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DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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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.

SR-16

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 1:30:12 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/30/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT for educating youth for stewardship of the coral reefs that are the basis for our tourism and recreational economy, fisheries, and shoreline protection!