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THREE PINHOLES FOUND IN EMPTY RED HILL TANK 5

PEARL HARBOR – Navy contract workers found three small holes on Tank 5 at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility June 11 and 12. Not visible to the naked eye, the defects were discovered during an extensive examination of the empty fuel tank that includes vacuum box testing.

Vacuum box testing determines if air can flow through the tank wall, giving an indication that liquid would also be able to escape the tank.

The inspection of Tank 5 is being conducted after the Navy announced a possible leak of up to 27,000 gallons of JP-8 jet fuel last January. Each of Red Hill's 20 cylindrical tanks is 250 feet tall, 100 feet in diameter, and can hold up to 12.5 million gallons of fuel. The tanks are large enough to hold Aloha Tower. A national strategic asset, the Red Hill facility provides secure fuel storage for ships and aircraft of U.S. Pacific Fleet and other military branches.

"The small holes were located in prior welding repairs and may explain the reason for the fuel loss," said Capt. Mike Williamson, Chief Engineer for Navy Region Hawaii. "We've got the right experts working meticulously to determine the full extent of the leak as the inspection continues."

Hawaii Department of Health officials have been updated on the latest findings. Meanwhile, laboratory tests continue to indicate that drinking water sources in the vicinity continue to meet federal regulatory Safe Drinking Water and State of Hawaii standards.

"The water continues to be safe to drink," said Williamson. "We continue to work closely with all of our government partners from local, state and federal agencies. As a follow up to our January announcement, we are continuing to update the public on everything the Navy is doing to avoid future leaks."

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