
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PRIORITIZE THE TESTING AND RESEARCHING OF THE FECAL INDICATOR BACTERIA LEVELS AND ANY OTHER POLLUTANTS OF THE BEACH SAND AT POKAI BAY ON OAHU'S LEEWARD COAST.

1 WHEREAS, Pokai Bay is one of the most-visited ocean areas
2 on Oahu's Leeward Coast because of its wide sandy beach and
3 relatively calm waters; and
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5 WHEREAS, because it is protected by an offshore breakwater,
6 Pokai Bay maintains calm conditions year-round, which makes it
7 an ideal location for many ocean users, including swimmers,
8 canoe paddlers, surfers, snorkelers, boaters, divers, and stand-
9 up paddlers; and
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11 WHEREAS, despite Pokai Bay's pristine appearance of
12 crystal-blue waters and white sand, it is sadly the site of
13 pollution from multiple sources, including runoff from
14 surrounding surfaces, illegal dumping, and user-induced
15 contaminants; and
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17 WHEREAS, over the last decade, beach users and local
18 community members have reported the presence of health and
19 environmental hazards at Pokai Bay; and
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21 WHEREAS, water runoff containing industrial pollutants
22 washed from local surface streets, parking lots, and sidewalks,
23 as well as petrochemical-based pollutants caused by vehicular
24 use of an adjacent boat ramp, are suspected sources of tar balls
25 that have been found on the beach; and
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27 WHEREAS, historically, illegal dumping of dredging
28 materials and other substances have occurred at higher rates
29 along the Leeward Coast, including at Pokai Bay, than at other
30 locations on Oahu; and



1 WHEREAS, the significant use of Leeward Coast beaches for
2 camping and associated activities of daily life by homeless
3 persons, such as bathing, are suspected of having introduced
4 higher than normal levels of bacteria to the sand and waters at
5 Pokai Bay, resulting in a rash of staph infections and other
6 health problems among regular beach users; and
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8 WHEREAS, a 2015 study by professors and researchers at the
9 University of Hawaii at Manoa's Department of Civil and
10 Environmental Engineering found that beach sand holds more fecal
11 indicator bacteria (FIB) than seawater; and
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13 WHEREAS, based upon the results of this study, the beach
14 sand at Pokai Bay may be found to retain pollutants from the
15 restroom facilities in the area, specifically rinse-off from the
16 showers and fecal bacteria from toilet plumbing; and
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18 WHEREAS, the Department of Health has the supplies to test
19 seawater, and occasionally tests the seawater in Pokai Bay
20 specifically for FIB, which decays at a slower rate than beach
21 sand; now, therefore,
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23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
24 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
25 of 2021, that the Department of Health is urged to prioritize
26 the testing and researching of the FIB levels and any other
27 pollutants of the beach sand at Pokai Bay on Oahu's Leeward
28 Coast; and
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that testing and researching the FIB
31 levels and any other pollutants in beach sand at Pokai Bay is
32 urged to become a priority of the Department of Health's non-
33 point source pollution program; and
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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
36 urged to develop a plan to increase water circulation at Pokai
37 Bay to improve water quality and mitigate environmental and
38 health risks caused by pollution and contaminants in the water;
39 and



H.R. NO. 153

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
2 requested to collaborate with other appropriate state and county
3 agencies to develop the plan to increase water circulation; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health is
6 requested to submit a report of its collaborative activities,
7 including significant findings, cost estimates, and any proposed
8 legislation to increase water circulation at Pokai Bay, to the
9 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
10 the Regular Session of 2022; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based upon the Department of
13 Health's testing and research of FIB in the beach sand at Pokai
14 Bay, the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and
15 Recreation is requested to prioritize renovations of the
16 restroom facilities at Pokai Bay; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health and Director
20 of the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and
21 Recreation.
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OFFERED BY: _____



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