

SENT VIA DOH-CWB E-PERMITTING PORTAL #HQQ-ZACV-PAH5H

Kenneth S. Fink, MD, MGA, MPH
Director of Health
State Department of Health
Clean Water Branch
2827 Waimano Home Road
Hale Ola Building, Room 225
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782

Dear Dr. Fink:

SUBJECT: August 16, 2026 Spill Report
Headworks Spill Report
Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (SIWWTP)
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
Permit No. HI 0020117 (Administratively Extended Until April 30, 2027)

In accordance with the Hawaii Administrative Rules, Chapter 11-62, Appendix B, Section 2, and Section 9.a., the City and County of Honolulu (CCH) submits details of a spill event. On August 19, 2026, an extension of the five (5) working day written reporting requirement was granted to Ms. Zhijun Zhou by Mr. Ryan Grenier from the State Department of Health (DOH) Clean Water Branch (CWB). The due date to submit the written report is August 31, 2026.

1. DESCRIPTION:

Tropical Storm Lala delivered intense rainfall across Oahu, causing an immediate peak in influent flow rates at the SIWWTP. Influent flow increased from 61 MGD at approximately 4:51 a.m., to 189 MGD at 7:15 a.m. The debris loading from this surge exceeded the continuous self-cleaning and removal rate of the four active Headworks band screens. This formed a dense mat that caused the screening motors to shut down, severely restricted wastewater flow to downstream treatment processes, and forced wastewater to back up and overflow from the screen channels and influent junction box.

Approximately 26.1 million gallons (MG) of mixed wastewater and stormwater overflowed from the influent junction box and influent screening channels located on the roof of the SIWWTP Headworks building. Of the total spill volume, approximately 0.65 MG were recovered, and 25.45 MG entered the storm drainage systems, which discharge to Honolulu Harbor.

Despite the overflow at the headworks, the vast majority of the influent flow remained within the facility's treatment train and received complete treatment, passing successfully through the grit chambers, primary clarification, secondary biological treatment, and ultraviolet (UV) disinfection prior to discharge through the outfall.

2. DATE AND DURATION:

The spill started on August 16, 2026, at 8:20 a.m. and was secured at 10:00 p.m. on the same day.

On August 16, 2026 at 9:59 a.m., Mr. Christian Hortizuela verbally notified the State Hospital operator of the spill event. At 10:12 a.m., Mr. Dale Mikami of the DOH-CWB returned Mr. Hortizuela's call to obtain additional information regarding the spill. At 10:25 a.m., Mr. Hortizuela verbally provided Mr. Mikami with an update on the spill status. At 10:39 a.m., Mr. Hortizuela verbally confirmed the spill had entered storm drainage system to Mr. Mikami and that signing was required by Mr. Mikami. At 11:12 a.m., Mr. Mikami further confirmed that signing can be conducted when conditions are safe.

On August 16, 2026, CCH issued the attached press release at 3:54 p.m. (see Attachment 1).

Once the CCH determined it was safe for personnel, fifteen (15) spill warning signs were posted on August 17, 2026 at 11:45 a.m. and six (6) additional signs were posted on August 19, 2026 at 11:50 a.m. The locations of the signs are shown on the attached Sign Map (See Attachment 2).

Sampling begun on August 18, 2026. Sampling locations are shown on the attached Sampling Map (see Attachment 3). Results of the sampling to date are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: SAMPLING RESULTS

Sample Date	Location	Time	Enterococcus (MF) cfu/100 mL	C. perfringens (MF) cfu/100 mL	Salinity (ppt)
8/18/2026	Keehi Boat Launch	9:49 a.m.	29	8.0	31.5
	Keehi Harbor	10:03 a.m.	18	12	31.7
	SI BP Softball Field	1:58 p.m.	0.9	9.0	33.1
	Anuenue Fisheries	10:25 a.m.	2,800	41	30.0
8/19/2026	Keehi Boat Launch	10:20 a.m.	290	51	33.7
	Keehi Boat Harbor	10:13 a.m.	25	5.0	32.5
	SI Beach Park Softball	10:38 a.m.	4.0	110	33.5
	SI Beach Park	10:30 a.m.	56	<0.9	32.8
8/20/2026	Keehi Boat Launch	10:19 a.m.	280	25	31.1
	Keehi Boat Harbor	10:11 a.m.	66	18	29.2
	SI Beach Park Softball	10:40 a.m.	<0.9	5.0	33.7
	SI Beach Park	10:30 a.m.	32	5.0	32.5
8/21/2026	Keehi Boat Launch	7:25 a.m.	22	2.0	32.2
	Keehi Boat Harbor	7:35 a.m.	0.9	4.0	32.6
	Coast Guard	7:49 a.m.	61	<0.9	32.8
	SI Beach Park	8:01 a.m.	19	20	33.2
8/22/2026	Keehi Boat Launch	10:09 a.m.	6.0	6.0	33.7
	Keehi Boat Harbor	10:00 a.m.	100	< 1.0	33.7

Sample Date	Location	Time	Enterococcus (MF) cfu/100 mL	C. perfringens (MF) cfu/100 mL	Salinity (ppt)
	SI Beach Park	10:21 a.m.	26	1.0	33.5
8/23/2026	Keehi Boat Launch	7:45 a.m.	24	10	33.1
	Keehi Boat Harbor	7:39 a.m.	12	4.0	32.8
	Coast Guard	8:15 a.m.	90	1.0	32.0
	SI Beach Park	8:22 a.m.	9.0	2.0	33.1

DOH-CWB instructed CCH to stop signing and sampling on August 24, 2026.

3. CAUSEⁱ:

Wet Weather. Heavy rainfall and excessive inflow/infiltration (I/I) caused a rapid surge of water and debris to enter the facility. The debris load mechanically overwhelmed the active Headworks influent band screens, forming a thick mat that blocked the flow under high hydraulic pressure.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) 24-hour rainfall measurements from a nearby rain gauge (#MNLH1) showed the area received 8.34 inches of rain within 12 hours, corresponding at a 10 year storm recurrence.

4. REMEDIAL ACTION:

On August 15, 2026, in anticipation of heavy rainfall from Hurricane Lala, operators switched the Headworks Building's four band screens to manual mode to ensure continuous operation at maximum speed, and increased monitoring of the screens.

During the event, operators immediately attempted to clear the blocked screens, while throttling and lowering the influent channel gates to control the surge. Simultaneously, staff placed absorbent sandbags around the area to redirect the overflow, protect critical equipment, and manually remove debris and floating material to restore capacity. However, as conditions worsened, the screen motor repeatedly tripped under the heavy debris load. Floodwaters rapidly inundated the influent structures, stairwells and elevated decks. Due to the rising water and immediate risk to personal safety, operators were forced to cease troubleshooting and evacuate the headworks area.

To manage the overwhelming surge at the source, plant operations contacted collection system operators to temporarily halt pumping upstream from the Ala Moana Wastewater Pump Stations. Operators followed up with two subsequent emergency calls; however, collection system operators were unable to throttle back at the pump station because of critical concerns that restricting the flow would trigger immediate upstream backups and wastewater spills into surrounding public areas.

Once flows began to subside and conditions were safe for operators to access the roof, operators started troubleshooting near the Band Screens. Operators also opened 50% of the swale gates' fully-opened height to initiate drainage and protect critical equipment and motor control centers

(MCCs) within the plant from water damage.

Three pumps were deployed to return mixed wastewater and stormwater: 1) from the Primary Clarifier (PC) #1 Service Area to PC #2; 2) from the road into the South PC Effluent Junction Box; and 3) from the PC #7 and #8 pump room, into PC #7.

Later, operators were able to remove multiple aerated grit channel (AGC) covers to divert the roof's stormwater mixed with wastewater into the treatment process after overcoming initial high-flow vacuum constraints on the covers, lowering the rooftop wastewater level by approximately four inches.

At approximately 10:00 p.m., operators fully closed the inlet gate to Band Screen #3 after several hours of manual actuation and floodwater levels decreasing, allowing crews to safely remove accumulated debris and return the screen to service. Reopening the inlet gate restored channel flow and stopped the spill. This action also reduced total influent flow to Band Screens #1, #2, and #5, enabling operators to isolate, clean, and return all four screens to normal operations.

On August 17, 2026, SIWWTP personnel initiated cleanup operations, utilizing hosing and sweeping to clear the affected areas and equipment. The majority of the affected areas have been cleaned.

A consultant has been engaged to evaluate the screen design under high-flow conditions involving rags and debris

and will provide recommendations to address these conditions.

In the interim, additional operators will be deployed to the Headworks Building during wet weather events to expedite and assist with manual debris removal from the influent screens, to prevent any debris mat formation.

I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Should you have any questions, please contact Zhijun Zhou of our Monitoring and Compliance Branch, Division of Environmental Quality, at (808) 768-3257.

¹Between August 13, 2026 and August 20, 2026, the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i issued two emergency proclamations in direct response to Tropical Storm Lala which occurred between August 14 to 16, 2026. As of August 31, 2026, the most currently effective proclamation relating to the weather event is the Second Proclamation Relating to Tropical Storm Lala, dated August 20, 2026, and effective through October 19, 2026 (“Second Proclamation”), unless earlier terminated or superseded by a separate proclamation.

The Second Proclamation continues to recognize the impacts and ongoing efforts to recover from Tropical Storm Lala. As recognized by the Second Proclamation, “it is critical that the State and counties have sufficient resources to clear debris, secure infrastructure, conduct emergency relief efforts, and take other measures to respond to and recover from Tropical Storm / Hurricane Lala.” The Second Proclamation continues to suspend a number of state laws “to the extent necessary to allow government agencies to respond to and recover from the emergency.”

Attachments:

Attachment 1: PRESS RELEASE

Attachment 2: SPILL WARNING SIGNAGE MAP

Attachment 3: SAMPLING MAP

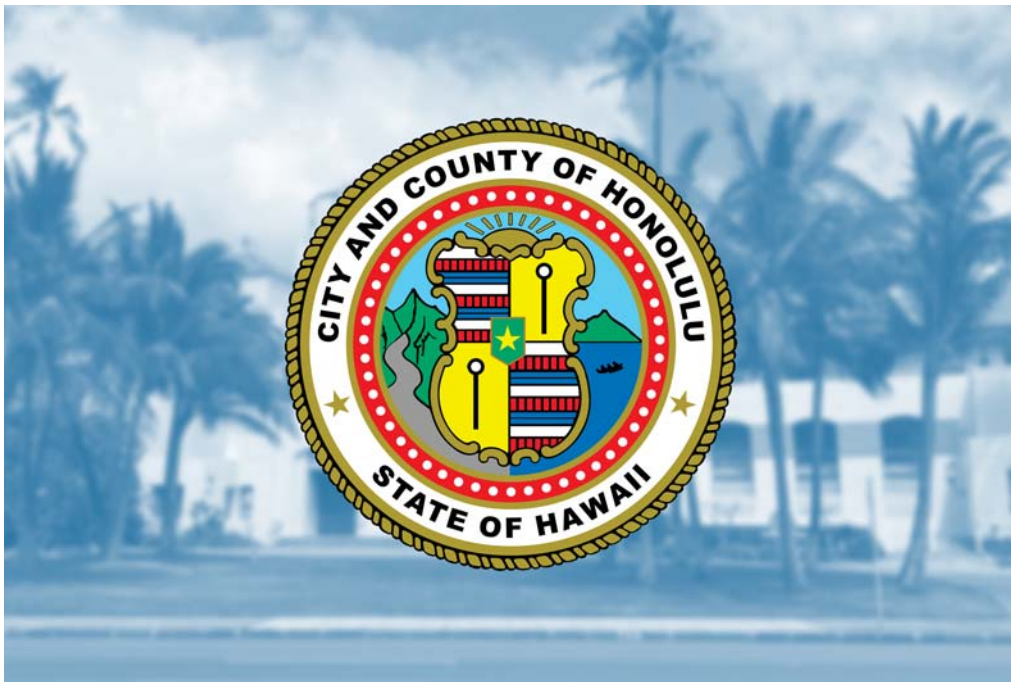
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2026

Jenn Boneza, PIO: (808) 768-3454

CITY AND COUNTY OF
HONOLULU**NEWS RELEASE**Mayor Rick Blangiardi
Department of Environmental Services
City and County of Honolulu

ENV acts swiftly to address a spill within the Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant



HONOLULU – The City and County of Honolulu’s Department of Environmental Services (ENV) is responding to a sewage spill in the Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant at 1350 Sand Island Parkway, Honolulu, on Sunday, August 16.

ENV responded to the spill at 8:20 a.m. Sunday. The spill is ongoing, and crews are on scene working to contain it. The cause of the spill is under investigation, and the total volume is currently unknown.

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ENV takes incidents like this seriously and remains committed to protecting public health and the environment.

About the Department of Environmental Services

The City and County of Honolulu's Department of Environmental Services (ENV) manages wastewater and solid waste systems that serve the island of O'ahu, which include 2,100 miles of sewer lines, 72 wastewater pump stations, nine wastewater treatment plants, three solid waste transfer stations, seven refuse and recycling convenience centers, seven solid waste collection base yards, one active landfill, and one waste-to-energy facility (H-POWER). ENV is dedicated to protecting public health, preserving the environment, and ensuring the sustainable management of Honolulu's essential infrastructure through innovation, efficiency, and community partnership.

Department of Environmental Services

City and County of Honolulu

YouTube: [@CCHNL_ENV](#)

Instagram: [@hnl.env](#)

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—PAU—

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ATTACHMENT 2: SPILL WARNING SIGNAGE MAP

SAND ISLAND WEST
BOAT LAUNCH
(6) SIGNS POSTED

SAND ISLAND EAST
BOAT LAUNCH
(4) SIGNS POSTED

SAND ISLAND EAST
CANOE LAUNCH
(3) SIGNS POSTED

APPROXIMATE
LOCATION OF SPILL
AT SAND ISLAND
WWTP

(2) SIGNS POSTED
ENTRANCE GATE AT
SI PARK -8/17/26 CLOSED
8/19/26 (6) ADDITIONAL
SIGNS POSTED NEAR
BATHROOM AND PARKING
AREAS

SAND ISLAND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP)

15 WARNING SIGNS POSTED 08/17/26 @ 11:45 AM

6 ADDITIONAL SIGNS ADDED ON 08/19/26 @ 11:50 AM

NPDES HI 0020117

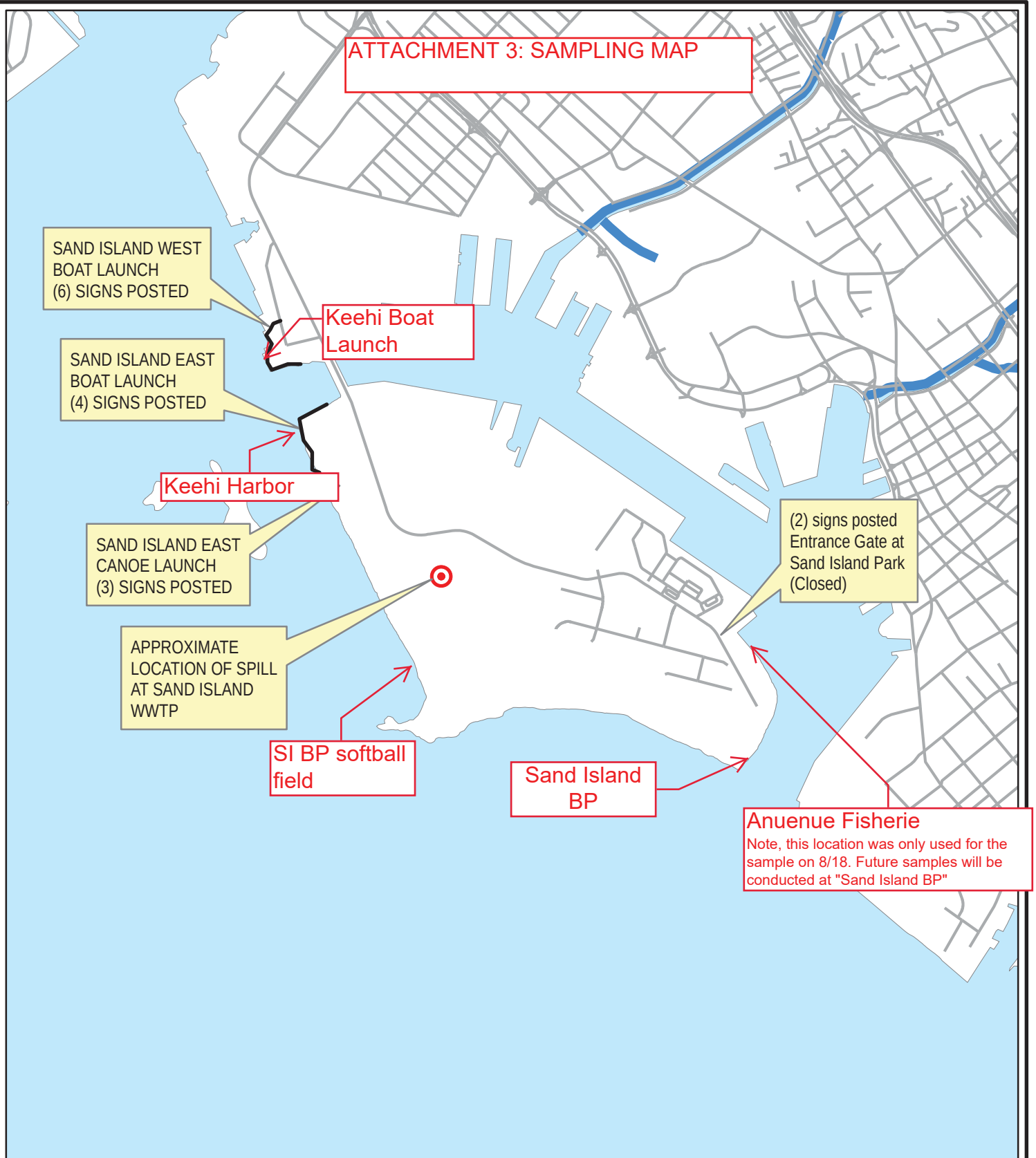
Prepared by: Dept. of Environmental Services
City & County of Honolulu
1000 Uluohia Street
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

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Feet

ATTACHMENT 3: SAMPLING MAP



SAND ISLAND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) 15 WARNING SIGNS POSTED 08/17/26 @ 11:45 AM NPDES HI 0020117



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