

MAR 16 2026

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# SENATE 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

9  
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

13  
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

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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

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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 Senate of the Thirty-third  
21 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the  
22 House of Representatives 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



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- 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: Mike Gabband

