
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE CONVENING OF A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE CANCER IN
THE FIREFIGHTING PROFESSION.

1 WHEREAS, protective equipment used by firefighters has
2 improved considerably in recent years, and fire departments have
3 instituted best practice procedures for the cleaning of
4 protective clothing and breathing apparatuses; and
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6 WHEREAS, despite protections and procedures, firefighters
7 are exposed to multiple carcinogens and toxicants through
8 incident exposure as residential and vehicle fires release
9 highly concentrated toxicants from plastics and synthetics; and
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11 WHEREAS, exposure to toxicants during the course of a
12 firefighters' career may not result in cancer symptoms or
13 diagnosis until several years after retirement; and
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15 WHEREAS, according to a three-year study by the University
16 of Cincinnati completed in 2005, firefighters have a higher risk
17 than the general population of being diagnosed with cancer; and
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19 WHEREAS, this study showed that, when compared to the
20 general population, firefighters have a:
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- 22 (1) One hundred two per cent higher risk for testicular
23 cancer;
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25 (2) Fifty-three per cent higher risk for multiple myeloma;
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27 (3) Fifty-one per cent higher risk for non-Hodgkin's
28 lymphoma;
29
30 (4) Thirty-nine per cent higher risk for skin cancer;
31



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- 1 (5) Thirty-two per cent higher risk for brain and
2 malignant melanoma;
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- 4 (6) Twenty-nine per cent higher risk for rectal cancer;
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- 6 (7) Twenty eight per cent higher risk for prostate cancer;
- 7
- 8 (8) Twenty-four per cent higher risk for buccal cavity and
9 pharynx cancer;
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- 11 (9) Twenty-two per cent higher risk for stomach cancer;
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- 13 (10) Twenty-one per cent higher risk for colon cancer; and
- 14
- 15 (11) Fourteen per cent higher risk for leukemia; and
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17 WHEREAS, firefighters also face a greater risk of
18 contracting infectious diseases and illnesses associated with
19 exposure to patient care and biochemical substances due to
20 bioterrorism than the general population; and

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22 WHEREAS, the impact on the families of firefighters
23 diagnosed with cancer include emotional toil, financial burdens,
24 time commitments, and decreased quality of life for each family
25 member; now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
28 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
29 Session of 2016, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature
30 convene a task force to examine issues relating to cancer in the
31 firefighting profession; and

32
33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairperson of the Senate
34 Standing Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
35 and the Chairperson of the House of Representatives Standing
36 Committee on Health are requested to serve as the Chairpersons
37 of the task force and to invite interested parties to be members
38 of the task force, including:

- 39 (1) One member representing the Department of Health;
- 40
- 41



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- 1 (2) One member representing the Disability Compensation
2 Division of the Department of Labor and Industrial
3 Relations;
- 4
- 5 (3) One member representing the State of Hawaii Employees'
6 Retirement System;
- 7
- 8 (4) One member representing the State Fire Council;
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- 10 (5) One member representing the University of Hawaii
11 Cancer Center;
- 12
- 13 (6) Four members to represent the human resources branch
14 of each county;
- 15
- 16 (7) One member representing the health insurance industry;
- 17
- 18 (8) One member that is an attorney familiar with workers'
19 compensation law; and
- 20
- 21 (9) One member representing the Hawaii Fire Fighters
22 Association; and
- 23

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to
25 examine:

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- 27 (1) Recommendations, if any, for revisions to state
28 workers' compensation laws that expedite the delivery
29 of workers' compensation benefits for firefighters
30 diagnosed with cancer;
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- 32 (2) The percentages of cancer diagnoses in Hawaii for the
33 general population compared to firefighters;
- 34
- 35 (3) Estimated costs to the State and counties were there
36 to be an increase in workers' compensation benefits
37 for firefighters diagnosed with cancer;
- 38
- 39 (4) County fire departments' safety procedures and
40 protocols for the prevention and reporting of
41 firefighter exposure to toxicants; and
- 42




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1 (5) Amending or adopting administrative rules that can
2 improve workers' compensation benefits for
3 firefighters diagnosed with cancer; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to
6 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including
7 any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than
8 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
9 2017; and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
12 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of each
13 county; the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on
14 Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health; the Chairperson of
15 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health; the
16 Director of Health; the Director of Labor and Industrial
17 Relations; the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the
18 Employees' Retirement System; the Chairperson of the State Fire
19 Council; the Director of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center;
20 and the President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association.
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23

OFFERED BY:  _____
BY REQUEST
FEB - 3 2016