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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the ocean economy,  
2 commonly referred to as the blue economy, represents one of the  
3 fastest-growing economic opportunities globally. The blue  
4 economy is the sustainable use of ocean and aquatic resources  
5 for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and job creation  
6 while preserving the health of oceanic and aquatic ecosystems.  
7 This includes a broad set of industries, including but not  
8 limited to marine construction, ship and boat building, marine  
9 transportation, energy, tourism and recreation, fisheries and  
10 other fishery-related businesses, aquaculture, marine  
11 biotechnology, ocean and coastal management, and conservation.  
12 The annual economic output of the blue economy is projected to  
13 double to an estimated \$3,000,000,000,000 by 2030.

14           The legislature further finds that Hawaii is already a  
15 national leader in the blue economy. As the United States' only  
16 island state, Hawaii's blue economy is substantial and growing,  
17 with the number of marine businesses in the State having



1 increased by twenty-three per cent within the past decade. This  
2 strength builds on the legacy, wisdom, and cultural ties that  
3 Native Hawaiians have cultivated with the ocean for centuries.

4       However, to remain competitive with other coastal states  
5 and with other countries, the State must act to modernize its  
6 approach and capitalize on its technology, infrastructure, and  
7 manufacturing advancements. These assets include marine  
8 biotechnology; autonomous maritime navigation; cybersecurity;  
9 shipping, ports, and harbors; and ocean data observation  
10 systems.

11       The legislature also finds that ocean clusters serve as  
12 engines of growth for more than fifty ocean industry development  
13 initiatives around the world. Successful examples exist  
14 nationally in San Diego and Washington and internationally in  
15 Iceland, Norway, and Singapore, where ocean clusters have  
16 catalyzed job creation, investment, innovation, and cross-sector  
17 collaboration.

18       Therefore, the legislature finds that designating and  
19 prioritizing Hawaii as an ocean cluster will further promote and  
20 expand the State's blue economy by leveraging existing strengths  
21 while supporting innovation, emerging opportunities, and



1 diversified economic growth. The Hawaii ocean cluster would  
2 encompass a broad range of blue economy activities, supported by  
3 technology, innovation, and Native Hawaiian knowledge as  
4 essential cross-cutting priorities.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 6 (1) Declare that the State is an ocean cluster;
- 7 (2) Establish the office of marine affairs and marine  
8 affairs task force within the Hawaii technology  
9 development corporation;
- 10 (3) Establish and appropriate funds for the marine affairs  
11 coordinator position;
- 12 (4) Repeal the powers and duties of the department of  
13 business, economic development, and tourism in marine  
14 affairs; and
- 15 (5) Transfer the personnel and functions of the governor's  
16 advisory committee on marine affairs to the office of  
17 marine affairs.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 206M, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
19 amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and  
20 to read as follows:

21 **"PART . MARINE AFFAIRS**



1           **§206M-A Declaration of intent.** The legislature declares  
2 it to be the purpose of this part to recognize and promote the  
3 State as an ocean cluster, a globally unique hub for ocean- and  
4 aquatic-centered culture, stewardship, economic opportunity, and  
5 innovation. The legislature recognizes that the State's status  
6 as the United States' only island state, strategic location in  
7 the Pacific Ocean, and history of Native Hawaiian knowledge in  
8 ocean navigation, regenerative marine resource management and  
9 ecosystem monitoring, and coastal resilience, uniquely position  
10 the State to lead the Pacific region in ocean- and aquatic-based  
11 industry development. The legislature further declares that  
12 actions taken under this part shall recognize the State's legacy  
13 within the blue economy while positioning the State as a global  
14 center of excellence for ocean- and aquatic-related activities.  
15 It is the intent of the legislature that the State's development  
16 as an ocean cluster benefits communities across the State  
17 through innovation that promotes cultural heritage and economic  
18 opportunity.

19           **§206M-B Definitions.** For the purposes of this part:  
20           "Blue economy" means industrial and economic activities  
21 that sustainably use ocean- and aquatic-related resources for



1 economic growth, improved livelihoods, and job creation while  
2 preserving the health of oceanic and aquatic ecosystems. "Blue  
3 economy" includes but is not limited to industries such as  
4 marine construction, ship and boat building, marine  
5 transportation, energy, tourism and recreation, fisheries and  
6 fishery-related businesses, aquaculture, marine biotechnology,  
7 ocean and coastal management, and conservation.

8 "Coordinator" means the marine affairs coordinator.

9 "Office" means the office of marine affairs.

10 "Task force" means the marine affairs task force.

11 **§206M-C Office of marine affairs; marine affairs task**

12 **force; establishment.** (a) There is established the office of  
13 marine affairs within the development corporation for  
14 administrative purposes only. The purpose of the office shall  
15 be to facilitate the development of marine affairs-related  
16 industries in the State. Duties of the office shall include but  
17 not be limited to:

18 (1) Developing and implementing a statewide marine affairs  
19 strategy that prioritizes the sustainable use,  
20 conservation, and stewardship of marine resources and  
21 encompasses:



- 1 (A) Research and education;
- 2 (B) Ecosystem management;
- 3 (C) Coastal resilience;
- 4 (D) Fisheries and ocean-based food systems;
- 5 (E) Marine tourism and recreation;
- 6 (F) Conservation and stewardship; and
- 7 (G) Marine transportation and logistics;
- 8 (2) Conducting comprehensive reviews of the status of
- 9 marine policy in the State at regular intervals;
- 10 (3) Identifying key challenges and opportunities for the
- 11 State in marine affairs;
- 12 (4) Collaborating with and supporting other public
- 13 entities working to develop the State's marine
- 14 industries;
- 15 (5) Promoting and developing technology-enabled marine
- 16 industries within the blue economy by:
- 17 (A) Developing and implementing a statewide ocean
- 18 technology and innovation development strategy
- 19 that complements the statewide marine affairs
- 20 strategy developed pursuant to paragraph (1);



- 1 (B) Conducting regular blue economy value chain  
2 assessments, including but not limited to  
3 maritime, aquaculture, coastal resilience, and  
4 ocean observation data to determine constraints,  
5 capital requirements, workforce gaps, and  
6 commercialization pathways;
- 7 (C) Identifying, evaluating, and proposing solutions  
8 to regulatory, capital, workforce,  
9 infrastructure, and permitting barriers to the  
10 growth and competitiveness of technology-enabled  
11 ocean industries in the State;
- 12 (D) Establishing a blue economy project and  
13 investment readiness program to facilitate the  
14 conversion of ocean innovation concepts into  
15 investable and deployable projects;
- 16 (E) Pursuing public, private, and federal funding to  
17 support ocean innovation and commercialization  
18 and the development of a robust ocean technology  
19 ecosystem;
- 20 (F) Developing advanced technologies to support  
21 marine industries, including but not limited to:



- 1 (i) Autonomous maritime navigation;
- 2 (ii) Digital and physical modernization of ocean
- 3 and coastal infrastructure;
- 4 (iii) Electrification of ports and harbors;
- 5 (iv) Marine biotechnology;
- 6 (v) Ocean and coastal monitoring and observation
- 7 systems; and
- 8 (vi) Regenerative technology innovations; and
- 9 (G) Recommending legislation and policies to
- 10 strengthen the State's competitiveness in the
- 11 blue economy and ocean technologies sectors;
- 12 (6) Serving as the State's coordinating entity for
- 13 technological advancement and economic development in
- 14 the blue economy; and
- 15 (7) Developing actionable recommendations for the governor
- 16 and legislature to reinvigorate the State's marine
- 17 affairs development strategy.
- 18 (b) The governing body of the office shall consist of a
- 19 marine affairs task force consisting of the following members:
- 20 (1) The chairperson of the board of land and natural
- 21 resources or the chairperson's designee;



- 1           (2) The chairperson of the board of agriculture and  
2           biosecurity or the chairperson's designee;
- 3           (3) The deputy director of the harbors division of the  
4           department of transportation or the deputy director's  
5           designee;
- 6           (4) The executive director of the natural energy  
7           laboratory of Hawaii authority or the executive  
8           director's designee;
- 9           (5) The chief executive officer of the Hawaii technology  
10          development corporation or the chief executive  
11          officer's designee;
- 12          (6) The executive director of the agribusiness development  
13          corporation or the executive director's designee;
- 14          (7) The chief energy officer of the Hawaii state energy  
15          office or the chief energy officer's designee;
- 16          (8) The chief executive officer of the office of Hawaiian  
17          affairs or the chief executive officer's designee;
- 18          (9) Two representatives from the university of Hawaii  
19          system, including:
  - 20                (A) The dean of the school of ocean and earth science  
21                and technology or the dean's designee; and



1 (B) The vice president of research and innovation or  
2 the vice president's designee; and

3 (10) Three representatives of the business sector with  
4 experience in the marine affairs field, including  
5 ocean shipping, ocean engineering, marine science and  
6 technology, consulting and public affairs, and marine  
7 research, who shall be invited by the chair to  
8 participate.

9 (c) Members shall be appointed in accordance with section  
10 26-34. The terms of the members shall be for four years. The  
11 task force shall select one of its members to serve as chair.  
12 No member of the task force shall receive any compensation for  
13 task force services, but shall be allowed reimbursement for  
14 necessary expenses for travel, board, and lodging incurred in  
15 the performance of task force duties.

16 **§206M-D Marine affairs coordinator; appointment; duties.**

17 (a) The office of marine affairs established pursuant to  
18 section 206M-C(a) shall appoint a marine affairs coordinator for  
19 the proper administration, enforcement, and facilitation of this  
20 part, without regard to chapter 76; provided that the  
21 coordinator shall be eligible for participation in state



1 employee benefit plans. Notwithstanding section 76-16(b) (17),  
2 this exemption from chapter 76 shall not expire. The salary of  
3 the coordinator shall be set by the governor.

4 (b) The marine affairs coordinator shall:

- 5 (1) Develop plans for future projects that align with the  
6 office's marine affairs strategy and statewide ocean  
7 technology and innovation development strategy,  
8 including objectives and criteria to measure the  
9 accomplishment of objectives; develop and implement  
10 programs through which the objectives are to be  
11 attained; and determine financial requirements for the  
12 total and optimum development of the State's marine  
13 resources based on the goals and needs of the State;
- 14 (2) Conduct systematic analyses of existing and proposed  
15 marine programs, evaluate the analyses conducted by  
16 state agencies, and recommend to the office, governor,  
17 and legislature programs that represent the most  
18 effective allocation of resources for the development  
19 of the blue economy;
- 20 (3) Assist departments having interests in marine affairs,  
21 including by assisting state agencies to develop and



- 1 analyze plans for future economic development projects  
2 relating to marine resources or technologies;  
3 coordinate activities that involve the  
4 responsibilities of multiple state agencies; and  
5 ensure the timely and effective implementation of all  
6 authorized marine projects and programs;
- 7 (4) Coordinate the dissemination of information related to  
8 the office's activities and the State's leadership  
9 potential as the center for marine affairs to the  
10 federal government, other state governments,  
11 governments of nations with interests in the Pacific  
12 basin, private and public organizations involved in  
13 marine science and technology, and commercial  
14 enterprises;
- 15 (5) Coordinate the State's involvement in national and  
16 international efforts to investigate, develop, and  
17 utilize the marine resources of the Pacific basin;
- 18 (6) Develop programs to continuously encourage private and  
19 public marine exploration and research projects that  
20 will result in the development of improved  
21 technological capabilities in the State;



- 1 (7) Formulate specific program and project proposals to  
2 solicit increased investment from the federal  
3 government and other sources to develop the State's  
4 marine resources and technologies and coordinate the  
5 preparation and submission of program and project  
6 proposals of state agencies;
- 7 (8) Serve as consultant on behalf of the office to the  
8 governor, state agencies, and private industry on  
9 matters relating to the preservation and enhancement  
10 of the quality of the State's marine environment;
- 11 (9) Perform other services as may be required by the  
12 office, governor, or legislature;
- 13 (10) Contract for services when required for the  
14 implementation of this part; and
- 15 (11) Prepare and submit an annual report to the governor  
16 and legislature on the implementation of this part and  
17 all matters related to marine affairs, including the  
18 office's findings, recommendations, and any proposed  
19 legislation no later than December 1 of each year."

20 SECTION 3. Section 201-13, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
21 repealed.



1       ~~["§201-13 Powers and duties of the department of business,~~  
2 ~~economic development, and tourism in marine affairs.~~ The

3 department of business, economic development, and tourism shall:

4       ~~(1) Assist state agencies in developing and analyzing~~  
5             ~~plans, including objectives, criteria to measure the~~  
6             ~~accomplishment of objectives, programs through which~~  
7             ~~the objectives are to be attained, and financial~~  
8             ~~requirements for the total and optimum development of~~  
9             ~~Hawaii's marine resources based on the needs and goals~~  
10            ~~of the State;~~

11       ~~(2) Develop and analyze plans for future economic~~  
12             ~~development projects, including objectives and~~  
13             ~~criteria to measure the accomplishment of objectives;~~  
14             ~~develop and implement programs through which the~~  
15             ~~objectives are to be attained; and determine financial~~  
16             ~~requirements for the total and optimum development of~~  
17             ~~Hawaii's marine resources based on the needs and goals~~  
18             ~~of the State;~~

19       ~~(3) Assist those departments having interests in marine~~  
20             ~~affairs, coordinate those activities which involve the~~  
21             ~~responsibilities of multiple state agencies, and~~



1           ~~encourage the timely and effective implementation of~~  
2           ~~all authorized marine projects and programs;~~  
3       ~~(4) Coordinate the dissemination of information to the~~  
4           ~~federal government, other state governments,~~  
5           ~~governments of nations with interests in the Pacific~~  
6           ~~basin, private and public organizations involved in~~  
7           ~~marine science and technology, and commercial~~  
8           ~~enterprises of Hawaii's leadership potential as the~~  
9           ~~center for marine affairs;~~  
10       ~~(5) Coordinate the State's involvement in national and~~  
11           ~~international efforts to investigate, develop and~~  
12           ~~utilize the marine resources of the Pacific basin;~~  
13       ~~(6) Develop programs to continuously encourage private and~~  
14           ~~public marine exploration and research projects which~~  
15           ~~will result in the development of improved~~  
16           ~~technological capabilities in Hawaii; and~~  
17       ~~(7) Formulate and assist state agencies in formulating~~  
18           ~~specific program and project proposals to solicit~~  
19           ~~increased investment by the federal government and~~  
20           ~~other sources to develop Hawaii's marine resources." ]~~



1 SECTION 4. The governor's advisory committee on marine  
2 affairs established by executive order is redesignated as the  
3 office of marine affairs established by section 206M-C, Hawaii  
4 Revised Statutes, and shall assume the functions prescribed by  
5 section 206M-C, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

6 The members presently serving on the governor's advisory  
7 committee on marine affairs shall continue to serve; provided  
8 that subsequent appointments to the office of marine affairs  
9 shall conform with the requirements of section 206M-C, Hawaii  
10 Revised Statutes. The chairperson of the board of land and  
11 natural resources, chairperson of the board of agriculture and  
12 biosecurity, deputy director of the harbors division of the  
13 department of transportation, executive director of the natural  
14 energy laboratory of Hawaii authority, chief executive officer  
15 of the Hawaii technology development corporation, executive  
16 director of the agribusiness development corporation, chief  
17 energy officer of the Hawaii state energy office, chief  
18 executive officer of the office of Hawaiian affairs, and  
19 representatives of the university of Hawaii system shall begin  
20 their service upon the effective date of this Act.



1 All officers and employees whose functions relate to the  
2 governor's advisory committee on marine affairs shall continue  
3 to serve but shall upon and after the effective date of this Act  
4 be considered employees of the office of marine affairs. The  
5 status of the employees shall not be affected by this Act,  
6 except for the redesignation of the committee.

7 SECTION 5. All rights, powers, functions, and duties of  
8 the governor's advisory committee on marine affairs are  
9 transferred to the Hawaii technology development corporation.

10 All officers and employees whose functions are transferred  
11 by this Act shall be transferred with their functions and shall  
12 continue to perform their regular duties upon their transfer,  
13 subject to the state personnel laws and this Act.

14 No officer or employee of the State having tenure shall  
15 suffer any loss of salary, seniority, prior service credit,  
16 vacation, sick leave, or other employee benefit or privilege as  
17 a consequence of this Act, and such officer or employee may be  
18 transferred or appointed to a civil service position without the  
19 necessity of examination; provided that the officer or employee  
20 possesses the minimum qualifications for the position to which  
21 transferred or appointed; and provided that subsequent changes



1 in status may be made pursuant to applicable civil service and  
2 compensation laws.

3 An officer or employee of the State who does not have  
4 tenure and who may be transferred or appointed to a civil  
5 service position as a consequence of this Act shall become a  
6 civil service employee without the loss of salary, seniority,  
7 prior service credit, vacation, sick leave, or other employee  
8 benefits or privileges and without the necessity of examination;  
9 provided that such officer or employee possesses the minimum  
10 qualifications for the position to which transferred or  
11 appointed.

12 If an office or position held by an officer or employee  
13 having tenure is abolished, the officer or employee shall not  
14 thereby be separated from public employment, but shall remain in  
15 the employment of the State with the same pay and classification  
16 and shall be transferred to some other office or position for  
17 which the officer or employee is eligible under the personnel  
18 laws of the State as determined by the head of the department or  
19 the governor.

20 SECTION 6. All appropriations, records, equipment,  
21 machines, files, supplies, contracts, books, papers, documents,



1 maps, and other personal property heretofore made, used,  
2 acquired, or held by the governor's advisory committee on marine  
3 affairs relating to the functions transferred to the office of  
4 marine affairs shall be transferred with the functions to which  
5 they relate.

6 SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general  
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to  
9 fund one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) marine affairs  
10 coordinator position within the Hawaii technology development  
11 corporation to support the office of marine affairs.

12 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii  
13 technology development corporation for the purposes of this  
14 part.

15 SECTION 8. In codifying the new sections added by section  
16 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute  
17 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating  
18 the new sections in this Act.

19 SECTION 9. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
20 and stricken.



**1** SECTION 10. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Hawaii Technology Development Corporation; Ocean Cluster; Office of Marine Affairs; Marine Affairs Task Force; Marine Affairs Coordinator; Reports; Transfer; Appropriation

**Description:**

Declares that the State is an ocean cluster. Establishes the Office of Marine Affairs and Marine Affairs Task Force within the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation. Establishes and appropriates funds for the Marine Affairs Coordinator position. Repeals the powers and duties of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism in marine affairs. Transfers the employees and functions of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs to the Office of Marine Affairs. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

