

U.S. pulls out of geothermal project

□ The government yanks \$5 million of funds for exploration

By Rod Thompson SB 2/9/91
Big Island correspondent

HILO — The federal government is withdrawing its money from the state's geothermal exploration program — a move that could hurt both sides in the controversial issue.

For groups opposing the geothermal program, the move undermines their lawsuit demanding a federal environmental impact statement.

The federal withdrawal also means the loss of up to \$15 million, leaving the state with no more than \$6 million to continue the program.

Last year Congress appropriated \$5 million for the exploration. Another \$10 million was expected to follow in the next two years.

But the Sierra Club, Greenpeace and the Blue Ocean Preservation Society filed suit in federal court saying if federal money is involved, a federal environmental impact study is needed. State officials already are preparing a state environmental study.

On Monday, U.S. Justice Department officials announced the U.S. Department of Energy is "reprogramming" the \$5 million, and none of it will go for

the Hawaii geothermal program, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney Skip Spaulding said yesterday.

The department now has to inform four Congressional committees originally involved in the appropriation, and it isn't clear whether the committees could reverse decision, Spaulding said.

The \$5 million commitment was a major part of the environmentalists' argument that the federal environmental study should be done. Removal of the money could seriously harm their case when it goes to trial Feb. 20, Spaulding said.

"It's an attempt to do an end run around our lawsuit," said Greenpeace Hawaii head Denver Leaman in Hilo.

Although the state is not a party to the suit, it could be hurt the most by the action.

Officials at the state's geothermal program office were not available for comment, but Spaulding said the federal decision took them by surprise.

Leaman suggested the decision could endanger the state's efforts to get another \$3 million from the state Legislature. The state already has \$3 million for exploration plus \$5.6 million already spent or committed.

But Michelle Wong-Wilson, the state's geothermal coordinator on the Big Island, said the opposite could be true. With federal money lacking, the Legislature might decide more state money is needed, she said.

SAW

Akaka wants U.S. apology to Hawaiians

Associated Press

U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka wants the federal government to apologize to native Hawaiians for the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

Akaka yesterday introduced a bill in the Senate that would require the apology.

It would also require the government to acknowledge it has a responsibility for the health, education and housing of native Hawaiians.

The U.S. Department of Interior, which recognizes a federal trust responsibility for the well-being of native Americans and their lands, does not recognize any such relationship with native Hawaiians or Hawaiian Home lands.

The federal government claims its responsibility was given to the state under the Hawaii Admissions Act, Akaka said.

"My legislation would affirm that a political trust relationship exists and would leave no doubt that the federal government has a moral and legal responsibility for the well-being of native Hawaiian people," said Akaka, who is part-Hawaiian.

Break Bishop Estate's hold through leasehold reform

In the 1980s the United States government broke up American Telephone and Telegraph because it was found the huge company was operating as a monopoly and thus was hurting consumers. American consumers were hurt by artificially high prices.

In Hawaii today there is a huge business that is stifling the people of Hawaii while racking in huge profits. This business keeps land and home prices artificially inflated, thus effectively blocking access to the American dream to many people. This Third World feudal albatross is the Bishop Estate.

The state should use condo leasehold reform to break the stranglehold that five men have over the state and too many of its people. It is time to bring Hawaii in with the rest of America.

Paul Gregory
Hilo

SB 2/11/91

Income gap widens in Hawaii

Star-Bulletin staff

2/11/91

The gap between the haves and have-nots is getting wider in Hawaii, but to a lesser degree than it is nationally.

First Hawaiian Bank, in its latest bimonthly issue of Economic Indicators, said that state income distribution in 1990 was pegged at 0.519 as measured by the Gini ratio on a scale of 0 to 1.

That ranks Hawaii No. 32 in income equality among the states in the most recent tally, the bank said.

The national ratio was 0.526. West Virginia has the best ratio at 0.476 and Alaska the worst at 0.636. The lower the ratio, the more equal income is distributed.

The shift to a service economy, with a greater concentration of lower paying jobs, is a major reason for the gradual worsening of income distribution in both national and local economies, First Hawaiian said.

Hawaii's income distribution has shifted over the years, improving from 0.513 in 1929 to 0.428 in the statehood year of 1959, reflecting more even distribution of wealth as incomes of a more educated postwar population rose, the bank said.

Since then, the income gap has grown steadily wider. The state's Gini ratio, named for Italian statistician Corrado Gini who developed it 80 years ago, climbed 18 percent between 1970 and now, from 0.441 to 0.519. But nationally the ratio rose 23 percent.

Geothermal group urges court to oust Pele Defense lawsuit

By Rod Thompson
Big Island correspondent

S-B 2/15/91

HILO — State Deputy Attorney General William Tam yesterday pointed to 12 boxes of records stacked in the courtroom of Circuit Judge Ernest Kubota. The question of geothermal development on Kilauea's middle east rift has been decided, he told the judge.

"This continual filing of claims has got to come to an end," said Campbell Estate attorney James Mee.

"Enough is enough," added True/Mid-Pacific Geothermal Venture attorney Gary Lee.

The attorneys were in court yesterday asking Kubota to dismiss the latest in a series of suits by the Pele Defense Fund, this one seeking to overturn the 1985-86 land exchange that made True/Mid-Pacific's current geothermal exploration possible.

In that exchange, Campbell Estate turned over lands on Kilauea's upper east rift to the state, while Campbell acquired former state lands on the middle east rift.

Pele Defense members argue that native Hawaiians who live near the geothermal lands are losing their traditional gathering rights there because of the exchange.

The group also argues that all Hawaiians are hurt because the lands are part of ceded lands formerly held by the Hawaiian monarchy, now held by the state. Part of the income from the lands, if any, is supposed to be used for the benefit of native Hawaiians.

"This is our last chance," Pele Defense Fund President Palikapu Dedman said this week in Honolulu. "The geothermal issue is just one point. This is a native rights issue on ceded land."

Dedman contends that the state acted irresponsibly when it swapped 27,785 acres of ceded land in the Wao Kele O Puna Forest Reserve for 25,807 acres of Campbell Estate property in Kahaualea along Kilauea's east rift zone.

Pele Defense sued the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, and later Campbell and True/Mid-Pacific, in state and federal courts to overturn the land exchange.

Tam argued yesterday that the state portion of the case already is decided. In May, a federal appeals court upheld a lower federal court ruling that private citizens cannot sue the state without the state's permission.

Mee said Campbell and True/Mid-Pacific were added to the lawsuit too late, after the period defined in the statute of limitations had run out.

But using a 1986 date for the exchange, instead of 1985 as the defendants do, Pele Defense attorney Melody McKenzie said the period in the statute of limitations has not run out.

Mee said no one is prohibited from traditional gathering in the 27,000-acre forest, except at drill sites and on the access road for safety reasons.

But Pele Defense attorney Alan Murakami argued the suit still is needed to clarify native Hawaiians' rights.

Pele Defense claims "a dozen or so" native gatherers still use the land but hasn't named any of them, True/Mid-Pacific attorney Lee said. McKenzie responded only that some Pele Defense members are native gatherers.

The land exchange was actually the proposal of the Sierra Club and the Volcano Community Association, Mee said. The lands the state received in the exchange have a superior biological value and still provide all native rights, he said.

Kubota said he will rule on the motion for dismissal later.

Star-Bulletin writer Benjamin Seto contributed to this report.

Site of proposed marina is now high-crime area

It amazes me to read Jeff Alexander's letter of Jan. 28 on how the Ewa Marina will harm land and lives.

In the past five years, I have worked on a voluntary basis with the police department on two programs: (1) the business security watch and (2) the neighborhood security watch.

My working relationship with the Police Department has familiarized me with the types of incidents that occur down at the proposed site: murders, kidnappings, sex offenses, assaults, robbery and theft.

If this is not harming lives, what is? According to Jeff, providing jobs and homes will ruin the lives of the people in Ewa Beach.

Jeff mentions the archaeological sites on the property and that the developer will destroy the sites.

What about the number of fires that the Fire Department responds to down at the project sites — fires that are maliciously set? Don't these fires damage the archaeological sites, or the keawe forest?

If you have attended any of the community presentations, you would have heard the developers saying that archaeological sites will be preserved for future generations.

S-B 2/15/91

Elaine Mihoch
Ewa Beach