
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FISH HATCHERY EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that loko i'a, or
2 traditional fishponds, offer a critical opportunity for
3 realizing the promise of Hawaii's sustainable future, as they
4 represent a unique nexus of environmental, cultural, social, and
5 economic benefits. According to the 2020 report entitled *Loko*
6 *I'a Needs Assessment*, loko i'a sit at the intersection of small-
7 scale fisheries, regenerative economic and workforce
8 development, and coastal ecosystem and community resiliency.
9 Loko i'a also offer opportunities to restore and revitalize
10 cultural sites and practices; rebuild coastal and estuarine
11 function; educate youth, residents, and visitors through
12 experiential training; prepare for and adapt to the effects of
13 climate change; and provide community food security and
14 resiliency.

15 The legislature also finds that although the United States
16 Fish Commission documented that approximately six hundred eighty
17 thousand pounds of seafood was delivered to Hawaii markets from



1 more than one hundred fishponds in the early 1900s, fishpond
2 production in Hawaii has steadily declined over the past hundred
3 years. By the late 1970s, only twenty-eight ponds were suitable
4 for production, and by 1985, only seven ponds were in commercial
5 or subsistence use. Fortunately, today in Hawaii, local
6 communities and grassroots nonprofit organizations are working
7 together across the State to restore traditional fishponds for
8 cultural, educational, and food production purposes, but these
9 efforts require support.

10 The 1993 report, *Governor's Task Force Report on Moloka'i*
11 *Fishpond Restoration*, reflected on hatcheries that once operated
12 in Hawaii to support fishponds and called for the development of
13 a hatchery. While this recommendation was never adopted, the
14 legislature finds that the State now has a unique historical
15 opportunity to develop a regenerative mullet hatchery program as
16 part of a broader effort to restock fishponds while
17 simultaneously supporting place-based and future-focused career
18 and technical education natural resource pathways in the
19 department of education. The 2020 *Loko I'a Needs Assessment*
20 circles back to this still critical need and opportunity to
21 develop a hatchery facility and increase partnerships between



1 practitioners and the State to visualize and plan for the
2 further development of hatcheries for fishpond production and
3 provide training and certification pathways for aquaculture
4 technicians and operators at fishponds.

5 The legislature is aware that the Waianae coast received
6 its name from the mullet that was once abundant along the coast.
7 In Hawaiian, wai means water, and 'anae means large fully grown
8 mullet. Before water was diverted for sugar cane or housing
9 developments, Waianae had many wetlands fed with brackish water,
10 also known as muliwai. These wetlands and their connection to
11 the ocean are essential for many marine species, including
12 mullet, or 'ama'ama, that have different life stages in varied
13 salinities. These fish were once produced in large amounts in
14 Waianae because of these muliwai. Not only is the Hawaiian
15 striped mullet significant to the community symbolically, but
16 the fish is also a staple protein that is highly desirable to
17 aquaculturists, particularly fish pond stewards, and has a long
18 history in the community.

19 The legislature further finds that the marine science
20 learning center at Waianae high school currently has a
21 functioning aquaculture facility with a saltwater well that has



1 been the central focus of the science curriculum delivered to
2 students enrolled in the major for more than twenty-five years.
3 The location of the well, which is directly adjacent to the
4 ocean, ensures a constant supply of saltwater for the well, an
5 ecological condition that is essential to the continued success
6 of a mullet hatchery program. In addition to the water, the
7 marine science learning center also has a long history of
8 engaging students in hands-on, work-based learning through work
9 in an aquaculture facility. This faculty is uniquely positioned
10 to facilitate transmission of the skill sets necessary to
11 produce sizable amounts of mullet fingerlings to supply
12 fishponds and take mullet through their life cycle to future
13 generations.

14 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 15 (1) Require the department of education to establish a
16 native fish hatchery pilot program at Waianae high
17 school; and
18 (2) Appropriate funds for the pilot program.

19 SECTION 2. (a) The department of education shall
20 establish a native fish hatchery pilot program at Waianae high



1 school to contribute to community sustainability efforts and
2 develop a green workforce.

3 (b) Under the pilot program, teachers shall be trained in
4 the operation and management of a fish hatchery and translate
5 the acquired concepts and skills into a curriculum to be
6 delivered to students.

7 (c) The department of education shall submit a report on
8 the progress of the pilot program and any findings and
9 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
10 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
11 the regular sessions of 2023, 2024, and 2025.

12 (d) The pilot program shall cease to exist on June 30,
13 2025.

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for
17 the establishment of a native fish hatchery pilot program at
18 Waianae high school; provided that the funds shall be used as
19 follows:

20 (1) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
21 hatchery manager position;



1 (2) \$ for two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE)
2 hatchery technicians; and

3 (3) \$ for the construction, operation, and
4 maintenance of a hatchery, including the greenhouse
5 structure to house the hatchery operations.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
7 education for the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Department of Education; Native Fish Hatchery; Pilot Program;
Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Department of Education to establish a native fish hatchery pilot program at Waianae High School. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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