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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

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REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY,  
ALONG WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,  
TO STUDY THE MINIMUM SOUND LEVEL NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT  
BLIND PEDESTRIANS CAN HEAR HYBRID AND OTHER "SILENT"  
VEHICLES IN ALL PHASES OF THEIR OPERATION.

1 WHEREAS, vehicles designed to reduce harmful pollutants and  
2 to operate with greater fuel efficiency include gasoline-  
3 electric hybrid and electric-only vehicles; and  
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5 WHEREAS, in the foreseeable future, vehicle engine  
6 technologies may include hydrogen fuel cell and other technology  
7 that provides an alternative to those that rely partly or wholly  
8 on internal combustion; and  
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10 WHEREAS, vehicle engines employing technologies other than  
11 internal combustion generate virtually no sound while in  
12 operation; and  
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14 WHEREAS, the total number of hybrid and electric-only  
15 vehicles sold per year in Hawaii, as well as the rest of the  
16 nation, is growing and may equal or exceed the number of  
17 internal combustion engine vehicles in the near future; and  
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19 WHEREAS, people, including pedestrians, who are not blind,  
20 such as bicyclists, runners, and children, benefit from the  
21 multi-sensory information generated by vehicular traffic,  
22 including the sound of vehicle engines; and  
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24 WHEREAS, blind pedestrians use the sound of vehicular  
25 traffic to discern the speed, direction, and other attributes of  
26 vehicles to traverse roads safely and independently; and  
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28 WHEREAS, hybrid vehicles, when operating on their electric  
29 engines, and electric-only vehicles are difficult for blind  
30 people to identify and track, rendering these vehicles  
31 potentially dangerous when moving on the street, emerging from  
32 driveways, moving through parking lots, and in other situations



1 where blind pedestrians and vehicles come into proximity with  
2 each other; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, vehicular design standards that consider the multi-  
5 sensory nature of traffic detection and avoidance and require  
6 vehicles to emit a minimum level of sound to alert pedestrians  
7 and prevent accidents are necessary for the protection of the  
8 public; and

9  
10 WHEREAS, the failure to take action to ensure that blind  
11 pedestrians can hear hybrid and other "silent" vehicles in all  
12 phases of their operation will lead to pedestrian injuries and  
13 fatalities; now, therefore,

14  
15 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
16 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
17 of 2009, that the United States Department of Environmental  
18 Protection (EPA), along with the United States Department of  
19 Transportation (USDOT), is requested to study the minimum sound  
20 level necessary to ensure that blind pedestrians can hear hybrid  
21 and other silent vehicles in all phases of their operation; and

22  
23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the EPA, along with USDOT, is  
24 requested to recommend minimum sound standards applicable to  
25 vehicles sold in, and licensed to travel on, the public roads of  
26 the United States that include:

- 27  
28 (1) An omni-directional sound with spectral characteristics  
29 similar to those of a modern internal combustion  
30 engine vehicle in all phases of operation, including  
31 times when the vehicle is at a full-stop;  
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33 (2) A sound that varies in a way consistent with the sound  
34 of vehicles with combustion engines indicating that the  
35 vehicle is idling, maintaining a constant speed,  
36 accelerating, or decelerating; and  
37  
38 (3) Standards that do not prescribe the apparatus,  
39 technology, or method to be used by vehicle  
40 manufacturers to achieve the required minimum sound  
41 level;

42  
43 and  
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the EPA, along with the USDOT,  
2 is requested to review all available research regarding the  
3 effect of traffic sounds on pedestrian safety and consult  
4 consumer groups representing individuals who are blind, other  
5 pedestrians, cyclists, and advocates for the safety of children;  
6 and  
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
9 Resolution be transmitted to the Administrator of the United  
10 States Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary of  
11 Transportation.  
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