

MAR 16 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, IN
CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
BIOSECURITY, TO ADOPT RULES TO PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL OCTOPUS
AQUACULTURE.

1 WHEREAS, efforts are underway in other regions to develop
2 and scale commercial octopus aquaculture, underscoring the
3 importance of proactivity considering the potential impacts of
4 such an industry on Hawaii's coastal ecosystems and implications
5 for animal welfare; and
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7 WHEREAS, the development of a commercial octopus
8 aquaculture industry, including land-based recirculating
9 aquaculture systems and open-circuit systems, would place
10 additional pressure on the State's finite land and coastal
11 resources through intensive coastal development, high energy
12 demands, large seawater withdraw and discharges, and the
13 generation of nutrient-rich waste and animal carcasses, with
14 implications for water quality, marine ecosystem health, and the
15 State's limited landfill and waste management capacity; and
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17 WHEREAS, pathogen spillover, pollution, and the escape of
18 non-native species associated with octopus aquaculture could
19 disrupt nearshore marine ecosystems, harming recreational and
20 subsistence fishers who harvest octopus for food, as well as
21 commercial fisheries dependent on healthy reef systems; and
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23 WHEREAS, octopus aquaculture would require large and
24 consistent inputs of animal-based feed, typically derived from
25 wild-caught fish and marine invertebrates, increasing pressure
26 on forage fisheries and marine food webs essential to the
27 State's nearshore ecosystems, local fisheries, and food
28 security; and
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30 WHEREAS, the cultural significance of the octopus in Native
31 Hawaiian traditions as a valued food source, a symbol of
32 intelligence and adaptability in stories, and an integral part
33 of traditional fishing and gathering practices, and therefore



1 recognizes a responsibility to safeguard the long-term health
2 and abundance of native octopus populations; and
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4 WHEREAS, octopus aquaculture raises serious animal welfare
5 concerns, as octopus are highly intelligent and solitary animals
6 with complex behavioral needs that veterinarians, scientists,
7 and animal welfare experts have identified as fundamentally at
8 odds with intensive confinement; and
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10 WHEREAS, there are no validated, commercially scalable
11 humane handling and slaughter methods for octopuses, potentially
12 resulting in chronic stress, aggression, cannibalism, and
13 compromised well-being; 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,
17 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in
18 consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity,
19 is requested to adopt rules prohibiting the commercial
20 aquaculture of any species of octopus, notwithstanding the
21 continued issuance of special activity permits for non-
22 commercial activities such as research and education that may
23 involve native species of octopus; and
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
26 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
27 Land and Natural Resources and Chairperson of the Board of
28 Agriculture and Biosecurity.
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OFFERED BY: Mike Gabbard

