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

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committee on  
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Monday, March 30, 2026  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of  
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 19  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
TO COLLABORATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND STATE  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A STUDENT  
CORAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 19 requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to collaborate with the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to develop a Student Coral Stewardship Program that assists with public education, outreach, and reef-safe sunscreen awareness at state beaches. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (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.

The Department would be happy to collaborate with the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission in the development of this program. The Department 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 to develop this student program, 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 12 (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, the House of Representatives concurring, that ~~[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 Department of Land and Natural Resources, is requested to develop and propose 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-enforcement 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 ~~[Department of Land and Natural 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.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/30/2026

**Time:** 01:00 PM

**Location:** CR 224 & Videoconference

**Committee:** WLA

**Department:** Education

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

**Title of Bill:** SCR19, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO COLLABORATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A STUDENT CORAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requesting The Department Of Land And Natural Resources To Collaborate With The Department Of Education And State Public Charter School Commission To Develop A Student Coral Stewardship Program.

**Department's Position:**

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

SCR 19 requests that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) 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 DLNR and partners.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.