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NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY PROVIDES KĪLAUEA RECOVERY INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

The County of Hawai'i has submitted final designs for Highway 137 restoration and the lower Pohoiki Road realignment to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for review. Both projects are funded with the help of a FEMA Public Assistance grant due to the 2018 Kīlauea eruption.

“These projects will provide a significant public benefit following the eruption, and we’re pleased to announce the completion of these important milestones with our Federal partner,” said Douglas Le, the County’s Disaster Recovery Officer.

Restoration of sections of Highway 137 inundated by lava will follow FEMA completing an Environmental Assessment (EA), as required under the National Environmental Policy Act, and providing the County a Notice to Proceed.

FEMA has selected a contractor to conduct the EAs for Highway 137 and the three Pohoiki Road projects – realignment of lower Pohoiki Road, restoring inundated sections of upper Pohoiki Road, and potential water service restoration to Isaac Hale Beach Park.

FEMA accepted final design for the upper Pohoiki Road restoration in October 2020. The three Pohoiki Road projects are being reviewed together.

“The environmental reviews for Highway 137 and the Pohoiki Road projects will occur concurrently,” said Ikaika Rodenhurst, County Public Works Director. “We will continue to work with FEMA to ensure the process is done efficiently while satisfying federal regulations.”

Timelines are subject to change; however, the County currently anticipates restoration of Pohoiki Road and Highway 137 starting around spring/summer 2022 following the environmental reviews.

The EA process will ensure proper consultation with lineal descendants, and assessment and documentation of historic, archaeological and environmentally sensitive resources, including any impacts and mitigation actions.

FEMA approved a \$61.5 million grant for impacted County roads and a \$30 million grant for impacted water infrastructure due to the eruption. The grants are provided on a reimbursement basis and cover 75% of the costs that were estimated in a damage assessment.

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