
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PRIORITIZE THE TESTING AND RESEARCH OF BEACH SAND CONTAMINATION LEVELS AT POKAI BAY ON OAHU'S LEEWARD COAST AND REQUESTING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO RENOVATE ITS PUBLIC FACILITIES AT POKAI BAY TO MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH RISKS CAUSED BY POLLUTION AND CONTAMINANTS.

1 WHEREAS, Pokai Bay is one of the most-visited ocean areas
2 on Oahu's Leeward Coast because of its wide sandy beach and
3 relatively calm waters; and
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5 WHEREAS, because it is protected by an offshore breakwater,
6 Pokai Bay maintains calm conditions year-round, which makes it
7 an ideal location for many ocean users including swimmers, canoe
8 paddlers, surfers, snorkelers, boaters, divers, and stand-up
9 paddlers; and
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11 WHEREAS, despite Pokai Bay's pristine appearance of
12 crystal-blue waters and white sand, it is sadly the site of
13 pollution from multiple sources including runoff from
14 surrounding surfaces, illegal dumping, and user-induced
15 contaminants; and
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17 WHEREAS, over the last decade, beach users and local
18 community members have reported the presence of health and
19 environmental hazards at Pokai Bay; and
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21 WHEREAS, water runoff containing industrial pollutants
22 washed from local surface streets, parking lots, and sidewalks,
23 as well as petrochemical-based pollutants caused by vehicular
24 use of an adjacent boat ramp, are suspected sources of tar balls
25 that have been found on the beach; and



1 WHEREAS, historically, illegal dumping of dredging
2 materials and other substances have occurred at higher rates
3 along the Leeward Coast, including at Pokai Bay, than at other
4 locations on Oahu; and

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6 WHEREAS, the significant use of Leeward Coast beaches for
7 camping and associated activities of daily life by homeless
8 persons, such as bathing, are suspected of having introduced
9 higher than normal levels of bacteria to the sand and waters at
10 Pokai Bay, resulting in a rash of staph infections and other
11 health problems among regular beach users; and

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13 WHEREAS, a 2015 study by professors and researchers at the
14 University of Hawaii at Manoa's Department of Civil and
15 Environmental Engineering found that beach sand holds more fecal
16 indicator bacteria (FIB) than seawater; and

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18 WHEREAS, based upon the results of this study, the beach
19 sand at Pokai Bay may be found to retain pollutants from the
20 restroom facilities in the area, specifically rinse-off from the
21 showers and fecal bacteria from toilet plumbing; and

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23 WHEREAS, the Department of Health has the supplies to test
24 seawater, and occasionally tests the seawater in Pokai Bay
25 specifically for FIB, which decays at slower rates in the beach
26 sand than in seawater; and now, therefore,

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28 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
29 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
30 2020, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Health is
31 urged to prioritize the testing and researching of the FIB
32 levels and any other pollutants of the beach sand at Pokai Bay;
33 and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that testing and researching the FIB
36 levels and any other pollutants in beach sand at Pokai Bay
37 should become a priority of the Department of Health's non-point
38 source pollution program; and

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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
41 urged to develop plan to increase water circulation at Pokai Bay



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1 to improve water quality and mitigate environmental and health
2 risks caused by pollution and contaminants in the water; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
4 requested to collaborate with other appropriate state and county
5 agencies to develop the plan to increase water circulation; and

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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health submit
8 a report of its collaborative activities, including significant
9 findings, cost estimates, and any proposed legislation to
10 increase water circulation at Pokai Bay to the Legislature no
11 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular
12 Session of 2021; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based upon the Department of
15 Health's testing and research of FIB in the beach sand at Pokai
16 Bay, the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and
17 Recreation is requested to prioritize renovations of the
18 restroom facilities at Pokai Bay; and

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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
21 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health
22 and Director of the City and County of Honolulu Department of
23 Parks and Recreation.

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OFFERED BY: *Carl Gut*

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