



RESOLUTION

URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO CONSIDER CONSOLIDATING ALL OCEAN SAFETY ACTIVITIES UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES' OCEAN SAFETY AND LIFEGUARD SERVICES DIVISION.

WHEREAS, Hawaii has promoted tourism since 1892, with visitor numbers skyrocketing after Hawaii's admission as a state in 1959 and the advent of commercial jet service soon thereafter; and

WHEREAS, today tourism is Hawaii's largest industry and visitor arrivals are hitting record numbers; and

WHEREAS, according to the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism's Visitor Statistics, the City and County of Honolulu ("City") has hosted over 1.7 million visitors from the U.S. mainland and around the world in the first four months of 2016 alone; and

WHEREAS, the tourism industry heavily promotes the State's natural beauty, including the City's nearly 200 miles of coastline and world-famous beaches; and

WHEREAS, millions of visitors, many of whom have limited water safety skills, and hundreds of thousands of residents enjoy the City's beautiful beaches and beach parks each year; and

WHEREAS, ocean activities such as swimming, surfing, snorkeling, diving, boating, paddling and kayaking are popular for residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, according to the State Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention Systems Branch, the number of ocean drownings has increased in recent years, and such drownings are the fifth most common cause of death in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, because visiting the City's beaches and participating in ocean activities are an integral part of many residents' daily life and because these beaches and ocean activities are heavily marketed to visitors, the City has the responsibility to keep residents and visitors safe; and

WHEREAS, the City's Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services division under the Department of Emergency Services employs some of the world's finest watermen and waterwomen and should have the staffing and tools necessary for a program that leads the nation and the world in ocean safety; and



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WHEREAS, other City departments, such as the Honolulu Fire Department, also have staff dedicated to ocean safety, which divides the responsibility for keeping residents and tourists safe on the beaches and in the water and may create coverage gaps; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it strongly urges the City Administration to consider consolidating the responsibility for the safety of residents and visitors while at the beach or in the ocean under the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director and the Director of Emergency Services.

INTRODUCED BY:

Kimberly Poie
Don Chan

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

JUL 15 2016
Honolulu, Hawaii

Councilmembers