

MAR 10 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES SENATE TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION, ALSO KNOWN AS THE HIGH SEAS TREATY.

1 WHEREAS, over millennia, Native Hawaiians have developed a
2 unique and sacred relationship with the ocean and its coral
3 reefs and diverse marine species; and
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5 WHEREAS, the health of the ocean is closely intertwined
6 with and essential to the health of the islands and people of
7 Hawaii, and is of critical importance to the State's economy,
8 environment, and culture; and
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10 WHEREAS, the health and function of Hawaii's waters are
11 threatened by global stressors related to climate change, which
12 is often beyond the control of the State alone; and
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14 WHEREAS, more than sixty percent of ocean surface areas are
15 beyond the jurisdiction of any nation and the ocean areas
16 outside the two-hundred-nautical-mile limits of nations are
17 referred to as the "high seas"; and
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19 WHEREAS, Hawaii is located in the middle of the Pacific
20 Ocean and thus very connected to the high seas; and
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22 WHEREAS, marine resources have little to no legal
23 protections in vast areas of the high seas and the exploitation
24 of resources therein can cause irreversible harm to ocean bio-
25 diversity and marine ecosystems; and
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27 WHEREAS, eighty percent of the carbon stored in the ocean
28 is contained in the deep ocean below one thousand meters, making
29 the protection of deep-sea ecosystems essential to mitigating
30 the impacts of climate change and preventing further increases
31 to atmospheric carbon dioxide; and
32



S.R. NO. 214

1 WHEREAS, on March 4, 2023, representatives of over one
 2 hundred ninety nations, including the United States, reached a
 3 deal on a historic United Nations treaty to protect the living
 4 resources and abundant bio-diversity in the high seas, known as
 5 the High Seas Treaty; and

6
 7 WHEREAS, subsequent to the formal approval of the
 8 negotiated agreement by the United Nations, the United States
 9 and other nations of the world will have the opportunity to
 10 ratify, or otherwise approve, the High Seas Treaty; and

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 12 WHEREAS, ratification of the High Seas Treaty by the United
 13 States would give the federal government a seat at the table
 14 when future international decisions are made on issues relating
 15 to high seas fishing, deep-sea mining, and ocean protection; and

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 17 WHEREAS, the High Seas Treaty would support Hawaii's
 18 interests in protecting the health of the ocean and thereby the
 19 preservation of the State's invaluable coral reefs and marine
 20 bio-diversity; now, therefore,

21
 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 United States Senate is urged to ratify the agreement
 25 under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the
 26 Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity
 27 of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, also known as the High
 28 Seas Treaty; and

29
 30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 31 Resolution be transmitted to Hawaii's congressional delegation,
 32 the Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
 33 Resources, and mayor of each county.

OFFERED BY


