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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HAWAI'I WATER  
SAFETY COALITION'S HAWAI'I WATER SAFETY PLAN.

1           WHEREAS, the State is in the midst of a drowning crisis,  
2 ranking second behind Alaska in the number of annual drowning  
3 fatalities per one million residents; and  
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5           WHEREAS, drowning is the leading cause of death for  
6 children in the State between ages one and fifteen, with twenty-  
7 six children lost between 2019 and 2023; and  
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9           WHEREAS, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders comprise  
10 approximately twenty-seven percent of the State's population but  
11 thirty-six percent of drowning deaths, reflecting significant  
12 inequities in access to swimming education and water safety  
13 resources; and  
14

15           WHEREAS, visitors make up less than fifteen percent of the  
16 State's average daily population but comprise the majority of  
17 drowning victims, with snorkeling accounting for ninety-one  
18 percent of visitor ocean drownings; and  
19

20           WHEREAS, drowning incidents involving visitors threaten  
21 both the State's public health and its more than \$20 billion  
22 tourism economy; and  
23

24           WHEREAS, drowning is the leading cause of injury-related  
25 visitor deaths in the State; and  
26

27           WHEREAS, non-fatal drownings, which occur at more than  
28 twice the rate of fatal drownings, often result in permanent  
29 brain damage and lifelong impacts for families; and  
30

31           WHEREAS, the Hawai'i Water Safety Coalition (HWSC), formed  
32 in 2023 and now under the umbrella of the Hawaiian Lifeguard  
33 Association, has developed the Hawai'i Water Safety Plan (HWSP)



1 as a comprehensive, evidenced-informed strategy aligned with the  
2 United States National Water Safety Action Plan and  
3 international best practices; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, the HWSP emphasizes the values of pono, laulima,  
6 kuleana, mālama, and kākou, which mean doing the right thing,  
7 cooperation, responsibility, care, and inclusion, respectively;  
8 and  
9

10 WHEREAS, the HWSP calls for urgent action, including the  
11 following:  
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- 13 (1) Establishing the HWSC as the centralized authority for  
14 water safety and drowning prevention;  
15
- 16 (2) Expanding funding for the Department of Health to  
17 prioritize drowning prevention, fill vacant staff  
18 positions, and improve data collection;  
19
- 20 (3) Requiring warning signage, fencing, and safety  
21 equipment at pools and at flood control structures,  
22 such as retention and detention ponds, reservoirs, and  
23 dams;  
24
- 25 (4) Supporting lifeguard services, junior lifeguard  
26 programs, and culturally competent water safety  
27 education statewide;  
28
- 29 (5) Supporting free water safety competency and swimming  
30 lessons for all children in the State;  
31
- 32 (6) Addressing inequities by building and maintaining  
33 public pools in underserved communities and  
34 integrating swim lessons into school curricula;  
35
- 36 (7) Reconvening the Department of Land and Natural  
37 Resources' task force on beach and water safety  
38 established by Act 190, Session Laws of Hawaii 1996;  
39
- 40 (8) Ensuring that all public and private pools in the  
41 State comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and  
42 Spa Safety Act, which mandates anti-entrapment drain



1 covers and other safety measures to prevent suction-  
2 related drowning incidents; and

- 3  
4 (9) Encouraging the use of the Centers for Disease Control  
5 and Prevention's Model Aquatic Health Code as a  
6 resource and guide when creating, revising, or  
7 updating state and local aquatic program regulations,  
8 guidance, and policy; and  
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10 WHEREAS, the HWSC was honored with the Safe Kids Champion  
11 for Children Award at the Safe Kids Worldwide International  
12 Childhood Injury Prevention Convention in 2025 for its  
13 outstanding contributions toward preventing childhood injuries;  
14 and  
15

16 WHEREAS, the Safe Kids Champion for Children Award  
17 recognizes organizations that have made a significant impact in  
18 child injury prevention, and HWSC was selected among more than  
19 twenty honorees for its leadership in addressing drowning  
20 through a plan grounded in Hawaiian culture and data-driven  
21 strategies; now, therefore,  
22

23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
24 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
25 of 2026, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature supports  
26 the findings and recommendations of the Hawai'i Water Safety  
27 Coalition's Hawai'i Water Safety Plan; and  
28

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor, Department of  
30 Health, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Department of  
31 Education, Hawaii Tourism Authority, and counties are urged to  
32 collaborate with the Hawai'i Water Safety Coalition to implement  
33 the Hawai'i Water Safety Plan; and  
34

35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
36 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director  
37 of Health, Superintendent of Education, Chairperson of the Board  
38 of Land and Natural Resources, President and Chief Executive  
39 Officer of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Mayor of each county,



# H.C.R. NO. 155

1 President of the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association, and Coordinator  
2 of the Hawai'i Water Safety Coalition.

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OFFERED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer", is written over a horizontal line.

MAR 16 2026

