
HOUSE 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

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28 WHEREAS, between 2006 and 2014, eighty-seven endangered
29 Hawaiian monk seals in Papahānaumokuākea were recorded as
30 entangled in ghost nets; and



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WHEREAS, the International Maritime Organization's London Dumping Regime and International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships Annex V specifically prohibit discharge of synthetic ropes and fishing gear; and

WHEREAS, the International Law of the Sea allows states to take action against vessels entering their ports if there is evidence that they have abandoned or negligently lost fishing gear, although gear is not marked in such a way as to trace ownership; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, that the State's congressional delegation is requested to:

- (1) Advocate for the enforcement of existing international laws to reduce ghost nets entering the State from international waters;
- (2) Advocate for the establishment of a requirement for United States fishing vessels to mark their fishing gear; and
- (3) Create financial incentives to retrieve and dispose of floating fishing gear; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the State's Congressional delegation.

OFFERED BY: *Lina Martin*

MAR - 8 2024

