H.C.R. NO. 7

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE COUNTY OF HAWAII TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS THAT HAVE INCURRED SIGNIFICANT LOSSES DUE TO THE EFFECTS OF VOG.

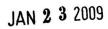
1 WHEREAS, in March of 2008, a rupture in the lower east wall of Kilauea's Halema'uma'u crater resulted in the release of 2 large quantities of volcanic emissions that, mixed with air, 3 formed what is commonly referred to as "vog"; and 4 5 6 WHEREAS, emissions from the newly created vent have continued throughout the year, resulting in elevated levels of 7 vog in the atmosphere; and 8 9 WHEREAS, vog contains sulfur dioxide which, in addition to 10 being a potential health hazard in high concentrations, has also 11 12 proven to be particularly harmful to agricultural crops; and 13 WHEREAS, sulfur dioxide, and by-products like sulfuric 14 acid, damage both the leaves and the flowers of plants, 15 including protea and other cut flowers, rendering them 16 unsalable: and 17 18 19 WHEREAS, acid rain resulting from vog represents another threat, particularly to ranchers whose fences and other 20 infrastructure are susceptible to acid rain effects; and 21 22 23 WHEREAS, farmers provided testimony on the devastating impact of vog on their businesses at fact-finding meetings 24 convened by the House Special Committee on Vog Effects; and 25 26 WHEREAS, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture approved the 27 Governor's request for a disaster designation for the County of 28 Hawaii due to the ongoing impact of vog, thereby allowing 29



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farmers in the county to apply for low-interest loans from the 1 federal Farm Service Agency; and 2 3 4 WHEREAS, notwithstanding the assistance already provided and in light of the continuous nature of the vog emergency, 5 there is a need for additional financial aid for agricultural 6 7 operations on the island of Hawaii; now, therefore, 8 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 9 10 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009, the Senate concurring, that the U.S. Department of 11 12 Agriculture (USDA) and the County of Hawaii are requested to 13 provide additional forms of financial support for agricultural operations that have incurred significant losses due to the 14 15 effects of voq; and 16 17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the USDA is requested to use funds in existing federal disaster relief programs to provide 18 grants and other forms of financial aid to assist the affected 19 20 agricultural operations; and 21 22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County of Hawaii is requested to implement real property tax relief to the affected 23 24 agricultural operations; and 25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this 26 27 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Mayor of the County of Hawaii, and each member of 28 29 the Hawaii County Council. 30 31 32 OFFERED BY: anohan





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