155

THE SENATE
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 2017
STATE OF HAWAII

S.C.R. NO. 155 S.D. 1

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING A SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGE SURCHARGE PROGRAM TO FUND PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS IN THE STATE.

WHEREAS, the prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay in Hawaii has increased dramatically over the past decade, and obesity-related medical expenditures in Hawaii were calculated to be over $470,000,000 in 2009 and are continuing to increase; and

WHEREAS, there is overwhelming evidence of the link between obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay and the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, including soft drinks, energy drinks, sweet teas, and sports drinks; and

WHEREAS, according to nutritional experts, sugar-sweetened beverages offer little or no nutritional value, but contain massive quantities of added sugars; and

WHEREAS, a twenty-ounce bottle of soda contains the equivalent of approximately sixteen teaspoons of sugar, yet the American Heart Association recommends that Americans consume no more than five to nine teaspoons of sugar per day; and

WHEREAS, research shows that almost half of the extra calories Americans consume in their diet comes from sugar-sweetened beverages, with the average American drinking nearly fifty gallons of sugar-sweetened beverages a year, the equivalent of thirty-nine pounds of extra sugar every year; and

WHEREAS, sugar is the primary and necessary factor in the development of tooth decay; and

WHEREAS, in addition to sugar, the acids found in beverages like soda, energy drinks, and juice erode tooth enamel, making
sugar-sweetened beverage consumption one of the most significant contributors to dental caries in children; and

WHEREAS, children from families of low socioeconomic status have a significantly higher consumption of soda and other types of sugar-sweetened beverages; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2012 Rethink Your Drink Adolescent post-test survey, adolescents in Hawaii drink an average of 8.6 cans, glasses, or bottles of sugar-sweetened beverages per week, and nearly all boys (ninety-four percent) and girls (ninety-three percent) consumed at least one serving of a sugar-sweetened beverage in the past week; and

WHEREAS, experiences in state after state demonstrate that higher cigarette taxes are one of the most effective ways to reduce smoking among both youth and adults, as studies have demonstrated that increasing the price of cigarettes directly impacts consumer behavior by reducing consumption, and this impact may be transferable to sugar-sweetened beverages; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2017, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Auditor is requested to conduct a study on the benefits of establishing a 1-cent per fluid ounce surcharge on the sale of sugar-sweetened beverages sold by distributors to retailers to fund public health programs in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include information on net operating costs and expected generated revenue that can benefit public health programs in obesity, diabetes, and oral health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study examine the collection of fees for a sugar-sweetened beverage surcharge program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by July 1, 2017, the Department of Health is requested to share specific data on the present
system of fee collection to the Auditor to facilitate the study
and allow for completion of the study in a timely manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including
any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than
twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
2018; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor, Director of
Health, and Director of Human Services.