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## HOUSE 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  
31 people to identify and track, rendering these vehicles  
32 potentially dangerous when moving on the street, emerging from  
33 driveways, moving through parking lots, and in other situations



1 where blind pedestrians and vehicles come into proximity with  
2 each other; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, vehicular design standards that consider the multi-  
5 sensory nature of traffic detection and avoidance and require  
6 vehicles to emit a minimum level of sound to alert pedestrians  
7 and prevent accidents are necessary for the protection of the  
8 public; and

9  
10 WHEREAS, the failure to take action to ensure that blind  
11 pedestrians can hear hybrid and other "silent" vehicles in all  
12 phases of their operation will lead to pedestrian injuries and  
13 fatalities; now, therefore,

14  
15 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
16 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
17 of 2009, that the Department of Transportation is requested to  
18 study the minimum sound level necessary to ensure that blind  
19 pedestrians can hear hybrid and other silent vehicles in all  
20 phases of their operation; and

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

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27 (1) An omni-directional sound with spectral characteristics  
28 similar to those of a modern internal combustion  
29 engine vehicle in all phases of operation, including  
30 times when the vehicle is at a full-stop;

31  
32 (2) A sound that varies in a way consistent with the sound  
33 of vehicles with combustion engines indicating that the  
34 vehicle is idling, maintaining a constant speed,  
35 accelerating, or decelerating; and

36  
37 (3) Standards that do not prescribe the apparatus,  
38 technology, or method to be used by vehicle  
39 manufacturers to achieve the required minimum sound  
40 level; and

41  
42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation  
43 is requested to review all available research regarding the  
44 effect of traffic sounds on pedestrian safety and consult



1 consumer groups representing individuals who are blind, other  
2 pedestrians, cyclists, and advocates for the safety of children;  
3 and  
4

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of  
6 Transportation is requested to submit a report to the  
7 Legislature of its findings and recommendations, including any  
8 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
9 the Regular Session of 2010; and  
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
12 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Transportation.  
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OFFERED BY:



MAR 16 2009

