
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PRIORITIZE FUNDING FOR
AIR CONDITIONING IN SCHOOLS ON HAWAII ISLAND THAT ARE
REGULARLY AFFECTED BY VOG.

1 WHEREAS, vog, or volcanic smog, is a form of air pollution
2 that occurs when volcanic emissions react with moisture, oxygen,
3 and sunlight; and

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5 WHEREAS, volcanic eruptions occur on Hawaii island and can
6 affect all parts of the State, but prevailing wind patterns
7 typically push vog emissions westward, where they typically
8 accumulate over North and South Kona and Kau; and

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10 WHEREAS, depending on the level of volcanic activity, vog
11 can affect air quality to the point where it poses significant
12 health risks, including irritating the skin, eyes, nose, and
13 throat and penetrating airways and the lungs, which can trigger
14 respiratory distress and induce asthma symptoms; and

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16 WHEREAS, studies about the effects of vog on residents of
17 Hawaii island show correlations between vog exposure and
18 increased rates of high blood pressure, acute bronchitis, acute
19 airway problems, asthma exacerbations, and respiratory illness;
20 and

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22 WHEREAS, children are generally more sensitive to vog than
23 adults because children have higher respiratory rates than
24 adults, meaning they take more breaths per minute; and

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26 WHEREAS, when vog levels are high, the public health
27 recommendations to reduce exposure include staying indoors with
28 the windows closed, using an air filter, and avoiding outdoor
29 activities that cause heavy breathing; however, in schools
30 without air conditioning, it can be very difficult to follow



1 these recommendations and retain a healthy learning environment
2 at the same time; and

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4 WHEREAS, hot temperatures negatively impact the ability of
5 students to learn, and West Hawaii island, in particular the
6 Kona area, consistently report some of the hottest temperatures
7 in the State; and

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9 WHEREAS, Hawaii's overheated classrooms can cause students
10 to suffer headaches, nausea, heat rashes, heat exhaustion, and,
11 in severe cases, heat stroke; and

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13 WHEREAS, studies show that the achievement gap between
14 cooled and non-cooled classroom environments can reach seventeen
15 percent on standardized tests; and

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17 WHEREAS, experiments in renewable energy cooling systems
18 have lowered departmental projections for comprehensive air
19 conditioning installation and classroom cooling; and

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21 WHEREAS, using available energy efficient technology,
22 including on-grid, off-grid, microgrid, and photovoltaic
23 technology, should reduce the cost of air conditioning
24 installation to approximately \$6,000 to \$8,000 per classroom;
25 and

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27 WHEREAS, the installation of air conditioning units in
28 Hawaii island classrooms in areas where air quality data shows
29 people regularly experience poor air quality and respiratory
30 issues related to vog will create safer, more comfortable, and
31 more effective learning environments that would better protect
32 students from vog; now, therefore,

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34 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
35 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
36 of 2022, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Education
37 is requested to prioritize funding for air conditioning in
38 schools on Hawaii island that are regularly affected by vog; and

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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
41 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to Chairperson of the Board
42 of Education and Interim Superintendent of Education.

