

MAR 1 6 2026

SENATE 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
31 disparities in canopy coverage among communities with differing
32 socioeconomic levels; and



1 WHEREAS, statewide programs, such as the Kaulunani Urban
2 and Community Forestry Program and the Shade Trees for Schools
3 initiative, demonstrate successful models for expanding tree
4 canopy coverage and shade through coordinated public investment
5 and community partnerships; and
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7 WHEREAS, urban tree canopy programs provide multiple co-
8 benefits, including improved air quality, reduced stormwater
9 runoff, lower energy costs, enhanced biodiversity, and better
10 mental and physical health outcomes; and
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12 WHEREAS, collaboration across state and county agencies is
13 necessary to maximize the effectiveness and equitability of
14 shade tree and urban canopy strategies across the State; now,
15 therefore,
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17 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
18 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
19 that this body affirms its support for expanding programs and
20 projects that increase tree canopy coverage and install shade
21 trees in urban areas to mitigate the effects of urban heat
22 islands throughout the State; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state and county agencies are
25 requested to collaborate on efforts to advance urban tree canopy
26 programs and projects, including by assessing:
27

- 28 (1) The distribution of urban heat island conditions,
29 existing tree canopy coverage, trends in canopy loss
30 or gain, and disparities in canopy access across the
31 State;
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- 33 (2) Priority areas with high heat exposure and low tree
34 canopy coverage;
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- 36 (3) Opportunities for integrating shade tree strategies
37 into capital improvement projects, housing
38 development, transit-oriented development, and climate
39 resilience planning;
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- 41 (4) Strategies for coordinating with community
42 organizations, schools, and the private sector;



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2 (5) Best practices for tree species selection, soil
3 volume, irrigation, maintenance, and long-term canopy
4 health; and
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6 (6) Statewide urban tree canopy standards and targets; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
9 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chair of the Board of
10 Land and Natural Resources, Director of the Office of Planning
11 and Sustainable Development, and the Mayors of each county.
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OFFERED BY: Mike Hubbard

