

FEB - 9 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

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

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

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30 WHEREAS, public charter schools in the State, such as West
31 Hawai'i Explorations Academy on Hawai'i Island, have demonstrated
32 a strong commitment to the early education of students in ocean
33 protection and marine stewardship by integrating place-based,



1 experiential learning focused on Hawai'i's marine environments
2 into their curriculum; and
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4 WHEREAS, collaboration among the Department of Land and
5 Natural Resources, Department of Education, State Public Charter
6 School Commission, and interested students can strengthen coral
7 reef restoration efforts through education, outreach and
8 stewardship; now, therefore,
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10 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
11 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
12 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested
13 to collaborate with the Department of Education and State Public
14 Charter School Commission to develop and propose a Student Coral
15 Stewardship Program that assists with public education,
16 outreach, and reef-safe sunscreen awareness at state beaches;
17 and
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Coral Stewardship
20 Program is intended to be educational, voluntary, and non-
21 enforcement in nature, and may include student-led outreach,
22 educational materials, and community engagement activities
23 informed by current scientific research; and
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and
26 Natural Resources is requested to submit a report to the
27 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
28 the Regular Session of 2027 that summarizes collaborative
29 efforts, including input and perspectives from participating
30 students, and that presents any legislative, policy, or funding
31 recommendations necessary to advance coral reef protection and
32 student stewardship initiatives; and
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
36 Land and Natural Resources, Superintendent of Education, and



S.R. NO. 16

1 Executive Director of the State Public Charter School
2 Commission.

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OFFERED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.K. Mc", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.