

---

---

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MARINE LIFE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that marine life  
2 conservation districts (MLCDs) are established by the department  
3 of land and natural resources, as authorized by chapter 190,  
4 Hawaii Revised Statutes, to conserve and replenish the State's  
5 marine resources. All MLCD designations are subject to public  
6 hearings and final approval from the board of natural resources  
7 and the governor.

8           The legislature further finds that there are currently ten  
9 existing MLCDs in the State, with three on Oahu and Maui and  
10 four on Hawaii island. The first MLCD was established in the  
11 State at Hanauma bay in 1967, which resulted in the adoption of  
12 a number of measures to restrict human access in an attempt to  
13 protect marine life. According to carrying capacity studies  
14 conducted by the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology in 2018 and  
15 2019, a twice-weekly closure requirement, reservation system,  
16 differential parking fees for residents and non-residents, \$25  
17 entry fee for non-residents more than thirteen years of age, and



1 mandatory education for visitors, along with other restrictions,  
2 has resulted in a notable improvement in the area's marine  
3 ecosystem.

4 The legislature further finds that MLCDs permit non-  
5 consumptive uses of the area, such as swimming, snorkeling, and  
6 diving. Many local businesses, such as surf schools and SCUBA  
7 operators, capitalize on the State's ocean resources --  
8 including within MLCDs. However, as the State progresses from  
9 the shutdowns associated with the coronavirus disease 2019  
10 pandemic into pre-pandemic tourism levels, appropriate  
11 restrictions are necessary to reduce impacts for the long term.

12 The legislature further finds that Act 31, Session Laws of  
13 Hawaii 2022, was passed to require the department of land and  
14 natural resources to establish and conduct the Pupukea marine  
15 life conservation district carrying capacity pilot program to  
16 identify long-term management options to reduce the impact of  
17 humans on the health and abundance of marine life in the  
18 sensitive areas of the Pupukea MLCD. The legislature believes  
19 that Act 31, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, is an excellent first  
20 step at addressing the capacity limits of the State's most



1 valuable marine resources and should serve as a model for all  
2 MLCDs in the State.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
4 department of land and natural resources to establish and  
5 conduct a marine life conservation district carrying capacity  
6 program to establish best practices for appropriate use of the  
7 state's marine life conservation districts.

8 SECTION 2. (a) The department of land and natural  
9 resources shall establish and conduct the marine life  
10 conservation district carrying capacity program to:

- 11 (1) Assess the carrying capacity of state-designated  
12 marine life conservation districts;
- 13 (2) Assess the impact of commercial use on state-  
14 designated marine life conservation districts, with a  
15 focus on how many commercial use permits should be  
16 issued;
- 17 (3) Monitor, document, and assess the effectiveness of:  
18 (A) Mandatory or voluntary kapu, or closures, of  
19 ecologically or culturally sensitive areas in  
20 state-designated marine life conservation  
21 districts;



1 (B) Mandatory or voluntary restrictions on certain  
2 activities in state-designated marine life  
3 conservation districts; and

4 (C) Other restrictions on access to areas in state-  
5 designated marine life conservation districts,  
6 including the imposition of fees; and

7 (4) Propose long-term management options to reduce the  
8 impact of humans on the health and abundance of marine  
9 life in the sensitive areas of state-designated marine  
10 life conservation districts.

11 (b) In establishing and conducting the marine life  
12 conservation district carrying capacity program, the department  
13 of land and natural resources shall consult with the counties;  
14 University of Hawaii, including the Hawaii institute of marine  
15 biology; and nonprofit community organizations in the State.

16 (c) The department of land and natural resources shall  
17 amend its administrative rules, as appropriate and in accordance  
18 with chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to effectuate the  
19 results of the marine life conservation district carrying  
20 capacity program.



1 (d) The department of land and natural resources shall  
2 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including  
3 any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than  
4 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of  
5 2024 and 2025.

6 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and  
9 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
10 year 2024-2025 for the department of land and natural resources  
11 to establish and conduct the marine life conservation district  
12 carrying capacity program pursuant to this Act.

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

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Department of Land and Natural Resources; Marine Life Conservation Districts; Program; Carrying Capacity; Administrative Rules; Report; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to establish and conduct the Marine Life Conservation District Carrying Capacity Program. Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to submit reports to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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

