

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 15 , 2024

RE: S.C.R. No. 122  
S.D. 1  
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Water & Land, to which was referred S.C.R. No. 122, S.D. 1, entitled:

"SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO WORK WITH THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER EXPERTS TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE POPULATION STATUS OF DEPLETED CORAL REEF HERBIVORES AROUND THE ISLAND OF OAHU AND DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE POLICIES FOR SUBSTANTIALLY REPLENISHING THOSE POPULATIONS WITHIN A DECADE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request the Department of Land and Natural Resources to:

- (1) With support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and other experts, conduct a study on the population status of individual species and families of coral reef herbivores around the island of Oahu, prioritizing the severely depleted uhu and kala populations; and
- (2) Conduct an analysis of alternative policies for substantially replenishing populations of coral reef herbivores around the island of Oahu within the decade.



Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources; Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition; Friends of Hanauma Bay; Animal Rights Hawai'i; The Nature Conservancy; Oceanic Preservation Society; and numerous individuals.

Your Committee finds that coral reefs provide extremely valuable ecosystem goods and services for the people of Hawaii. Reefs are also fundamental to the fabric of local communities, providing a source of food, materials, and traditional activities. Your Committee further finds that many reefs around the island of Oahu have been degraded from poor land use practices and are dominated by dead coral covered by seaweeds. The maintenance and recovery of coral reefs require abundant and diverse herbivores, which keep reef surfaces clean so that corals can flourish.

Your Committee notes that the population of coral reef herbivores around Oahu is the lowest in the State, existing at below five percent of its potential. Your Committee believes that strengthening existing statewide fishing rules concerning herbivores, along with other policies and strategies, are needed to help replenish herbivore populations in the coral reefs surrounding Oahu.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Amending a provision to state that the depletion of herbivores results in reefs being dominated by seaweeds rather than corals, thus reducing fishing and other recreational, commercial, and traditional cultural opportunities;
- (2) Deleting a provision stating that coral reef herbivores are frequently targets of spearfishing at night around the island of Oahu when the fish are inactive and highly vulnerable, resulting in unsustainable exploitation and unreported catch;
- (3) Amending a provision to state that existing statewide fishing rules concerning herbivores may be insufficient to replenish herbivore populations around Oahu before coral bleaching becomes an annual event;



- (4) Modifying its title in accordance with its amended purpose; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water & Land that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.C.R. No. 122, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as S.C.R. No. 122, S.D. 1, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Water & Land,

FOR   
LINDA ICHIYAMA, Chair



