

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2517

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2944
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, to which was referred S.B. No. 2944 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CONSERVATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules that implement wildlife viewing guidelines that substantially conform to the wildlife viewing guidelines issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and
- (2) Require annual reports to the Legislature until rules are adopted.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from three individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee finds that, despite statewide viewing guidance, incidents continue to occur in which individuals approach, crowd, touch, or otherwise disturb wildlife, including Hawaiian green sea turtles and Hawaiian monk seals. Your



Committee is also aware that interactions between people and wildlife are subject to federal protections and viewing guidance, but the federal protections and guidelines require complementary state guidelines to effectively deter harmful incidents. This measure will raise public awareness and improve the well-being of the public and the State's wildlife by aligning state wildlife viewing guidelines with the corresponding federal guidelines.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2944, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2944, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Water, Land,
Culture and the Arts,



CHRIS LEE, Chair



