
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE HAWAII' I CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION
COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A PROACTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO EDUCATE HAWAII'S RESIDENTS ABOUT
THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

1 WHEREAS, humanity's runaway greenhouse gas emissions are
2 changing the climate and have created an ecological crisis; and

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4 WHEREAS, the public generally recognizes and understands
5 the impacts of climate change on infrastructure and the built
6 environment but have less of an understanding of the health
7 impacts of climate change; and

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9 WHEREAS, the World Health Organization recognizes that
10 climate change adversely impacts the social determinants of
11 health, which include food security, economic stability, strong
12 social and community support networks, healthy environments, and
13 access to quality health care and emergency services; and

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15 WHEREAS, recognizing the urgent need to combat climate
16 change, Hawaii became the first state to declare a climate
17 emergency by adopting S.C.R. No. 44 in 2021, declaring a climate
18 emergency and requesting statewide collaboration toward an
19 immediate transition and emergency mobilization effort to
20 restore a safe climate; and

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22 WHEREAS, scientific consensus indicates public health will
23 be impacted because climate change will increase the incidence
24 of increased heat, vector-borne diseases, crop failure and food
25 insecurity, water insecurity, waterborne diseases, extreme
26 weather events, air pollution, and adverse mental health impacts
27 due to these climate stressors and collective eco-grief, which
28 refers to the deep sense of loss and overwhelming emotional
29 response felt when learning about and experiencing the



1 catastrophic destruction of the environment due to climate
2 change; and

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4 WHEREAS, as an island state, Hawaii remains particularly
5 vulnerable to the effects of climate change, thereby endangering
6 the health, safety, and welfare of the people, warranting
7 preemptive and protective action; and

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9 WHEREAS, vector-borne diseases are expected to increase in
10 Hawaii as invasive insect vectors reach the State, become more
11 endemic in Hawaii's changing climate, and spread disease; and

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13 WHEREAS, crop failure and food insecurity are expected to
14 increase globally and in Hawaii as weather patterns and climatic
15 systems become less stable and less favorable for current
16 agricultural practices, reducing access to locally grown food
17 and resulting in a shift to more inexpensive and processed foods
18 that lead to poorer health outcomes; and

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20 WHEREAS, water insecurity is expected to increase as
21 changing climate patterns reduce the sustainable replenishment
22 of Hawaii's groundwater aquifers and the aquifers' ability to
23 meet the needs of the State's population; and

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25 WHEREAS, the incidence of waterborne disease is expected to
26 increase as sea level rise, heavy storms, and flooding events
27 create more vectors for the spread of pathogens and the flooding
28 of the State's outdated cesspools releases hazardous waste into
29 aquifers, waterways, and infrastructure; and

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31 WHEREAS, extreme weather and heat events are expected to
32 become more frequent and serious and damage public
33 infrastructure, physical health, and mental health; and

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35 WHEREAS, studies find that there is an increased incidence
36 of aggression and violent crimes when temperature increases,
37 with every one degree Celsius increase potentially causing a six
38 percent increase in violent crime; and

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40 WHEREAS, the mental health impacts of climate change are
41 evident in the form of eco-grief and other detrimental mental
42 health effects; and



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WHEREAS, living through climate disasters can result in trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, increases in substance abuse and risky behavior, and detrimental mental health effects from declining physical health, loss of social support and employment, population migration, and community change; and

WHEREAS, air quality is expected to worsen as the number of trade wind days in Hawaii decreases and pollen and mold increase; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii has already begun taking in many Pacific Islanders who have experienced forced migration due to sea level rise and the ecological degradation of their home islands, which may increase the risk of conflict between communities due to the rapid changes in population and cultural demographics; and

WHEREAS, the public is vulnerable, as climate action is not viewed as urgent because the public has not been informed of the full spectrum of public health risks posed by the climate crisis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023, the Senate concurring, that the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is urged to develop a proactive and comprehensive communication strategy to educate Hawaii's residents about the health impacts of the climate crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is urged to use federal Inflation Reduction Act funding and work with other state agencies, local governments, and community organizations to develop a public health engagement strategy that:

- (1) Is led by Native Hawaiian communities and communities most reliant on the natural environment;
- (2) Best communicates how the climate crisis will uniquely affect public health in Hawaii;



H.C.R. NO. 192

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(3) Addresses eco-grief and aims to improve any adverse mental health responses experienced when people understand the severity of this public health crisis; and

(4) Aims to improve the mental health, public health, and resiliency of Hawaii's residents so that the public is informed and prepared to tackle the climate crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is urged to submit a progress report to the Legislature, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024, detailing actions taken, the most vulnerable communities, and the amount of funding necessary to improve its outreach and the effectiveness of its communication strategy in the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Co-Chairs of the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

OFFERED BY: *Miss E. Lowen*

MAR 10 2023

