
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE HAWAI‘I CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION
COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A PROACTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO EDUCATE HAWAII'S RESIDENTS ABOUT
THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

1 WHEREAS, humanity's runaway greenhouse gas emissions are
2 changing the climate and have created an ecological crisis; and

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4 WHEREAS, the public generally recognizes and understands
5 the impacts of climate change on infrastructure and the built
6 environment but have less of an understanding of the health
7 impacts of climate change; and

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9 WHEREAS, the World Health Organization recognizes that
10 climate change adversely impacts the social determinants of
11 health, which include food security, economic stability, strong
12 social and community support networks, healthy environments, and
13 access to quality health care and emergency services; and

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15 WHEREAS, recognizing the urgent need to combat climate
16 change, Hawaii became the first state to declare a climate
17 emergency by adopting S.C.R. No. 44 in 2021, declaring a climate
18 emergency and requesting statewide collaboration toward an
19 immediate transition and emergency mobilization effort to
20 restore a safe climate; and

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22 WHEREAS, scientific consensus indicates public health will
23 be impacted because climate change will increase the incidence
24 of increased heat, vector-borne diseases, crop failure and food
25 insecurity, water insecurity, waterborne diseases, extreme
26 weather events, air pollution, and adverse mental health impacts
27 due to these climate stressors and collective eco-grief, which
28 refers to the deep sense of loss and overwhelming emotional
29 response felt when learning about and experiencing the
30 catastrophic destruction of the environment due to climate
31 change; and



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WHEREAS, as an island state, Hawaii remains particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, thereby endangering the health, safety, and welfare of the people, warranting preemptive and protective action; and

WHEREAS, vector-borne diseases are expected to increase in Hawaii as invasive insect vectors reach the State, become more endemic in Hawaii's changing climate, and spread disease; and

WHEREAS, crop failure and food insecurity are expected to increase globally and in Hawaii as weather patterns and climatic systems become less stable and less favorable for current agricultural practices, reducing access to locally grown food and resulting in a shift to more inexpensive and processed foods that lead to poorer health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, water insecurity is expected to increase as changing climate patterns reduce the sustainable replenishment of Hawaii's groundwater aquifers and the aquifers' ability to meet the needs of the State's population; and

WHEREAS, the incidence of waterborne disease is expected to increase as sea level rise, heavy storms, and flooding events create more vectors for the spread of pathogens and the flooding of the State's outdated cesspools releases hazardous waste into aquifers, waterways, and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, extreme weather and heat events are expected to become more frequent and serious and damage public infrastructure, physical health, and mental health; and

WHEREAS, studies find that there is an increased incidence of aggression and violent crimes when temperature increases, with every one degree Celsius increase potentially causing a six percent increase in violent crime; and

WHEREAS, the mental health impacts of climate change are evident in the form of eco-grief and other detrimental mental health effects; and



1 WHEREAS, living through climate disasters can result in
2 trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, increases in
3 substance abuse and risky behavior, and detrimental mental
4 health effects from declining physical health, loss of social
5 support and employment, population migration, and community
6 change; and

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8 WHEREAS, air quality is expected to worsen as the number of
9 trade wind days in Hawaii decreases and pollen and mold
10 increase; and

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12 WHEREAS, Hawaii has already begun taking in many Pacific
13 Islanders who have experienced forced migration due to sea level
14 rise and the ecological degradation of their home islands, which
15 may increase the risk of conflict between communities due to the
16 rapid changes in population and cultural demographics; and

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18 WHEREAS, the public is vulnerable, as climate action is not
19 viewed as urgent because the public has not been informed of the
20 full spectrum of public health risks posed by the climate
21 crisis; now, therefore,

22
23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
24 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
25 Session of 2023, that the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and
26 Adaptation Commission is urged to develop a proactive and
27 comprehensive communication strategy to educate Hawaii's
28 residents about the health impacts of the climate crisis; and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawai'i Climate Change
31 Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is urged to use federal
32 Inflation Reduction Act funding and work with other state
33 agencies, local governments, and community organizations to
34 develop a public health engagement strategy that:

- 35
36 (1) Is led by Native Hawaiian communities and communities
37 most reliant on the natural environment;
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39 (2) Best communicates how the climate crisis will uniquely
40 affect public health in Hawaii;
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H.R. NO. 197

1 (3) Addresses eco-grief and aims to improve any adverse
 2 mental health responses experienced when people
 3 understand the severity of this public health crisis;
 4 and

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 6 (4) Aims to improve the mental health, public health, and
 7 resiliency of Hawaii's residents so that the public is
 8 informed and prepared to tackle the climate crisis;
 9 and

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 11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawai'i Climate Change
 12 Mitigation and Adaptation Commission is urged to submit a
 13 progress report to the Legislature, no later than twenty days
 14 prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2024, detailing
 15 actions taken, the most vulnerable communities, and the amount
 16 of funding necessary to improve its outreach and the
 17 effectiveness of its communication strategy in the future; and

18
 19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 20 Resolution be transmitted to the Co-Chairs of the Hawai'i Climate
 21 Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

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OFFERED BY: *Nicole E. Lowen*

MAR 10 2023

