

MAR 18 2009

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO EXAMINE WAYS TO
REDUCE HIGHWAY CLOSURE TIMES ON OAHU DUE TO INVESTIGATION
OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

1 WHEREAS, while the preservation and recording of evidence
2 in traffic accidents, especially those involving fatalities, is
3 critical, the efficient management of traffic accident
4 investigations is also of critical importance to the traveling
5 public; and

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7 WHEREAS, accident investigations in Hawaii proceed at a
8 slower pace than in many comparable metropolitan areas in the
9 United States; and

10
11 WHEREAS, the average length of time for road closures in
12 Hawaii ranges from two to four hours for major traffic accidents
13 and to more than eight hours when a fatality occurs; and

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15 WHEREAS, in contrast, the average duration for road
16 closures in California ranges from thirty minutes for major
17 collisions to sixty minutes for fatal accidents; and

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19 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Police Department has commented
20 publicly in the recent past that it has implemented accident
21 investigation teams similar to those used on the mainland,
22 trained its investigations officers in a similar manner and has
23 used the same modern high definition digital surveying and
24 scanning equipment to record and reconstruct accident scenes,
25 while acting with due diligence to preserve evidence; and

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27 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Police Department has further
28 publicly commented that, while striving to balance shorter road
29 closure times with complete and thorough traffic accident
30 investigations, it is no longer requiring a traffic
31 investigation to be conducted in an accident resulting in



1 critical injuries or death if the accident involves only one car
2 and one driver; and
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4 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Police Department has indicated that
5 it is attempting to better coordinate the actions of accident
6 responders such as towing companies, the Honolulu Fire
7 Department, and the Medical Examiner, including providing a
8 police escort for the Medical Examiner to reach the accident
9 scene; and
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11 WHEREAS, by conducting post-accident reviews of each road
12 closure, the Honolulu Police Department has concluded that the
13 average road closure time of almost four hours on Oahu before
14 August, 2008, has been reduced to just under three hours after
15 August, 2008; and
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17 WHEREAS, although average road closure times have been
18 reduced, there is clearly more room for improvement; and
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20 WHEREAS, since the island of Oahu experiences the greatest
21 traffic volume in the State, road closures on Oahu due to
22 accidents affect the most people; and
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24 WHEREAS, it is apparent that certain factors may affect
25 road closure times, such as the geographic layout of Oahu's
26 major highways, the lack of adequate alternate bypass roads, the
27 degree of coordination with various relevant entities such as
28 state and municipal highway crews, warning to motorists of road
29 closures, and the lack of a dedicated traffic television or
30 radio channel; and
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32 WHEREAS, prolonged road closures in the State hurt the
33 public and the State's economy because students cannot get to
34 and from school, workers cannot get to and from work, businesses
35 cannot receive or deliver products necessary to do business, and
36 road closures may even contribute to secondary accidents that
37 cause further delays; now, therefore,
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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
40 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009, the
41 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
42 Transportation is requested to examine ways to reduce highway
43 road closure times on Oahu due to investigation of traffic
44 accidents; and



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 2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
 3 Transportation is requested to identify all relevant factors
 4 that may influence the duration of road closures that apply to
 5 the island of Oahu, such as the layout of major highways and the
 6 existence and layout of alternate bypass routes, population,
 7 agency coordination, use of media including a dedicated traffic
 8 channel, and any other relevant factors, and examine and analyze
 9 traffic investigation policies and procedures in mainland
 10 jurisdictions that are affected by comparable factors; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
 13 Transportation is requested to submit its findings and
 14 recommendations on how to reduce road closure times due to
 15 traffic accident investigations, including any necessary
 16 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty
 17 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2010; and
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 20 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of
 21 Transportation and the Police Chief, Medical Examiner, and
 22 Director of Transportation Services of the City and County of
 23 Honolulu.
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OFFERED BY: Clarence K. Miskihara

David V. Lee
Ray L. Johnson

Will Eynon

Michelle N. Sidani

