
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE CONVENING OF A CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS THE SCOPE AND RISKS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE HEALTH OF HAWAII'S RESIDENTS AND TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS TO HEALTH STATEWIDE.

1 WHEREAS, climate change, together with other natural and
2 human-made health stressors, influences human health and disease
3 in many ways; and

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5 WHEREAS, as a result of climate change, some existing
6 health threats will intensify, and in other cases, new health
7 threats will emerge; and

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9 WHEREAS, public health may be affected by disruptions of
10 physical, biological, and ecological systems, including
11 disturbances originating in Hawaii or elsewhere; and

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13 WHEREAS, the potential health effects of these disruptions
14 include: increased asthma and other respiratory and
15 cardiovascular diseases, heat-related morbidity and mortality,
16 injuries and premature deaths related to extreme weather events,
17 changes in the prevalence and geographical distribution of food-
18 and water-borne illnesses and other infectious diseases, and
19 greater levels of mental and emotional stress in response to
20 climate change and extreme weather-related emergencies; and

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22 WHEREAS, Hawaii is not alone in its concern about the issue
23 of climate change and health; and

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25 WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association and other
26 national health organizations, such as the Centers for Disease
27 Control and Prevention, have identified climate change and
28 health as a major public health issue; and



1 WHEREAS, the magnitude and frequency of climate change-
2 related events are projected to increase and will stress the
3 capability of existing response systems to manage them; and
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5 WHEREAS, when these crucial response systems, such as
6 communications for emergency medical services or transportation
7 for evacuation, become stressed, public health will be affected;
8 and
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10 WHEREAS, there are ways that the entire array of public
11 health strategies, including health policy advocacy, health
12 surveillance and monitoring, environmental health intervention,
13 infectious disease intervention, health education, and other
14 public health services, can help to mitigate and reduce the
15 health effects of climate change; and
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17 WHEREAS, public health workers in the State surveyed by the
18 Hawaii Public Health Association in 2014 expressed a desire to
19 help address the effects of climate change on health; and
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21 WHEREAS, however, most public health workers feel that they
22 lack the specific expertise, knowledge, or skills to do so; and
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24 WHEREAS, a coordinated public health response is needed to
25 discuss emerging and perceived threats while also providing
26 public health workers with the necessary education, skills, and
27 resources; and
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29 WHEREAS, recognizing that climate change is one of the most
30 significant public health issues of our time and that there are
31 many other ways in which climate change is already affecting
32 public health, the goal of the State should be to increase
33 effective public health engagement and action regarding climate
34 change; now, therefore,
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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
37 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
38 Session of 2015, the Senate concurring, that the Director of
39 Health is requested to convene the Climate Change and Health
40 Working Group to assess the scope and risks of climate change on
41 the health of Hawaii's residents in order to develop a strategic
42 plan to address climate change risks to health statewide; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Climate Change and Health
2 Working Group be composed of public- and private-sector
3 organizations and entities that will focus on assisting health
4 professionals in preparing for and responding effectively and
5 efficiently to the health effects of climate change through the
6 following:

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- 8 (1) Developing, improving, integrating, and maintaining
9 state and regional disease surveillance systems and
10 monitoring capacity to respond to health-related
11 effects of climate change, including specific threats
12 related to:
- 13
- 14 (A) Water security, food safety, and vector-borne
15 infectious diseases;
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- 17 (B) Respiratory and pulmonary effects, including
18 responses to air allergens;
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- 20 (C) Cardiovascular effects, including impacts of
21 temperature extremes;
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- 23 (D) The health effects of air pollution, including
24 heightened sensitivity to air pollution; and
- 25
- 26 (E) Mental and behavioral health impacts of climate
27 change in the health of displaced persons and at-
28 risk populations and communities;
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- 30 (2) Creating evidence-based tools for predicting and
31 monitoring the public health impacts of climate change
32 at the state and community levels;
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- 34 (3) Identifying and prioritizing communities and
35 populations vulnerable to the health effects of
36 climate change, and determining actions and
37 communication strategies that should be adopted to
38 inform and protect these communities and populations;
- 39
- 40 (4) Developing recommendations for health communication,
41 public education, and outreach programs aimed at
42 public health and health care professionals as well as
43 the general public to promote preparedness and



- 1 response strategies related to climate change and
- 2 public health;
- 3
- 4 (5) Developing recommendations for expanding and training
- 5 the public health workforce to strengthen its capacity
- 6 to respond to and prepare for the health impacts of
- 7 climate change; and
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- 9 (6) Developing recommendations for the development,
- 10 implementation, and support of preparedness and
- 11 response planning to anticipate and reduce the health
- 12 threats due to climate change; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of Health, or the
 15 Director's designee, serve as the chairperson or co-chairperson
 16 of the Climate Change and Health Working Group; and

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 18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Climate Change and Health
 19 Working Group include representation from both public- and
 20 private-sector representatives in public health and health care;
 21 and

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 23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Climate Change and Health
 24 Working Group submit a report, to be prepared and drafted by the
 25 Department of Health, of its findings and recommendations,
 26 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
 27 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
 28 of 2016; and

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 30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Climate Change and Health
 31 Working Group will be dissolved on June 30, 2016; and

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 33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 34 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health
 35 and President of the Hawaii Public Health Association.

