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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

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REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO HIRE A STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL OFFICER TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF RAT LUNGWORM DISEASE AND OTHER ZONOTIC DISEASES IN THE STATE'S HUMAN POPULATION AND TO SUPPORT STATEWIDE EFFORTS IN PROTECTING AND IMPROVING HUMAN HEALTH.

1 WHEREAS, zoonotic diseases are caused by infection from  
2 viruses, bacteria, parasites, or fungi and can be transmitted  
3 directly or indirectly to humans by consumption of contaminated  
4 foodstuffs or contact with infected animals; and

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6 WHEREAS, zoonotic diseases can cause illness of varying  
7 severity or even death in people; and

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9 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
10 reports that zoonotic diseases are very common and every year  
11 tens of thousands of Americans will get sick from them; and

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13 WHEREAS, leptospirosis, E. coli infection, methicillin-  
14 resistant staphylococcus aureus infection, ringworm,  
15 toxoplasmosis, salmonella infection, tuberculosis, H1N1 and H3N2  
16 influenza virus, also known as bird flu or swine flu,  
17 brucellosis caused by Brucella suis, and angiostrongyliasis  
18 cantonensis, more commonly known as rat lungworm disease, are  
19 examples of zoonotic diseases; and

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21 WHEREAS, zoonotic diseases are very well understood and  
22 studied by veterinarians; and

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24 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that in the past, the  
25 Department of Health had a Public Health Veterinarian position  
26 that was filled by a doctor of veterinary medicine; and



1 WHEREAS, David Sasaki, doctor of veterinary medicine and a  
2 world expert on leptospirosis, filled that position, and also  
3 oversaw the production of public health publications that were  
4 distributed to Hawaii physicians and veterinarians; and  
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6 WHEREAS, those publications were well received and helped  
7 educate physicians about disease reporting requirements, the  
8 prevalence of a number of diseases in the State, and the  
9 appropriate treatment for the diseases; and  
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11 WHEREAS, while the publications provided vital information  
12 on specific topics such as resistance to antibiotics of common  
13 venereal diseases such as gonorrhea, the publications also  
14 provided a deeper understanding of the risk of animal diseases  
15 to humans; and  
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17 WHEREAS, most health departments across the nation have a  
18 position filled by a doctor of veterinary medicine that is  
19 usually designated as a public health veterinarian; and  
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21 WHEREAS, establishing a State Veterinary Medical Officer  
22 position within the Department of Health may help to prevent the  
23 spread of rat lungworm disease and other zoonotic diseases in  
24 the State's human population and support statewide efforts to  
25 protect and improve human health; and  
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27 WHEREAS, a State Veterinary Medical Officer could also  
28 revive public health publications and disseminate the  
29 publications in electronic form, as well as couple the  
30 publications with continuing medical education for physicians,  
31 nurses, and veterinarians to help ensure that the State's health  
32 care workforce is continually updated on the latest information  
33 on zoonotic diseases; and  
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35 WHEREAS, a State Veterinary Medical Officer may also help  
36 address the current outbreak of rat lungworm disease in humans,  
37 dogs, cats, and horses in the State; and  
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39 WHEREAS, global warming contributes to the increase of the  
40 number and types of viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi that  
41 are spread between animals and humans, which makes early



1 detection and study of these vectors and the illnesses they  
2 cause imperative to protect public health; now, therefore,

3  
4 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
5 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
6 of 2018, that the Department of Health is requested to hire a  
7 State Veterinary Medical Officer to help prevent the spread of  
8 rat lungworm disease and other zoonotic diseases in the State's  
9 human population and support statewide efforts to protect and  
10 improve human health; and

11  
12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
13 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health.  
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OFFERED BY:

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MAR 09 2018

