

FEB 13 2009

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
REPORT, "THE CORAL REEF OF SOUTH MOLOKAI, HAWAII: PORTRAIT
OF A SEDIMENT THREATENED FRINGING REEF", ENCOURAGING
FEDERAL, STATE, AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION TO STEWARD THE
SOUTH MOLOKAI REEF FISHERY.

1 WHEREAS, in ancient times the people of the island of
2 Moloka'i were known for producing abundant quantities of food, so
3 much so that the island and its surrounding waters were known as
4 "Aina Momona", meaning "abundant land"; and

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6 WHEREAS, the people of Moloka'i maintained a sustainable and
7 self-sufficient food supply for over a thousand years; and

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9 WHEREAS, the island of Moloka'i's unique east-west
10 configuration and its south shore's protection from prevailing
11 ocean swells have led to the establishment and continued growth
12 of Hawai'i's largest fringing coral reef, known as the South
13 Moloka'i Reef; and

14
15 WHEREAS, the South Moloka'i Reef has been a key resource for
16 the maintenance of the island's wealth as a food producer, as
17 evidenced by the fifty-plus traditional Hawaiian fishponds that
18 still mark its shoreline as well as the enduring fishing
19 traditions that continue to sustain the people of Moloka'i; and

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21 WHEREAS, modernization and abandonment of traditional
22 resource management have led to a severe decline of Moloka'i's
23 fishery; and

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25 WHEREAS, a century of cattle grazing, goat foraging, and
26 other land-use practices have caused severe sedimentation that
27 negatively impacts the South Moloka'i Reef; and

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29 WHEREAS, in 1999, the United States Geological Survey began
30 an in-depth study of the sedimentation crisis on the South
31 Moloka'i Reef, including deployment of innovative quantitative
32 measurement-and-analysis techniques, culminating in the 2008



1 publication of a report, "The Coral Reef of South Moloka'i,
2 Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened Fringing Reef"; and
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4 WHEREAS, the President of the Global Coral Reef Alliance,
5 Thomas Goreau, states that the United States Geological Survey
6 report on the South Moloka'i Reef provides "a level of
7 documentation and insight that has never been available for any
8 reef before"; and
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10 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey report states
11 that the South Moloka'i Reef has "major significance in terms of
12 its intrinsic beauty, biodiversity, cultural importance, and as
13 a local food resource," that it is "longer, more continuous, and
14 has denser coral cover than reefs at any of the other (main
15 Hawaiian) islands," and that "this alone makes it a state and
16 national treasure worthy of study and protection"; and
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18 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey report states
19 that sediment run-off from the mauka lands "inhibits or prevents
20 coral growth (on the reef)" and is a "first order cause of reef
21 degradation"; and
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23 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey report
24 concludes that "there is encouraging evidence that, with enough
25 will and local support, the condition of the reef can improve";
26 and
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28 WHEREAS, multiple community planning documents that have
29 been produced by the people of Moloka'i, including the most
30 recent one, "Molokai: Future of a Hawaiian Island," have
31 consistently declared that protection of the South Moloka'i Reef
32 and mitigation of land-based sedimentation impacts on the reef
33 are first priorities of the island community; now, therefore,
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35 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
36 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009,
37 that the Legislature expresses support of the United States
38 Geological Survey report, "The Coral Reef of South Moloka'i,
39 Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened Fringing Reef", and
40 its conclusion that the overall condition of the South Moloka'i
41 Reef can be improved; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state agencies and federal
2 agencies are encouraged to recognize and support the conclusions
3 of the United States Geological Survey report, "The Coral Reef
4 of South Moloka'i, Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened
5 Fringing Reef"; and
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature expresses
8 recognition of and support for the community-based efforts to
9 steward the South Moloka'i Reef fishery for continued subsistence
10 use, beginning with a systematic restoration and reforestation
11 of mauka lands; and
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature expresses
14 support of the use of the scientific findings as presented in
15 the United States Geological Survey report, "The Coral Reef of
16 South Moloka'i, Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened
17 Fringing Reef", and traditional Hawaiian conservation practices
18 to preserve the health of the South Moloka'i Reef; and
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature expresses its
21 appreciation for the efforts of the United States Geological
22 Survey scientists, researchers, and others for their innovative
23 study of the South Moloka'i Reef over a decade; and
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
26 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Mayor of Maui
27 County, and the Director of the United States Geological Survey.
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OFFERED BY: C. Amlee

