HAWAII WATER QUALITY STANDARDS
AND CORAL REEF BIOCRITERIA

In the existing rule (What we have):

- Current Hawaii WQS are generally protective of coral reefs
- No actions allowed that would substantially damage the biological characteristics of coral reefs
- When a determination of substantial risk is made, the action is considered to be contrary to the public interest and no permits shall be issued
- Specific criteria include:
  - -No heavy flood-borne sediments thicker than 2 mm
  - -Chlorophyll a not to exceed 1.50 ug/L
  - -Turbidity not to exceed 1.5 N.T.U.

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What we don't have:

- Hawaii WQS do not address coral reef biocriteria directly
- WQS do not specify or identify stressors which may be detrimental to coral reefs, such as:
  - -Elevated nutrient loads
  - -Algal blooms
  - -Elevated turbidity/sediment loads
  - -Decreased light penetration loads
  - -Long water residence times
- Do not know the levels of exceedences that may potentially harm coral reef communities
- Current WQS does not establish compliance points for limiting stressors defined above
- Compliance points are defined as where in the water column and on the reefs, WQS must be met

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Suggestions for improving the efficacy of Hawaii WQS (What we need):

- Seek additional EPA funding to support hiring a contractor to assist in the development of coral reef biocriteria
- Revise and enhance marine bottom criteria to support development of coral reef biocriteria to reduce fresh water pollutants entering the coastal ocean
- Add coral reef biocriteria in the WQS
- Link clean and polluted stream discharge characteristics to conditions in the nearshore coastal waters where they may affect coral reef ecosystems