

DLNR and Navy Discussing Options For Underwater UXO

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(Honolulu) Balancing public safety, while providing a high level of protection for the aquatic environment are the overarching considerations being discussed by the Hawai'i Dept. of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i Dept. of Health, for the safe remediation of two WWII-era bombs off of Molokini Crater in Maui County, in state ocean waters.

Recent social media postings have suggested, that the U.S.Navy, with the State's concurrence, plan to "blow up Molokini." DLNR Chair Suzanne Case said, "We continue a careful and deliberative process to identify the best strategy to render this unexploded ordnance (UXO) safe while protecting the marine environment. This process began more than six months ago, and no final decisions have been made and will not be made without public engagement. It's important we hear from stakeholders."

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Molokini attracted hundreds of thousand of boaters and snorkelers each year, attracted by the crater's rich underwater life. "In no way do we, as the agency responsible for the protection of Hawai'i's natural resources, want to agree to anything that might create unmitigated damage," added Case. "Conversely, we must be mindful of the potential hazard to human health and safety this UXO can pose," Case said.

The state agencies are asking people to be patient, to let the process continue, and to arm themselves with accurate information, in order to knowledgeably contribute to the upcoming public discourse about how to render UXO around Molokini safe.