
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO COLLABORATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOP A STUDENT CORAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's coral reefs are critical to the State's
2 environment, culture, shoreline protection, and economy, yet
3 they are increasingly threatened by climate change, pollution,
4 and human activities; and

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6 WHEREAS, scientific research has shown that certain
7 chemical-based sunscreen ingredients, including oxybenzone and
8 octinoxate, contribute to coral bleaching and harm marine
9 ecosystems when they enter nearshore waters; and

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11 WHEREAS, the Legislature has demonstrated leadership in
12 coral reef protection through Act 104, Session Laws of Hawaii
13 2018, which restricts the sale and distribution of sunscreens
14 containing chemicals harmful to coral reefs; and

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16 WHEREAS, many residents and visitors wish to comply with
17 reef-safe practices but face barriers, including limited access,
18 higher cost, or lack of information regarding reef-safe
19 sunscreen options; and

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21 WHEREAS, improving public education and awareness regarding
22 reef-safe practices, including the use of mineral-based
23 sunscreen, can help protect coral reefs while also promoting
24 skin cancer prevention and public health; and

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26 WHEREAS, students across Hawai'i have demonstrated a strong
27 interest, research capacity, and leadership in coral reef
28 science, environmental stewardship, and community education; and

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30 WHEREAS, public charter schools in the State, such as West
31 Hawai'i Explorations Academy on Hawai'i Island, have demonstrated



1 a strong commitment to the early education of students in ocean
2 protection and marine stewardship by integrating place-based,
3 experiential learning focused on Hawai'i's marine environments
4 into their curriculum; and
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6 WHEREAS, collaboration among the Department of Land and
7 Natural Resources, Department of Education, State Public Charter
8 School Commission, and interested students can strengthen coral
9 reef restoration efforts through education, outreach and
10 stewardship; now, therefore,
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12 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
13 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
14 of 2026, that the Department of Education and State Public
15 Charter School Commission, in collaboration with the Department
16 of Land and Natural Resources, are requested to develop a
17 Student Coral Stewardship Program that assists with public
18 education, outreach, and reef-safe sunscreen awareness at state
19 beaches; and
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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Coral Stewardship
22 Program is intended to be educational, voluntary, and non-
23 enforcement in nature and may include student-led outreach,
24 educational materials, and community-engagement activities
25 informed by current scientific research; and
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27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and
28 State Public Charter School Commission are requested to submit a
29 report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
30 convening of the Regular Session of 2027 that summarizes
31 collaborative efforts, including input and perspectives from
32 participating students and that presents any legislative,
33 policy, or funding recommendations necessary to advance coral
34 reef protection and student stewardship initiatives; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
37 Resolution be transmitted to the Superintendent of Education,
38 Executive Director of the State Public Charter School
39 Commission, and Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
40 Resources.

