
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PRIORITIZE TESTING AND
RESEARCH OF BEACH SAND CONTAMINATION LEVELS AT POKAI BAY
AND REQUESTING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU DEPARTMENT
OF PARKS AND RECREATION TO PRIORITIZE RENOVATIONS OF THE
RESTROOM FACILITIES AT POKAI BAY.

1 WHEREAS, Pokai Bay is one of the most-visited ocean areas
2 on Oahu's Leeward Coast because of its wide sandy beach and
3 relatively calm waters; and
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5 WHEREAS, because it is protected by an offshore breakwater,
6 Pokai Bay maintains calm conditions year-round, which makes it
7 an ideal location for many ocean users including swimmers, canoe
8 paddlers, surfers, snorkelers, boaters, divers, and stand-up
9 paddlers; and
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11 WHEREAS, despite Pokai Bay's pristine appearance of
12 crystal-blue waters and white sand, it is sadly the site of
13 pollution from multiple sources including runoff from
14 surrounding surfaces, illegal dumping, and user-induced
15 contaminants; and
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17 WHEREAS, over the last decade, beach users and local
18 community members have reported the presence of health and
19 environmental hazards at Pokai Bay; and
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21 WHEREAS, water runoff containing industrial pollutants
22 washed from local surface streets, parking lots, and sidewalks,
23 as well as pollution from illegally moored boats and
24 petrochemical-based pollutants caused by vehicular use of an
25 adjacent boat ramp, are additional suspected sources of
26 pollution; and



1 WHEREAS, historically, illegal dumping of dredging
2 materials and other substances have occurred at higher rates
3 along the Leeward Coast, including at Pokai Bay, than at other
4 locations on Oahu; and

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6 WHEREAS, the significant use of Leeward Coast beaches for
7 camping and associated activities of daily life by homeless
8 persons, such as bathing, are suspected of having introduced
9 higher than normal levels of bacteria to the sand and waters at
10 Pokai Bay, resulting in a rash of staph infections and other
11 health problems among regular beach users; and

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13 WHEREAS, a 2015 study by professors and researchers at the
14 University of Hawaii at Manoa's Department of Civil and
15 Environmental Engineering found that beach sand holds more fecal
16 indicator bacteria (FIB) than seawater; and

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18 WHEREAS, based upon the results of this study, the beach
19 sand at Pokai Bay may be found to retain pollutants from the
20 restroom facilities in the area, specifically rinse-off from the
21 showers and fecal bacteria from toilet plumbing; and

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23 WHEREAS, the Department of Health has the supplies to test
24 seawater, and occasionally tests the seawater in Pokai Bay
25 specifically for FIB, which decays at slower rates in the beach
26 sand than in seawater; now, therefore,

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28 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
29 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, the
30 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
31 Health is urged to prioritize testing and research of FIB levels
32 and any other pollutants of the beach sand at Pokai Bay; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
35 urged to make testing and research of FIB levels and any other
36 pollutants in beach sand at Pokai Bay a priority of the
37 Department's non-point source pollution program; and

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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
40 urged to develop a plan to increase water circulation at Pokai
41 Bay to improve water quality and mitigate environmental and



S.C.R. NO. 235

1 health risks caused by pollution and contaminants in the water;
2 and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
5 requested to collaborate with other appropriate state and county
6 agencies to develop the plan to increase water circulation; and

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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
9 requested to submit a report of its collaborative activities,
10 including significant findings, cost estimates, and any proposed
11 legislation to increase water circulation at Pokai Bay, to the
12 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
13 the Regular Session of 2023; and

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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based upon the Department of
16 Health's testing and research of FIB in the beach sand at Pokai
17 Bay, the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and
18 Recreation is requested to prioritize renovations of the
19 restroom facilities at Pokai Bay; and

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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
22 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health
23 and Director of the City and County of Honolulu Department of
24 Parks and Recreation.

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27 OFFERED BY: 

