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# SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
REPORT, "THE CORAL REEF OF SOUTH MOLOKAI, HAWAII: PORTRAIT  
OF A SEDIMENT THREATENED FRINGING REEF", ENCOURAGING  
FEDERAL, STATE, AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION TO STEWARD THE  
SOUTH MOLOKAI REEF FISHERY.

1           WHEREAS, in ancient times the people of the island of  
2 Moloka'i were known for producing abundant quantities of food, so  
3 much so that the island and its surrounding waters were known as  
4 "'Aina Momona", meaning "abundant land"; and  
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6           WHEREAS, the people of Moloka'i maintained a sustainable and  
7 self-sufficient food supply for over a thousand years; and  
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9           WHEREAS, the island of Moloka'i's unique east-west  
10 configuration and its south shore's protection from prevailing  
11 ocean swells have led to the establishment and continued growth  
12 of Hawai'i's largest fringing coral reef, known as the South  
13 Moloka'i Reef; and  
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15           WHEREAS, the South Moloka'i Reef has been a key resource for  
16 the maintenance of the island's wealth as a food producer, as  
17 evidenced by the fifty-plus traditional Hawaiian fishponds that  
18 still mark its shoreline as well as the enduring fishing  
19 traditions that continue to sustain the people of Moloka'i; and  
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21           WHEREAS, modernization and abandonment of traditional  
22 resource management have led to a severe decline of Moloka'i's  
23 fishery; and  
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25           WHEREAS, a century of cattle grazing, goat foraging, and  
26 other land-use practices have caused severe sedimentation that  
27 negatively impacts the South Moloka'i Reef; and  
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29           WHEREAS, in 1999, the United States Geological Survey began  
30 an in-depth study of the sedimentation crisis on the South  
31 Moloka'i Reef, including deployment of innovative quantitative  
32 measurement-and-analysis techniques, culminating in the 2008

1 publication of a report, "The Coral Reef of South Moloka'i,  
2 Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened Fringing Reef"; and  
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4 WHEREAS, the President of the Global Coral Reef Alliance,  
5 Thomas Goreau, states that the United States Geological Survey  
6 report on the South Moloka'i Reef provides "a level of  
7 documentation and insight that has never been available for any  
8 reef before"; and  
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10 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey report states  
11 that the South Moloka'i Reef has "major significance in terms of  
12 its intrinsic beauty, biodiversity, cultural importance, and as  
13 a local food resource," that it is "longer, more continuous, and  
14 has denser coral cover than reefs at any of the other (main  
15 Hawaiian) islands," and that "this alone makes it a state and  
16 national treasure worthy of study and protection"; and  
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18 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey report states  
19 that sediment run-off from the mauka lands "inhibits or prevents  
20 coral growth (on the reef)" and is a "first order cause of reef  
21 degradation"; and  
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23 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey report  
24 concludes that "there is encouraging evidence that, with enough  
25 will and local support, the condition of the reef can improve";  
26 and  
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28 WHEREAS, multiple community planning documents that have  
29 been produced by the people of Moloka'i, including the most  
30 recent one, "Molokai: Future of a Hawaiian Island," have  
31 consistently declared that protection of the South Moloka'i Reef  
32 and mitigation of land-based sedimentation impacts on the reef  
33 are first priorities of the island community; now, therefore,  
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35 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth  
36 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009,  
37 that the Senate expresses support of the United States  
38 Geological Survey report, "The Coral Reef of South Moloka'i,  
39 Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened Fringing Reef", and  
40 its conclusion that the overall condition of the South Moloka'i  
41 Reef can be improved; and  
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state agencies and federal  
2 agencies are encouraged to recognize and support the conclusions  
3 of the United States Geological Survey report, "The Coral Reef  
4 of South Moloka'i, Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened  
5 Fringing Reef"; and  
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate expresses  
8 recognition of and support for the community-based efforts to  
9 steward the South Moloka'i Reef fishery for continued subsistence  
10 use, beginning with a systematic restoration and reforestation  
11 of mauka lands; and  
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate expresses support of  
14 the use of the scientific findings as presented in the United  
15 States Geological Survey report, "The Coral Reef of South  
16 Moloka'i, Hawai'i: Portrait of a Sediment-Threatened Fringing  
17 Reef", and traditional Hawaiian conservation practices to  
18 preserve the health of the South Moloka'i Reef; and  
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate expresses its  
21 appreciation for the efforts of the United States Geological  
22 Survey scientists, researchers, and others for their innovative  
23 study of the South Moloka'i Reef over a decade; and  
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
26 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Mayor of Maui  
27 County, and the Director of the United States Geological Survey.