

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 24 , 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2972  
S.D. 1  
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Water & Land, to which was referred S.B. No. 2972, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO OAHU CORAL REEF RESTORATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to temporarily prohibit the nighttime spearing of any uhu or kala in state marine waters around Oahu, until regulations that will restore populations of uhu and kala suitable for the recovery of coral reefs are implemented by the Holomua Marine Initiative of the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition; Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force; The Nature Conservancy - Hawai'i and Palmyra; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; Friends of Hanauma Bay; Puakō For Reefs; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Your Committee finds that herbivorous fish populations have been severely depleted near centers of human population in Hawaii. Without these natural reef caretakers, coral reefs struggle to



recover from environmental stress, leading to ecosystem degradation that affects marine biodiversity, shoreline protection, and community well-being. The Division of Aquatic Resources established the Holomua Marine Initiative as a place-based, community-led process for developing a comprehensive island-wide strategy to effectively manage nearshore marine resources around each main Hawaiian island. While the Holomua Marine Initiative has implemented and established several improvements to the well-being of nearshore ecosystems, the Initiative has not yet adopted regulations to address coral reef restoration on Oahu.

Your Committee further finds that the temporary prohibition proposed by this measure may be premature and that expediting the Holomua Marine Initiative process to address coral reef restoration needs on Oahu instead would be a more efficient and effective approach.

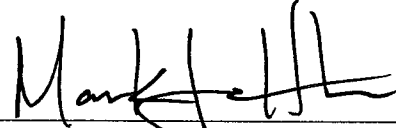
Your Committee has amended this measure accordingly by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have temporarily prohibited the nighttime spearing of any uhu or kala in state marine waters around Oahu;
- (2) Requiring the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources to begin the Holomua Marine Initiative process no later than July 1, 2026, to address coral reef restoration on Oahu;
- (3) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water & Land that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2972, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2972, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Water & Land,



---

MARK J. HASHEM, Chair



