

MAR 10 2026

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# SENATE 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  
4

5           WHEREAS, increasing human use of nearshore areas, including  
6 activities considered non-extractive, can significantly affect  
7 marine ecosystems and resource health; and  
8

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  
12

13           WHEREAS, carrying capacity studies are a critical tool for  
14 informing science-based management and long-term sustainability;  
15 and  
16

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  
33 government agencies, researchers, community groups, and ocean  
34 users, and provide a successful model that may be adopted for  
35 marine life conservation districts statewide; now, therefore,



1  
2 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
3 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,  
4 that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested  
5 to convene and provide administrative support for a Marine Life  
6 Conservation District Carrying Capacity Study Task Force (Task  
7 Force); and

8  
9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to  
10 develop a comprehensive statewide implementation framework to  
11 guide the future establishment of a Marine Life Conservation  
12 District Carrying Capacity Program (Program); and

13  
14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to:

- 15  
16 (1) Build an interdisciplinary planning framework for  
17 conducting marine life conservation districts carrying  
18 capacity studies;  
19  
20 (2) Develop a prioritized list and recommended sequencing  
21 for studies across marine life conservation districts  
22 statewide;  
23  
24 (3) Establish recommended study design standards,  
25 timelines, and update intervals;  
26  
27 (4) Identify staffing, technical, and administrative needs  
28 to implement the Program; and  
29  
30 (5) Identify and recommend necessary legislative  
31 appropriations, funding mechanisms, and resource  
32 requirements to establish and sustain the Program; and  
33

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is encouraged to  
35 include or invite representatives or designees from:

- 36  
37 (1) The Department of Land and Natural Resources;  
38  
39 (2) County governments;  
40  
41 (3) The University of Hawai'i;  
42



- 1 (4) Community-based marine resource stewardship
- 2 organizations;
- 3
- 4 (5) Commercial ocean recreation operators that operate in
- 5 marine life conservation districts, including scuba
- 6 and snorkel charter operators and surf schools; and
- 7
- 8 (6) Other subject matter experts and stakeholders
- 9 identified by the Department of Land and Natural
- 10 Resources; and
- 11

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is urged to  
13 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including  
14 any proposed legislation with appropriations for the formal  
15 establishment of the Program, to the Legislature no later than  
16 twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of  
17 2027; and

18  
19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
20 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
21 Land and Natural Resources, the Mayor of each county of the  
22 State, and President of the University of Hawai'i.

23  
24  
25 OFFERED BY:

