Petition to redistrict swamp is withdrawn

LIHUE — The State Land Use Commission yesterday withdrew its own petition to redistrict 224 acres of the Kawainui Swamp on Oahu from urban to conservation use and referred the matter to the Department of Planning and Economic Development.

The commission acted on the recommendation of DPED Land Use Division attorney Gilbert Lee after Lee indicated there might be a conflict in having the commission defend its own petition before itself.

Commission Chairman Eddie Tangen, while refusing to agree a conflict existed, recommended to the commission that the petition be rerouted through the Land Use Division. The commission unanimously agreed.

Lee called the situation potentially "monumental," in that it is the first time under the Land Use Commission's new rules of procedure that a State body is bringing a redistricting petition itself.

He said the division will take time to make sure it has a firm case.

Land Use Division Chief Tatsuo Fujimoto told the commission that the new application would probably be submitted in 90 days.

The redistricting of the Kawainui Swamp lands is opposed by the Planning Department of the City and County of Honolulu.