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## Navy contractors begin drilling for two new ground water monitoring wells

PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM – Navy contractors began drilling operations Aug. 28 to install two new groundwater monitoring wells north of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.

There are currently seven groundwater monitoring wells in the vicinity of Red Hill. These two additional wells will enhance understanding of groundwater movement in the vicinity of the facility and provide alerts should any contaminants be detected.

The wells were sited and planned in direct cooperation with and approval by appropriate state and federal regulatory agencies, principally the Underground Storage Tank Section of the Hawaii State Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Planning and fieldwork are being conducted following appropriate regulatory, health, safety, and security procedures. Well drilling and installation will be done by Valley Well Drilling, based in Kapolei, and is expected to be complete by the end of October 2014.

Oahu's drinking water is drawn from sources, including the Navy's Red Hill Water Supply Shaft, which are sampled and analyzed by certified laboratories regularly to ensure it is safe for consumption. Drinking water collection sources are different in purpose and structure from groundwater monitoring wells, also referred to as sentinel wells, whose purpose is not supply but to detect potential contaminants and provide information on groundwater movement and behavior.

"The siting and installation of these additional groundwater monitoring wells is a direct result of the collaboration between the Navy, state Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and our combined interest to further refine understanding of how ground water moves near the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage facility, said Aaron Poentis, Environmental Program Director for Navy Region Hawaii. "We value this precious resource along with our fellow residents, families and friends."

There is currently a network of seven sentinel wells in the vicinity of Red Hill; six of those are operated by the Navy. Data from the two new wells will be added to the existing network and used to validate models that are intended to describe possible groundwater movement and ability to transport any contamination toward drinking water sources.

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Certified civilian and Navy laboratory tests indicate that drinking water sources in the Red Hill vicinity continue to meet federal Safe Drinking Water and State of Hawaii standards.

The Navy awarded the overall contract on May 22 to Battelle Memorial Institute and Parsons Government Services for evaluation of the Red Hill facility based on their previous experience at other similar Department of Defense sites on Oahu. The contract tasks include planning, fieldwork, and documentation for the installation of Red Hill monitoring wells. The total cost of all three phases of installation for the two wells is expected to be approximately \$670,000, with about 75 percent of that cost invested in the fieldwork phase efforts, which are subcontracted to firms based in Hawaii.

The Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility is operated within industry standards and maintained under American Petroleum Institute guidelines. It is a national strategic asset and continues to provide vital, secure fuel storage for ships and aircraft of United States Pacific Fleet and other military branches.