HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH TO FORM A WORK GROUP TO EXPLORE THE NEED TO BAN OR BETTER LABEL PRODUCTS CONTAINING THE ARTIFICIAL SWEETENER ASPARTAME.

WHEREAS, discovered in 1965, aspartame was first approved in the United States in 1981 and is one of the most widely used artificial sweeteners; and

WHEREAS, when metabolized by the body, aspartame is broken down into two common amino acids, aspartic acid and phenylalanine, and a small amount of a third substance, methanol; and

WHEREAS, these three substances occur in similar or greater amounts in common foods; and

WHEREAS, aspartame continues to be the subject of strong public controversy regarding its safety; and

WHEREAS, some studies have recommended further investigation into the possible connection between aspartame and diseases such as brain tumors, brain lesions, and lymphoma; and

WHEREAS, some human and animal studies have found adverse effects and some have found no adverse effects; and

WHEREAS, while there have been a number of studies on the effects of aspartame on people, there is a great deal of argument by both proponents and opponents on the methods used in the testing and whether accurate representations of the consequences of average consumption by people have been achieved by these studies; and

WHEREAS, the Internet has become a tool for many to spread and promote the opinion they adhere to as fact whether it is
that aspartame is a neurotoxin derived from toxic sludge or it is a harmless product enabling a healthy lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, while many may find that the simple answer to the problem is to not purchase or use any product containing aspartame in it, there are those who maintain that some products do not specifically list aspartame as an ingredient, rather it is hidden under the label of "natural flavors"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Director of Health is requested to form a work group to explore the need to ban or improve labeling for products containing the artificial sweetener aspartame; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the members of the work group should include:

1. One member from the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

2. One member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;

3. The Director of Health or the director's designee;

4. The President of the Calorie Control Council or the President's designee; and

5. The President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Beverage Association or a designee;

6. The President of the Hawaii Society of Naturopathic Physicians or a designee;

7. The Founder of Mission Possible International or a designee; and

8. Two consumers appointed by the Director of Health; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the work group is requested to submit a report of its findings, as well as any suggested legislation, to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2010; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health, President of the Calorie Control Council, President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Beverage Association, President of the Hawaii Society of Naturopathic Physicians, and Founder of Mission Possible International.

OFFERED BY:  

[Signature]

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