
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO PROVIDE FEDERAL AID TO ASSIST AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS IN VOG-IMPACTED AREAS IN MEETING THEIR WATER NEEDS.

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, farmers provided testimony on the devastating
20 impact of vog on their businesses at fact-finding meetings
21 convened by the House Special Committee on Vog Effects; and

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23 WHEREAS, one of the methods used to treat plants exposed to
24 sulfur dioxide involves spraying plants with large amounts of
25 water to wash off the sulfur dioxide; and

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27 WHEREAS, many farmers are located in rural areas that have
28 no access to relatively inexpensive county water and, instead,
29 must rely on costly water provided by privately operated public
30 utilities;

31 WHEREAS, the cost to farmers that are forced to rely on
32 water treatments to save their crops is enormous; and



1 WHEREAS, the Legislature, in 2008, passed a measure enacted
 2 into law as Act 169, to assist farmers living in remote areas by
 3 allowing the Public Utilities Commission to establish
 4 preferential water rates for customers that use water for bona-
 5 fide agricultural activities; and

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 7 WHEREAS, notwithstanding these efforts, additional aid is
 8 needed to assist farmers in meeting their water needs; now,
 9 therefore,

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 11 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 12 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
 13 of 2009, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is requested to
 14 provide federal aid to assist agricultural operations in vog-
 15 impacted areas in meeting their water needs; and

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 17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 18 Resolution be transmitted to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.
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OFFERED BY:

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JAN 23 2009

