



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
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**Date:** 04/16/2026

**Time:** 09:00 AM

**Location:** 411 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** WAL

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** SCR19, 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.

**Purpose of Bill:** 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.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to testify on SCR 19 SD 1 and offers comments.

SCR 19 SD 1 requests that the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) collaborate with the Department to develop a student coral stewardship program focused on public education, outreach, and reef-safe practices.

The Department agrees that students benefit from authentic, place-based learning experiences that connect science, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems offer meaningful opportunities for students to engage in science learning aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards, deepen their understanding of human impacts on natural systems, and contribute to the stewardship of Hawai'i's ocean environment.

While the Department supports the intent of this measure, implementation would require coordination across agencies and consideration of instructional time, school capacity, and existing programs. The Department appreciates the collaborative approach outlined in the resolution and looks forward to continued coordination with DAR and partners.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

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AQUATIC RESOURCES  
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CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Thursday, April 16, 2026  
9:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

In consideration of  
**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 19**  
**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.**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 19, Senate Draft 1 requests the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to collaborate with the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to develop and proposed a framework for a Student Coral Stewardship Program that assists with public education, outreach, and reef-safe sunscreen awareness at state beaches. **The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments and suggested amendments.**

The Department agrees that improving public education and awareness regarding reef-safe practices can help protect coral reefs. A Student Coral Stewardship Program that assists with public education, outreach, and awareness of reef-safe practices is a great way to provide students with increased knowledge and hands on experience with marine stewardship.

DAR would be happy to collaborate with the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission in the development of a framework for this program. DAR can provide information on the status of Hawai'i's coral reefs, key issues and threats facing them, and recommendations for reef-safe practices. However, the Department believes

that this effort, and any reporting on progress and recommendations, should be led by the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission. Therefore, the Department offers the following amendments to this measure, beginning on page 2, line 14 (amended language highlighted in yellow):

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, that ~~[the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested to collaborate with]~~ the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission, in collaboration with the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, is requested to develop and propose a framework for a Student Coral Stewardship Program that assists with public education, outreach, and reef-safe sunscreen awareness at state beaches; and

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ~~[Division of Aquatic Resources is]~~ Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission are requested to submit a report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027 that summarizes collaborative efforts, including input and perspectives from participating students, and that presents any legislative, policy, or funding recommendations necessary to advance coral reef protection and student stewardship initiatives; and

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.