

MAR 11 2016

## SENATE RESOLUTION

STRONGLY URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PLAN AND ADDRESS THE  
NEED FOR A RESPONSE TEAM FOR VECTOR-BORNE ILLNESSES.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii is an isolated island state with tropical  
2 climates of warm temperatures located in the middle of the  
3 Pacific Ocean, making it geographically and climatically  
4 vulnerable as a breeding ground for vectors and creating  
5 favorable conditions for transmission of viruses and infectious  
6 diseases by infected *Aedis aegypti* mosquitoes; and  
7

8 WHEREAS, *Aedis aegypti*, also known as the yellow fever  
9 mosquito as it was responsible for the infamous yellow fever  
10 outbreak, was thought to be extinct in Hawaii in 1949 but was  
11 later found in traps at the Honolulu International Airport in  
12 2012, and it is now most recently associated with the spread of  
13 dengue fever, chikungunya, and zika; and  
14

15 WHEREAS, dengue fever, first documented in the 1950s and  
16 recognized as one of the most common vector-borne diseases  
17 worldwide that causes explosive outbreaks through transmission  
18 between humans by a single bite from an infected *Aedis aegypti*,  
19 is an incurable disease without a vaccine, causing sudden-onset  
20 high fever; severe headache; muscle, bone, and joint pain; skin  
21 rash; possible organ dysfunction; severe gastrointestinal  
22 bleeding; and, in some cases, death; and  
23

24 WHEREAS, chikungunya, first discovered in Africa in 1952  
25 and researched as a potential biological weapon, has recently  
26 reached nearly epidemic proportions in parts of Tahiti and is  
27 known as a crippling, incurable viral infection without a  
28 vaccine, causing sudden-onset high fever, headache, fatigue,  
29 severe to debilitating joint pain lasting several years, and  
30 digestive symptoms, including abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting,  
31 and diarrhea; and  
32

33 WHEREAS, zika was first discovered in Africa and noted by  
34 the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization  
35 in December 2015 as occurring within nine countries, with a  
36 recent ongoing outbreak in Brazil in April 2015, and active zika



1 virus transmission in over thirty-five countries according to  
2 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and  
3

4 WHEREAS, zika is an unpreventable disease with no vaccine  
5 that is spread by transmission of the zika virus by daytime  
6 active *Aedis aegypti* and possible sexual transmission between  
7 humans; and  
8

9 WHEREAS, symptoms of zika include headache, skin rash,  
10 fever, malaise, conjunctivitis, joint pain, and severe birth  
11 defects, particularly an increased risk of microcephaly, a  
12 neurodevelopmental disorder affecting fetuses of pregnant women  
13 that results in abnormal head size and incomplete brain  
14 development; and  
15

16 WHEREAS, Hawaii is a tourist destination where thousands of  
17 visitors travel every year from countries of similar climates in  
18 similar geographic locales that have or are experiencing  
19 outbreaks or high incidence of the viruses transmitted by  
20 infected mosquitoes, such as French Polynesia, which has  
21 reported approximately 130,000 chikungunya cases, of which  
22 approximately half being reported in Tahiti; and  
23

24 WHEREAS, chikungunya has been found to lead to  
25 leptospirosis in some cases, which is a bacterial disease  
26 affecting humans and animals that is spread through contact with  
27 either urine or other bodily fluids of infected animals or with  
28 water, soil, or food contaminated with the urine of infected  
29 animals, creating a secondary public health concern; and  
30

31 WHEREAS, mosquitoes in Hawaii are under the administrative  
32 purview of the Vector Control Unit of the Department of Health,  
33 which in 2009 saw several positions eliminated, resulting in a  
34 reduction of approximately one-half of the Vector Control Unit's  
35 previous size, allotting only four workers for Oahu, two for  
36 Maui County, two for Hawaii County, and four for Kauai County,  
37 further leading to an inadequate number of workers in proportion  
38 to the population growth; now, therefore,  
39

40 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth  
41 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016,  
42 that the Department of Health is strongly urged to plan and



S.R. NO. 94

1 address the need for a response team for vector-borne illnesses,  
 2 such as dengue fever, chikungunya, and zika, in order to  
 3 proactively and ably respond to the likely public health threat  
 4 the illnesses pose; and

5  
 6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
 7 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Health,  
 8 and each member of Hawaii's congressional delegation.  
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 10  
 11

OFFERED BY:

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