

---

# SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES TO COLLABORATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION 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

5  
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

10  
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

15  
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

20  
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

25  
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

29  
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



1 protection and marine stewardship by integrating place-based,  
2 experiential learning focused on the State's marine environments  
3 into their curriculum; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, collaboration among the Department of Land and  
6 Natural Resources, Department of Education, State Public Charter  
7 School Commission, and interested students can strengthen coral  
8 reef restoration efforts through education, outreach and  
9 stewardship; now, therefore,  
10

11 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
12 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,  
13 that the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land  
14 and Natural Resources is requested to collaborate with the  
15 Department of Education and State Public Charter School  
16 Commission to develop and propose a framework for a Student  
17 Coral Stewardship Program that assists with public education,  
18 outreach, and reef-safe sunscreen awareness at state beaches;  
19 and  
20

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Coral Stewardship  
22 Program is intended to be educational, voluntary, and non-  
23 enforceable in nature, and may include student-led outreach,  
24 educational materials, and community engagement activities  
25 informed by current scientific research; and  
26

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division of Aquatic  
28 Resources is requested to submit a report to the Legislature no  
29 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular  
30 Session of 2027 that summarizes collaborative efforts, including  
31 input and perspectives from participating students, and that  
32 presents any legislative, policy, or funding recommendations  
33 necessary to advance coral reef protection and student  
34 stewardship initiatives; and  
35

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
37 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
38 Land and Natural Resources, Superintendent of Education,  
39 Administrator of the Division of Aquatic Resources, and  
40 Executive Director of the State Public Charter School  
41 Commission.

