

Federal Housing Program Halted Over UXO Threats

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Honolulu, Hawaii Concerns over WWII UXO on some Big Island properties have forced two federal housing-assistance programs to suspend grants and loan guarantees for Native Hawaiian housing at those locations. Among those programs on hold is a \$2 million grant for infrastructure work at a Hawaiian homestead development in Waimea.

Also affected are several families planning to build new homes. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has stopped issuing loan guarantees in the areas. Officials from the department recently learned that five homestead communities are within 100,000 acres contaminated with remnants of bombs, grenades and other munitions, remnants of WWII training exercises in the area.

To date, the USACE has removed more than 2,300 UXO items, and the remediation efforts are slated to continue for decades. Since the 1940s, nine people have been killed or injured by old munitions in the area, but no current homesteaders have reported finding UXO on their lots. Approximately 600 people have leased lots in the affected areas, and many fear they would not be compensated for homes or other improvements.