
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE COUNTY COUNCILS TO ENACT ORDINANCES TO BAN THE SALE
AND RENTAL OF FULL-FACE SNORKEL MASKS IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, the State is a prime destination for ocean
2 activities because of the clear blue waters, year-round warm
3 waters, and unique ocean ecosystems; and
4

5 WHEREAS, the promotion of safe practices will ensure that
6 locals and non-locals enjoy ocean activities in the State; and
7

8 WHEREAS, 17 snorkeling-related deaths occur on average each
9 year in Hawaii; and
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11 WHEREAS, in 2018, there were 14 such deaths in the first
12 three months; and
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14 WHEREAS, between January 14 and 27, 2018, eight people,
15 including at least three tourists, drowned near several beaches
16 on Maui, bringing the death toll in the span of two weeks to
17 almost half of the 17 snorkeling deaths that Hawaii experiences
18 in a year; and
19

20 WHEREAS, two of those deaths involved visitors from
21 California who were wearing full-face snorkel masks and those
22 drownings have raised concerns about use of recently introduced
23 models of full-face snorkeling masks; and
24

25 WHEREAS, full-face snorkel masks are masks that seal around
26 a person's entire face and strap around the head with a tube for
27 breathing and the design of full-face snorkel masks makes it
28 difficult to remove the mask when an individual panics in the
29 ocean; and
30

31 WHEREAS, the design is also believed to retain more carbon
32 dioxide in the mask, which may lead to a person becoming
33 disoriented or lose consciousness; and



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1 WHEREAS, critics of the full-face design, including
 2 experienced watermen and women on Maui say that there is carbon
 3 dioxide buildup in the mask, and the masks are prone to leaking
 4 and fogging easily; and

5
 6 WHEREAS, the full-face masks are popular because the new
 7 design advertises that people can breathe through their nose and
 8 mouth, unlike a traditional snorkel with only a mouthpiece; and

9
 10 WHEREAS, a Hawaii retailer field-tested the full-face
 11 snorkeling masks and now refuses to sell them, and an owner of
 12 one of Maui's and the State's largest snorkel companies said
 13 that he never will sell the "one piece" snorkel masks; and

14
 15 WHEREAS, some surviving relatives and friends of the
 16 deceased snorkelers have placed the blame on full-face snorkel
 17 masks; now, therefore,

18
 19 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 20 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
 21 2019, that this body urges the county councils to enact
 22 ordinances to ban the sale and rental of full-face snorkel masks
 23 in Hawaii; and

24
 25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 26 Resolution be transmitted to the Council Chairs of the Honolulu
 27 City Council, Kaua'i County Council, Maui County Council, and
 28 Hawai'i County Council.

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 30
 31

OFFERED BY:

[Handwritten signatures and names]
 S. Oik
 M. Aho
 Dan James
 Cynthia Thiele
 Dettl
[Other illegible signatures]



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