

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

106

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 08 2023

RE: S.B. No. 432

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Water and Land, to which was referred S.B. No. 432 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DESIGNATION OF HAWAII CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to designate Hawaii coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, and five individuals. Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency.

Your Committees find that in Hawaii, coral reefs serve as the first line of defense to shoreline erosion and tidal flooding related events. Coral reefs act as natural breakwaters, dissipating up to ninety-seven percent of wave energy impacting shorelines and trapping sediment, which is estimated to save the State around \$836,000,000 annually. Your Committees additionally find that Hawaii's coral reefs are threatened by the effects of climate change, including sea level rise, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification, among other substantial stressors. This measure will designate Hawaii's coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure, which will demonstrate the State's support for nature-based climate change solutions and increase the likelihood



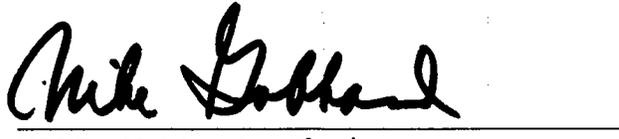
of receiving funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program to support coral reef protection and restoration in Hawaii.

Your Committees acknowledge a concern addressed in testimony by the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, which requests that your Committees consider adding language to this measure that would also direct that this designation be considered by the State and counties in their hazard mitigation planning and that this would streamline and support the State's ability to pursue federal grants.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Water and Land that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 432 and recommend that it pass Second Reading and be placed on the calendar for Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Agriculture and
Environment and Water and Land,


LORRAINE R. INOUE, Chair


MIKE GABBARD, Chair



