
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AND THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEWING CHAPTERS 341, 343, AND 344, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES, TO REVIEW THE FEASIBILITY AND IMPACT OF REQUIRING AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT TO INCLUDE EFFECTS OF A PROPOSED ACTION AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

1 WHEREAS, the potential adverse impacts of climate change
2 and global warming include a rise in sea levels and risk
3 associated with hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, flooding,
4 wildfires, and other natural and technological hazards resulting
5 in the displacement of businesses and residences and damage to
6 marine ecosystems and the natural environment; and
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8 WHEREAS, the effects will not only impact the health and
9 safety of Hawaii's residents, but also ripple through the
10 state's economy as some of Hawaii's largest industries,
11 including tourism, agriculture, recreational and commercial
12 fishing, and forestry, are adversely affected; and
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14 WHEREAS, the leading contributor to global warming and
15 climate change is the release of carbon emissions and other
16 greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and the recent increases
17 in fossil fuel demand and industrialization worldwide have
18 served to increase such emissions and hasten adverse climate
19 change; and
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21 WHEREAS, Chapters 341, 343, and 344, Hawaii Revised
22 Statutes, the basis of Hawaii's environmental review process,
23 have protected the state's environment for over 30 years; and
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25 WHEREAS, notwithstanding the success of these laws,
26 concerns have arisen regarding the ability of this process to
27 adapt to the modern demands for achieving sustainability in



1 Hawaii in a way that appropriately balances the state economy,
2 environment, and social conditions over the long term; and
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4 WHEREAS, in addition, best practices for environmental
5 assessments, globally and nationally, have changed dramatically
6 since Hawaii's laws were written, and Hawaii has not optimized
7 the opportunities to learn from these developments; and
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9 WHEREAS, our environmental review process must continue to
10 evolve and improve, encouraging and adopting best practices for
11 agencies, planners, businesses, and affected communities as well
12 as for the courts, to promote sustainability in Hawaii and
13 protect our unique and fragile natural ecosystem and resources;
14 and
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16 WHEREAS, a study of our environmental review process that
17 was previously mandated by the Legislature in Act 294, Session
18 Laws of 2006, was not completed due to a lapse in the
19 appropriation for the Department of Health; and
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21 WHEREAS, recent judicial and legislative events surrounding
22 the Superferry underscore the pressing need to continue to
23 pursue the completion of a study, with a broad focus, that will
24 assist in the development of a broad strategy to modernize
25 Hawaii's environmental review system; and
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27 WHEREAS, the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) will enter
28 into a contract with the University of Hawaii (UH) to conduct a
29 study of the state's environmental review process, and also
30 requires UH, through the Research Corporation of UH, to
31 establish an interdisciplinary team of faculty, researchers, and
32 students from the UH Department of Urban and Regional Planning,
33 Environmental Center, and the environmental law program at the
34 William S. Richardson School of Law, among other technical
35 experts in the field of environmental management and planning;
36 and
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38 WHEREAS, the Research Corporation of UH and the
39 interdisciplinary team, in conducting their study, should also
40 consider a proposal discussed during this legislative session
41 that would require an environmental impact statement (EIS) to
42 include effects of a proposed action as a contributor to climate
43 change; now, therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
2 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
3 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Research
4 Corporation of UH and the interdisciplinary team reviewing
5 Chapters 341, 343, and 344, Hawaii Revised Statutes, are
6 requested to review the feasibility and impact of requiring an
7 EIS to include effects of a proposed action as a contributor to
8 climate change; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
11 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the
12 Legislative Reference Bureau, President of the University of
13 Hawaii, and Director of the Research Corporation of the
14 University of Hawaii.
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