SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, due to Hawaii's high cost of living and food prices, many low-income individuals and families struggle to purchase food; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a crucial means of providing necessary assistance in the purchase of food for some of Hawaii's most disadvantaged citizens; and

WHEREAS, in October 2015, 182,226 people in Hawaii participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is 7.2 percent less than the number of people who participated in October 2014; and

WHEREAS, while Hawaii secures over $500,000,000 annually in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funds, a 2012 report by the United States Department of Agriculture ranked Hawaii above only Nevada, California, and Wyoming in the percentage of eligible individuals who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS, individuals who receive assistance through the state Medicaid program are likely eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, since eligibility for both programs is based on income; and

WHEREAS, in October 2015, 341,829 people in Hawaii were enrolled in Medicaid, which means 159,603 people who were enrolled in Medicaid were likely eligible to participate, but
did not participate, in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS, if additional eligible individuals in Hawaii participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the State could receive an estimated $247,000,000 in additional federal funding, which could ultimately be injected into the economy without negatively impacting the state budget; and

WHEREAS, Moody's Analytics estimates that for every $1 given in supplemental nutrition assistance program funds, $1.70 can be generated in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, many individuals who are eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program do not participate because they are unaware of their eligibility or of the program's existence; 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 management audit of the State of Hawaii Department of Human Services' implementation of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as a component of the audit, the Auditor is requested to examine the Department of Human Services' process for identifying and enrolling qualified persons in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in light of the fact that the State of Hawaii has the nation's fourth-lowest participation rate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program among individuals who qualify for the program, the Auditor is requested to identify ways to increase program participation among qualified individuals in Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to examine the total utilization and total capacity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the State; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to examine ways to maximize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program in the State; and

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

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