
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

1 WHEREAS, the State's coral reefs are critical to the
2 State's environment, culture, shoreline protection, and economy,
3 yet they are increasingly threatened by climate change,
4 pollution, 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 the State have demonstrated a
27 strong interest, research capacity, and leadership in coral reef
28 science, environmental stewardship, and community education; and



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



- 1 Commission, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
- 2 Resources, and Administrator of the Division of Aquatic
- 3 Resources.

