
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that coral reefs in
2 Hawaii and across the globe have been subject to immense stress
3 in recent decades because of human-caused climate change and
4 other factors including warming ocean temperatures, ocean
5 acidification, coral bleaching, severe storms, coastal
6 development, overfishing, and pollution from wastewater,
7 stormwater runoff, and sunscreen chemicals. Coral reefs,
8 sometimes referred to as the rainforests of the ocean, are one
9 of the most biodiverse ecosystems on the planet and provide a
10 habitat for many rare and endangered species. These reefs are
11 also immeasurably important to Hawaii's economy and way of life,
12 including Hawaii's tourism industry, food supply, recreation,
13 and coastal protection.

14 The legislature also finds that record-setting temperatures
15 have led to several wide-spread coral bleaching events in
16 Hawaii's waters in recent years. Coral bleaching occurs when
17 corals are stressed by increasing temperatures and exposure to



1 pollutants causing coral polyps to expel the symbiotic algae
2 that live in coral tissue. This causes corals to turn white,
3 and makes corals more vulnerable to disease, starvation, and
4 decay.

5 Following a bleaching event, macro algae can overtake a
6 reef and prevent reef recovery and the return of the symbiotic
7 algae that corals depend on. High nutrient levels in polluted
8 waters and the absence of a sufficient amount of herbivorous
9 fish to graze on the algae and prevent overgrowth make these
10 algal blooms more likely to occur.

11 The legislature acknowledges that while Hawaii's laws offer
12 herbivorous fish some protections in marine protected areas and
13 fish replenishment areas, the legislature believes that ensuring
14 healthy populations of herbivorous fish in all of Hawaii's
15 waters is essential to protect Hawaii's coral reefs from
16 extinction.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
18 department of land and natural resources to adopt rules to
19 protect the herbivorous fish that are necessary for the health
20 of coral reefs throughout the State.



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1 SECTION 2. The department of land and natural resources
 2 shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised
 3 Statutes, to protect herbivorous fish in all fresh, brackish, or
 4 salt waters of the State, including but not limited to coastal
 5 waters, streams, rivers, drainage ditches, ponds, reservoirs,
 6 canals, ground waters, and lakes.

7 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
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H.B. NO. 1847

Report Title:

DLNR; Herbivorous Fish; Protection; Rulemaking

Description:

Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules to protect herbivorous fish in all state waters.

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