
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE STATE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO ADVOCATE FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL LAWS TO REDUCE GHOST NETS ENTERING THE STATE FROM INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND TAKE OTHER ACTIONS TO REDUCE MARINE DEBRIS FROM FISHING GEAR.

1 WHEREAS, discarded or lost fishing nets in the ocean,
2 otherwise known as ghost nets, entangle, injure, and kill
3 hundreds of thousands of marine animals and coral reefs every
4 year; and

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6 WHEREAS, because ghost nets are non-biodegradable, these
7 fishing debris can pollute the ocean for up to six hundred years
8 after initially entering the ocean; and

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10 WHEREAS, international waters are the most common location
11 for fishing vessels to dump ghost nets; and

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13 WHEREAS, one hundred fifteen thousand pounds of ghost nets
14 wash in from international waters to the reefs of
15 Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Papahānaumokuākea)
16 annually, harming coral reefs and marine wildlife; and

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18 WHEREAS, there is a backlog of ghost net accumulation of
19 approximately one million pounds in Papahānaumokuākea, despite
20 ongoing clean-up efforts by government agencies and non-profit
21 organizations; and

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23 WHEREAS, Papahānaumokuākea encompasses 582,578 square miles
24 of marine conservation area and is home to twenty-three
25 endangered species, including the Hawaiian monk seal, green sea
26 turtle, and humpback whale; and



1 WHEREAS, between 2006 and 2014, eighty-seven endangered
2 Hawaiian monk seals in Papahānaumokuākea were recorded as
3 entangled in ghost nets; and
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5 WHEREAS, the International Maritime Organization's London
6 Dumping Regime and International Convention for the Prevention
7 of Pollution from Ships Annex V specifically prohibit discharge
8 of synthetic ropes and fishing gear; and
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10 WHEREAS, the International Law of the Sea allows states to
11 take action against vessels entering their ports if there is
12 evidence that they have abandoned or negligently lost fishing
13 gear, although gear is not marked in such a way as to trace
14 ownership; now, therefore,
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16 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
17 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
18 Session of 2024, the Senate concurring, that the State's
19 congressional delegation is requested to:
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- 21 (1) Advocate for the enforcement of existing international
22 laws to reduce ghost nets entering the State from
23 international waters;
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- 25 (2) Advocate for the establishment of a requirement for
26 United States fishing vessels to mark their fishing
27 gear; and
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- 29 (3) Create financial incentives to retrieve and dispose of
30 floating fishing gear; and
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
33 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to each member of Hawaii's
34 congressional delegation.

