

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH CENTER TO TAKE ALL ACTION NECESSARY TO INCENTIVIZE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS TO TEST SEWAGE SLUDGE, RECLAIMED WATER, AND ANY OTHER RESIDUAL MATERIAL FOR THE PRESENCE OF PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES.

1 WHEREAS, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances
2 (PFAS) are a large category of pollutants known as "forever
3 chemicals" because they do not degrade; and
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5 WHEREAS, some PFAS chemicals have been found to pose a wide
6 range of health risks, even at very low dosages; and
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8 WHEREAS, PFAS have been found in wastewater treatment plant
9 sludge (biosolids) and reclaimed water in the State; and
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11 WHEREAS, PFAS-contaminated biosolids used as fertilizer and
12 reclaimed water used for irrigation may directly impact crops
13 and soil by introducing PFAS into the food chain and adversely
14 affecting both the environment and human health when consumed;
15 and
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17 WHEREAS, consuming PFAS-contaminated produce may pose a
18 wide range of health risks, including prostate, kidney, and
19 testicular cancers, liver disease, endocrine disruption, and
20 other serious health issues; and
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22 WHEREAS, consuming PFAS-contaminated produce can harm
23 reproductive and immune systems and affect reproductive health
24 by decreasing fertility and causing high blood pressure in
25 pregnant women; and
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27 WHEREAS, a pregnant woman consuming PFAS-contaminated
28 produce during critical fetal development stages can impact the
29 long-term health of the child by causing developmental delays,
30 low birth weight, accelerated puberty, and behavioral changes;
31 and
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1 WHEREAS, biosolids used as fertilizer that contain PFAS and
2 other harmful substances can affect crop quality and safety, and
3 harm aquatic ecosystems; and
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5 WHEREAS, PFAS can enter food chains and result in
6 biomagnification, affecting aquatic fauna, insects, amphibians,
7 fish, and seafood; and
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9 WHEREAS, regular testing and monitoring at wastewater
10 treatment plants is necessary to mitigate land application of
11 biosolids or reclaimed water containing PFAS and to prevent PFAS
12 exposure and protect public health; and
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14 WHEREAS, the production of biosolids and reclaimed water
15 for landscape irrigation, agricultural irrigation, industrial
16 processes, and other non-drinking water applications is subject
17 to regulation and approval by the Department of Health; and
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19 WHEREAS, wastewater treatment facilities that sell or
20 supply biosolids or reclaimed water to agricultural farms for
21 fertilization or irrigation should be required to test the
22 biosolids and reclaimed water for the presence of PFAS and allow
23 for appropriate management and mitigation measures for the
24 safety of consumers, farmers, and the environment; and
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26 WHEREAS, despite the Department of Health and Honolulu
27 Board of Water Supply's active testing of drinking water wells
28 for PFAS, forever chemicals have been detected in the State's
29 soil, groundwater, and drinking water, demonstrating the need
30 for water purveyors, the military, and other government agencies
31 to test for PFAS; and
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33 WHEREAS, in April 2024, the United States Environmental
34 Protection Agency finalized rules that will require public water
35 systems to monitor for some PFAS and take action if levels
36 exceed maximum contaminant levels, and on Oahu, the Department
37 of Health has reported the detection of PFAS in several
38 communities' drinking water, including Kunia and Waipio, where
39 PFAS levels were detected far above what the federal government
40 considers safe; and
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1 WHEREAS, requiring monitoring for PFAS at wastewater
 2 treatment plants consistent with environmental regulations and
 3 public health guidelines demonstrates responsible management of
 4 wastewater facilities by the Department of Health; now,
 5 therefore,

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 7 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
 8 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
 9 that the Department of Health and University of Hawaii Water
 10 Resources Research Center are urged to take all action
 11 necessary, within their respective authorities and expertise, to
 12 incentivize wastewater treatment plants in the State to test
 13 sewage sludge, reclaimed water, and any other residual material
 14 for the presence of PFAS; and

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 16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
 17 urged to adopt administrative rules for the safe disposal and
 18 sequestration of sewage sludge, reclaimed water, and other
 19 residual material that contain any amount of PFAS; and

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 21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
 22 urged to prohibit the issuance or renewal of permits for the use
 23 of sewage sludge, reclaimed water, or other residual material on
 24 land used for agronomic purposes, where drainage tiles have been
 25 installed, that drains into the waters of the State, or in a
 26 five-hundred-year floodplain if testing yields any amount of
 27 PFAS; and

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 29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor is urged to
 30 support the Department of Health's actions; and

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 32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 33 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Health,
 34 and Director of the University of Hawaii Water Resources
 35 Research Center.

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 OFFERED BY: 

