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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE COCONUT TREE.

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

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that coconut palms, *cocos*  
2   *nucifera*, or niu in Hawaiian, are a significant and  
3   underutilized natural resource in Hawaii. The species has grown  
4   in Hawaii for thousands of years and is considered a naturalized  
5   Polynesian canoe plant.

6       The legislature further finds that the coconut palm is one  
7   of the most useful plants in the world. Early Hawaiians were  
8   able to repurpose almost every part of the tree, including using  
9   it for food and emergency drinking water, using the oil from the  
10   meat as cosmetics for skin and hair, and using the shells to  
11   make kitchenware, like spoons, cups, bowls, and containers.  
12   Additionally, leaves and husks were used to create cordage,  
13   baskets, and roofing thatch, among other goods. The trunks were  
14   also used for house construction, canoe building, and drums.

15       The legislature notes that pursuant to section 226-7,  
16   Hawaii Revised Statutes, it is the policy of the State to  
17   encourage agriculture by making the best use of natural



1 resources, enhance agricultural growth by providing public  
2 incentives and encouraging private initiatives, and promote  
3 economically competitive activities that increase Hawaii's  
4 agricultural self-sufficiency. Additionally, the legislature  
5 believes that increased food security and self-sufficiency are  
6 priorities for the State. However, the legislature finds that  
7 many of the coconut palm's edible products, including its water  
8 and meat, are not being maximized for food security and local  
9 food systems, nor is the coconut palm being maximized for  
10 agricultural production. As a result, there is limited  
11 promotion of the coconut palm for public health, agricultural  
12 policies, and food assistance programs.

13 The legislature recognizes that categorizing coconut palms  
14 as a sustainable staple food source could encourage local  
15 agricultural production and cultivation. Formal recognition as  
16 a food source is also an important first step in maximizing the  
17 coconut palm's utilization as a natural resource.

18 The legislature also finds that coconut palms thrive in  
19 Hawaii's tropical climate and are abundant, providing an  
20 excellent opportunity for economic development in the State.  
21 Recognizing the coconut palm as a food source will support local



1 coconut farmers, processors, and businesses and encourage the  
2 growth of new industries and markets for coconut-based products.

3 The legislature further finds that the coconut palm is an  
4 enduring symbol of Native Hawaiian culture, deeply embedded in  
5 traditional practices, language, and community life.

6 Historically, the coconut palm provided essential materials for  
7 shelter, tools, and weaving, and was revered for its spiritual  
8 significance in Native Hawaiian traditions. Beyond its  
9 practical uses, the coconut tree represents resilience and  
10 sustainability, preserves cultural heritage, revitalizes  
11 indigenous knowledge, and reinforces Hawaii's sense of place.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to recognize the  
13 coconut palm as a culturally significant plant and sustainable  
14 staple food source in Hawaii.

15 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by  
16 adding a new chapter to title 12, subtitle 6, to be  
17 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

18 "CHAPTER

19 COCONUT PALM

20 § -1 Coconut palm; cultural significance. The coconut  
21 palm (*cocos nucifera*), or niu in Hawaiian, is established,



1 designated, and recognized as a culturally significant plant in  
2 the State."

3 SECTION 3. Chapter 141, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§141- Coconut palm; sustainable staple food source.

7 The coconut palm (cocos nucifera), or niu in Hawaiian, is  
8 established, designated, and recognized as a sustainable staple  
9 food source in the State."

10 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

11 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

Coconut Palm; Tree; Cultural Significance; Food Source;  
Recognition

**Description:**

Recognizes the coconut palm as a culturally significant plant  
and sustainable staple food source in the State. Effective  
7/1/3000. (HD1)

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

