



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOWN HALL MEETING HELD ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED OAHU COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER

HONOLULU – On November 29, 2017, over 80 individuals representing agencies, organizations and neighborhoods throughout Oahu attended a second Town Hall meeting at the Aloha Stadium Hospitality Room. The meeting provided a forum for offering public comments and input concerning the recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) project. Hosted by the Hawaii Department of Public Safety (PSD) and Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS), the meeting brought together leaders of both departments and their consultants to present information to an audience of persons interested in the future of OCCC.

The Draft EIS includes detailed discussions of the impacts of constructing and operating a new OCCC facility at each of four alternative sites. PSD is also proposing to relocate female detainees currently housed at OCCC to the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC) in Kailua to better accommodate their needs; relocating female detainees to WCCC is also addressed within the Draft EIS.

After introductory remarks by Tracey S. Wiltgen, who moderated the meeting, PSD Director Nolan P. Espinda welcomed the audience and explained the urgent need to replace the outmoded, obsolete and inefficient OCCC. He went on further to credit Governor David Ige with leading from the front on this project, beginning with the Governor’s vision as expressed in his 2016 State of the State speech, all the way to his November 8, 2017 press conference announcing the preferred site as named in the Draft EIS.

“A new OCCC at the Animal Quarantine Station site in Halawa, as proposed in the Draft EIS, would better meet the current and future needs of the State of Hawaii,” says Public

Safety Director Nolan Espinda. “The notion that we are trying to build a larger facility to expand and increase our incarcerated population is simply not true. It is critical that we build a more modern and efficient jail to house our current population in a safe, secure, clean and constitutionally compliant facility.”

Next, State Comptroller Roderick Becker provided brief remarks concerning the role of DAGS in assisting PSD with this important and much-needed project. Consultant team representatives followed with information concerning the timeline for developing a new OCCC, the extensive public outreach undertaken by PSD since 2016, along with technical information about Draft EIS contents, how to view a copy of the document, and the process and deadline for submitting written comments that will be addressed in a Final EIS to be published in 2018.

The majority of the evening was devoted to the public who offered comments covering a wide variety of topics including the need for additional programs and services to help offenders reintegrate into their communities, the role of state-sponsored task forces and commissions studying approaches to reforming the criminal justice system in Hawaii, and concerns over the possible cost of developing a new OCCC among other issues and concerns.

The Draft EIS is available for downloading or viewing from the following sources:

- OEQC’s direct link to the document:
http://oeqc2.doh.hawaii.gov/EA_EIS_Library/2017-11-08-OA-DEIS-Replacement-of-Oahu-Community-Correctional-Center.pdf, or visit the online EA/EIS Library through the OEQC website: <http://health.hawaii.gov/oeqc/>
- On-line commenting site: *<http://futureoccc.commentinput.com/?id=4fGhu>*
- OCCC Future Plans website: *<http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans>*
- Printed copies are available at: Hawaii State Public Library, Kalihi-Palama Public Library, Aiea Public Library, Mililani Public Library, Kailua Public Library, and Hawaii Kai Regional Library

The Draft EIS public comment period ends on January 8, 2018. Additional information concerning the OCCC project is available at: *<http://dps.hawaii.gov/occc-future-plans>*.

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