STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2751

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 05 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2944
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 2944, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CONSERVATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to give state and county officials greater authority to enforce wildlife protections and viewing guidelines that currently exist in federal law.

More specifically, the measure:

(1) Requires the Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules implementing wildlife viewing guidelines that substantially conform to the wildlife viewing guidelines issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

(2) Specifies that violations of the rules will be subject to statutory penalties.

Your Committee received written comments in support of this measure from numerous individuals.

Your Committee received written comments in opposition to this measure from one individual.

Your Committee received written comments on this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's beaches are essential habitats for native marine wildlife, including Hawaiian green sea turtles and Hawaiian monk seals, which routinely bask, rest, recover, and give birth on the State's shores. Your Committee believes that responsible wildlife-viewing practices must protect these animals, support public safety, and remain consistent with the State's cultural and environmental values. While federal protections and federal viewing guidelines exist for certain marine species, deterrence, investigations, and enforcement can be difficult. Accordingly, your Committee finds that establishing similar provisions in state administrative rules will enable state and county enforcement personnel to take appropriate actions and to provide greater protections for the State's native marine wildlife.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2944, S.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,

DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, Chair

The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Ways and Means
WAM

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:
SB2944, SD1	WLA, WAM	3/3/2026

☐ The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.

If so, then the previous decision was to: _____

The Recommendation is:

☒ Pass, unamended 2312 ☐ Pass, with amendments 2311 ☐ Hold 2310 ☐ Recommit 2313

Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
DELA CRUZ, Donovan M. (C)	X			
MORIWAKI, Sharon Y. (VC)	X			
DECOITE, Lynn	X			
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C.	X			
HASHIMOTO, Troy N.	X			
INOUYE, Lorraine R.	X			
KANUHA, Dru Mamo	X			
KIDANI, Michelle N.	X			
KIM, Donna Mercado	X			
LEE, Chris	X			
RICHARDS, III, Herbert M. "Tim"	X			
WAKAI, Glenn	X			
FEVELLA, Kurt				X
TOTAL	12	0	0	1

Recommendation: ☒ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

Chair's or Designee's Signature:

Distribution: Original — File with Committee Report; Yellow — Committee; Pink — Drafting Agency

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

Revised: 01/02/26