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**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2013 7:53 AM  
**To:** Kobayashi, Ann; Martin, Ernie; Harimoto, Breene; Chang, Stanley; Manahan, Joey; Pine, Kymberly Marcos; A Person  
 Ikaika; ccidistrict4@honolulu.gov; Fukunaga, Carol A; Menor, Ron  
**Cc:** ; Choon James  
**Subject:** FY2014 Budget Committee Hearings - Fire Department must set its priorities amidst city's perennial budgeting restraints

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 2013 MAR 13 AM 7:57

## City Council FY 2014 Department Budget Hearings - Honolulu Fire Department

Aloha City Council Budget Chair Ann Kobayashi and city council members,

We continue to be alarmed at the audacity of bureaucrat(s) who defy the city council's common sense approach to mitigating this Hauula Fire Station Relocation fiasco. As you may know, my husband's grandfather was buried in his firemen uniform and we are proud of the four generations of firemen. We are strong supporters of our first responders. However, there can be no sacred cows.

The City Council unanimously deleted and defunded this controversial project for FY2013. The past Managing Director Douglas Chin stated their Administration was open to exploring alternative relocation sites for Hauula and Waialua.

Yet, the bureaucrats continue to push and shove their own agenda.

Asking \$750,000 for "planning and design" is putting the cart before the horse when this matter is still not resolved in the courts yet.

There is a growing pattern of behavior that is very alarming. City Hall has continual struggles with debt to service the many municipals needs in Oahu. Yet this unwelcome project continues to be pushed through the system!

This Taj Mahal station is double the lot and triple the costs of a typical station. It's being relocated for less than two minutes away from the existing Hauula Fire Station. The Environment Assessment stated it will not increase personnel nor increase its scope of service. The main premises for this relocation was it was in a flood zone. However, residents who were born before this station was built have repeatedly said the station has never flooded. Land Chief Miyata then said the fire station's condition was bad but its condition is similar to the public schools that thousands of children use daily. The list of shifting and shallow rationale is long.

We enclose a few selected links to provide a quick background of this fiasco.

<http://www.hawaiireporter.com/mayor-carlisle-stop-the-hauula-fire-station-relocation-fiasco/123> Alice Ubando and other families living next to the proposed site were never consulted. They live within 25 feet of this site.

<http://www.hawaiireporter.com/stop-hauula-fire-station-relocation-shibai/123> Marvin Iseke lives within 25 feet of an earlier proposed site at Hanaimoa Street, was never consulted by the same EA consultant. DDC also did not fully disclose there are state and city-owned acreages around the existing Hauula Fire Station. An imaginative and professional architect could address these vacant lots.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJnAo9X0jTY>

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgTNKvDmsHk> DDC has long list of bureaucratic malfeasance in this project. DDC violated HRS Chapter 343, NEPA. DDC Environmental Assessment (EA) report listed ALTERNATE ANALYSIS as NONE. Neighbors living next to this proposed site were never consulted. DDC did not disclose to city council there was a Reynolds Recycling Center that has no other commercial to relocate to.

Local firemen have no say in the bureaucratic policy. This project is not a public-good decision based on sound and logical premises. It's becoming clearer and clearer to us that it is contractor-driven, not merit-driven. It does not serve the public well when **priorities** are so messed up.

We enclose a story of our friend in Punalu'u whose house was burned. All our local firemen were quick to the scene but they were greatly hampered by the lack of water hydrants. Fire Capt. Terry Seelig said that **there are many places in the islands that don't have fire hydrants close by**. We know. There are many areas in our region in the same situation.

Why then are we not setting our **priorities** in providing basic tools (fire hydrants) for our firemen instead of bullying local residents into accepting a relocation site they do not want?

If the city is truly concerned about public safety, our region needs more police manpower. We have a sub-station with 3 policemen on duty at the Kahuku sub-station. Kaneohe and Wahiawa are the next closest stations. Often times, these policemen are so overworked and spread out, police calls require 40 minutes for response time. On the other hand, we have eight fire stations in our region. The tradition of having a fire station in every little town needs to be re-examined.

Above all, it's not too much to ask City Hall to be prudent with the public treasury. Firemen are worried about receiving regular paychecks and a dependable pension as much as any one else. Take special interest and contractors out of the decision-making process. We cannot find any compelling reason for this project to continue except that it's a pretty plum building contract to have.

Why does the city continue to carelessly expend funds in this manner? Limited funds could be used for many other compelling needs. The city should know how ridiculous it looks trying to shove the \$13 Million building ticket down Hauula's residents' throat when nearby Kahuku Plantation Camp's 71 old-timers have been given eviction notices. What about the incomplete Kahuku Park? What about the month-to-month lease Kahuku Golf Course used by the public?

Thank you for deleting and defund this project for FY2013. Please continue with the common sense approach and delete and defund this project once and for all.

Mahalo!

Choon James  
808 293 9111

Reference:

## **Fire destroys Punaluu home located far from hydrant**

The blaze does an estimated \$600,000 in damage and displaces nine people

[http://www.staradvertiser.com/news/20110324\\_Fire\\_destroys\\_Punaluu\\_home\\_located\\_far\\_from\\_hydrant.html?id=118564384](http://www.staradvertiser.com/news/20110324_Fire_destroys_Punaluu_home_located_far_from_hydrant.html?id=118564384)

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Billy Casey stood in front of the burnt-out remnants of what had been his family home since 1972 wondering whether a nearby fire hydrant might have saved his Punaluu house, much of it burnt to the ground in a blaze yesterday.

"We've been trying for 40 years to get a fire hydrant," said Casey, whose house at 53-416H Kamehameha Highway is on a private road off Punaluu Valley Road and is more than 1,000 feet from the nearest fire hydrant.

**"There are many places in the islands that don't have fire hydrants close by,"** fire Capt. Terry Seelig said.

Firefighters from Hauula arrived in less than 10 minutes with a 750-gallon truck and a 1,500-gallon tanker behind it, with companies from Kaaawa and Kahuku right behind, Seelig said.

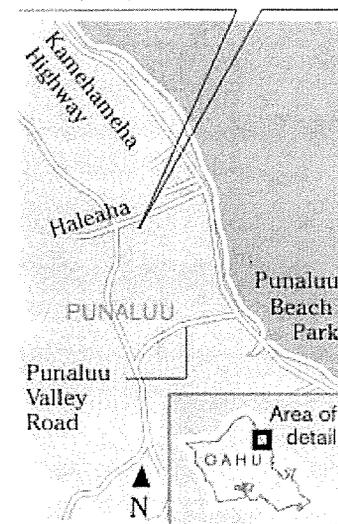
Firefighters ran a hose from the nearest hydrant on Punaluu Valley Road, where it intersects with the private road. The first company drops the hose, and the second company hooks up a pumper to the hydrant and relays water to the site, with additional pumpers used if needed, Seelig said.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=qoktw\\_p-M-k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=qoktw_p-M-k)

<http://www.khon2.com/content/news/developingstories/story/Residents-Lone-fire-hydrant-not-enough-to-fight/Nc043UnWSE2ttokdX0tZKg.cspX>

#### PUNALUU FIRE

*Early morning fire at two-story house leaves nine people homeless.*



STAR-ADVERTISER

## Residents: Lone fire hydrant not enough to fight Punaluu house fire

Published: 3/23/2011 7:55 am

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Updated: 3/23/2011 6:45 pm

- Video
- Images
- Fire destroys Punaluu home

A fire deep in Punaluu Valley destroyed a two-story home Wednesday morning leaving a family of nine homeless. Residents applaud the efforts of 35 firefighters but say the area's one fire hydrant was not enough to do the job.

Bill Casey was about to wake his family when he noticed a strong odor coming from upstairs.

"About quarter to six I smelt some burnt plastic," said Casey who saw an orange glow coming from the kitchen. "I went back in the house woke everyone else that was not up got them out."

Eight of the nine occupants were home at the time all got out safely. The first of seven fire companies arrived in 10 minutes but residents say it took awhile before they could even attack the blaze.

"We just waited for the fire department to get here and bring in the hose from at the end of the road for the one hydrant there," said Casey.

"The flames were huge. The smoke and flames and crackling noise it was horrible," said neighbor Kiki Emery.

Firefighters scrambled to connect hoses from the lone fire hydrant a thousand feet away. Crews stretched even more line to get on all sides of the burning structure.

"It was remarkable what they did it took probably about 30 minutes for them before they could really get water to us," said Casey. He and his wife Kanani and the rest of the family watched helplessly as flames engulfed one room at a time. "The garage, the living room and it just by the time they really got water going it was probably out of control."

Casey says the community has pleaded with the city for decades for more fire hydrants.

"We've been asking probably for 30 years now and of course my dad and them were in the home before asking and it's every 10 years or so they'll come out and survey it and say there's something on the board and that they'll get going and we don't see anything," he said.

"We had community meetings board meetings I know all the neighbors were just talking about it they said last month they were just talking about putting one here, asking them and I guess nothing happened," added Ira Casey.

The house was heavily damaged and is unlivable. No other structure was damaged.

"I'm just thankful that, blessing that we got all the family out that's all that's important is getting our loved ones out," said Bill Casey.

"Maybe this what they needed someone to lose their home," said Ira.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. Damage was estimated at \$600,000.

The American Red Cross offered assistance to the family along with many concerned neighbors.

A spokesman for the Board of Water Supply says the home is on a private road and the city's responsibility ends at the public right of way.

He says a project to add a hydrant is in the design phase, but there are no immediate plans to move it up the priority list.







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MAINTENANCE

YARD



Department of Parks & Recreation  
City & County of Honolulu