

State monitoring air in Kapolei area

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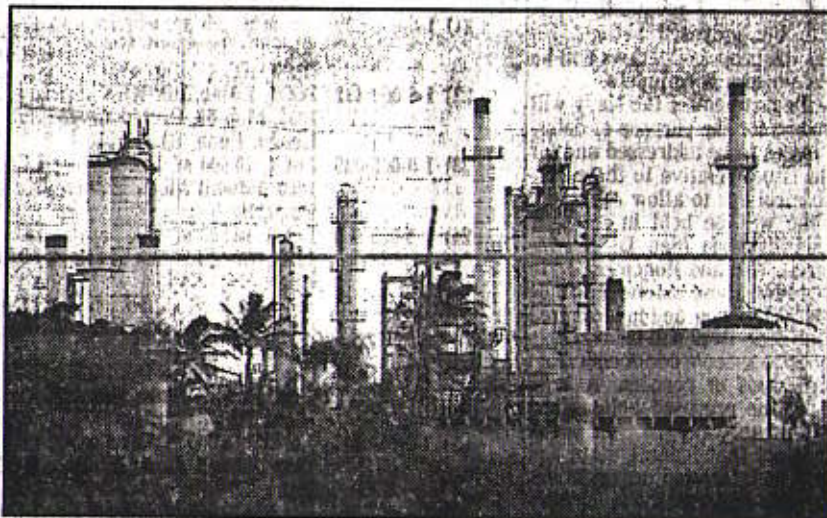
KAPOLEI — In the past two months, the state Health Department's overseer for health hazards at Campbell Industrial Park has received about 30 calls from workers in the park or residents in outlying areas who have complained about air pollutants.

State compliance coordinator Helen Mary Wessel has a 24-hour hotline for anyone who wants to complain or comment on noxious emissions or other environmental problems that might stem from industries at Campbell Industrial Park. The hotline telephone number is 674-3388.

The complaints she has already received include multiple calls about single cases, from residents and workers in Kapolei, Makakilo, Honokai Hale, Barbers Point and from within the industrial park, Wessel said.

Wessel, who recently moved into an office at Kapolei's Campbell Estate buildings, said she had expected to get a lot more complaints in her first two months on the newly created state job.

The worst recent incident, she



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The BHP Refinery at Campbell Industrial Park is one of the facilities that have been the subject of calls to the state's emissions hotline.

said, involved a Barbers Point Elementary School worker who on Nov. 26 had to leave school and was hospitalized with breathing problems.

"It was not clear what brought on her problem," Wessel said.

There have been a couple of complaints from the school over the past two months, she said.

"Although we can not pinpoint what it is yet, with the help of people calling in, I'm beginning

to build a database, which will help draw some conclusions as to the sources of the problems," Wessel said.

Preliminary data from recent Health Department air sampling tests are not finding any toxic fumes at levels that would cause health problems.

However, the testing is not foolproof, Wessel said. A complaint might come in, but by the time samples are taken, winds

may have dispersed the compound that caused it.

A little over a year ago, a sulfur dioxide leak at the BHP Refinery sent 29 people to the hospital, and emissions from Chevron's Hawaii Refinery sent about 30 Barbers Point Elementary students and teachers to clinics.

The state received \$200,000 from the two firms to settle the cases. That money, among other things, is paying Wessel's salary.

Wessel says that a number of complaints have not been conclusively confirmed as being a result of fumes from Campbell Industrial Park.

However, one day at the end of October, multiple complaints were traced to BHP Refinery.

BHP was having trouble with its sour water storage, which resulted in the release of small amounts of hydrogen sulfide and ammonia, Wessel said.

On Nov. 12, BHP's sulfur recovery unit also malfunctioned, Wessel said, and odor complaints were traced to that incident.

Although the Chevron USA Refinery has had some equipment failures during recent heavy rains, there have been no complaints connected to the company, she said.