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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE 'AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO FOLLOW ITS ADOPTED RULES OF PRACTICE, FULFILL ITS STATUTORY DUTIES, INCLUDING COMPLYING WITH THE SUNSHINE LAW, CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF ITS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND ESTABLISH POLICIES TO ASSURE CONSISTENT STANDARDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY; AND REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL AUDIT OF THE 'AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

1           WHEREAS, in August 2006, Native Hawaiian cultural  
2 practitioners, kūpuna, and representatives from forty-three moku  
3 across the State gathered at Puwalu 'Ekahi to share manao and  
4 call for a process to uphold and perpetuate traditional Hawaiian  
5 land and ocean practices; and

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7           WHEREAS, subsequent gatherings known as Puwalu 'Elua and  
8 Puwalu 'Ekolu, held in November and December 2006, convened  
9 educators, policymakers, cultural practitioners, environmental  
10 experts, and community leaders to discuss the integration of  
11 traditional Hawaiian knowledge and management practices into  
12 public policy, education, and resource management; and

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14           WHEREAS, additional puwalu convened between 2006 and 2010  
15 gathered input from farmers, fishers, environmental advocates,  
16 educators, Native Hawaiian organizations, agencies, and  
17 governmental representatives, resulting in consensus on the need  
18 to integrate the traditional 'aha moku system into state  
19 governance and resource management policy; and

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21           WHEREAS, the Legislature enacted Act 288, Session Laws of  
22 Hawaii 2012, establishing the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee and  
23 administratively attaching it to the Department of Land and  
24 Natural Resources to advise the State on Native Hawaiian  
25 traditional and customary resource management practices; and  
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1 WHEREAS, the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee appears to have  
2 held meetings in 2013 and 2014 addressing organizational  
3 development, funding, communications, and the development of a  
4 strategic plan and reporting framework; and  
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6 WHEREAS, on October 20, 2016, the 'Aha Moku Advisory  
7 Committee reportedly adopted Rules of Practice and Procedure to  
8 govern its operations; and  
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10 WHEREAS, a resolution adopted at the November 2016 puwalu  
11 gathering referenced the adoption of those Rules of Practice and  
12 Procedure and expressed support for adherence to them; and  
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14 WHEREAS, a resolution adopted at the 2017 puwalu gathering  
15 expressed concerns regarding whether the 'Aha Moku Advisory  
16 Committee provided the representation required under existing  
17 law; and  
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19 WHEREAS, the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee receives annual  
20 state funding of approximately \$286,300 through the Department  
21 of Land and Natural Resources and is subject to public  
22 accountability and transparency standards; and  
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24 WHEREAS, as a public advisory committee, the 'Aha Moku  
25 Advisory Committee is subject to the Sunshine Law, which  
26 requires deliberations and decision-making to occur in properly  
27 noticed public meetings; and  
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29 WHEREAS, independent 'aha moku island councils and community  
30 groups exist separately from the statutorily established 'Aha  
31 Moku Advisory Committee and are not the subject of this measure;  
32 and  
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34 WHEREAS, concerns have been raised within the Native  
35 Hawaiian community regarding the administration, representation,  
36 and transparency of the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; and  
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38 WHEREAS, the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee has not  
39 consistently convened publicly noticed meetings, raising  
40 concerns regarding compliance with the Sunshine Law; and  
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1           WHEREAS, the Executive Director of the 'Aha Moku Advisory  
2 Committee has acknowledged that the Committee does not follow  
3 the Rules of Practice reportedly adopted on October 20, 2016;  
4 and

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6           WHEREAS, there is no publicly available record indicating  
7 that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee has repealed, amended, or  
8 formally discontinued those Rules of Practice; and

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10          WHEREAS, the absence of publicly available agendas,  
11 minutes, reports, and other administrative records has limited  
12 transparency and hindered public participation and oversight;  
13 and

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15          WHEREAS, although the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee employs  
16 an Executive Director, the lack of regular meetings,  
17 administrative records, budgetary accounting, and statutorily  
18 required reports raises concerns regarding oversight,  
19 governance, and accountability; and

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21          WHEREAS, because the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee has not  
22 convened a publicly noticed meeting for more than five years,  
23 there is no apparent mechanism for the Advisory Committee to  
24 manage or evaluate its Executive Director, including performance  
25 reviews, duties, or salary and budgetary decisions; and

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27          WHEREAS, questions have arisen regarding how the 'Aha Moku  
28 Advisory Committee is able to issue official positions,  
29 effectively manage and make salary decisions for their Executive  
30 Director, and review, monitor, and approve budgets and reports  
31 to the Legislature, without formally discussing and adopting  
32 positions and decisions in open meetings; and

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34          WHEREAS, advisory positions have been issued in the name of  
35 the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee without those matters being  
36 properly agendized, deliberated, and adopted at Sunshine  
37 Law-compliant meetings; and

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39          WHEREAS, consistent administrative and managerial policies  
40 are necessary to ensure accountability, effective oversight, and  
41 responsible stewardship of public resources; and



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2 WHEREAS, a comprehensive and independent review is  
3 necessary to ensure that the operations of the 'Aha Moku Advisory  
4 Committee align with statutory requirements, best practices in  
5 governance, fiscal prudence, and the public trust; now,  
6 therefore,

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8 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
9 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
10 of 2026, that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee is urged to follow  
11 and implement the Rules of Practice and Procedures reportedly  
12 adopted on October 20, 2016; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee  
15 is urged to fulfill all statutory duties, including complying  
16 with the Sunshine Law, holding regular meetings, ensuring  
17 transparency in decision-making, providing appropriate oversight  
18 of the Executive Director, and submitting required reports in a  
19 timely manner; and

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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that advisory positions issued in  
22 the name of the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee be adopted only  
23 through properly noticed public meetings in compliance with the  
24 Sunshine Law; and

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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee  
27 is urged to conduct a formal performance review of its Executive  
28 Director and to convene an open and properly noticed meeting to  
29 evaluate legal and administrative risks facing the Advisory  
30 Committee, including compliance with the Sunshine Law, statutory  
31 reporting requirements, and fiscal accountability; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee  
34 is urged to adopt appropriate administrative and managerial  
35 policies and procedures to promote consistent standards of  
36 accountability and effective governance; and

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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairperson of the Board of  
39 Land and Natural Resources is requested to exercise oversight to  
40 ensure that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee fulfills its



1 mandated purpose and operates in compliance with the Sunshine  
2 Law and other applicable legal requirements; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of the Auditor is  
5 requested to conduct a comprehensive performance and financial  
6 audit of the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; and

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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to  
9 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including  
10 any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than  
11 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of  
12 2027; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
15 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
16 Land and Natural Resources; Executive Director of the 'Aha Moku  
17 Advisory Committee; each member of the 'Aha Moku Advisory  
18 Committee; and Auditor.

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