
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

AFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS
THAT INCREASE TREE CANOPY COVERAGE AND INSTALL SHADE TREES
IN URBAN AREAS TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF URBAN HEAT
ISLANDS ACROSS THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, an urban heat island effect occurs when built
2 environments with extensive pavement, rooftops, and other heat-
3 absorbing materials experience significantly higher temperatures
4 than surrounding areas; and

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6 WHEREAS, the effects of urban heat islands are already
7 being felt across the State, increasing heat exposure and the
8 risk of heat-related illness among residents; and

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10 WHEREAS, a tree canopy refers to the leaves, branches, and
11 stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above, and
12 provide shade below; and

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14 WHEREAS, children, kupuna, individuals with preexisting
15 medical conditions, and residents of low-canopy and lower-income
16 neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to extreme heat and
17 face heightened risks of heat-related illness; and

18
19 WHEREAS, shade trees mitigate the effects of urban heat
20 islands by lowering ambient and surface temperatures and
21 providing cooling through shade and evapotranspiration; and

22
23 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu's Urban Tree Plan
24 guides local efforts to expand the urban tree canopy as a
25 critical means to mitigate urban heat and improve public health,
26 including achieving its goal of increasing the urban tree canopy
27 to thirty-five percent by 2035; and

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29 WHEREAS, recent urban tree canopy assessments documented a
30 decline in tree canopy coverage in Honolulu and identified



1 disparities in canopy coverage among communities with differing
2 socioeconomic levels; and

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4 WHEREAS, statewide programs, such as the Kaulunani Urban
5 and Community Forestry Program and the Shade Trees for Schools
6 initiative, demonstrate successful models for expanding tree
7 canopy coverage and shade through coordinated public investment
8 and community partnerships; and

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10 WHEREAS, urban tree canopy programs provide multiple co-
11 benefits, including improved air quality, reduced stormwater
12 runoff, lower energy costs, enhanced biodiversity, and better
13 mental and physical health outcomes; and

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15 WHEREAS, collaboration across state and county agencies is
16 necessary to maximize the effectiveness and equitability of
17 shade tree and urban canopy strategies across the State; now,
18 therefore,

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20 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
21 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
22 of 2026, the Senate concurring, that this body affirms its
23 support for expanding programs and projects that increase tree
24 canopy coverage and install shade trees in urban areas to
25 mitigate the effects of urban heat islands throughout the State;
26 and

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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state and county agencies are
29 requested to collaborate on efforts to advance urban tree canopy
30 programs and projects, including by assessing:

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- 32 (1) The distribution of urban heat island conditions,
33 existing tree canopy coverage, trends in canopy loss
34 or gain, and disparities in canopy access across the
35 State;
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 - 37 (2) Priority areas with high heat exposure and low tree
38 canopy coverage;
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 - 40 (3) Opportunities for integrating shade tree strategies
41 into capital improvement projects, housing



H.C.R. NO. 103

- 1 development, transit-oriented development, and climate
- 2 resilience planning;
- 3
- 4 (4) Strategies for coordinating with community
- 5 organizations, schools, and the private sector;
- 6
- 7 (5) Best practices for tree species selection, soil
- 8 volume, irrigation, maintenance, and long-term canopy
- 9 health; and
- 10
- 11 (6) Statewide urban tree canopy standards and targets; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
14 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chair of
15 the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director of the Office
16 of Planning and Sustainable Development, and the Mayors of each
17 county.

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OFFERED BY:



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