



**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**News Release**

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**STATE WATER COMMISSION RELEASES DECISION ON WEST MAUI  
“NA WAI ‘EHA” INSTREAM FLOW STANDARDS**

HONOLULU -- The State Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) issued its final decision and order in the contested case to set interim instream flow standards for four west Maui streams –Waihe‘e, Waiehu, ‘Iao and Waikapu -- known together as “Na Wai ‘Eha.”

**Decision and Order**

The Commission has ordered the following amended interim instream flow standards (IIFS):

- Waihe‘e stream IIFS are 10 million gallons per day;
- North Waiehu stream IIFS are 1.6 million gallons per day;
- South Waiehu stream IIFS are 0.9 million gallons per day; and
- ‘Iao stream and Waikapu stream IIFS remain at the current levels

The Commission’s decision strongly emphasized responsible management of public trust resources.

“Hawai‘i has been fortunate compared to many regions around the world in that we have abundant sources of clean water,” stated the majority opinion of the Commission. “However these resources are not infinite, and due to changing weather patterns and demands, in many parts of our state we have reached or exceeded the capacity of existing water resources.”

The Commission’s decision on Na Wai Eha, as well as its decision late last month on east Maui, requires all parties to address critical water issues which have been avoided for far too long.

(more)

Entities diverting water from streams, including the County, will need to invest in water systems and infrastructure to increase effective use and conservation of water. Larger diverters facing ongoing and growing needs, including the County, were encouraged by the Commission to explore joint development of reclamation and water recycling in order to address their needs without returning to these streams.

“Even if we allowed 100 percent of the stream water to be diverted, there is simply not enough water in these streams to meet the offstream demands” stated Laura H. Thielen, Chairperson of the Commission. “The combination of drought, the degradation of our watersheds from invasive species, and years of growth and development has left our streams with far less water than was available 50 years ago. Maui County is particularly vulnerable to these changes as in some places they rely on streams for 85 percent of their water supply. This reliance is no longer sustainable and Maui needs to develop alternative sources of water, reclamation and conservation,” said Thielen.

The Commission’s decision, following closely on the heels of its east Maui streams decision just two weeks ago, is likely to have far-reaching repercussions leading to improved water resource use and management.

The final decision and order can be found on the Commission’s website at <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/cwrn/currentissues.htm>

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