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News Release

FEMA Direct Lease Program Says No to Rental Properties That Illegally Kick Out Tenants

HONOLULU – Although FEMA is leasing rental units on Maui to house wildfire survivors, the FEMA Direct Lease program is rejecting properties that illegally force tenants out so landlords could gain higher rents from the FEMA program.

FEMA will take reports alleging tenants were unlawfully evicted so the landlord could increase profits through the FEMA Direct Lease program and forward them to the appropriate state and federal authorities. If a complaint is confirmed, the rental property cited in the complaint will not be used in FEMA's Direct Lease Program. The investigation could also result in fines or other action by state authorities.

Under the Direct Lease program, FEMA pays landlords directly for a rental unit to house wildfire survivors for up to 18 months. Three property management companies have been contracted to administer the program.

Gov. Josh Green's emergency proclamation – currently in effect until March 5 – was intended to help prevent vulnerable tenants from losing their homes after the August disaster. It prohibits Maui's property owners from raising rent above the amount charged Aug. 9.

FEMA's commitment to helping wildfire survivors also means bringing no harm to Maui's larger community.

If you believe your landlord wrongly issued you an eviction in order to benefit from the FEMA Direct Lease program, FEMA urges you to report it to the Hawai'i Attorney General's office, which is conducting investigations. Complaints may be emailed to: HawaiiAG@Hawaii.gov.

You may also call FEMA's Civil Rights Resource Line at **833-285-7448**.

For additional information on landlord-tenant issues, contact the Hawai'i Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Office of Consumer Affairs at **808-243-4648**.

If you are facing civil legal issues as a result of the wildfires and you cannot afford an attorney, you can get legal advice by calling the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i's toll-free lines at **808-536-4302** or **800-499-4302**.

The Disaster Legal Services national hotline is **888-743-5749** or **888-533-2773**. Free legal advice may be accessed at <https://www.ladrc.org/disasters/hawaii-wildfires/> or <https://hawaii.freelegalanswers.org/>.

For the latest information on the Maui wildfire recovery efforts, visit mauicounty.gov, mauirecovers.org, fema.gov/disaster/4724 and [Hawaii Wildfires - YouTube](#). Follow FEMA on social media: [@FEMARegion9](#) and facebook.com/fema. You may also get disaster assistance information and download applications at sba.gov/hawaii-wildfires.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency and/or economic status. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call the Civil Rights Resource line at 833-285-7448.