
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE
CUMULATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS OF PERSISTENT URBAN NOISE IN
HONOLULU.

1 WHEREAS, comprehensive research has shown that there is a
2 direct link between excessive noise and health issues such as
3 stress-related illnesses, high blood pressure, hearing loss,
4 sleep disruption, and lost productivity; and
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6 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
7 found that hearing loss can result from a single loud sound,
8 like firecrackers, near your ear, or more often, hearing loss
9 can result over time from damage caused by repeated exposures to
10 loud sounds; the louder the sound, the shorter the amount of
11 time it takes for hearing loss to occur and the longer the
12 exposure, the greater the risk for hearing loss; and
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14 WHEREAS, when noise is considered in its entirety and not
15 solely by individual measurements or considerations it can have
16 a detrimental cumulative effect; and
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18 WHEREAS, aggregated unrestrained noises occurring around
19 the clock can significantly affect the quality of life of
20 Honolulu's urban dwellers and detract from a sustainable livable
21 urban environment; and
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23 WHEREAS, the residents of urban Honolulu experience noise
24 as part of the increasingly loud urban soundscape; and
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26 WHEREAS, an inventory of some of the frequent and pervasive
27 urban noise derived from various sources includes:
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- 29 (1) Buses "kneeling" along the Beretania Street, Hotel
30 Street, and King Street routes, which generate a
31 hydraulic noise followed by a beeping noise;
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- 33 (2) The high-pitched and extremely piercing sirens of fire
34 trucks and ambulances;
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- 1 (3) The downshifting of fire trucks coming down Nu‘uanu
2 Avenue to King Street;
- 3
- 4 (4) Garbage trucks circling through Chinatown and downtown
5 Honolulu with their back-up beepers and rattling large
6 containers beginning at 4:30 a.m. and sometimes as
7 early as 2:30 a.m.;
- 8
- 9 (5) Honking car horns and car alarms at unpredictable
10 times;
- 11
- 12 (6) Tourist trolley bells clanging three to four jingles
13 in a row;
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- 15 (7) Squealing noises that are particularly penetrating and
16 intense from poorly maintained brakes of buses,
17 garbage trucks, and tourist trolleys;
- 18
- 19 (8) Loud motorcycle engines that can also trigger more
20 noise by setting off car alarms;
- 21
- 22 (9) Mopeds without mufflers or with modified mufflers; and
- 23
- 24 (10) Back-up beepers on various vehicles that can be heard
25 from blocks away, which are especially noticeable at
26 night and in the early morning; and
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28 WHEREAS, other sources of noise that contribute to the
29 urban cacophony and discord include:

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- 31 (1) Low-frequency repetitive bass music that emanates with
32 occasional spikes in volume from music playing at area
33 venues, especially open-air venues;
- 34
- 35 (2) Smokers congregating outside their favorite bar or
36 restaurant, often continuing 2:00 a.m. or later;
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- 38 (3) Leaf blowers in the street, parks, and around
39 residential buildings during and outside of the
40 legally permitted times;
- 41



1 (4) People whistling and yelling at each other throughout
2 the night; and

3
4 (5) Homeless campers creating various noises, including
5 the occasional quarrel or fight; and
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7 WHEREAS, other more intermittent noises add up to
8 additional disruptive noise that intrude on urban residents in
9 the day and night, such as:

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11 (1) Power washing of streets and private plazas;

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13 (2) Grease trap pumping at some restaurants starting as
14 early as 6:00 a.m. and utilizing a very loud motor;

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16 (3) Street cleaning machines that tend to be operated
17 about 4:30 a.m.;

18
19 (4) Recycling operations from bars that involve a large
20 dump of glass bottles all at once and sorting of
21 individual bottles, several times a week at
22 unpredictable hours; and

23
24 (5) Harbor noise, including loud hammering; and
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26 WHEREAS, the Department of Health has jurisdiction over
27 noise pollution under chapter 342F, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
28 which requires the Director of Health to prevent, control, and
29 abate noise pollution in the State; now, therefore,

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31 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
32 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
33 2020, that the Department of Health, in consultation with the
34 John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawai'i at
35 Mānoa, is requested to conduct a study on the cumulative health
36 effects of persistent urban noise in Honolulu, including the
37 extent of urban noise, its effect on quality of life, and
38 possible solutions utilized by other urban environments that may
39 be effective in Honolulu; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
2 requested to submit its findings and recommendations to the
3 Legislature by September 1, 2021; and

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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
6 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health, Dean of the
7 John A. Burns School of Medicine, Mayor of the City and County
8 of Honolulu, Chairperson of the Honolulu City Council, and
9 Chairperson of the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board.

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