STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2670

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2973
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 Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, to which was referred S.B. No. 2973 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FISHING,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to prohibit the use of jug line fishing and other jug rig variant fishing methods in state waters.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Kaimana Ocean Safari, For the Fishes, Conservation Council for Hawai'i, Moana Ohana, and thirteen individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawai'i Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition, Inc. and Makahanaloa Fishing Association.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea.

Your Committee finds that jug line fishing and jug rig variant fishing methods frequently result in the hooking, entanglement, or injury of non-target species, including sharks and protected green sea turtles, and present a severe risk to endangered species, such as the Hawaiian monk seal and hawksbill

sea turtle. Furthermore, the jug lines often become marine debris that can persist for years, continuing to pollute coastal and offshore areas, damage delicate coral reefs, and pose a serious threat to marine life through entanglement and injury long after it is no longer in use. This measure will prohibit imprecise fishing methods that are incompatible with responsible resource management and help to fulfill the State's obligation to protect marine wildlife for present and future generations.

Your Committee notes that there are multiple legal gears and methods that employ the use of floatation devices with the primary purpose of suspending a fishing line, hook, and weight that are different from the jug fishing rigs that this measure intends to address. Your Committee believes that narrowing the definition of affected gears and methods will remove unintended impacts on gears and methods with lower risk. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

(1) Exempting store-bought or home-made fishing floats or bobbers that are cast with rod and reel or used while hand-pole fishing;

(2) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and

(3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2973, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2973, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Water, Land,
Culture and the Arts,

Culture and the Arts,

CHRIS LEE, Chair

The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
WLA

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:
SB 2973	WLA, JDC	2/18/2026

☐ 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
LEE, Chris (C)	✓			
INOUYE, Lorraine R. (VC)	✓			
CHANG, Stanley				✓
LAMOSAO, Rachele	✓			
DECORTE, Samantha	✓			
TOTAL	4			1

Recommendation: ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

Chair's or Designee's Signature:

Lorraine R. Inouye

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

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

Revised: 01/21/26