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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HAWAII ISLAND TO FEEL IMPACTS OF TROPICAL STORM NIALA

HONOLULU — According to a National Weather Service (NWS) briefing this morning, Niala strengthened into a tropical storm overnight. The center of the system is located about 455 miles southeast of Hilo and continues to move slowly in a northwest direction.

Forecasters are confident that Tropical Storm Niala will begin to weaken over weekend and turn towards the west because of a pattern of high wind shear, taking the center of the storm on a track south of the islands. However, the weakening rate and timing of the anticipated westward turn is somewhat uncertain at this point.

Currently, there is a 20 percent chance that Hawaii Island will experience tropical storm force winds. Heavy rainfall with the possibility of thunderstorms could begin as early as this evening and last through Monday afternoon. Flooding is a serious possibility because of the saturated soils from previous rainfall events.

“We are standing by, continuing communication and coordination amongst all county emergency management and civil defense agencies, especially Hawaii County, to ensure that they have what they need in order to prepare for and respond to any impacts Tropical Storm Niala might bring,” said Vern Miyagi, Administrator of Emergency Management.

Maui is expected to see some heavy rainfall late into the weekend, and the rest of the state will likely experience breezy to gusty trade winds. Increased trade wind speeds will cause elevated surf levels on east and southeast facing shores on all islands.

Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA), advises residents on Hawaii Island to take the following precautions to prepare for possible flooding caused by Tropical Storm Niala:

- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, roads, and other areas known to flood suddenly.
- Make sure to monitor local broadcasters and/or sign up for local notification systems if you live in a flood prone area.

(more)

- Gather important documents such as your flood insurance policy. Flood losses are not covered under normal homeowners' insurance policies.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur quickly and without warning. Be prepared to evacuate and move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Secure your home and elevate essential items. Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances and do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- Do not attempt to cross fast moving water, especially if you are unsure of the depth.
- Check with local officials and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) if you plan to hike or camp next week. Parks and other trails may be closed depending on the weather forecast. Visit the DLNR website at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/category/news/> for the latest closure information.
- Follow the Department of Education online at <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org> for the latest information on possible school closures. Make sure you know the closure notification procedure if your children attend a private or charter school.

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