
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DESIGNATION OF `AWA AS THE OFFICIAL STATE BEVERAGE.

1 WHEREAS, anthropological evidence suggests that `awa, as it
2 is called in Hawaiian, has been cultivated and consumed by
3 humans for well over three thousand years; and
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5 WHEREAS, historically, over a dozen types of `awa, or Piper
6 methysticum, were known in Hawai`i; and
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8 WHEREAS, in Hawai`i, these different variations were used
9 to name distinct varieties, recognized by those who knew the
10 plant well; and
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12 WHEREAS, in Hawai`i, `awa was commonly used until the end
13 of the nineteenth century; and
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15 WHEREAS, traditionally, `awa was considered to be a
16 beneficial herb for healthy individuals, but to be avoided by
17 the sick or infirm; and
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19 WHEREAS, `awa was considered not only a medicinal plant,
20 but it was consumed as a ceremonial beverage as well; and
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22 WHEREAS, in Hawai`i, `awa was used by the ali`i and kahuna,
23 as well as commoners, for medicinal purposes and also to promote
24 relaxation; and
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26 WHEREAS, in a traditional context, there were three major
27 kinds of `awa ceremonies:
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29 (1) Those held on formal occasions, such as to honor
30 ali`i;
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32 (2) Ceremonies performed at community meetings, such as
33 elder councils; and
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1 (3) Informal ceremonies; and

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3 WHEREAS, in Hawai`i, `awa was drunk during divination
4 ceremonies, naming of children aged one years old, the
5 consecrating of a male child, or initiating of young girls into
6 traditional hula and chanting; and

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8 WHEREAS, the feelings of camaraderie that `awa drinking
9 evokes has made it a symbol for peace and friendship in many
10 island nations of the Pacific; and

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12 WHEREAS, `awa is still used today by a wide range of
13 Pacific societies for spiritual, medicinal, and recreational
14 purposes; and

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16 WHEREAS, recently, `awa has seen a resurgence in popularity
17 in Hawai`i and elsewhere; and

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19 WHEREAS, due to this resurgence, the local demand for `awa
20 has outpaced the local industry's ability to supply it,
21 requiring many to purchase `awa from other Pacific island
22 sources such as Vanuatu; and

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24 WHEREAS, Hawai`i's rich cultural, historic, and ceremonial
25 traditions that are tied to `awa should be preserved and
26 fostered to ensure that this knowledge, experience, and
27 indigenous product is available for future generations of
28 Hawai`i residents; now, therefore,

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30 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
31 Twenty-third Legislature of the State of Hawai`i, Regular
32 Session of 2006, the Senate concurring, that `awa be considered
33 the official state beverage; and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Departments of Agriculture,
36 Land and Natural Resources, and Business, Economic Development,
37 and Tourism are urged to encourage the propagation, cultivation,
38 and production of `awa in the State; and

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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
41 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
42 Board of Agriculture, the Chairperson of the Board of Land and
43 Natural Resources, and the Director of Business, Economic
44 Development, and Tourism, the Chairperson of the Board of



1 Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the `Awa
2 Development Council.
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OFFERED BY:

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