
SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
CONVENE AND PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE TO A
DESALINATION PLANNING TASK FORCE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE
USE OF DESALINATION FOR LARGE-SCALE WATER CONSUMPTION IN
THE STATE IS FEASIBLE.

1 WHEREAS, freshwater scarcity is an increasingly present
2 threat to communities around the world in the face of population
3 growth and climate change; and
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5 WHEREAS, freshwater is vital not only to the sustenance of
6 life in the State, but also its economy and culture, including
7 supporting agricultural production and tourism; and
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9 WHEREAS, islands like O'ahu rely on underground aquifers for
10 their freshwater supply; and
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12 WHEREAS, underground aquifers take decades to replenish
13 naturally and are susceptible to chemical spills and leaks,
14 draughts, and commercial overuse; and
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16 WHEREAS, a decrease of rainfall of eighteen percent over
17 the last thirty years, a population that has doubled since 1959,
18 constantly rising visitor levels, and the destruction of half of
19 its watershed forests have contributed to a freshwater crisis in
20 the State; and
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22 WHEREAS, desalination, the process of removing salt from
23 seawater, offers a promising solution to the freshwater scarcity
24 crisis; and
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26 WHEREAS, despite the abundance of seawater surrounding the
27 State and need for an alternative source of freshwater,
28 desalination can be cost-prohibitive and energy-intensive,
29 necessitating a thorough examination of whether it is the
30 solution best suited to the State's needs; now, therefore,
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1 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
2 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
3 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested
4 to convene and provide administrative assistance to a
5 Desalination Planning Task Force to determine whether the use of
6 desalination for large-scale water consumption in the State is
7 feasible; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to
10 consist of the following members:

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- 12 (1) The Chairperson of the Commission on Water Resource
13 Management or the Chairperson's designee, who shall
14 serve as Chair of the Task Force;
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 - 16 (2) The Director of Health or the Director's designee;
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 - 18 (3) The Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture or the
19 Chairperson's designee;
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 - 21 (4) The Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian
22 Affairs or the Chief Executive Officer's designee;
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 - 24 (5) The Chairs of the Senate and House of Representatives
25 Standing Committees on Water and Land or their
26 designees; and
 - 27
 - 28 (6) The Director or Manager and Chief Engineer of each
29 county's Department or Board of Water Supply; and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to:

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- 33 (1) Conduct a study to determine the water demand for
34 housing, agriculture, and industrial uses throughout
35 the State, including in high-need areas;
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 - 37 (2) Examine the feasibility of using desalination as a
38 source of clean and safe drinking water to supplement
39 the State's existing groundwater and surface water
40 resources;
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- 1 (3) Determine the extent to which the use of desalination
- 2 will:
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- 4 (A) Assist the State in meeting its projected future
- 5 water needs; and
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- 7 (B) Improve the resiliency of the State's water
- 8 systems, considering in particular the impacts of
- 9 the water crisis caused by the contamination at
- 10 the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility;
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- 12 (4) Determine whether it is feasible for the Commission on
- 13 Water Resource Management to integrate desalination
- 14 into its overall water management plans;
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- 16 (5) Consider the extent to which the construction of
- 17 desalination plants may affect or interfere with
- 18 historical sites and Native Hawaiian cultural sites
- 19 and practices, including burial sites; and
- 20
- 21 (6) Address environmental concerns associated with the
- 22 operation of desalination plants, including high
- 23 energy consumption and disposal of brine concentrate;
- 24 and
- 25

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to

27 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including

28 any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than

29 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of

30 2026; and

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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to

33 dissolve on June 30, 2026; and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this

36 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the Senate,

37 Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chairperson of the

38 Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director of Health,

39 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Chief Executive Officer

40 of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Mayors of each county.

