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# HOUSE CONCURRENT 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

12  
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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- 1           (3) The interruption of important ecological functions in  
2           midwater and benthic ecosystems;
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- 4           (4) The resuspension and release of metals and toxins that  
5           might contaminate seafood;
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- 7           (5) Noise pollution arising from seabed mining that could  
8           cause physiological and behavioral stress to marine  
9           mammals and other marine species; and
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- 11          (6) Uncertain impacts on ecosystem services including  
12          ocean carbon sequestration and storage dynamics, as  
13          well as fisheries; and  
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15           WHEREAS, these and other impacts could, individually or  
16           collectively, cause impossible-to-reverse harm to ocean  
17           biodiversity, ocean ecosystems, marine ecosystem functioning,  
18           and human well-being; and  
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20           WHEREAS, in September 2021, members of the International  
21           Union for Conservation of Nature passed a motion calling for a  
22           moratorium on deep seabed mining, the issuance of new  
23           exploitation and new exploration contracts, and the adoption of  
24           seabed mining regulations for exploitation, including  
25           "exploitation" regulations by the International Seabed  
26           Authority; and  
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28           WHEREAS, as of November 2022, six hundred fifty-three  
29           marine science and policy experts from more than forty-four  
30           countries have signed a public statement recommending that the  
31           transition to the exploitation of mineral resources be paused  
32           until sufficient and robust scientific information has been  
33           obtained to make informed decisions regarding whether seabed  
34           mining can be authorized without significant damage to the  
35           marine environment and, if so, under what conditions; and  
36

37           WHEREAS, Hawaii's waters provide residents approximately  
38           \$13,400,000 in fishing income annually, of which approximately  
39           \$10,000,000 is from non-commercial catch; and  
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1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's waters also provide an estimated  
2 \$1,230,000,000 in tourism-related income annually, including but  
3 not limited to income attributable to marine mammals; and  
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5 WHEREAS, the health and sustainability of the State's  
6 communities and economy are closely intertwined with the health  
7 of the State's ocean ecosystems; and  
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9 WHEREAS, the health and function of Hawaii's waters are  
10 threatened by global stressors related to climate change, and by  
11 local stressors from land-based sources of pollution,  
12 unsustainable fishing practices, and invasive species; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, protection of deep-sea ecosystems is essential to  
15 mitigating the impacts of climate change and preventing further  
16 rises in atmospheric carbon dioxide, as the deep ocean below one  
17 thousand meters contains eighty percent of the carbon stored in  
18 the ocean; and  
19

20 WHEREAS, the United States, as the only maritime power that  
21 has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the  
22 Sea, bears responsibility to fully utilize its power to  
23 safeguard its own waters from the exploitative national security  
24 interests of foreign entities; now, therefore,  
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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
27 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
28 Session of 2023, the Senate concurring, that the Department of  
29 Land and Natural Resources is urged to prohibit mining of the  
30 seabed within Hawaii state waters; and  
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and  
33 Natural Resources is requested to take actions to prevent  
34 transboundary impacts of seabed mining from other jurisdictions,  
35 including areas beyond national jurisdiction; and  
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of  
38 Transportation is requested to prohibit the use of State ports  
39 by commercial vessels affiliated with seabed mining in other  
40 jurisdictions, including areas beyond national jurisdiction; and  
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of these  
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,  
3 Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director  
4 of Transportation, and Mayor of each county.

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OFFERED BY: *Miss E. Lowen*

FEB 24 2023

