
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DIVISION OF STATE PARKS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO ASSESS POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS OCEAN CONDITIONS AT BEACH PARKS AND ENSURE THAT SAFETY CONCERNS ARE ADDRESSED PRIOR TO UNDERTAKING ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS THAT WILL INCREASE USE, AND TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS AT STATE BEACH PARKS ON THE DIVISION'S WEBSITE AND IN ITS PRINTED MATERIALS.

1 WHEREAS, the Division of State Parks of the Department of
2 Land and Natural Resources is tasked with the management,
3 maintenance, and development of park facilities, including beach
4 parks; and

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6 WHEREAS, beach park improvements such as paved access
7 roads, restrooms, showers, and picnic tables tend to greatly
8 increase the use of those parks, particularly by visitors who
9 are less likely to go to remote beaches that are not easily
10 accessible and have no amenities; and

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12 WHEREAS, improvements were made in 2005 at Kua Bay in North
13 Kona on the Island of Hawaii, and these improvements have led to
14 greatly increased use of this beach, particularly by visitors
15 who are inexperienced with the ocean; and

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17 WHEREAS, although it is common knowledge among local
18 residents that Kua Bay can experience rip tides, strong
19 currents, rough shore break, and generally dangerous conditions,
20 the environmental impact statement for the access road and other
21 improvements to Kua Bay did not include any consideration of
22 potentially hazardous ocean conditions; and

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24 WHEREAS, the Division of State Parks website describes
25 Hapuna Beach as having "dangerous rip currents and pounding
26 shore breaks during periods of high surf. Waves over 3 feet
27 high are for experts--all others should stay out of the water
28 and out of the shoreline", but describes Kua Bay as "a section



1 at the north end of the park that has been developed with a
2 paved access road, parking lot, and comfort station with an
3 outdoor shower", with no mention of the frequent rough and
4 dangerous conditions at Kua Bay; and

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6 WHEREAS, there have been three drownings and twenty-eight
7 emergency calls from the Kua Bay area since 2013, as well as
8 seven spinal cord injuries between 2009 and 2013; and

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10 WHEREAS, drownings at state beach parks accounted for five
11 percent of the total fatal injuries in Hawaii for residents and
12 forty-nine percent of the fatal injuries for non-residents
13 between 2010 and 2014; and

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15 WHEREAS, conducting a thorough assessment of potential
16 hazards before making remote beaches more accessible could
17 provide insight that would save lives; and

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19 WHEREAS, these safety assessments should include input from
20 residents who can provide local knowledge about potential
21 hazards, information regarding the distance from hospitals, as
22 well as medical data from emergency medical services to advise
23 the Division of State Parks regarding high-risk locations and
24 past incidents; and

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26 WHEREAS, a safety assessment of a location should also
27 include a recommendation of whether a lifeguard is necessary
28 there, whether access should be improved if a lifeguard cannot
29 be stationed there, and whether improved access is not
30 advisable; now, therefore,

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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
33 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
34 of 2018, that the Division of State Parks of the Department of
35 Land and Natural Resources is urged to conduct an assessment of
36 potentially hazardous ocean conditions at beach parks prior to
37 undertaking access improvements that will increase use, and to
38 provide information about potentially hazardous conditions at
39 state beach parks on the Division's website and in its printed
40 materials; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 2 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
 3 Land and Natural Resources and the Administrator of the Division
 4 of State Parks.
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OFFERED BY:

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