
HOUSE RESOLUTION

STRONGLY URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO WORK WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON UNDERWATER MUNITIONS' INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY BOARD ON UNDERWATER MUNITIONS TO SEEK AND SECURE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE NON-DESTRUCTIVE DISPOSAL OF THOUSANDS OF TONS OF UNDERWATER MUNITIONS DUMPED, LOST, OR ABANDONED IN HAWAIIAN WATERS.

1 WHEREAS, international scientific findings suggest an
2 urgent need for awareness, research, and the non-destructive
3 disposal of thousands of tons of underwater munitions dumped,
4 lost, or abandoned in Hawaiian waters; and
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6 WHEREAS, lost or abandoned munitions at sea are commonly
7 referred to as "underwater munitions", which includes
8 conventional, chemical, radiological, and biological munitions,
9 as well as their propellants, fuses, and booster and bursting
10 explosives; and
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12 WHEREAS, there is cause for concern regarding chemical and
13 conventional munitions present in the marine environment,
14 whether as unexploded ordnance or discarded military munitions,
15 because they pose a threat to the health and safety of humans as
16 well as marine life; and
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18 WHEREAS, through corrosion and chemical changes, these
19 devices might become more volatile, thus increasing the danger
20 of unexpected explosions; and
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22 WHEREAS, underwater munitions are point source emitters of
23 pollution, both as chronic contamination of the marine
24 environment through leakages and sudden release of toxic
25 substances through explosions; and



1 WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Islands served as a staging area in
2 both world wars and the Vietnam War, and vast quantities of
3 unused munitions were dumped throughout the island chain; and
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5 WHEREAS, the steel casements for these munitions are now
6 undergoing rapid corrosion due to prolonged exposure to
7 seawater, creating a special urgency to find, retrieve, and
8 destroy these underwater munitions before their breakdown
9 products continue to spread toxins across the sea floor; and
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11 WHEREAS, until the 1960s, sea dumping was believed to be
12 one of the safest and most cost-effective ways to dispose of
13 munitions; and
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15 WHEREAS, however, in 1969, the United States National
16 Academy of Sciences recommended the discontinuation of sea
17 disposal of chemical warfare agents, and in 1972, the United
18 States Congress enacted the Marine Protection Act, recognizing
19 that "[u]nregulated dumping of material into ocean waters
20 endangers human health, welfare, and amenities, and the marine
21 environment, ecological system, and economic potentialities";
22 and
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24 WHEREAS, the coral reefs of Hawaii generate \$835,000,000 in
25 annual economic activity; create more than 8,000 full-time jobs;
26 provide shoreline protection from storms and coastal erosion;
27 and are the source of Hawaii's famous tourist beaches; and
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29 WHEREAS, it is difficult for any single organization to
30 adequately address all aspects of underwater munitions; thus, a
31 statewide effort is necessary to bring together stakeholders to
32 cooperate, collect, process, coordinate, prioritize resources,
33 and distribute information for underwater munitions policy,
34 science, technology, and responses; and
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36 WHEREAS, there is a need for greater involvement and
37 cooperation on underwater munitions policy, science, technology,
38 and responses by state departments and agencies, non-
39 governmental organizations, foundations, charities, local
40 interest groups, marine operators, coral restoration groups,
41 fisheries, beachgoers, stakeholders, and the general public; and



1 WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources,
2 including its Division of Aquatic Resources, works to:

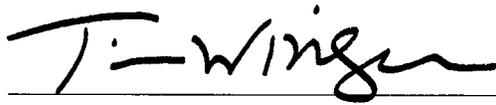
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- 4 (1) Restore Hawaii's coral reefs;
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- 6 (2) Conserve the State's coral reefs for present and
- 7 future generations; and
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- 9 (3) Create a resilient and sustainable future for Hawaiian
- 10 coral reefs; and
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12 WHEREAS, decaying underwater munitions should be removed
13 from coral reefs when done safely or remediated with non-
14 destructive disposal technologies to protect the corals and sea
15 life and to prevent harmful algae blooms; now, therefore,

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17 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
18 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
19 of 2021, that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is
20 strongly urged to work with the International Dialogue on
21 Underwater Munitions' International Scientific and Technology
22 Advisory Board on Underwater Munitions to seek and secure
23 federal funding for the non-destructive disposal of thousands of
24 tons of underwater munitions dumped, lost, or abandoned in
25 Hawaiian waters; and

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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
28 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
29 Board of Land and Natural Resources, and Chairperson of the
30 International Scientific and Technology Advisory Board on
31 Underwater Munitions.

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OFFERED BY: 
MAR 12 2021

