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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO TAKE ALL ACTION NECESSARY TO REQUIRE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS TO TEST SEWAGE SLUDGE AND ANY OTHER RESIDUAL MATERIAL FOR THE PRESENCE OF PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES.

1 WHEREAS, consuming produce contaminated with perfluoroalkyl  
2 and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) found in reclaimed water  
3 and sludge poses a range of health risks; and

4  
5 WHEREAS, regular testing and monitoring at waste water  
6 treatment plants are crucial to prevent PFAS exposure and  
7 protect public health; and

8  
9 WHEREAS, the use of reclaimed water for landscape  
10 irrigation, agricultural irrigation, industrial processes, and  
11 other non-drinking water applications is subject to regulation  
12 and approval by the Department of Health; and

13  
14 WHEREAS, reclaimed water used for irrigation directly  
15 impacts crops and soil, with contaminated reclaimed water  
16 introducing PFAS into the food chain and adversely affecting  
17 both the environment and human health when consumed; and

18  
19 WHEREAS, PFAS can enter food chains and result in  
20 biomagnification, affecting aquatic fauna, insects, amphibians,  
21 fish, and seafood; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities that sell  
24 reclaimed water to agricultural farms for irrigation purposes  
25 should be required to test the reclaimed water for the presence  
26 of PFAS to ensure the safety of the reclaimed water and the  
27 absence of harmful contaminants that can negatively impact human  
28 health and the environment; and

29  
30 WHEREAS, when utilizing reclaimed water for agricultural  
31 practices, requiring regular testing will help identify  
32 potential PFAS contamination and allow for appropriate



1 management and mitigation measures for the safety of consumers,  
2 farmers, and the environment; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, despite the Department of Health and Honolulu  
5 Board of Water Supply actively testing drinking water wells for  
6 PFAS, "forever chemicals" have been detected in the State's  
7 soil, groundwater, and drinking water, demonstrating the need  
8 for water purveyors, the military, and other government agencies  
9 to test for PFAS; and

10  
11 WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency  
12 has proposed regulations that would require water utilities to  
13 test for PFAS and limit their levels to very low amounts, and on  
14 Oahu, the Department of Health has reported PFAS detections in  
15 several communities' drinking water, including Kunia and Waipio,  
16 where PFAS levels were detected far above what the federal  
17 government considers safe; and

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19 WHEREAS, the PFAS in Kunia's water likely came from five  
20 United States Army installations in the immediate vicinity that  
21 send their wastewater to the Schofield Barracks Wastewater  
22 Treatment Plant, where one hundred percent of its reclaimed  
23 water is reused for agricultural purposes, causing groundwater  
24 and surface water contamination; and

25  
26 WHEREAS, military wastewater treatment plants collect  
27 wastewater from drains at military hangers and workshops, which  
28 carry PFAS from engine cleaning, chrome plating, wire coating,  
29 and releases from overhead fire suppression systems from routine  
30 testing and frequent accidents into sewer drain systems; and

31  
32 WHEREAS, leachate from landfills at military bases contain  
33 PFAS, and the leachate is pumped to wastewater treatment plants  
34 that treat wastewater for many chemicals but not PFAS; and

35  
36 WHEREAS, in 2004, the United States Army sold the Schofield  
37 Barracks Wastewater Treatment Plant to Aqua Engineers, the  
38 State's largest reuse irrigation system, where its PFAS-  
39 contaminated effluent-based reclaimed water and fertilizer are  
40 sold below market rates for reuse on food crops, enabling PFAS  
41 compounds to poison crops, contaminate groundwater and surface



1 water, and find pathways to human consumption through drinking  
2 water, produce, and seafood consumption; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, consuming produce grown with PFAS-contaminated  
5 water or fertilized with PFAS-contaminated sludge contributes to  
6 an increased risk of certain cancers, including prostate,  
7 kidney, and testicular cancers; and

8  
9 WHEREAS, consuming PFAS-contaminated crops exacerbates  
10 health risks linked to liver disease, endocrine disruption, and  
11 other serious health issues; and

12  
13 WHEREAS, a pregnant woman consuming PFAS-contaminated  
14 produce during critical fetal development stages can impact the  
15 long-term health of the child by causing developmental delays,  
16 low birth weight, accelerated puberty, and behavioral changes;  
17 and

18  
19 WHEREAS, consuming PFAS-contaminated food can affect  
20 reproductive health by decreasing fertility and causing high  
21 blood pressure in pregnant women; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, consuming contaminated produce is likely to  
24 introduce endocrine-disrupting PFAS chemicals that can harm  
25 reproductive and immune systems; and

26  
27 WHEREAS, sludge used as fertilizer containing PFAS and  
28 other harmful substances, such as microplastics, heavy metals,  
29 and endocrine-disrupting chemicals, contaminates the soil,  
30 affects crop quality and safety, and harms aquatic ecosystems;  
31 and

32  
33 WHEREAS, requiring monitoring for PFAS at wastewater  
34 treatment plants through environmental regulations and public  
35 health guidelines demonstrates responsible management of  
36 wastewater facilities by the Department of Health; now,  
37 therefore,

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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second  
40 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,  
41 that the Department of Health is urged to take all action  
42 necessary to require wastewater treatment plants to test sewage



1 sludge and any other residual material for the presence of PFAS;  
2 and

3

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is  
5 urged to adopt administrative rules for the safe disposal and  
6 sequestration of sewage sludge and other residual material that  
7 contain any amount of PFAS; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is  
10 urged to prohibit the issuance or renewal of permits if testing  
11 yields PFAS in sewage sludge or other residual material on land  
12 used for agronomic purposes, where drainage tiles have been  
13 installed, that drains into the waters of the State, or in a  
14 five hundred year floodplain; and

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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor is urged to  
17 support the Department of Health's action; and

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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
20 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and Director of  
21 Health.

