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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DESIGNATING APRIL AS TREE AWARENESS MONTH IN HAWAII.

WHEREAS, trees have been identified as an important tool in mitigating global climate change by reducing the world's carbon footprint and helping communities become healthier; and

WHEREAS, trees contribute to the environment by cleaning the air, removing odors and pollutant gases, filtering particulates out of the air, providing oxygen, and removing and storing carbon while releasing oxygen back in the air; and

WHEREAS, trees cool heat-absorbing streets and buildings up to ten degrees Fahrenheit; shade homes and streets by releasing water vapor into the air through their leaves, which encourages residents to walk thereby improving their health; and contribute to more vitality in communities;

WHEREAS, trees shield children from ultraviolet B rays (UVB) by reducing UVB exposure by almost fifty percent and can provide protection to children on school campuses and playgrounds where children spend many hours outdoors; and

WHEREAS, well-documented studies confirm the positive effects of trees on health, including helping patients recover more quickly from surgery and lowering a person's blood pressure; and

WHEREAS, well-documented studies also confirm the positive effects of trees on productivity by aiding in concentration and reducing mental fatigue, including improving the performance of office workers in their jobs and students' performance in achieving higher test scores and graduation rates when trees are visible through their windows; and

H.C.R. NO. \ \$1

WHEREAS, trees in an island state, such as Hawaii, are a crucial part of sustainable living; are important to the State's agricultural economy, including the harvested fruit and wood industries; and can provide green jobs and opportunities for small businesses; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture has reported planting street trees to be "the single largest benefit" to property values and trees planted in well-selected locations on streets can raise property values; and

WHEREAS, trees planted along streets, sidewalks, and parking lots can help absorb heat energy and dust, mask concrete walls and unsightly views, muffle sound from freeways, create an eye-soothing canopy of green, slow traffic, and give civic pride and identity to neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, trees also contribute to the business economy, as studies show that more trees and landscaping in a business district encourage increased business into that district; and

WHEREAS, in a tourism-based economy, having trees in the State's surroundings is vitally important since trees contribute to tourists' appreciation of the beauty of Hawaii, cool the areas where tourists are walking, and increase their pleasure while hiking and other tourist experiences; and

 WHEREAS, community organizations in Hawaii, including Trees for Honolulu's Future, Healthy Climate Communities, Smart Trees Pacific, and Outdoor Circle, have endeavored to increase tree knowledge and awareness; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Camilo Mora, of the MoraLab of the Carbon Neutrality Project of the Geography and Environment Department at University of Hawaii, has engaged students and parents in planting trees to reach carbon neutrality goals;

WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources acknowledges that "trees literally hold our island state together," and "help define Hawaii's sense of place, that special connection between our diverse cultures and the environment, the land and its people"; and

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WHEREAS, Arbor Day is one day to help raise awareness of the value and benefits of trees; however, a month would increase public awareness and provide more adequate public recognition of the multitude of benefits and importance of trees; and

WHEREAS, the public should be encouraged to learn more about the value and benefits of trees to the State's economy, culture, and environment; and

WHEREAS, particularly in Hawaii, an island state which depends heavily on sustainability and tourism, designating April as Tree Awareness Month would be an appropriate way to honor trees and recognize trees' multitude of benefits, including providing community building, and educational and economic opportunities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, the Senate concurring; that April be designated as Tree Awareness Month in Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and Mayor of each county.

OFFERED BY:

MAR - 6 2020