
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE STATE TO PROTECT THE TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN TARO VARIETIES AND THE FAMOUS TARO GROWING AREAS (WET AND DRY) OF THE STATE AS UNIQUE AND CHERISHED RESOURCES CONTRIBUTING TO THE SPECIAL IDENTITY AND WELL-BEING OF HAWAI'I.

1 WHEREAS, in the Kumulipo, the Hawaiian creation chant,
2 Häloa-naka, Häloa-lau-kapalili (the trembling stalk), the taro
3 plant, and Häloa, the child, are born of the same parents, Wakea
4 and Ho'ohökükalani, and Hawaiian people cherish this sacred
5 relationship with kalo (taro); and
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7 WHEREAS, taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) has been a plant of
8 central importance to the survival of the Hawaiian people since
9 their arrival to these islands an estimated 1,200 years ago; and
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11 WHEREAS, the famed and historic kalo-growing areas and
12 historic cropping systems, wet and dry, throughout the Hawaiian
13 Islands represent 1,200 years of unparalleled engineering skills
14 and continuous taro cultivation that preserves the lifestyle and
15 beauty of these unique landscapes for residents and millions of
16 tourists annually; and
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18 WHEREAS, the fallow and working lo'i (taro patches) in
19 Hawai'i also serve as habitats for the state's endemic and
20 endangered waterbirds and other fauna; and
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22 WHEREAS, poi, kalo, and lü'au (taro leaf) in local diets
23 are conclusively recognized by physicians as having positive
24 effects on Hawaiian health, and growing kalo contributes to the
25 health and well-being of the native Hawaiian community and all
26 of us today; and



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1 WHEREAS, the availability of lo'i kalo provides a healthy,
2 low-cost food choice to low-income families to reduce their
3 monthly cost of food by more than fifty percent; and
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5 WHEREAS, kalo has provided the people of Hawai'i with food
6 and livelihood, contributed to all forms of education from pre-
7 school through graduate school, from the arts and culture to the
8 sciences, and provided inspiration to hundreds of artists and
9 cultural practitioners throughout the generations; and
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11 WHEREAS, taro farmers generously contribute daily and
12 annually to all manner of family and community events, and
13 enhance the economic abundance and vibrancy of the state; and
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15 WHEREAS, kalo and lo'i kalo are a source of art, research,
16 jobs, value-added products, product-imaging, tourism, and the
17 tourist experience in Hawai'i, and a part of the face of Hawai'i
18 to the world; and
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20 WHEREAS, no other region in the Pacific can surpass Hawaii
21 in its degree of refinement in growing kalo; and
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23 WHEREAS, at one time, Hawaiians developed three hundred to
24 four hundred varieties of kalo, many specific to particular
25 climates, soils, and elevations, each with its own unique
26 characteristics of color, shape, hardiness, fragrance, and
27 flavor, but in 1934, only sixty-nine known Hawaiian varieties of
28 kalo were documented by Bulletin 84; and
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30 WHEREAS, little is known or documented of the diverse,
31 traditional cropping system designs, production methods, and
32 varieties, that are the very things that define Hawaii's
33 uniqueness in the Pacific; and
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35 WHEREAS, the original Hawaiian kalo variety collections set
36 aside to preserve this unique heritage from the 1930's to the
37 present are incomplete and in need of recovery, with many of the
38 varieties at risk of disappearing completely because their
39 population numbers fewer than the population of most state and
40 federally listed threatened and endangered species in the state;
41 and



1 WHEREAS, while this agricultural crop is the most
2 significant cultural crop in the state, it represented barely
3 one percent of all agricultural lands in production in Hawai'i
4 in 2005; and

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6 WHEREAS, taro farms are rapidly disappearing with only an
7 estimated five hundred acres remaining out of many thousands of
8 acres of agricultural lands in the state, as of 2006; and

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10 WHEREAS, there are many threats to the continuation of kalo
11 cultivation, including: crop diseases; invasive apple snail
12 (*Pomacea canaliculata*), which accounted for up to twenty-five
13 percent of crop loss and fifty percent of labor cost increases
14 for kalo farmers in 2005; destruction of several major
15 traditional Hawaiian kalo variety collections by feral pigs in
16 the last few years; the rising cost of living, land values,
17 leases, and taxes; all of which threaten to put kalo, a
18 potentially multi-million dollar industry with a multitude of
19 indirect benefits, out of business within the next five years
20 and make kalo-farming become an endangered way of life; and

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22 WHEREAS, if the State is to retain as much of what makes
23 Hawai'i unique as possible before it is lost, and before
24 additional conservation and other intervention measures are
25 considered, the importance of the ancient Hawaiian taro
26 varieties and the famous taro-growing areas of the islands
27 should be recognized as unique and in need of protection; now,
28 therefore,

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30 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
31 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
32 Session of 2007, the Senate concurring, that the State of
33 Hawai'i recognizes that taro is an important agricultural,
34 cultural, and economic crop essential to both our heritage and
35 our future; and

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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Hawai'i recognizes
38 the Hawaiian taro varieties and the famous taro-growing areas of
39 the islands, wet and dry, as unique, cherished resources in
40 danger of extinction and in need of conservation, by supporting
41 policy, laws, rules, and actions that provide for their
42 protection; and



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor;
3 Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources;
4 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; Director of Business,
5 Economic Development, and Tourism; Executive Director of the
6 Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Director of Health; and the Mayors of
7 the respective counties.

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OFFERED BY: 

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