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Hawaii Water Service Hosts Exercises to Enhance Coordinated Emergency Response; Plans Underway for New Firefighter Grant Program

Waikoloa, Hawaii—To enhance coordination during emergencies or natural disasters when seconds matter, local water and wastewater utility Hawaii Water Service (Hawaii Water) held its annual Community Emergency Operations Center (EOC) exercises on both Maui and the Big Island this week.

Hawaii Water's annual EOC exercises, held on Nov. 5 on Maui and Nov. 6 on the Big Island, refresh the knowledge and improve readiness of Hawaii Water employees who serve 6,500 customers on Kauai, Maui, Oahu, and the Big Island, including residents, businesses, and resorts. Together, the events drew more than 50 attendees, with community and first responders also invited to learn how the utility prepares to respond to crises and collaborate on a regional, coordinated response should a large-scale emergency occur. This year's EOCs included an emergency response course using the Incident Command System and a hands-on disaster simulation, which prompted attendees to think through how they would keep communities safe in the event of a significant tropical weather event with unprecedented flooding, downed power lines, landslides, and impassable roads.

"Protecting our customers' and communities' health and safety is our highest priority, and part of fulfilling that commitment includes regularly training on potential incidents and preparing our team's operational readiness and response," said Geoff Fulks, Hawaii Water General Manager. "We are pleased that many of our community partners and officials were able to join us as we work together to make the communities we serve safer."

To help support local firefighter efforts, Hawaii Water will launch a new firefighter grant program next month. Through the program, fire departments in Hawaii Water's service areas will be invited to apply for funds to offset the cost of life-saving measures from training to personal protective equipment.

This year's EOC exercises were led by the utility's Safety team and Gerald Simon, retired Vice President of Emergency Preparedness, Safety, and Security and former Oakland (Calif.) Fire Chief. In addition to Hawaii Water employees, other community partners attended the EOCs including: Hawaii County Councilman James Hustace, Maui County Councilwoman Tamara Paltin's Office, Hawaii Rural Water Association, Hawaii County Civil Defense, Hawaiian Electric, Maui Land & Pineapple, Rosewood Hotels & Resorts, and Wildfire Safety Advocates of Waikoloa.

About Hawaii Water Service
Hawaii Water Service provides high-quality, reliable water and/or wastewater services to residents, businesses, and resorts on Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island through about 4,000 water service connections and 1,840 wastewater connections. Hawaii Water's purpose is to

enhance the quality of life for customers and communities. To do so, it invests responsibly in water and wastewater infrastructure, sustainability initiatives, and community well-being. The company's employees live by a set of strong core values and share a commitment to protecting the planet, caring for people, and operating with the utmost integrity. The utility has been named one of "America's Most Responsible Companies" and the "World's Most Trustworthy Companies" by *Newsweek*, a USA Top Workplace, and a Great Place to Work®. More information is available at www.hawaiiwaterservice.com.