

MAR 10 2026

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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARINE LIFE CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT CARRYING CAPACITY STUDY TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A  
STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

1           WHEREAS, the State's marine life conservation districts  
2 protect vital marine ecosystems and support cultural practices,  
3 recreation, education, and local livelihoods; and  
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5           WHEREAS, increasing human use of nearshore areas, including  
6 activities considered non-extractive, can significantly affect  
7 marine ecosystems and resource health; and  
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9           WHEREAS, understanding human-use thresholds and ecological  
10 response is essential to ensure marine life conservation  
11 districts are effectively managed and protected; and  
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13           WHEREAS, carrying capacity studies are a critical tool for  
14 informing science-based management and long-term sustainability;  
15 and  
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17           WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources  
18 Division of Aquatic Resources' community-driven Holomua Marine  
19 Initiative identifies monitoring, which includes measuring  
20 conditions, tracking management outcomes, and using data to  
21 guide adaptive management, as a core pillar of improved marine  
22 management statewide; and  
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24           WHEREAS, the State would benefit from a coordinated,  
25 phased, and prioritized approach to conducting marine life  
26 conservation districts carrying capacity studies; and  
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28           WHEREAS, the collaborative management, monitoring, and  
29 stakeholder engagement associated with the Carrying Capacity  
30 Pilot Program for the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District,  
31 which was established by Act 31, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022,  
32 demonstrate the effectiveness of coordinated partnerships among



1 government agencies, researchers, community groups, and ocean  
2 users, and provide a successful model that may be adopted for  
3 marine life conservation districts statewide; now, therefore,  
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
6 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the  
7 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Land  
8 and Natural Resources is requested to convene and provide  
9 administrative support for a Marine Life Conservation District  
10 Carrying Capacity Study Task Force (Task Force); and  
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to  
13 develop a comprehensive statewide implementation framework to  
14 guide the future establishment of a Marine Life Conservation  
15 District Carrying Capacity Program (Program); and  
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to:

- 18 (1) Build an interdisciplinary planning framework for  
19 conducting marine life conservation districts carrying  
20 capacity studies;  
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- 22 (2) Develop a prioritized list and recommended sequencing  
23 for studies across marine life conservation districts  
24 statewide;  
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- 26 (3) Establish recommended study design standards,  
27 timelines, and update intervals;  
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- 29 (4) Identify staffing, technical, and administrative needs  
30 to implement the Program; and  
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- 32 (5) Identify and recommend necessary legislative  
33 appropriations, funding mechanisms, and resource  
34 requirements to establish and sustain the Program; and  
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is encouraged to  
38 include or invite representatives or designees from:

- 39 (1) The Department of Land and Natural Resources;  
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- 41 (2) County governments;  
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- (3) The University of Hawai'i;
- (4) Community-based marine resource stewardship organizations;
- (5) Commercial ocean recreation operators that operate in marine life conservation districts, including scuba and snorkel charter operators and surf schools; and
- (6) Other subject matter experts and stakeholders identified by the Department of Land and Natural Resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is urged to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation with appropriations for the formal establishment of the Program, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Mayor of each county of the State, and President of the University of Hawai'i.

OFFERED BY:

