



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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Pfleuger Pleads Guilty to Water Pollution Crimes

HONOLULU – James H. Pfleuger pleaded guilty today in the Kauai Circuit Court to ten felony environmental crimes concerning water pollution.

Pfleuger had originally pleaded no contest to prior charges, but today withdrew the no contest pleas and entered guilty pleas to ten felony charges. Both the Department of the Attorney General and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency believed that no contest pleas – which occur without formal admissions of guilt – were inappropriate in this case.

Pfleuger admitted to knowingly altering a system of drainage in violation of the state Water Pollution law on ten occasions from February 11 to and including February 21, 2002. Pfleuger authorized an individual under his control to excavate soil to create trenches using trenching equipment. The trenching occurred on a broad, flat plateau on the mauka area of Pfleuger's Kauai property, and allowed runoff and pollutants to go directly into the ocean in the Pila`a Beach area.

Judge George Masuoka sentenced Pleuger to serve three years of probation and pay \$500,000 in fines. This appears to be the largest criminal fine imposed in a state environmental crime case in Hawaii.

“These were serious environmental crimes, and we believe felony convictions and a \$500,000 fine appropriately reflect the seriousness of these offenses,” said

(more)

Attorney General Mark Bennett. "We will continue vigorous prosecution of these types of offenses."

This case was prosecuted by the Environmental Crimes Unit -- a joint effort of the Attorney General, the Department of Health, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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