

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

DECLARING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE
AND REQUESTING STATEWIDE COORDINATION TO IDENTIFY, PLAN
FOR, AND CREATE CROSS-SECTOR SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN
HAWAII'S PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

1 WHEREAS, humanity's runaway greenhouse gas emissions have
2 contributed to accelerated climate change, characterized by
3 rising global temperatures, sea level rise, ecological collapse,
4 and the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather
5 events; and

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7 WHEREAS, as stated in House Concurrent Resolution No. 192
8 (2023), scientific consensus indicates public health will be
9 impacted because climate change will increase the incidence of
10 increased heat, vector-borne diseases, crop failure and food
11 insecurity, water insecurity, waterborne diseases, extreme
12 weather events, air pollution, and adverse mental health impacts
13 due to these climate stressors and collective eco-grief, which
14 refers to the deep sense of loss and overwhelming emotional
15 response felt when learning about and experiencing the
16 catastrophic destruction of the environment due to climate
17 change; and

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19 WHEREAS, climate change adversely impacts the social
20 determinants of health, which include food security, economic
21 stability, strong social and community support networks, healthy
22 environments, and access to quality health care and emergency
23 services; and

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25 WHEREAS, as an island state, Hawaii remains particularly
26 vulnerable to the effects of climate change, thereby endangering
27 the health, safety, and welfare of its residents, warranting
28 preemptive and protective action; and

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30 WHEREAS, climate change and health impacts are not limited
31 to the responses of Department of Health, but transcend
32 traditionally siloed approaches to state administration and
33 impact all departments including those that oversee land, water,
34 agriculture, transportation, and emergency services; and



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WHEREAS, Hawaii established itself as a national leader in adapting to the climate crisis by becoming the first state in the United States to declare a climate emergency through Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 44 (2021), which recognized that climate change threatens the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 44 (2021) called for statewide commitment and mobilization of resources to a just transition to a decarbonized economy and facilitation of investments in beneficial projects and infrastructure, but did not declare a public health emergency nor call for the mobilization of resources necessary to adapt and protect human health in Hawaii from the severe threat of climate change; and

WHEREAS, leading scientific and medical authorities, including the United Nations, World Health Organization, and American Public Health Association, have identified climate change as a major public health crisis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025, that this body acknowledges that climate change poses a dire threat to public health, declares a public health emergency in the State, and requests entities statewide to actively examine how the climate considerations within their departments impact human health and coordinate with other departments to identify, plan for, and create cross-sector solutions to strengthen Hawaii's public health response to the climate crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Attorney General; Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development; Director of Health; Director of Transportation; Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; and mayors of the City and County of Honolulu and counties of Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii.

OFFERED BY:

