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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

February 19, 2025

### **Fire debris cleared from final commercial property in Lahaina ahead of schedule**

*Focus shifts to moving fire debris from temporary site at Olowalu to Central Maui*

The County of Maui and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in partnership with federal, state, and local contractors and agencies, announced today that debris removal has been completed from all commercial properties devastated by the August 2023 wildfires in Lahaina. Those property owners are now able to apply for building permits as part of the next phase in the rebuilding process.

Debris was cleared from 148 commercial lots in Lahaina ahead of the February 26, 2025, deadline. The clearing of the commercial lots follows the clearing of residential properties at the end of August 2024. In total, 1,538 residential and commercial properties have been cleared of wildfire debris.

Soil sampling and erosion control measures will be implemented on the final two commercial properties before the end of the month to ensure environmental safety before transferring the properties back to the County of Maui.

“The completion of debris removal from Lahaina’s commercial properties marks another critical milestone in our community’s recovery,” Mayor Richard Bissen said. “This milestone not only paves the way for rebuilding businesses but also restores hope for owners, workers and families who depend on them. We remain committed to supporting our residents as we rebuild Lahaina together.”

Mayor Bissen expressed gratitude for the expedited efforts of USACE and other partners, noting that the progress has been swifter than anticipated.

“This marks an important step in recovery that wouldn’t have been achieved without the dedication of our community partners and the public’s trust,” said USACE Recovery Field Office Commander, Lt. Col. Joseph Kendall. “Completion of debris removal is a vital step towards recovery and is essential in the overall rebuilding process.”

### **Temporary Debris Storage Site**

The focus now shifts to transporting approximately 400,000 tons of debris from the West Maui Temporary Disposal Storage (TDS) site, located in Olowalu, to a Permanent Disposal Site (PDS) at the Central Maui Landfill.

The County of Maui is slated to complete the first of a two-phase plan to construct the PDS at the Central Maui Landfill on March 17.

Based on the March completion date, USACE anticipates transporting material to the PDS once the permanent site’s construction is completed, which is expected in June 2025. USACE estimates that it will

take approximately five months to safely complete the hauling of the nearly 400,000 tons of debris.

Until the PDS at the Central Maui Landfill is ready to receive ash and debris, USACE will temporarily secure the TDS to ensure further protection of human health and the environment.

“We are fully committed to ensuring that the debris is moved from the temporary site to the permanent disposal site as quickly and safely as possible,” said Mayor Richard Bissen. “Our partnership with federal agencies is critical in making this happen efficiently, and we will continue to push for the swift completion of this process. We made a promise to the Olowalu community, and we intend to keep it by prioritizing the responsible and timely relocation of the debris.”

### **Lahaina Concrete Piling Removal**

USACE is coordinating with the U.S. Navy to remove concrete pilings along Front Street later this year and estimates it will take three months to complete. Removing the pilings will increase safety near the seawall and along Front Street.

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**Resources:** County of Maui/Mia A'i photo: Mayor Richard Bissen speaks with Alpha Inc. construction personnel about the significance of the site serving as a permanent location for Lahaina debris following a blessing by Kumu Cody Pueo Pata. Alpha Inc. was awarded the contract to build the Permanent Disposal Site at the Central Maui Landfill.

USACE photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials and its contractors stand in front of the last commercial property cleared on Front Street in Lahaina.