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## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO STUDY THE MINIMUM SOUND LEVEL NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT BLIND PEDESTRIANS CAN HEAR HYBRID AND OTHER "SILENT" VEHICLES IN ALL PHASES OF THEIR OPERATION.

1           WHEREAS, vehicles designed to reduce harmful pollutants and  
2 to operate with greater fuel efficiency include gasoline-  
3 electric hybrid and electric-only vehicles; and  
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5           WHEREAS, in the foreseeable future, vehicle engine  
6 technologies may include hydrogen fuel cell and other technology  
7 that provides an alternative to those that rely partly or wholly  
8 on internal combustion; and  
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10          WHEREAS, vehicle engines employing technologies other than  
11 internal combustion generate virtually no sound while in  
12 operation; and  
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14          WHEREAS, the total number of hybrid and electric-only  
15 vehicles sold per year in Hawaii is growing and may equal or  
16 exceed the number of internal combustion engine vehicles in  
17 Hawaii in the future; and  
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19          WHEREAS, people, including pedestrians, who are not blind,  
20 such as bicyclists, runners, and children, benefit from the  
21 multi-sensory information generated by vehicular traffic,  
22 including the sound of vehicle engines; and  
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24          WHEREAS, blind pedestrians use the sound of vehicular  
25 traffic to discern the speed, direction, and other attributes of  
26 vehicles in order to transverse roads safely and independently;  
27 and  
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29          WHEREAS, hybrid vehicles, when operating on their electric  
30 engines, and electric-only vehicles are difficult for blind



1 people to identify and track, rendering these vehicles  
2 potentially dangerous when moving on the street, emerging from  
3 driveways, moving through parking lots, and in other situations  
4 where blind pedestrians and vehicles come into proximity with  
5 each other; and

6  
7 WHEREAS, vehicular design standards that consider the multi-  
8 sensory nature of traffic detection and avoidance and require  
9 vehicles to emit a minimum level of sound to alert pedestrians  
10 and prevent accidents are necessary for the protection of the  
11 public; and

12  
13 WHEREAS, the failure to take action to ensure that blind  
14 pedestrians can hear hybrid and other "silent" vehicles in all  
15 phases of their operation will lead to pedestrian injuries and  
16 fatalities; now, therefore,

17  
18 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
19 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
20 of 2009, the Senate concurring, that the Department of  
21 Transportation is requested to study the minimum sound level  
22 necessary to ensure that blind pedestrians can hear hybrid and  
23 other silent vehicles in all phases of their operation; and

24  
25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of  
26 Transportation is requested to recommend minimum sound standards  
27 applicable to vehicles sold, in and licensed to travel on the  
28 public roads of, Hawaii that include:

- 29  
30 (1) An omni-directional sound with spectral characteristics  
31 similar to those of a modern internal combustion  
32 engine vehicle in all phases of operation, including  
33 times when the vehicle is at a full-stop;  
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35 (2) A sound that varies in a way consistent with the sound  
36 of vehicles with combustion engines indicating that the  
37 vehicle is idling, maintaining a constant speed,  
38 accelerating, or decelerating; and  
39  
40 (3) Standards that do not prescribe the apparatus,  
41 technology, or method to be used by vehicle  
42 manufacturers to achieve the required minimum sound  
43 level; and  
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation  
2 is requested to review all available research regarding the  
3 effect of traffic sounds on pedestrian safety and consult  
4 consumer groups representing individuals who are blind, other  
5 pedestrians, cyclists, and advocates for the safety of children;  
6 and

7  
8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of  
9 Transportation is requested to submit a report to the  
10 Legislature of its findings and recommendations, including any  
11 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
12 the Regular Session of 2010; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
15 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of  
16 Transportation.

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OFFERED BY:

  
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MAR 16 2009

