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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO PROTECT  
HAWAII'S WATERS AND RESOURCES BY PROHIBITING SEABED MINING.

1           WHEREAS, the ocean is of significant economic,  
2 environmental, and cultural importance to the State; and  
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4           WHEREAS, over millennia, Native Hawaiians have developed a  
5 unique and sacred relationship with the ocean, in which the  
6 health of the ocean is essential to the health of the islands of  
7 Hawaii and its people; and  
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9           WHEREAS, the waters of the State are known to contain  
10 living resources in the form of abundant and diverse marine  
11 biodiversity; and  
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13           WHEREAS, the waters of the State are known to contain  
14 mineral resources in the form of polymetallic nodules on abyssal  
15 plains and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts on seamounts; and  
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17           WHEREAS, there is a critical lack of rigorous scientific  
18 information regarding the potential negative impacts that seabed  
19 mining could cause on ocean health, from the deep ocean to the  
20 coasts, through:  
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22           (1) The production of large, persistent sediment plumes  
23 that could have negative impacts on seafloor and  
24 midwater species and ecosystems;  
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26           (2) Direct loss of unique, fragile, and ecologically  
27 important species and populations as a result of  
28 habitat degradation or elimination, some even before  
29 they have been discovered;  
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31           (3) The interruption of important ecological functions in  
32 midwater and benthic ecosystems;  
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- 1 (4) The resuspension and release of metals and toxins that
- 2 might contaminate seafood;
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- 4 (5) Noise pollution arising from seabed mining that could
- 5 cause physiological and behavioral stress to marine
- 6 mammals and other marine species; and
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- 8 (6) Uncertain impacts on ecosystem services including
- 9 ocean carbon sequestration and storage dynamics, as
- 10 well as fisheries; and
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12 WHEREAS, these and other impacts could, individually or  
 13 collectively, cause impossible-to-reverse harm to ocean  
 14 biodiversity, ocean ecosystems, marine ecosystem functioning,  
 15 and human well-being; and

16  
 17 WHEREAS, in September 2021, members of the International  
 18 Union for Conservation of Nature passed a motion calling for a  
 19 moratorium on deep seabed mining, the issuance of new  
 20 exploitation and new exploration contracts, and the adoption of  
 21 seabed mining regulations for exploitation, including  
 22 "exploitation" regulations by the International Seabed  
 23 Authority; and

24  
 25 WHEREAS, as of November 2022, six hundred fifty-three  
 26 marine science and policy experts from more than forty-four  
 27 countries have signed a public statement recommending that the  
 28 transition to the exploitation of mineral resources be paused  
 29 until sufficient and robust scientific information has been  
 30 obtained to make informed decisions regarding whether seabed  
 31 mining can be authorized without significant damage to the  
 32 marine environment and, if so, under what conditions; and

33  
 34 WHEREAS, Hawaii's waters provide residents approximately  
 35 \$13,400,000 in fishing income annually, of which approximately  
 36 \$10,000,000 is from non-commercial catch; and

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 38 WHEREAS, Hawaii's waters also provide an estimated  
 39 \$1,230,000,000 in tourism-related income annually, including but  
 40 not limited to income attributable to marine mammals; and

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1           WHEREAS, the health and sustainability of the State's  
2 communities and economy are closely intertwined with the health  
3 of the State's ocean ecosystems; and  
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5           WHEREAS, the health and function of Hawaii's waters are  
6 threatened by global stressors related to climate change, and by  
7 local stressors from land-based sources of pollution,  
8 unsustainable fishing practices, and invasive species; and  
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10           WHEREAS, protection of deep-sea ecosystems is essential to  
11 mitigating the impacts of climate change and preventing further  
12 rises in atmospheric carbon dioxide, as the deep ocean below one  
13 thousand meters contains eighty percent of the carbon stored in  
14 the ocean; and  
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16           WHEREAS, the United States, as the only maritime power that  
17 has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the  
18 Sea, bears responsibility to fully utilize its power to  
19 safeguard its own waters from the exploitative national security  
20 interests of foreign entities; now, therefore,  
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22           BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second  
23 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023,  
24 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is urged to  
25 prohibit mining of the seabed within Hawaii state waters; and  
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27           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and  
28 Natural Resources is requested to take actions to prevent  
29 transboundary impacts of seabed mining from other jurisdictions,  
30 including areas beyond national jurisdiction; and  
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32           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of  
33 Transportation is requested to prohibit the use of state ports  
34 by commercial vessels affiliated with seabed mining in other  
35 jurisdictions, including areas beyond national jurisdiction; and  
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37           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
38 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the  
39 Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director of Transportation,  
40 and Mayor of each county.

