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



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

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

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

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

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

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- 38 (1) One member representing the Department of Health;
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- 40 (2) One member representing the Department of Human
- 41 Resources Development;
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- 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;  
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- 8 (5) One member representing the State Fire Council;  
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- 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;  
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- 16 (8) One member representing the health insurance industry;  
17
- 18 (9) One member who is an attorney familiar with workers'  
19 compensation law;  
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- 21 (10) One member representing the Hawaii Fire Fighters  
22 Association; and  
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- 24 (11) The Fire Chief from each county, or the Chief's  
25 designee; and  
26

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



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