



# News Release

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## **Tanapag PCB Remediation Project Nears Milestone**

(Honolulu, April 12, 2001) -- The Honolulu Engineer District's Tanapag Village, Saipan, PCB Remediation Project is nearing an important milestone.

The excavation and stock piling that began in August of more than 20,000 cubic yards of soil contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyls will be completed by the end of April. This is the latest accomplishment in a story that dates back to the 1960s.

Honolulu District is overseeing the project in the remote Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. Territory more than 3,700 miles west of Hawaii, as part of the Department of Defense's Formerly Used Defense Sites program. The contamination resulted when PCB fluid leaked from capacitors that apparently once were used at the Army's Kwajalein Atoll military installation in the 1960s. As yet, the District has been unable to determine how the capacitors reached Saipan and how they were moved to various sites in Tanapag Village.

The CNMI Department of Environmental Quality reported the presence of the capacitors to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1988. The USEPA asked the Army whether it could use DoD funds to remove the PCBs from the soil and the Army agreed. HED began the Tanapag soil cleanup in 1991 and the just completed work is the third phase of project.

Since the beginning, the Honolulu District has coordinated all cleanup efforts with CNMI officials and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and kept local villagers informed, too, through a series of public meetings, news releases, and the establishment of an Internet page for the project at <http://www.poh.usace.army.mil/tanapag.html>

The third phase of the project was done with USEPA oversight under the provisions of a USEPA administrative order issued in accordance with the Section 7003 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Environmental Chemical Corporation of Aiea, Hawaii did the excavation and stockpiling work under contract with the Corps.

The Honolulu District is preparing a focused feasibility study of the alternative methods and costs of treating the excavated and stock piled contaminated soil. When completed, the resulting report will go through a public review and comment period. Then HED will consider all substantive comments and prepare an action memorandum describing the method it will use to complete the cleanup. The current schedule calls for treatment of the soil to begin later this year and it is expected to take about six months.