

JAN 21 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING THE COMMISSIONING AND FUNDING OF WATER RESOURCE AND HEALTH BASELINE STUDIES TO BE DONE PRIOR TO FUTURE GEOTHERMAL DRILLING AND DEVELOPMENT.

1 WHEREAS, geothermal development can affect the health and
2 wellbeing of people surrounding a geothermal plant during
3 dramatic accidents like the KS-8 blowout in 1991 and potentially
4 during smaller upsets and operational releases similar to those
5 that occurred in 1997 and 2005; and

6
7 WHEREAS, the Puna district is particularly vulnerable to
8 the health effects of geothermal; and

9
10 WHEREAS, the Geothermal Public Health Assessment Study
11 Group's *Final Report, Geothermal Public Health Assessment* found
12 in pertinent part:

13
14 "Puna has unique challenges. Being a rural area with a
15 highly dispersed population and underdeveloped
16 transportation and health systems, it is difficult for
17 residents in need of health assistance to reach help.
18 There are clinics but no hospital facilities in the
19 District of Puna. There are no public wastewater treatment
20 systems; most homes have septic tanks or cesspools. About
21 13% of Puna's people live below the federal poverty line.
22 Almost half of the population age 65 and over are living
23 with disabilities. Puna has the worst statistics in the
24 County for low birth weight babies (9%), mood disorders
25 (1,885 over a 5-year period, or 10%), and anxiety disorders
26 (790 over a 5-year period or 4.6%).

27
28 While 84.2% of Puna's population report themselves to be in
29 good health, other numbers suggest problems. Seven percent
30 of the population lack complete plumbing facilities and
31 four percent lack complete kitchen facilities. Puna's high
32 percentage of low-income residents tends to increase the
33 need for social services, yet private health care providers
34 are reported to be reluctant to locate in Puna due to
35 insurance issues. Puna residents score worst in the state



1 on several other indicators: adults who are obese (24%);
2 adults who smoke (18.9%); adults without health insurance
3 (9.5%); and
4

5 WHEREAS, by establishing a baseline health study that
6 measures the same parameters explored as described in
7 Recommendation 1 of the *Final Report, Geothermal Public Health*
8 *Assessment* (2013), future health studies can more easily
9 establish the magnitude and responsibility of health effects;
10 and
11

12 WHEREAS, geothermal development may affect water wells
13 downstream from the development area as well as the coastal
14 basal brackish groundwater and the ocean near the geothermal
15 plant; and
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17 WHEREAS, by establishing a baseline using the methodology
18 of the study of Recommendation 4 of the *Final Report, Geothermal*
19 *Public Health Assessment* (2013), future water studies will be
20 able to more easily establish the magnitude and possible
21 responsibility for environmental impact from geothermal
22 development; now, therefore,
23

24 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-seventh
25 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014,
26 that the County of Hawaii is encouraged to commission water
27 resource and health baseline studies that are to be completed
28 prior to future geothermal drilling; and
29

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that future geothermal developers
31 are encouraged to fund these studies; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Geological
34 Survey is encouraged to conduct these studies; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
37 Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of Maui County and the
38 United States Geological Survey.
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OFFERED BY:




