

FEB 04 2016

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## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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REQUESTING THE CONVENING OF A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE CANCER IN  
THE FIREFIGHTING PROFESSION.

1 WHEREAS, protective equipment used by firefighters has  
2 improved considerably in recent years, and fire departments have  
3 instituted best practice procedures for the cleaning of  
4 protective clothing and breathing apparatuses; and  
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6 WHEREAS, despite protections and procedures, firefighters  
7 are exposed to multiple carcinogens and toxicants through  
8 incident exposure as residential and vehicle fires release  
9 highly concentrated toxicants from plastics and synthetics; and  
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11 WHEREAS, exposure to toxicants during the course of a  
12 firefighters' career may not result in cancer symptoms or  
13 diagnosis until several years after retirement; and  
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15 WHEREAS, according to a three-year study by the University  
16 of Cincinnati completed in 2005, firefighters have a higher risk  
17 than the general population of being diagnosed with cancer; and  
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19 WHEREAS, this study showed that, when compared to the  
20 general population, firefighters have a:  
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- 22 (1) One hundred two per cent higher risk for testicular  
23 cancer;  
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25 (2) Fifty-three per cent higher risk for multiple myeloma;  
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27 (3) Fifty-one per cent higher risk for non-Hodgkin's  
28 lymphoma;  
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30 (4) Thirty-nine per cent higher risk for skin cancer;  
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- (5) Thirty-two per cent higher risk for brain and malignant melanoma;
- (6) Twenty-nine per cent higher risk for rectal cancer;
- (7) Twenty eight per cent higher risk for prostate cancer;
- (8) Twenty-four per cent higher risk for buccal cavity and pharynx cancer;
- (9) Twenty-two per cent higher risk for stomach cancer;
- (10) Twenty-one per cent higher risk for colon cancer; and
- (11) Fourteen per cent higher risk for leukemia; and

WHEREAS, firefighters also face a greater risk of contracting infectious diseases and illnesses associated with exposure to patient care and biochemical substances due to bioterrorism than the general population; and

WHEREAS, the impact on the families of firefighters diagnosed with cancer include emotional toil, financial burdens, time commitments, and decreased quality of life for each family member; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislature convene a task force to examine issues relating to cancer in the firefighting profession; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health and the Chairperson of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health are requested to serve as the Chairpersons of the task force and to invite interested parties to be members of the task force, including:

- (1) One member representing the Department of Health;



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- (2) One member representing the Disability Compensation Division of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations;
- (3) One member representing the State of Hawaii Employees' Retirement System;
- (4) One member representing the State Fire Council;
- (5) One member representing the University of Hawaii Cancer Center;
- (6) Four members to represent the human resources branch of each county;
- (7) One member representing the health insurance industry;
- (8) One member that is an attorney familiar with workers' compensation law; and
- (9) One member representing the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to examine:

- (1) Recommendations, if any, for revisions to state workers' compensation laws that expedite the delivery of workers' compensation benefits for firefighters diagnosed with cancer;
- (2) The percentages of cancer diagnoses in Hawaii for the general population compared to firefighters;
- (3) Estimated costs to the State and counties were there to be an increase in workers' compensation benefits for firefighters diagnosed with cancer;
- (4) County fire departments' safety procedures and protocols for the prevention and reporting of firefighter exposure to toxicants; and



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(5) Amending or adopting administrative rules that can improve workers' compensation benefits for firefighters diagnosed with cancer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2017; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of each county; the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health; the Chairperson of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health; the Director of Health; the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations; the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Employees' Retirement System; the Chairperson of the State Fire Council; the Director of the University of Hawaii Cancer Center; and the President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association.

OFFERED BY:

  
BY REQUEST

