

MAR 10 2023

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO MINIMIZE
HUMAN INTERACTION AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS DURING CORAL
SPAWNING EVENTS.

1 WHEREAS, Native Hawaiians have a unique and sacred
2 relationship with the ocean and corals, in which the health of
3 the corals and ocean are essential to the health of the islands
4 of Hawaii and its people; and

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6 WHEREAS, healthy coral reefs are critical to the economic,
7 cultural, and environmental well-being of Hawaii; and

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9 WHEREAS, coral reefs in Hawaii and worldwide are currently
10 threatened by oceans becoming warmer and more acidic, sediments,
11 sewage and runoff nutrients, and other factors; and

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13 WHEREAS, to protect our economy, connections to culture,
14 and environment, Hawaii should act to encourage greater coral
15 survival; and

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17 WHEREAS, cauliflower coral, also known as head coral, rose
18 coral, or Ko'a in Hawaiian, is a major reef-building coral that
19 protects Hawaii's shorelines and provides habitat for fish and
20 crab; and

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22 WHEREAS, many cauliflower coral colonies experienced
23 bleaching and death from 2014-2016 due to abnormally high ocean
24 temperatures; and

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26 WHEREAS, these events and other stressors have left the
27 cauliflower coral imperiled, though not officially endangered,
28 throughout a significant portion of its range in Hawaii; and

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30 WHEREAS, cauliflower corals reproduce by spawning, in which
31 the corals synchronize their release of massive numbers of eggs
32 and sperm to spread over a broad area during, or a few days



1 after, the full moon once a year in April or May, and this event
2 can be predicted reliably by the National Oceanic and
3 Atmospheric Administration; and

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5 WHEREAS, cauliflower coral's fertilized eggs form free-
6 floating coral larvae that die at a high rate unless they settle
7 into a reef; and

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9 WHEREAS, coral larvae survive interferences/activity at
10 higher rates if they are not disturbed by human interaction such
11 as swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving in the first few days
12 after they form; and

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14 WHEREAS, the Kohala Center's Kahalu'u Bay Education Center
15 on Hawaii Island has been educating visitors to minimize human
16 interaction during spawning for several days per year since
17 2020; and

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19 WHEREAS, there have been increases in juvenile cauliflower
20 corals in Kahalu'u Bay as a result of these efforts to minimize
21 human contact after spawning; and

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23 WHEREAS, as a result of the successful program at Kahalu'u
24 Bay, the Department of Land and Natural Resources has ordered
25 brief spawning closures at Wai'akea Bay State Park, providing a
26 strong foundation for extending closures to other suitable
27 areas; and

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29 WHEREAS, more reef-building cauliflower corals could
30 survive without human interaction in the few days after
31 spawning; now, therefore,

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33 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
34 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023, the
35 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Land
36 and Natural Resources is urged to determine priority locations
37 around the State where minimizing human interaction immediately
38 after cauliflower coral spawning may contribute to greater coral
39 reef formation; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and
42 Natural Resources is requested to take actions to support



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1 healthier coral reefs, including public education, to minimize
2 human interaction following coral spawning periods; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
5 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,
6 Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and
7 Mayor of each county.
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OFFERED BY:

