
HOUSE 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,
8 canoe paddlers, surfers, snorkelers, boaters, divers, and stand-
9 up 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, additional suspected sources of pollution at Pokai
22 Bay include water runoff containing industrial pollutants washed
23 from local surface streets, parking lots, and sidewalks;
24 illegally moored boats; and petrochemical-based pollutants from
25 vehicular use of an adjacent boat ramp; and

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27 WHEREAS, historically, illegal dumping of dredging
28 materials and other substances has occurred at higher rates



1 along the Leeward Coast, including at Pokai Bay, than at other
2 locations on Oahu; and

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

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

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

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

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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
27 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
28 Session of 2023, the Senate concurring, that the Department of
29 Health is urged to prioritize testing and research of fecal
30 indicator bacteria levels and any other pollutants of the beach
31 sand at Pokai Bay; and

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



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 2024; and

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



MAR 10 2023

