REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO HIRE A STATE VETERINARY
MEDICAL OFFICER TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF RAT LUNGWORM
DISEASE AND OTHER ZOONOTIC DISEASES IN THE STATE'S HUMAN
POPULATION AND TO SUPPORT STATEWIDE EFFORTS IN PROTECTING
AND IMPROVING HUMAN HEALTH.

WHEREAS, zoonotic diseases are caused by infection from
viruses, bacteria, parasites, or fungi and can be transmitted
directly or indirectly to humans by consumption of contaminated
foodstuffs or contact with infected animals; and

WHEREAS, zoonotic diseases can cause illness of varying
severity or even death in people; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
reports that zoonotic diseases are very common and every year
tens of thousands of Americans will get sick from them; and

WHEREAS, leptospirosis, E. coli infection, methicillin-
resistant staphylococcus aureus infection, ringworm,
toxoplasmosis, salmonella infection, tuberculosis, H1N1 and H3N2
influenza virus, also known as bird flu or swine flu,
brucellosis caused by Brucella suis, and angiostrongyliasi

cantonensis, more commonly known as rat lungworm disease, are
examples of zoonotic diseases; and

WHEREAS, zoonotic diseases are very well understood and
studied by veterinarians; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that in the past, the
Department of Health had a Public Health Veterinarian position
that was filled by a doctor of veterinary medicine; and
WHEREAS, David Sasaki, doctor of veterinary medicine and a
world expert on leptospirosis, filled that position, and also
oversaw the production of public health publications that were
distributed to Hawaii physicians and veterinarians; and

WHEREAS, those publications were well received and helped
educate physicians about disease reporting requirements, the
prevalence of a number of diseases in the State, and the
appropriate treatment for the diseases; and

WHEREAS, while the publications provided vital information
on specific topics such as resistance to antibiotics of common
venereal diseases such as gonorrhea, the publications also
provided a deeper understanding of the risk of animal diseases
to humans; and

WHEREAS, most health departments across the nation have a
position filled by a doctor of veterinary medicine that is
usually designated as a public health veterinarian; and

WHEREAS, establishing a State Veterinary Medical Officer
position within the Department of Health may help to prevent the
spread of rat lungworm disease and other zoonotic diseases in
the State's human population and support statewide efforts to
protect and improve human health; and

WHEREAS, a State Veterinary Medical Officer could also
revive public health publications and disseminate the
publications in electronic form, as well as couple the
publications with continuing medical education for physicians,
nurses, and veterinarians to help ensure that the State's health
care workforce is continually updated on the latest information
on zoonotic diseases; and

WHEREAS, a State Veterinary Medical Officer may also help
address the current outbreak of rat lungworm disease in humans,
dogs, cats, and horses in the State; and

WHEREAS, global warming contributes to the increase of the
number and types of viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi that
are spread between animals and humans, which makes early
detection and study of these vectors and the illnesses they
cause imperative to protect public health; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
of 2018, that the Department of Health is requested to hire a
State Veterinary Medical Officer to help prevent the spread of
rat lungworm disease and other zoonotic diseases in the State's
human population and support statewide efforts to protect and
improve human health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health.

OFFERED BY:

[Signatures]

MAR 09 2018