

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Attn: Amy Miller-Bowen

Ms. Bowen:

Aloha my name is Jeff Wallace and I'm writing on behalf of my colleague and close friend Duke Pontin.

As a 1974 Kahuku High graduate, I've remained tied to this area, serving as manager of Amorient Aquafarms from 1978 to 1994, became a state-licensed operator for the Kahuku Airbase Water System in 1999 along with my profession as a firefighter at Kahuku Station since 2000. I lay this out only to emphasize I'm committed to ensure the well-being of my community. I feel a need to speak on Mr. Pontin's behalf.

The Airbase Water System is old infrastructure. It dates back to the war when the Army-Air Corp built the airfield on Kahuku Point to support the war effort. The key word here is "old". When I first got involved with the system, it was owned and operated by Campbell Estate. Outside of meeting public health standards, little importance was put into maintaining the system, thus there were continuous leaks resulting in huge losses of water. Fast-forward to 2010, the water system was put into a nonprofit corporation and forced the users to become owners, while the Board of Directors did little to fix problems. They hired a management company to the tune of \$100,000 a year to manage the system but did nothing in the way of maintenance. There was no way the 18 families that received water from the well could afford that ridiculous amount. That's why Mr. Pontin stepped up.

He convinced the board to let him manage the Kahuku Water Association, and did it for the first 3 ½ years for free. Not only did he save it from financial ruin, he became aware of the huge water loss and immediately went to work to stop the 5,000,000 gallons a month water loss. With his own money, equipment and personnel it took two years to revamp the underground piping system, *his efforts prevailed stopping the waste of over sixty-million gallons of drinking water from being drawn out the aquifer year after year*. Once the system was sound, he designed and implemented ways to detect leaks. Today, our system is one of the most efficient and cost effective in the state. Something we're quite proud of.

The point of this, Mr. Pontin is truly a responsible and caring champion for protecting the environment. Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely
Jeff Wallace