
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE COUNTY OF HAWAII TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS THAT HAVE INCURRED SIGNIFICANT LOSSES DUE TO THE EFFECTS OF VOG.

1 WHEREAS, in March of 2008, a rupture in the lower east wall
2 of Kilauea's Halema'uma'u crater resulted in the release of
3 large quantities of volcanic emissions that, mixed with air,
4 formed what is commonly referred to as "vog"; and
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6 WHEREAS, emissions from the newly created vent have
7 continued throughout the year, resulting in elevated levels of
8 vog in the atmosphere; and
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10 WHEREAS, vog contains sulfur dioxide which, in addition to
11 being a potential health hazard in high concentrations, has also
12 proven to be particularly harmful to agricultural crops; and
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14 WHEREAS, sulfur dioxide, and by-products like sulfuric
15 acid, damage both the leaves and the flowers of plants,
16 including protea and other cut flowers, rendering them
17 unsalable; and
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19 WHEREAS, acid rain resulting from vog represents another
20 threat, particularly to ranchers whose fences and other
21 infrastructure are susceptible to acid rain effects; and
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23 WHEREAS, farmers provided testimony on the devastating
24 impact of vog on their businesses at fact-finding meetings
25 convened by the House Special Committee on Vog Effects; and
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27 WHEREAS, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture approved the
28 Governor's request for a disaster designation for the County of
29 Hawaii due to the ongoing impact of vog, thereby allowing
30 farmers in the county to apply for low-interest loans from the
31 federal Farm Service Agency; and



1 WHEREAS, notwithstanding the assistance already provided
2 and in light of the continuous nature of the vog emergency,
3 there is a need for additional financial aid for agricultural
4 operations on the island of Hawaii; now, therefore,
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6 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
7 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
8 of 2009, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the
9 County of Hawaii are requested to provide additional forms of
10 financial support for agricultural operations that have incurred
11 significant losses due to the effects of vog; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that USDA is requested to use funds
14 in existing federal disaster relief programs to provide grants
15 and other forms of financial aid to assist the affected
16 agricultural operations; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Hawaii is
19 requested to implement real property tax relief to the affected
20 agricultural operations; and
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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
23 Resolution be transmitted to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture,
24 Hawaii's Congressional delegation, Mayor of the County of
25 Hawaii, and each member of the Hawaii County Council.

