
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO
CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO
EXPAND BLUE CARBON INITIATIVES IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, blue carbon is a term used to describe the carbon
2 sequestered within marine and coastal ecosystems; and

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4 WHEREAS, the conservation and restoration of blue carbon
5 ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes,
6 have been recognized as effective nature-based solutions for
7 sequestering carbon dioxide, acting as carbon sinks, and
8 mitigating greenhouse gas emissions; and

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10 WHEREAS, Hawaii is committed to addressing climate change
11 and achieving carbon sequestration goals, including reducing
12 greenhouse gas emissions and protecting coastal ecosystems; and

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14 WHEREAS, the southeastern Australian state of New South
15 Wales recently launched the New South Wales Blue Carbon Strategy
16 2022-2027, a landmark international framework for supporting and
17 restoring coastal biodiversity and ecosystems while
18 simultaneously working toward emissions reduction; and

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20 WHEREAS, the G7 Climate, Energy, and Environment Ministers'
21 Communique issued on April 16, 2023, affirmed the importance of
22 nature-based solutions, including blue carbon programs, in
23 halting and reversing biodiversity loss, mitigating the impacts
24 of climate change, and preserving and enhancing carbon sinks;
25 and

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27 WHEREAS, marine ecologist Carlos Duarte of King Abdullah
28 University of Science and Technology has suggested that as much
29 as fifteen percent of target greenhouse gas emissions may be
30 removed through blue carbon strategies; and



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WHEREAS, analyzing global blue carbon initiatives could maximize the potential for these programs to contribute to local carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation efforts; and

WHEREAS, understanding existing blue carbon efforts that are already underway in the State, their role in greenhouse gas mitigation, and the environmental benefits of expanding support for blue carbon initiatives is necessary to inform future policy and investment decisions; and

WHEREAS, developing a standardized method for measuring carbon sequestration achieved through blue carbon projects will facilitate accurate monitoring and reporting of their carbon sequestration potential; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a working group comprised of relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, environmental organizations, researchers, and community representatives, will ensure a collaborative and inclusive approach to developing recommendations to expand blue carbon efforts in the State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the Senate concurring, that the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development is requested to convene a working group to develop recommendations to expand blue carbon initiatives in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to consist of the following members:

- (1) The Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, or the Director's designee, to serve as Chairperson of the working group;
- (2) The Director of Land and Natural Resources, or the Director's designee;
- (3) The Chief Energy Officer of the Hawaii State Energy Office, or the Chief Energy Officer's designee;



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- (4) One member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- (5) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (6) One representative from a nonprofit public interest organization specializing in Hawaiian rights, as invited by the Chairperson;
- (7) One representative from a nonprofit public interest organization specializing in environmental preservation, as invited by the Chairperson;
- (8) One representative from a nonprofit public interest organization specializing in climate change mitigation and renewable energy, as invited by the Chairperson;
- (9) One faculty member from the University of Hawaii School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology with expertise in the role of oceans in absorbing carbon emissions, to be appointed by the President of the University of Hawaii System; and
- (10) Other relevant stakeholders as recommended by the working group and invited by the Chairperson; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to consider the:

- (1) Performance of current blue carbon initiatives in the State and abroad, and how these initiatives may be expanded or implemented to strengthen the State's carbon sequestration efforts;
- (2) Role of carbon sinks in advancing greenhouse gas mitigation efforts;
- (3) Development of a carbon sequestration measurement method for blue carbon projects in the State;



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- (4) New South Wales Blue Carbon Strategy 2022-2027 and other national and international blue carbon initiatives, roadmaps, and frameworks; and
- (5) Any other issue that the working group determines to be relevant for evaluating the potential of blue carbon projects to enhance the State's climate change mitigation and clean economy goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations on blue carbon initiatives, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Director of Land and Natural Resources, President of the University of Hawaii System, Director of the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, and Chief Energy Officer of the Hawaii State Energy Office.

OFFERED BY:



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