

MAR 16 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO COLLABORATE TO ESTABLISH A
FORMAL, LONG-TERM COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM TO EXPAND,
EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTE, AND SUSTAIN TREE-CANOPY COVERAGE
ACROSS PUBLIC SCHOOLS STATE WIDE.

1 WHEREAS, increasing heat in Hawaii threatens student health
2 and limits outdoor-learning and recreational opportunities
3 across public schools statewide; and
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5 WHEREAS, only twenty-one percent of elementary schools
6 currently meet the recommended thirty-percent tree-canopy
7 coverage needed to provide adequate shade and cooling; and
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9 WHEREAS, Title I schools and schools that serve lower-
10 income communities often have less tree-canopy coverage and
11 suffer from higher heat exposure, raising significant concerns
12 about equity; and
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14 WHEREAS, in addition to lowering the temperature on school
15 campuses through shade, transpiration, and reduction of the
16 heat-island effect, trees also absorb storm water, clean the
17 air, beautify spaces, and help achieve state and county
18 environmental goals; and
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20 WHEREAS, there are twenty-nine agricultural or natural-
21 resource programs on Department of Education campuses statewide,
22 where tree propagation, planting, and care offer relevant
23 educational opportunities for students; and
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25 WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources,
26 through its Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program,
27 successfully partnered with the Department of Education under a
28 2025 Memorandum of Agreement to implement the Shade Trees for
29 Schools initiative and successfully partnered in 2024 in a Fruit



1 Trees for Schools pilot program initiative on campuses with
2 agricultural programs; and

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4 WHEREAS, these efforts demonstrate strong demand and
5 measurable benefits but have been tied to specific short-term
6 funding opportunities; now, therefore,

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8 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
9 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
10 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Department
11 of Education are requested to establish a formal, long-term
12 collaborative program to expand, equitably distribute, and
13 sustain tree-canopy coverage across public schools statewide;
14 and

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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the program is requested to
17 incorporate and plan for the long-term maintenance of the trees
18 and the selection of species and locations that would ensure
19 durable climate, health, and educational benefits for Hawaii's
20 students; and

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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body supports the creation
23 of staff positions to implement and sustain the work of this
24 formal, long-term collaborative program; and

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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
27 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
28 Land and Natural Resources and Superintendent of Education.

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31 OFFERED BY: 

