

# **An Analysis of Declining Water Quality in Maunalua Bay**

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## *Abstract:*

In 2002, the Hawaii State Department of Health declared Maunalua Bay an impaired water body, indicating that pollution levels do not meet state standards for public safety. Causes of declining water quality in the bay include: increased urban development, the use of pesticides for landscaping, and alterations of natural streams. These human-induced changes have resulted in increased levels of nutrients, chlorophyll, and turbidity in the bay, which decreases native seagrass and coral health and encourages invasive algal presence and sand accumulation. Despite knowledge of these issues, few efforts have been successful in limiting human impacts on water quality. Therefore, our group has taken steps to characterize water quality in Maunalua Bay, to test methods for water quality assessment, and develop recommendations for constructing a Quality Assurance Project Plan to allow for consistent monitoring of water quality in the bay and facilitate the release of information to stakeholders and community members.