

MAR 13 2008

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## SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY, IN COOPERATION AND CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND APPROPRIATE WATER SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS, TO FURNISH ONBOARD A VISITOR WATER SAFETY INFORMATION MULTI-LINGUAL HANDOUT TO PROVIDE EDUCATION ON WATER RECREATIONAL HAZARDS.

1           WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health in a May 23,  
2 2007 article in the *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, statistics show that  
3 Hawaii has the second-highest resident drowning rate in the  
4 United States, and if drowning included visitors, Hawaii may  
5 lead the nation; and  
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7           WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health, in a  
8 June 18, 2006 article in *The Honolulu Advertiser*, seventy-seven  
9 drownings occurred statewide in 2006, up from seventy-one in  
10 2004, which previously was a fifteen-year high; the article  
11 quoted a Department of Health official as saying that the  
12 statistics definitely point to a lack of awareness, and most  
13 people would agree we need to do more education; and  
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15           WHEREAS, an August 26, 2006 article in *The New York Times*,  
16 stated that drowning claims far more lives in Hawaii than  
17 headline grabbing shark attacks, especially with Hawaii's  
18 coastlines of sand, coral reef, and lava rock creating  
19 shorebreaks and currents that cause many swimmers, even  
20 competent ones, to encounter entirely unexpected peril; and  
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22           WHEREAS, *The Garden Island News* in an article of January 1,  
23 2008, reported that on August 5 and 6, 2007, there were a total  
24 of sixteen rescues in Kauai waters, ten visitors and six local  
25 people who were rescued from deadly rip currents during strong  
26 tradewind conditions; two Kapa'a surfers had recently responded  
27 to someone on shore at Donkey Beach waiving frantically for help  
28 to rescue a Tennessee family of six all in severe distress in  
29 the water, with all six saved by the surfers but four landed up  
30 in the emergency room for aspirating seawater; the father stated  
31 that they had just arrived on Kauai to stay at a private  
32 residence and thus had no chance to be warned by hotel  
33 concierges or activities desk personnel; and  
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1           WHEREAS, it was further reported in *The Honolulu Advertiser*  
2 on January 30, 2007, that a key feature of a water safety  
3 warning program to protect visitors is information, and for  
4 years, lifeguards have been fighting a difficult battle to  
5 educate people about ocean hazards; many of them have launched  
6 their own individual efforts (often at their own expense) to  
7 warn visitors; and

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9           WHEREAS, visitors to Hawaii often learn about an area from  
10 a guidebook; of particular concern to some is the issue of  
11 internet and travel guides that direct visitors, who are often  
12 inexperienced swimmers, to remote beaches, cliffs, and dive  
13 spots that may not have lifeguards; for example, on Oahu along  
14 the cliffs of Maunalua Bay in Hawaii Kai, drownings and rescues  
15 are a regular occurrence, despite warning signs, at two popular  
16 cliff-diving places, Spitting Caves and China Walls; and

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18           WHEREAS, many interventions to prevent drowning have been  
19 undertaken to get information to visitors via airline water  
20 safety videos, hotel concierges, car rental companies, visitor  
21 information websites, and baggage claim videos; and

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23           WHEREAS, two documents that are distributed onboard to  
24 every air traveler arriving to Hawaii are the Department of  
25 Agriculture Plant and Animal Declaration Form and the Visitor  
26 Survey Form; and

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28           WHEREAS, a simple one-page handout could similarly be  
29 distributed onboard to airline passengers to provide water  
30 safety information to educate them on water recreational  
31 hazards, such as drownings; and

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33           WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority has the  
34 responsibility, among other things, under section 201B-3(a)(21),  
35 Hawaii Revised Statutes, to establish a public information and  
36 educational program to inform the public of tourism and  
37 tourism-related problems, which by reasonable interpretation  
38 includes the prevention of drowning; and

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40           WHEREAS, section 201B-3(c), Hawaii Revised Statutes,  
41 further provides that the Hawaii Tourism Authority shall do any  
42 and all things necessary to carry out its purposes and to  
43 exercise its powers and responsibilities under law; now,  
44 therefore,



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BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, that the Hawaii Tourism Authority is requested, in cooperation and conjunction with the Department of Health and appropriate water safety organizations, to furnish and distribute aboard to all incoming mainland and international flights a visitor water safety information multi-lingual handout to provide education on water recreational hazards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is requested to cooperate with and assist the Hawaii Tourism Authority in producing a visitor water safety information multi-lingual handout to provide education on water recreational hazards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Department of Transportation is requested to work with the airlines to ensure the distribution of the handout onboard to all incoming passengers on flights to Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health; Director of Transportation; Executive Director of the Hawaii Tourism Authority and each member of the Hawaii Tourism Authority; the Mayor and every councilmember of each county; and the manager of Hawaii operations for Aloha Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, American Airlines, Continental Airlines, Delta Airlines, Northwest Airlines, US Air, United Airlines, American Trans Air, Continental Micronesia, TWA, Air Canada, Air New Zealand, Alaska Airlines, Japan Airlines, Jalways, All Nippon Airways, Air Japan, Jetstar, Korean Air, Philippines Airlines, Qantas Airways, WestJet, ATA, China Airlines, Omni Air International, US Airways, and America West.

OFFERED BY: Ray I. Acen  
Gene Mercedes K.  
Will Gay  
Shianne Chun Oalland