

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
ESTABLISH 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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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
33 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
34 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested



1 to convene and provide administrative assistance to a
2 Desalination Planning Task Force to determine whether the use of
3 desalination for large-scale water consumption in the State is
4 feasible; and

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

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

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30 (1) Conduct a study to determine the water demand for
31 housing, agriculture, and industrial uses throughout
32 the State, including in high-need areas;
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34 (2) Examine the feasibility of using desalination as a
35 source of clean and safe drinking water to supplement
36 the State's existing groundwater and surface water
37 resources;
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39 (3) Determine the extent to which the use of desalination
40 will:
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(A) Assist the State in meeting its projected future water needs; and

(B) Improve the resiliency of the State's water systems, considering in particular the impacts of the water crisis caused by the contamination at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility;

(4) Determine whether it is feasible for the Commission on Water Resource Management to integrate desalination into its overall water management plans;

(5) Consider the extent to which the construction of desalination plants may affect or interfere with historical sites and Native Hawaiian cultural sites and practices, including burial sites; and

(6) Address environmental concerns associated with the operation of desalination plants, including high energy consumption and disposal of brine concentrate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to dissolve on June 30, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director of Health, Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Chief Executive Officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Mayors of each county.

OFFERED BY:


