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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AQUATIC RESOURCES.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that coral reefs play a  
2 vital role in Hawaii's marine ecosystem, providing habitats for  
3 many native and endemic species. Healthy coral reefs support  
4 biodiversity as well as subsistence, recreational, and  
5 commercial fishing. In 2017, a study found that the food  
6 security contribution of Hawaii's coral reefs was valued at  
7 \$7,000,000 to \$13,000,000, or seven million meals, every year.  
8 It was further found in a 2019 study that Hawaii's coral reefs  
9 provided \$836,000,000 in flood protection benefits.

10           The legislature further finds that global stressors, such  
11 as the effects of climate change including ocean warming, ocean  
12 acidification, and damage from severe weather, as well as local  
13 stressors, such as ship groundings, anchor damage, and  
14 overfishing, threaten Hawaii's valuable coral reefs. Coral  
15 bleaching was first reported in Hawaii in 1996, with subsequent  
16 major events in the following years. The slow growth rates of  
17 Hawaii corals hinder coral recovery after such events. To



1 achieve the goals of ensuring healthy, well-managed fisheries in  
2 Hawaii and protecting aquatic resources from global and local  
3 stressors, the department of land and natural resources  
4 continues to manage coral reef restoration efforts. The  
5 department of land and natural resources' coral reef restoration  
6 efforts include managing coral nurseries, effective management  
7 of herbivore populations, invasive species removal, and general  
8 monitoring of coral reefs in state waters. These programs  
9 require specialized equipment and personnel. It is highly  
10 important that the State continue to support the efforts with  
11 funding toward restoring coral reefs in Hawaii.

12 The legislature believes that additional funding is needed  
13 for coral reef restoration and habitat enhancement projects to  
14 provide crucial support toward efforts to protect Hawaii's  
15 valuable coral reefs and nearshore fisheries for future  
16 generations.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate  
18 funds to support coral reef restoration and habitat enhancement  
19 efforts.

20 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so



1 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and  
2 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
3 year 2024-2025 for coral reef restoration and habitat  
4 enhancement efforts of the department of land and natural  
5 resources.

6 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
7 of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

9

INTRODUCED BY: *Rindealchizna*

JAN 20 2023



# H.B. NO. 761

**Report Title:**

DLNR; Coral Reef; Restoration; Habitat Enhancement;  
Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds for coral reef restoration and habitat enhancement efforts of the department of land and natural resources.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

