

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RELATED TO
GEOHERMAL DEVELOPMENT AT
KAHAUALE'A, ISLAND OF HAWAII

Chronology of Events
Involving Environmental Aspects of
the Kahauale'a Geothermal Project:

July - September 1981, January 1982:

Applicant conducted an Environmental Base Line study of Kahauale'a in July, August, and September 1981 and in January 1982. The survey included air quality samples, soil and plant chemistry analyses, surface water samples, and plant and bird surveys. In addition, weather quality and meteorology of the area was assessed by short period data collection in accessible areas adjacent to the project area and analysis of more extensive meteorological reports from other areas which could be used to estimate weather in the project area.

October 16, 1981

An Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notice was issued by DLNR for the Kahauale'a Geothermal Project.

October 23, 1981

EIS Preparation Notice published in EQC Bulletin.

February - March 1981

Air dispersion models were developed to forecast the dispersion of emissions from project operations under "worst-case" weather conditions which in turn allowed computations on the level of emission abatement for Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) that must be achieved to maintain acceptable air quality standards.

Engineering calculations and assessments were made by acoustical engineers using "worst-case" weather scenarios to predict sound propagation, refraction and attenuation of project noises and to show that noise levels, except for initial flow testing of each new well, could be within the county noise guidelines at the nearest residence to the source.

Landscape engineer prepared topographical analyses to show that the visual impact of the project facilities would be minimal due to the shielding offered by land slopes and trees and the distance to project sites from observation points with a view corridor to those sites.

March 1982

Draft EIS completed.

March 2, 1982

Conservation District Use Application (CDUA) for Geothermal Development at Kahauale'a filed with DLNR; environmental assessment included.

March 29, 1982

DLNR notified applicant that an Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared in accordance with EIS Rules and Regulations as established under Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes and submitted to the Department for review and approval.

May 8, 1982

The EQC Bulletin published a notice that the Draft EIS for the Kahauale'a Project had been submitted to BLNR and was available for public and agency comment.

June 7, 1982

Comments due on Draft EIS.

June 23, 1982

Revised EIS incorporating/responding to comments on Draft EIS submitted to DLNR for acceptance.

June 28, 1982

DLNR granted applicant's request for extension of 30-days to clarify certain responses in the Revised EIS.

July 30, 1982

Final Revised EIS accepted by BLNR. Acceptance based on findings by the Board that the EIS had adequately disclosed the likely environmental consequences and their appropriate mitigative measures based on available technologies.

August 8, 1982

The "Notice of Acceptance" of the Revised EIS was published in the EQC Bulletin.

September 28, 1982

The Volcano Community Association filed as original Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief in the 3rd Circuit Court (Civil No. 8223) on grounds that the EIS was inadequate. The case has not been heard.