
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE
CUMULATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS OF PERSISTENT URBAN NOISE IN
HONOLULU.

1 WHEREAS, comprehensive research has shown that there is a
2 direct link between excessive noise and health issues such as
3 stress-related illnesses, high blood pressure, hearing loss,
4 sleep disruption, and lost productivity; and
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6 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
7 found that hearing loss can result from a single loud sound
8 (like firecrackers) near your ear, or more often, hearing loss
9 can result over time from damage caused by repeated exposures to
10 loud sounds; the louder the sound, the shorter the amount of
11 time it takes for hearing loss to occur and the longer the
12 exposure, the greater the risk for hearing loss; and
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14 WHEREAS, when noise is considered in its entirety and not
15 solely by individual measurements or considerations it can have
16 a detrimental cumulative effect; and
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18 WHEREAS, aggregated unrestrained noises occurring around
19 the clock can significantly affect the quality of life of
20 Honolulu's urban dwellers and detract from a sustainable livable
21 urban environment; and
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23 WHEREAS, the residents of urban Honolulu experience noise
24 as part of the increasingly loud urban soundscape; and
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26 WHEREAS, an inventory of some of the frequent and pervasive
27 urban noise derived from various sources includes:
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- 29 (1) Buses "kneeling" along the Beretania Street, Hotel
30 Street, and King Street routes, which generate a
31 hydraulic noise followed by a beeping noise;
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- (2) The super high-pitched and extremely piercing sirens of fire trucks and ambulances;
- (3) The downshifting of fire trucks coming down Nuʻuanu Avenue to King Street;
- (4) Garbage trucks circling through Chinatown and downtown Honolulu with their back-up beepers and rattling large containers beginning at 4:30 a.m. and sometimes as early as 2:30 a.m.;
- (5) Honking car horns and car alarms at unpredictable times;
- (6) Tourist trolley bells clanging three to four jingles in a row;
- (7) Squealing noises that are particularly penetrating and intense from poorly maintained brakes of buses, garbage trucks, and tourist trolleys;
- (8) Loud motorcycle engines which can also trigger more noise by setting off car alarms;
- (9) Mopeds without mufflers or with modified mufflers; and
- (10) Back-up beepers on various vehicles that can be heard from blocks away, which are especially noticeable at night and in the early morning; and

WHEREAS, other sources of noise that contribute to the urban cacophony and discord include:

- (1) Low-frequency repetitive bass music that emanates with occasional spikes in volume from music playing at area venues, especially open-air venues;
- (2) Smokers congregating outside their favorite bar or restaurant, often continuing until closing time at 2:00 a.m.;



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- (3) Leaf blowers in the street, parks, and around residential buildings during and outside of the legally permitted times;
- (4) People whistling and yelling at each other throughout the night; and
- (5) Homeless campers creating various noises, including the occasional brawl and fight; and

WHEREAS, other more intermittent noises add up to additional disruptive noise that intrude on urban residents in the day and night, such as:

- (1) Power washing of streets and private plazas;
- (2) Grease trap pumping at some restaurants starting as early as 6:00 a.m. and utilizing a very loud motor;
- (3) Street cleaning machines that tend to be operated about 4:30 a.m.;
- (4) Recycling operations from bars that involve a large dump of glass bottles all at once and sorting of individual bottles, several times a week at unpredictable hours; and
- (5) Harbor noise, including loud hammering; and

WHEREAS, the state Department of Health has jurisdiction over noise pollution under chapter 342F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which requires the Director of Health to prevent, control, and abate noise pollution in the State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Health, in consultation with the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, is requested to conduct a study on the cumulative health effects of persistent urban noise in Honolulu, including the extent of urban noise, its effect on quality of life, and possible solutions utilized



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is requested to submit its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by September 1, 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health, Dean of the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Chairperson of the Honolulu City Council, and Chair of the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board.

Karl Rhoads

Dr. Mercado
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