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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO CONVENE A SEARCH AND RESCUE WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DETER HIKERS FROM ENTERING ILLEGAL HIKING TRAILS AND TO ADDRESS RISING SEARCH AND RESCUE COSTS FACING THE STATE AND COUNTIES DUE TO INCREASED ILLEGAL HIKING TRAFFIC.

1           WHEREAS, hiking is a popular outdoor activity to enjoy the  
2 State's unique natural environment, including endemic flora,  
3 majestic waterfalls, and panoramic views of the ocean; and  
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5           WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has  
6 increased outdoor activity around the world, specifically hiking  
7 in Hawaii; and  
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9           WHEREAS, certain areas within the numerous hiking trails  
10 available to the public throughout the State pose safety  
11 concerns and consequently have been closed to the public; and  
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13           WHEREAS, despite warnings, some individuals and groups  
14 unlawfully enter trails that have been closed to the public due  
15 to safety concerns, ultimately putting themselves at risk of  
16 significant injury and risking damage to native habitats and  
17 other natural resources that may be in those closed areas for  
18 preservation purposes; and  
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20           WHEREAS, an increase in hiking in the State requires more  
21 emergency responders to be readily available in case hikers are  
22 in need of search and rescue; and  
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24           WHEREAS, the more searches and rescues made, the more risks  
25 there are to emergency responders; and  
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1 WHEREAS, the State and counties of Hawaii incur significant  
2 costs associated with the rescue of hikers who choose to go on  
3 illegal hikes and often ignore signs prohibiting access; and  
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5 WHEREAS, each rescue costs upwards of thousands of dollars,  
6 and nearly one thousand rescues are made every year in Hawaii;  
7 and  
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9 WHEREAS, six states - Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire, Oregon,  
10 South Dakota, and Vermont - have existing laws in place that  
11 impose a financial penalty for individuals needing to be rescued  
12 outdoors because of their lack of preparation; and  
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14 WHEREAS, because of the considerable costs associated with  
15 the search and rescue of individuals who wilfully disregard  
16 their and others' safety by ignoring warning signs, it is  
17 critical to develop policies that encourage public safety and  
18 accountability; now, therefore,  
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20 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second  
21 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the  
22 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Law  
23 Enforcement is requested to convene a Search and Rescue Working  
24 Group to develop and make recommendations to deter hikers from  
25 entering illegal hiking trails and to address rising search and  
26 rescue costs facing the State and counties due to increased  
27 illegal hiking traffic; and  
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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Search and Rescue Working  
30 Group is also requested to examine:  
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- 32 (1) Existing applicable fines or fees and propose, if  
33 appropriate, new or amended fines or fees;
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- 35 (2) The process for collecting fines or fees; and  
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- 37 (3) The policies of other states with regard to fees  
38 imposed on persons rescued from illegal hikes; and  
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Search and Rescue Working  
41 Group is requested to consist of the following members, or their  
42 designees:



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- 2 (1) The Director of Law Enforcement;
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- 4 (2) The Attorney General;
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- 6 (3) A member of the Judiciary, appointed by the Chief
- 7 Justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court;
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- 9 (4) The chief of police from each county;
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- 11 (5) The fire chief from each county; and
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- 13 (6) The prosecuting attorney from each county; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Search and Rescue Working  
16 Group is requested to submit a report of its findings and  
17 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
18 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
19 the Regular Session of 2025; and

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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
22 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Law  
23 Enforcement, Attorney General, Chief Justice, chief of police of  
24 each county, fire chief of each county, and prosecuting attorney  
25 of each county.

