
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
5

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
10

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
14

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
18

19 WHEREAS, this study showed that, when compared to the
20 general population, firefighters have a:

- 21
- 22 (1) 102 percent higher risk for testicular cancer;
 - 23 (2) 53 percent higher risk for multiple myeloma;
 - 24 (3) 51 percent higher risk for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma;
 - 25 (4) 39 percent higher risk for skin cancer;
 - 26 (5) 32 percent higher risk for brain and malignant
27 melanoma;
 - 28
 - 29
 - 30
 - 31



- 1 (6) 29 percent higher risk for rectal cancer;
2
3 (7) 28 percent higher risk for prostate cancer;
4
5 (8) 24 percent higher risk for buccal cavity and pharynx
6 cancer;
7
8 (9) 22 percent higher risk for stomach cancer;
9
10 (10) 21 percent higher risk for colon cancer; and
11
12 (11) 14 percent higher risk for leukemia; and
13

14 WHEREAS, firefighters also face a greater risk of
15 contracting infectious diseases and illnesses associated with
16 exposure to patient care and biochemical substances due to
17 bioterrorism than the general population; and
18

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

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

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

- 37 (1) One member representing the Department of Health;
38
39 (2) One member representing the Department of Human
40 Resources Development;



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

- 26
- 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;
- 31
- 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 if there
- 36 were to be an increase in workers' compensation
- 37 benefits 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



1 (5) Amending or adopting administrative rules that can
2 improve workers' compensation benefits for
3 firefighters diagnosed with cancer; and
4

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 20
8 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2017; and
9

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
11 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of each
12 county; Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on
13 Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health; Chairperson of the
14 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health; Director
15 of Health; Director of Human Resources Development; Director of
16 Labor and Industrial Relations; Chairperson of the Board of
17 Trustees of the Employees' Retirement System; Chairperson of the
18 State Fire Council; Interim Director of the University of Hawaii
19 Cancer Center; and President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters
20 Association.

