

8/26/93

Inouye: Expand Kauai missile site's use

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LIHUE — Moving the Coast Guard's search and rescue operation from Oahu to Kauai could help the Pacific Missile Range Facility in Māna remain open as other bases close, U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye said.

Such a move would require expanding the base runway and building more airplane hangars, Inouye told businessmen yesterday at a luncheon hosted by the Kauai Economic Development Board at the Outrigger Kauai Beach Hotel at Nukoli'i.

Inouye said he began discussing the relocation with officials after learning Barbers Point would be closed because of federal military budget cutbacks.

The Kauai base also could become a center to study ways to clean up the ocean, he said.

The center, which would be developed at a cost of \$5 million, would be the first of its kind in the United States and would generate high-tech jobs, he said. Its data could help with ocean cleanup projects elsewhere, he added.

The project could work hand in

hand with a \$5 million ocean study center in West Hawaii that he has supported, Inouye said.

If the new programs are implemented at the Kauai base, they could produce jobs to replace those that might be lost if the launching of rockets and missiles is reduced



Daniel Inouye

because of public opposition, the senator said.

In addition to the launchings, submarine and other military maneuvers are carried out at the base.

Although critics have attacked two Strategic Target System Polaris rocket launches at the base for environmental and religious reasons, the base remains a good neighbor in West Kauai, Inouye insisted.

The project's focus has changed from intercepting long-range missiles to detecting shorter-range missiles, Inouye said, but the project is still vital to the nation's security.