STAND. COM. REP. NO. 270 -26

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 13 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2599
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Water & Land, to which was referred H.B. No. 2599 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AQUATIC PROTECTION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources to:

(1) Manage the aquatic life and aquatic resources of the State, giving the highest priority to protecting, restoring, and maintaining ecosystem integrity and using the best scientific data available; and

(2) Set goals to substantially improve coral-reef resilience around Oahu and develop a framework to meet those goals with annual reports to the Legislature.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from one member of the Hawai'i County Council; Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force; Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; Chamber of Sustainable Commerce; Malama Pupukea-Waimea; Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc.; Moana Ohana; and six individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee finds that many coral reefs around the island of Oahu are widely known to be among the most degraded in Hawaii, the result of poor agricultural and development land use practices in the past, unchecked ungulate populations that lead to erosion and sedimentation, and run-off of excess nutrients from sewage and fertilizers. Your Committee further finds that increasing ocean warming is now causing more frequent and severe coral bleaching events that kill corals and are predicted to be annual events by about 2040. Ocean acidification and other pollutants also adversely affect corals. Your Committee finds that immediate action, as provided in this measure, is needed to protect and restore coral reefs around the State and especially around the island of Oahu.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

(1) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and

(2) 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 is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2599, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2599, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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

MARK J. HASHEM, Chair

State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
The Thirty-third Legislature

HSCR 270-26

Record of Votes of the Committee on Water & Land

Bill/Resolution No.:	Committee Referral:	Date:
HB 2599	WAL, FIN	2/10/2026

☐ The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.

The recommendation is to: ☐ Pass, unamended (as is) ☑ Pass, with amendments (HD) ☐ Hold
☐ Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)

WAL Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. HASHEM, Mark J. (C)	✓			
2. MORIKAWA, Dee (VC)	✓			
3. BELATTI, Della Au	✓			
4. ICHIYAMA, Linda	✓			
5. IWAMOTO, Kim Coco	✓			
6. POEPOE, Mahina	✓			
7. WOODSON, Justin H.	✓			
8. SHIMIZU, Garner M.	✓			
9. SOUZA, Kanani	✓			
TOTAL (9)	9	Ø	Ø	Ø

The recommendation is: ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted
If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation.
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: _____

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