

JAN 20 2023

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that in rural areas such
2 as Molokai, a remote island with a population of about seven
3 thousand people, many state departments do not staff full-time
4 employees dedicated to enforcement activities. Therefore, when
5 a complaint is made, department staff members are not physically
6 present to address the situation; instead, state departments
7 rely on still photos and videos that may not capture the full
8 extent of the situation or be sufficient to support the issuance
9 of a citation. State departments must then determine whether to
10 send a staff member into the field after the fact to
11 investigate, which can take weeks to schedule depending upon
12 flight schedules or staff availability. The delay hinders the
13 ability of any government inspector to witness the violation and
14 issue an enforceable citation. These limitations lead to delays
15 in stopping environmentally hazardous activities that impact the
16 health and safety of the residents of Molokai.



1 The legislature further finds that a multi-departmental
2 investigative hotline may give residents a way to report
3 concerns and violations to someone in a remote location who is
4 familiar with the local landmarks and regions, as not all
5 locations in rural areas such as Molokai have physical addresses
6 or cross-streets to identify exact locations. The assignment of
7 a trained investigator to rural areas who can communicate
8 directly with state departments and utilize state department
9 resources may address these situations in a timely manner and
10 save state departments the unpredictable costs of travel and
11 other related expenses.

12 The purpose of the Act is to establish and fund:

- 13 (1) An environmental investigative hotline pilot project
14 that shall implement and manage an investigative
15 hotline for Molokai residents to report environmental
16 concerns on Molokai; and
- 17 (2) One full-time investigator on the island of Molokai to
18 investigate environmental concerns.

19 SECTION 2. There is established the environmental
20 investigative hotline pilot project. The environmental
21 management division of the department of health shall implement



1 and manage the pilot project for Molokai residents to report
2 environmental violations and concerns on Molokai.

3 SECTION 3. The environmental management division of the
4 department of health shall submit a report of its findings and
5 recommendations relating to the environmental investigative
6 hotline pilot project, including any proposed legislation, to
7 the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening
8 of the regular session of 2024.

9 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
12 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
13 year 2024-2025 for the implementation and management of the
14 environmental investigative hotline pilot project.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
16 health for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
19 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
20 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
21 year 2024-2025 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)



S.B. NO. 718

1 investigator position on Molokai to investigate potential
2 environmental concerns reported through the environmental
3 investigative hotline pilot project.

4 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
5 of health for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Lyn DeLoite



S.B. NO. 778

Report Title:

Investigative; Hotline; Molokai; Environment; Department of Health; Pilot Project; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes and funds an environmental investigative hotline pilot project through the Environmental Management Division of the Department of Health to implement and manage an investigative hotline for Molokai residents to report environmental concerns on Molokai. Establishes one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) investigator on the island of Molokai to investigate environmental concerns. Makes an appropriation.

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