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SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO TAKE ALL ACTION NECESSARY TO REQUIRE A WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT TO TEST SEWAGE SLUDGE AND ANY OTHER RESIDUAL MATERIAL FOR THE PRESENCE OF PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES.

1 WHEREAS, consuming produce contaminated with perfluoroalkyl
2 and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from reclaimed water and
3 sludge poses a range of health risks where regular testing and
4 monitoring at waste water treatment plants are crucial to
5 prevent PFAS exposure and protect public health; and

6
7 WHEREAS, the use of reclaimed water for landscape
8 irrigation, agricultural irrigation, industrial processes, and
9 other non-drinking water applications is subject to regulation
10 and approval by the Department of Health; and

11
12 WHEREAS, reclaimed water used for irrigation directly
13 impacts crops and soil, with contaminated reclaimed water
14 introducing PFAS into the food chain and adversely affecting
15 both the environment and human health when consumed; and

16
17 WHEREAS, PFAS can enter food chains and result in
18 biomagnification, affecting aquatic fauna, insects, amphibians,
19 fish, and seafood; and

20
21 WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities that sell
22 reclaimed water to agricultural farms for irrigation purposes
23 should be required to test the reclaimed water for the presence
24 of PFAS to ensure the safety of the reclaimed water and the
25 absence of harmful contaminants that can negatively impact human
26 health and the environment; and

27
28 WHEREAS, when utilizing reclaimed water for agricultural
29 practices, requiring regular testing will help identify
30 potential PFAS contamination and allow for appropriate
31 management and mitigation measures for the safety of consumers,
32 farmers, and the environment; and

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1 WHEREAS, despite the Department of Health and Honolulu
2 Board of Water Supply actively testing drinking water wells for
3 PFAS, "forever chemicals" have been detected in the State's
4 soil, groundwater, and drinking water, demonstrating the need
5 for water purveyors, the military, and other government agencies
6 to test for PFAS; and

7
8 WHEREAS, the United States Environmental Protection Agency
9 has proposed regulations that would require water utilities to
10 test for PFAS and limit their levels to very low amounts, and on
11 Oahu, the Department of Health has reported PFAS detections in
12 several communities' drinking water, including Kunia and Waipio,
13 where PFAS levels were detected far above what the federal
14 government considers safe; and

15
16 WHEREAS, the PFAS in Kunia's water likely came from five
17 United States Army installations in the immediate vicinity that
18 send their wastewater to the Schofield Barracks Wastewater
19 Treatment Plant, where one hundred percent of its reclaimed
20 water is reused for agricultural purposes, causing groundwater
21 and surface water contamination; and

22
23 WHEREAS, military wastewater treatment plants collect
24 wastewater from drains at military hangers and workshops, which
25 carry PFAS from engine cleaning, chrome plating, wire coating,
26 and releases from overhead fire suppression systems from routine
27 testing and frequent accidents into sewer drain systems; and

28
29 WHEREAS, leachate from landfills at military bases contain
30 PFAS, and the leachate is pumped to wastewater treatment plants
31 that treat wastewater for many chemicals but not PFAS; and

32
33 WHEREAS, in 2004, the United States Army sold the Schofield
34 Barracks Wastewater Treatment Plant to Aqua Engineers, the
35 State's largest reuse irrigation system, where its PFAS-
36 contaminated effluent-based reclaimed water and fertilizer are
37 sold below market rates for reuse on food crops, enabling PFAS
38 compounds to poison crops, contaminate groundwater and surface
39 water, and find pathways to human consumption through drinking
40 water, produce, and seafood consumption; and



1 WHEREAS, consuming produce grown with PFAS-contaminated
2 water or fertilized with PFAS-containing sludge contributes to
3 an increased risk of certain cancers, including prostate,
4 kidney, and testicular cancers; and

5
6 WHEREAS, consuming PFAS-contaminated crops exacerbates
7 health risks linked to liver disease, endocrine disruption, and
8 other serious health issues; and

9
10 WHEREAS, a pregnant woman consuming PFAS-contaminated
11 produce during critical fetal development stages can impact the
12 long-term health of the child by causing developmental delays,
13 low birth weight, accelerated puberty, and behavioral changes;
14 and

15
16 WHEREAS, consuming PFAS-contaminated food can affect
17 reproductive health by decreasing fertility and causing high
18 blood pressure in pregnant women; and

19
20 WHEREAS, consuming contaminated produce is likely to
21 introduce endocrine-disrupting PFAS chemicals that can harm
22 reproductive and immune systems; and

23
24 WHEREAS, sludge used as fertilizer containing PFAS and
25 other harmful substances, such as microplastics, heavy metals,
26 and endocrine-disrupting chemicals, contaminates the soil,
27 affects crop quality and safety, and harms aquatic ecosystems;
28 and

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30 WHEREAS, requiring monitoring for PFAS at wastewater
31 treatment plants through environmental regulations and public
32 health guidelines demonstrates responsible management of
33 wastewater facilities by the Department of Health; now,
34 therefore,

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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
37 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,
38 that the Department of Health is urged to take all action
39 necessary to require a wastewater treatment plant to test sewage
40 sludge and any other residual material for the presence of PFAS;
41 and
42



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
2 urged to adopt administrative rules for the safe disposal and
3 sequestration of sewage sludge and other residual material that
4 contain any amount of PFAS; and
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
7 urged to prohibit the issuance or renewal of permits if testing
8 yields PFAS in sewage sludge or other residual material on land
9 used for agronomic purposes, where drainage tiles have been
10 installed, that drains into the waters of the State, or in a
11 five hundred year floodplain; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor is urged to
14 support the Department of Health's action; and
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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
17 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and Director of
18 Health.
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OFFERED BY: 

