



EPA Shares Report on Community Involvement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is distributing its recommendations for community involvement for Hawaii geothermal issues and is asking for your response to the recommendations.

In May 1996, representatives from EPA's Region 9 office in San Francisco visited the Pahoia and Hilo communities in Hawaii to explore ways to better involve the community in geothermal issues. One of the ideas we discussed was the possibility of forming a community work group regarding geothermal issues. We talked with residents, state and local government officials, members of community and environmental groups, and representatives of business and industry. We appreciated the time and thought people devoted to those discussions.

The idea of a work group came after earlier EPA visits to the community near the Puna Geothermal Venture facility, when we learned about the community's need for information, feelings of mistrust and polarized viewpoints. We wondered if a group, comprised of members from various segments of the public, could be a mechanism for improving the flow of

information and the relationships among the numerous public, government and industry parties.

In addition to compiling this broad array of comments, EPA has in the last 18 months given consideration to the possible options for improving the exchange of information and community involvement for local geothermal issues. We've struggled to find the best alternative, given the divergent opinions both on geothermal and public involvement. We've given thought to the resources needed to establish and maintain a community work group and have considered alternatives for increasing community involvement.

Attached to this fact sheet is the report which summarizes what we heard from the people interviewed and the options we explored. We'd like you to review the report and let us know what you think. Are your views characterized accurately and are they still the same today? Do you have a preference for the course we should take on community involvement? Please give us your responses to these questions and any other comments you have. EPA wants to choose an option that best meets the needs of the community.

COMMENTS • QUESTIONS

You may send your comments on the enclosed form with the pre-addressed and stamped self-mailer by May 8, 1998 to the address listed below:

Mike Ardito, Hawaii Superfund Project Officer
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You may also telephone or e-mail Mike with your comments or questions.

Telephone: (415) 744-2328 or
Region 9 Superfund's toll-free message line:
(800) 231-3075.

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