

Community Questions from the 9/5/18 Meeting in Pahoa With County of Hawai'i Responses

Note: Some questions were asked verbally; others were submitted in writing. Questions

1. Safety in Leilani

- **Other fissures are now putting out plumes, and I needed respirator. Let's not get ahead of ourselves.**
- **When is it safe to take children back into home, given extent of tephra and other remaining hazards?**

Answer: The USGS and State Health Department continue to closely monitor air quality levels. The SO₂ emission levels are at their lowest rates in more than 10 years. The USGS Hawai'i Volcano Observatory (HVO) has nevertheless advised that eruptive events such as lava flow and related emissions can occur at any time. Persons may return, but each resident should consider the potential hazards.

- **If HVNP can open, why isn't it safe for Leilani residents to return?**

Answer: While both the Kilauea Summit in HVNP and the LERZ were impacted, the lava activity and the health hazards in the LERZ were higher than the Summit area. Bearing public safety in mind, as risks were reduced, areas were reopened on a case-by-case basis. The County, in coordination with the Health Department and HVO, has since deemed the Leilani Estates area to be at reduced volcanic hazard risk with no imminent eruptive danger.

2. 50 Yard Buffer from Lava Field

- **Do I get fined if I go within 50 yards of the lava on my own property?**

Answer: Civil Defense is allowing access for residents to their property within the 50-yard buffer. No written waiver is need. For safety and security, those residents accessing isolated properties within the flow area on foot or helicopter are asked to register with Civil Defense. Please contact the Civil Defense Office at 935-0031 for more information.

3. Extension of Emergency Proclamation

- **My fear is that the extension of the emergency proclamation is to eventually condemn property. I think another 60 days is unwarranted and would like to negotiate another time frame that would allow residents to resume their lives.**

Answer: [The mandatory evacuation has been lifted for Leilani Estates](#). While the mandatory evacuation was lifted, a voluntary evacuation remains in place for affected areas in the LERZ.

Because the USGS has deemed the Kilauea eruption as still ongoing, the Mayor's emergency proclamation was extended to allow response activities to continue as necessary. Parts of the emergency proclamation can be rescinded based on changing conditions.

4. Leilani Access

- **Thank you for maintaining the checkpoint at the top of Leilani. Removing it would adversely impact many who are trying to move on & start over somewhere else. Many are in the process of dealing with insurance, SBA, FEMA, lenders, etc. Removing the checkpoint may reduce, stop, make people ineligible for support. In addition, many have health & safety concerns. Note that there are many families with young children that are not represented at these meetings.**
- **How long will the blockade on Leilani Ave. be maintained? What are long term safe places that people will be able to return to in relation to active fissures – fissures 7 & 21 currently spewing gases, they have been all week.**
- **Are the criteria used to determine safety for residents in Leilani & other evacuated areas the exact same criteria used to allow tourists/visitors into areas of the National Park in Volcano? Can this be validated with comparables & quantitative data?**
- **When will barricades be taken down? What are criteria for lifting mandatory evacuation zone? Are homes in mandatory evac area in imminent danger?**
- **“Public Safety – First Responder Safety” has entirely usurped our civil liberties. The very things that made me feel safe, the “powers that be” have taken away: Blocking the community from viewing the flow well before any threat (Kapoho Rd) not allowing me to enter my remaining property without threat of \$5,000 fine while others get in freely (Checkout “New Beach” footage on social media). It’s a no brainer if the government doesn’t trust the populous with its own safety the populous will not trust the Government. So, is the government squeezing the remaining communities out in order to take over??? It feels like it 100%.**

Answer: Access is now open to all residents of Leilani Estates. A checkpoint is still being maintained at the entrance to limit access to residents only.

5. Access to Other Communities

- **What is the timeline for restoring access to Kapoho, Lava Tree/Four Corners, other areas? What is the estimated timeline for recovery of evacuated communities?**

Answer: Communities outside of the lava flow field are accessible. Hazards and risks with the flow field are constantly being monitored and evaluated for safety. The County will update residents with information as soon as it becomes available.

6. Takings

- **At this point, how is the mandatory evacuation area not a regulatory taking of property rights under the 5th and 14th amendment, which supersedes HRS 127A and HCC Chapter 7?**

Answer: [The mandatory evacuation has been lifted for Leilani Estates.](#)

7. Citations

- **How many incidents of theft/looting were reported after the checkpoints were in place (in Papaya Farms Rd area)?**

Answer: 48 have been cited throughout the entire closure area, with the majority at Lava Tree State Park and MacKenzie Recreation Area.

8. Pohoiki

- **At Pohoiki, we've lost a critical resource, where people gather. "No can" is not an option – let's address "how can." Let's find a way to safely re-open Pohoiki.**

Answer: Mayor Kim has committed to reopening access to Pohoiki as quickly and safely as possible. The Fire Department and the Departments of Park and Recreation and Public Works recently conducted a site assessment and are developing the plan to open Pohoiki.

9. Water Systems

- **Will the Department of Water Supply return service to Pohoiki Road and then also to Isaac Hale Beach Park as things improve?**

Answer: The Department of Water Supply is assessing all damage and will provide information to residents as it becomes available. At this point, there are no plans to restore water service to that area. Options for providing well water to Isaac Hale Park are being explored, though it may not be potable.

10. Tourism

- **Is HVNP moving to Pahoia? Let's take our time – Pahoia is not set up to accommodate lots of tourists. We don't want money to rush in. We don't to sacrifice our coastline. Don't give up your land.**

Answer: The HVNP reopened on September 22. No other future plans/changes have been made.

11. Communications & Community Engagement

- **People making decisions about Leilani Estates have never been there. Have a meeting in the Leilani community center.**

- **Rest of island isn't aware of impacts. Improve communication.**
- **Not everyone has Internet access. Please provide other ways of staying informed.**
- **Can questions/responses be checked against the video recording?**

Answer: The County is committed to working with the impacted communities. Information will be provided through a variety of media.

12. Involve Youth

- **I'm here to give voice to youth in our community. We're not hearing from them. Their quality of life/mental health is impacted by lack of access to parks and beach access.**

Answer: The intent is to engage the young people of Hawai'i County to play an active role in the recovery process.

13. Helicopter Noise

- **Tourist helicopters are preventing full recovery because of noise pollution.**
- **Want serenity returned, free from helicopter noise. Governor/Mayor/Congress members, what are you doing to address the issue? Establish off-shore flight paths.**
- **Recovery presentation included public health, but it didn't speak to helicopter noise. That issue needs to be addressed.**

Answer: Complaints regarding commercial helicopter operations can be filed at <http://hawaiihelicopterassociation.org/> or by calling 808-639-5566.

14. Redevelopment Agency

- **Regarding the redevelopment agency, more details are needed: Who appoints the board? How many members does it have? How are they chosen? Will the community be at the table? Who will be paid? How much?**

Answer: The County is still exploring options for supporting the recovery process with a redevelopment agency. Once a specific path forward is identified, details will be shared.

15. General

- **Move meetings back to Tuesday (Wednesday conflicts with Uncle Roberts event).**

Answer: Eruption information meetings will only be held on an as-needed basis for the time being. As the recovery process moves forward, community meetings will be scheduled.