various agencies and stakeholders. All previously submitted comments are still valid. New comments are due no later than December 23.

KIUC uses water from diversions at North Fork Wailua River and Waikoko Stream, collectively referred to as the "Blue Hole Diversion," to produce electricity at 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 burning 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.

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.

The EA document includes stream, flora and fauna and socio-economic studies, and a Cultural Impact Assessment. It can be accessed on the OEQC website: <https://health.hawaii.gov/oeqc/>

More information on the Waiahi hydros can be found in the "Renewables" section of KIUC's website: www.kiuc.coop.

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Water flows past the existing diversion structure at North Fork Wailua River in October 2019



Water leaves the Lower Waiahi hydropower plant and re-enters Waiahi Stream