

PRESS RELEASE

USEPA Visits the Territory

Representatives from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) recently departed the Territory after a conference with ASPA and AS-EPA, discussing deficiencies noted in the 2010 Sanitary Survey Report of ASPA's water system and its Corrective Action Plan (CAP). More importantly, they also discussed the recent Boil Water notices.

Although USEPA was pleased with the progress ASPA has made thus far, there is still a significant amount of work which ASPA is required to complete. According to AS-EPA Director Fanuatele Dr. To'afa Vaiaga'e, "AS-EPA is closely monitoring the CAP to ensure that benchmarks are met. While ASPA is trying to recruit additional technical staff, I have tasked my own staff to assist ASPA with the CAP. I am also pleased with the support from USEPA, particularly in awarding ASPA more than \$10 million for this fiscal year and an additional \$10 million plus earmarked for fiscal year 2012. These funding awards will assist ASPA in improving water and waste water infrastructure and operations."

The AS-EPA Director emphasized the importance of prioritizing Drinking Water among all the services ASPA provides. The Director stated that "you can survive without power but you can't live without water." The USEPA and AS-EPA believe that the administrative component of the CAP is very important because it will improve and enhance ASPA's internal operations. Equally important, it will ensure that benchmarks set forth in the CAP are met and deficiencies are corrected in a timely manner.

The AS-EPA Director would like to thank everyone for their patience and support as they continue to work with ASPA to resolve the problem with water contamination. The Director has stated that "In order to resolve long-term E-Coli contaminations in our drinking water, we all have to be part of the solution. The presence of E-Coli in our drinking water means human and animal wastes have been detected in our underground drinking water aquifers. Cesspools, cesspits, piggeries, inadequate onsite waste water disposal system, and poor land use management practices have all contributed to the problem with our drinking water. Our drinking water supplies will continue to be threatened if we don't make adjustments to how we manage development on our land. I am asking leaders in our community for their assistance and to join us in our fight to protect our drinking water resources."

For more information on how you can contribute in our fight to protect drinking water, please contact Christianera Tuitele, Water Program Manager. Contact ASPA's Waste Water Division for more information on proper onsite waste water disposal system.