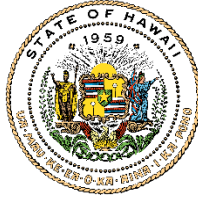
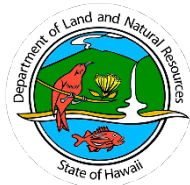


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committees on
WATER & LAND
and
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Thursday, April 13, 2023
8:45 AM**

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 325

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 41
DESIGNATING HAWAII'S CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL NATURAL
INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRONGLY SUPPORTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS
SUCH AS CORAL REEF RESTORATION FOR RISK REDUCTION**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 designates Hawai'i coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure.**

Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 26-15(b), the Department is responsible for managing and administering the aquatic and terrestrial wildlife resources of the State, including coral reefs. In Hawai'i, coral reefs serve as the first line of defense to shoreline erosion and tidal flooding related events. This is because coral reefs act as natural breakwaters, dissipating up to 97% of wave energy impacting shorelines and trapping sediment. This wave energy attenuation service is valued around \$836 million annually when considering people, property, and jobs.

Hawai'i coral reefs are threatened by the effects of climate change including sea level rise, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification. Other stressors include land-based sources of pollution, impacts to groundwater discharge, unsustainable fishing practices, anchor damage, and invasive species. Hawai'i has experienced three major coral bleaching events in the past eight years

DAWN N. S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

resulting in 40% live coral cover loss in some areas. As these hazards continue to threaten this ecosystem, the State must be proactive in protecting and restoring our coral reefs.

The effort to protect and restore coral reefs is already underway in the Department through the operation of a coral restoration nursery, regular monitoring of reef health, invasive species prevention and control, and management of nearshore fisheries. However, to further support these efforts, the Department would like to utilize the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program, which can provide a 3:1 match with \$2 billion - \$4 billion available funds annually for competition throughout the United States and associated territories. The formal designation of coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure demonstrates the Legislature's political support for nature-based solutions to combat climate change impacts and increases our likelihood of receiving funding through FEMA's HMA program towards coral reef protection and restoration in Hawai'i.

Additionally, this designation will promote an awareness of conservation and restoration for an important natural resource. Not only do coral reefs provide shoreline protection services, but they also provide a way of life for the people of Hawai'i through sustenance, economy, and recreation. It is estimated that annually coral reef fisheries provide 7 million meals to the people of Hawai'i, of which about 5 million are sourced from non-commercial catches. Also, coral reef associated tourism contributes \$1.23 billion to the State's economy. Furthermore, coral reefs support an intrinsic value and identity to communities rooted in culture, tradition, and recreation.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 will support the Department's continued management of coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure and support nature-based solutions to combat climate change in the State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



SCR41

DESIGNATING HAWAII'S CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRONGLY SUPPORTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS SUCH AS CORAL REEF RESTORATION FOR RISK REDUCTION

House Committee on Water & Land

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

April 13, 2023

8:45 AM

Room 325

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend to the Board of Trustees, **SUPPORT** for SCR41, which would designate Hawai'i's coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure, while offering Legislative support for nature-based solutions such as coral reef restoration. **OHA acknowledges the critical nature of Hawai'i's coral reefs to Hawai'i, generally, and wishes to express that coral reef ecosystems are integral to traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, culture, and identity.**

OHA understands that it is not enough to rely solely on “nature-based solutions” to better preserve, protect, and conserve ‘āina (the natural world). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change stated:

“Indigenous, local and traditional knowledge systems and practices, including indigenous peoples’ holistic view of community and environment, are a major resource for adapting to climate change [...] Integrating such forms of knowledge with existing practices increases the effectiveness of adaptation.”¹

“Indigenous knowledge can be a unique source for techniques for adaptation and may be favoured [sic] over externally generated knowledge.”²

“Indigenous knowledge is an important source of guidance for biodiversity conservation, impact assessment, governance, disaster preparedness and resilience.”³

Here in Hawai'i, it is the traditional knowledge systems and practices of Native Hawaiians that are indispensable for the preservation, protection, and conservation of ‘āina. OHA takes care to note that it is of critical importance to the responsible advancement and perpetuation of Native Hawaiian culture and identity to support Native Hawaiian

¹ IPCC, AR5 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2014, P.19.

² IPCC, AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2022, P.469.

³ Id. at 526.



SCR41
DESIGNATING HAWAII'S CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL NATURAL
INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRONGLY SUPPORTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS
SUCH AS CORAL REEF RESTORATION FOR RISK REDUCTION
House Committee on Water & Land
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

participation and even leadership in the development, implementation, and use of Native Hawaiian knowledge in nature-based solutions for the better future of Hawai'i and the people who call these Islands, home.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and respectfully urges the Legislature to **PASS SCR41**. Mahalo nui loa.

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:46:51 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are in strong support for this reso.

Mahalo



To: The Honorable Chairs Linda Ichiyama and Nicole Lowen, The Honorable Vice-chairs Mahaina Poepoe and Elle Cochran, and members of the Committees on Water and Land and Energy and Environment

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing SCR41 **DESIGNATING HAWAII'S CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRONGLY SUPPORTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS SUCH AS CORAL REEF RESTORATION FOR RISK REDUCTION.**

Hearing: Thursday, April 13, 2023, 8:45 a.m., Room 325

Aloha Chairs Ichiyama and Lowen, Vice-chairs Poepoe and Cochran, and members of the Committees on Water and Land and Energy and Environment:

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition STRONGLY SUPPORTS SCR41!

The islands of Hawai'i include environmental resources such as coral reefs that, if healthy, effectively managed, and functioning, can help mitigate the risks and related loss and damage from floods and the effects of climate change and natural disasters. Studies have shown that healthy coral reefs can absorb up to ninety-seven percent of wave energy. One study has estimated that Hawaii's coral reefs protect \$836,000,000 worth of coastal infrastructure from flooding annually.

The State's coastal areas and infrastructure face climate change-related risks and disaster events, including exposure to storms, high wave events, sea level rise, and flooding. Climate scientists and other experts predict an increase in the number and severity of hurricanes, higher levels of rainfall in fewer storm events, increasing sea surface temperatures, and increased ocean acidification, which will negatively impact coral reefs. Coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs, that serve as a first line of defense are being lost at alarming rates. Live coral cover has declined by as much as forty percent in some areas.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is responsible for responding to natural disasters and providing technical and financial hazard mitigation support. This support is primarily distributed as grant funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs. Coral reef restoration for risk reduction is an active restoration strategy with the aim of increasing the structural integrity and complexity of coral reef ecosystems to attenuate wave energy and reduce coastal flooding. A recent report by The Nature Conservancy concluded that **coral reef restoration for risk reduction is a cost-effective hazard mitigation strategy in Hawai'i.**

Legislative recognition of coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure demonstrates political support for nature-based solutions, and the level of a State's political support is an important metric when the Federal Emergency Management Agency directs activities and funding toward coral reef restoration for risk reduction projects.

The Legislature should designate Hawaii's coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure and strongly support nature-based solutions such as coral reef restoration for risk reduction.

We thank the committees for hearing this important measure and respectfully urge your passage of SCR41!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)



*Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments,
emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay*

COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair

Rep. Elle Cochran, Vice Chair

DATE:	Thursday, April 13, 2023
TIME:	8:45 A.M.
PLACE:	VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE Conference Room 325

Re: Strong Support for SCR41

Aloha Chair Ichiyama and Chair Lowen; Vice Chair Poepoe and Vice Chair Cochran; and members of the House Water and Land and Energy and Environmental Protection Committees:

Friends of Hanauma Bay **Strongly Supports SCR41** designating Hawaii's coral reefs as critical infrastructure and strongly supporting nature-based solutions such as coral reef restoration for risk reduction.

Hawaii's coral reefs are critical to the environmental, cultural, and economic health of our State, yet they continue to face increasing existential threats.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides financial assistance to all states, territories, and federally recognized tribal governments of the United States through its Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs, including its Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program.



*Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments,
emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay*

Legislative recognition of coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure demonstrates political support for nature-based based solutions, and the level of a State's political support is an important metric when the Federal Emergency Management Agency directs activities and funding toward coral reef restoration for risk reduction projects.

Mahalo for hearing and supporting SCR41 that is critically important to our coral reefs!

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop
President
Friends of Hanauma Bay

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting SCR 41, Designating Hawai'i's coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure and
strongly supporting nature-based solutions such as coral reef restoration for risk reduction.**

**Committee on Water and Land
Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
April 13, 2023, 8:45 am
Conference Room 325 and via Videoconference**

Aloha Chairs Ichiyama and Lowen, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Cochran, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SCR 41, Designating Hawai'i's coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure and strongly supporting nature-based solutions such as coral reef restoration for risk reduction.

The coral reefs that line our coasts are environmental, economic, recreational, and cultural treasures that support our island lifestyle and livelihoods. Each year, they also provide flood protection to people, property, and jobs valued at more than \$836 million, support nearshore fisheries worth \$13.4 million, and contribute more than \$1.2 billion through reef-related tourism to the state's economy. Studies have shown that coral reefs' structure can protect against natural hazards by reducing up to 97% of wave energy reaching the shoreline, resulting in less coastal flooding onshore.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides billions of dollars in hazard mitigation assistance to reduce or eliminate long-term disaster risks. FEMA is now embracing nature-based solutions (utilizing natural processes to provide increased resilience) as a viable and preferred hazard mitigation solution. Most of these programs require State or local government to apply for funding, and Hawai'i's recognition of coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure will help in future applications for FEMA funding.

Coral reefs are an important nature-based solution to coastal hazards for Hawai'i and we can potentially be a model to showcase healthy coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure that helps our communities become more resilient in the face of natural disasters, climate change, and other stressors. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on SCR 41.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and Palmyra is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and work in over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.

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Founders: Samuel A. Cooke Herbert C. Cornuelle

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 8:46:52 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Culbertson	Big Island Reef Keepers hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support for SCR 41!

R A Culbertson

Honokaa

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:28:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion K A Kapuniai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

THIS BILL DESIGNATES AND SUPPORTS EFFORTS TO MITIGATE FURTHER RISK OF DETERIORATION, BUT FAILS TO IDENTIFY WHO OR WHAT ORGANIZATION SHOULD TAKE ON THE KULEANA TO RESEARCH, DEVELOP PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES, RECOMMEND A FUNDING STRUCTURE, AND REPORT TO THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

I JUST SAW AN EXCELLENT PIECE ON PUBLIC TELEVISION BY THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII OCEAN SCIENCE AND THE MAUI OCEAN CENTER SHARING THE DETRIMENT OF OUR CORAL REEFS.

Thank you, M Kapuniai

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 9:57:50 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SCR41 which will encourage our leaders to fund coral reef restoration and other measures to protect our critically important coral reefs.



Restore the Commons

Thursday, April 13, 2023, 2:00 pm

House Committees on Water and Land and on Energy and Environmental Protection

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 41:

DESIGNATING HAWAII'S CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND
STRONGLY SUPPORTING CORAL REEF RESTORATION FOR RISK REDUCTION

Position: Strong support

Me ke Aloha, Chairs Ichiyama and Lowen, Vice-Chairs Poepoe and Cochrane, and Members of the House Committees on Water and Land and on Energy and Environmental Protection:

Hawaii's indigenous and kama'āina are all-too-familiar with the crucial role of coral in our fragile habitat, particularly the importance of the fragile fishery and the several land-based threats to its sustainability by careless land management practices. Fewer may be aware of the importance of live corals to the resilience of reefs against storm impacts. Dead reefs become brittle and no longer provide the wave-absorbing attributes we take for granted. Of course, dead reefs do not support an important number of staples in the island diet, including migrating pelagic species in this freshwater oasis in the vast saltwater desert of Moana Nui.

We recognize that our reefs have been poorly managed since the usurpation of native Hawaiian practices, even though we nominally recognize these as somehow important. We have allowed overfishing, cesspool contamination, contaminant spills, and land runoff of sediments and other contaminants. It is remarkable that ocean currents have helped dilute and disperse these contaminants, but the state of our reefs is not healthy. If we are to persist much longer into this century, we need to cultivate greater respect for the great qualities they represent, and begin to manage more intelligently. This will require key research, maintenance, wise rules of use, and better land management.

This pair of resolutions provides for greater attention to these matters, by identifying them as critical infrastructure against violent wave action and for an essential food sources and refuge for pelagic species, provided by nature, and by encouraging greater efforts for research and understanding of better management practices to protect and to encourage the flourishing of coral reefs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this issue,

/s/ Charley Ice, Hoa'āina;

Retired Hydrologist, Commission on Water Resource Management (25 years), protecting the nearshore environment with the Division of Aquatics, Aha Moku, and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
Acting Chair of the Food Security and Agriculture Committee of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party; Co-chair of the Energy & Climate Action Committee of the Environmental Caucus

**Building the new normal with People and Land: Food Security Health Care Public Banking
Regenerating Soils Cutting Waste Eliminating GHG emissions**

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 12:04:32 PM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 2:01:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Spencer Hisatake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fully Support this effort. Would like to also identify some of the root causes that is effecting the reef systems not on Oahu but to also identify the Axis Deer, Muflon Sheep and other animals that are ripping the land up in Maui County (all three Islands Maui, Molokai, Lanai) up-rooting the ground that is causing massive run-off into the reef system.

Committee on Water & Land

Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Elle Cochran, Vice Chair

Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023

Time: 8:45 A.M.

Place: Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

In Support of SCR41

Aloha Chair Ichiyama and Vice Chair Poepoe; Chair Lowen and Vice Chair Cochran and Committee Members on Water & Land and Committee members on Energy & Environmental Protection

My name is Amalie Persson and I am in **support** of SCR41, designating Hawaii's coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure and strongly supporting nature-based solutions such as coral reef restoration for risk reduction.

Protection of Hawaii's coral reefs is essential for ecosystem support, prevention of coastline erosion, and natural disaster prevention. Coral reefs support diverse underwater ecosystems of fish and other species. They provide both shelter and food which species need to survive. Having a healthy reef allows for the fishing industry to continue as Hawaii typically brings in around \$50 million annually. Coral reefs also help protect coastline erosion and infrastructure as reefs can absorb ninety-seven percent of wave energy. This protects beaches and properties from damage caused by storms and large waves.

Hawaii's coral reefs are at high risk for being permanently destroyed due to coral bleaching, pollution, getting damaged by humans, and increase in ocean acidification. These reasons are why I stress my support for this bill so that coral reefs can be protected and restored before it's too late.

I would like to thank the committee for giving me an opportunity to speak and for taking the time to listen. Mahalo!

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 9:41:53 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Reefs support us and natural solutions best

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 10:57:28 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the Water and Land Committee and the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee,

I'm testifying in strong support of SCR41.

With increasing impacts to our oceans Hawaii needs to pass bills and resolutions protecting and restoring our coral reefs.

Designating our coral reefs as critical natural infrastructure and an important part of nature-based solutions is a strong start.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Virginia Tincher, Oahu

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 11:28:03 AM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Geyer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

SUPPORT SCR41. Our coral reefs are in extreme danger of dieing out completely in the next decade or so due to climate change. Please do everything in your power to protect them, including passing this resolution.

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 6:43:20 PM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitlyn Stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony Presented Before the House Committee on Water and Land/Energy and Environment Protection

April 13, 2023 at 8:45 am

by

Kaitlyn Stewart, Student

University of Hawai'i at Manoa

SUPPORT OF SCR41- DESIGNATING HAWAII'S CORAL REEFS AS CRITICAL NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRONGLY SUPPORTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS SUCH AS CORAL REEF RESTORATION FOR RISK REDUCTION.

Chair Linda Ichiyama and Nicole E. Lowen, Vice Mahina Poepoe and Elle Cochran, and Members of the Committee:

I am Kaitlyn Stewart, a student at University of Hawaii. I am currently a junior within the social work program at the Myron B Thompson school of social work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testifying in support of SCR41

There would be benefits impacting oceanic life and the economic system of Hawaii if this bill was passed.

The environmental gain if coral was classified as critical natural infrastructure would be tremendous. This classification would allow reefs to gain proper protection by policies already in place that would benefit their lifespan. There are manuals and procedures to protect ocean life if they are classified as natural infrastructure and coral reefs would benefit from this change.

The economic system of Hawaii is a beneficiary of coral reef and this bill would lead to great stability within the community. According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, coral reef ecosystems “protect coastlines from storms and erosion, provide jobs for local communities, and offer opportunities for recreation”. The importance of coral reefs goes far beyond oceanic life and impacts thousands of humans, as well as Hawaii’s economic system.

Long term impact of this bill would be more job opportunities for local communities, and a better ocean ecosystem.

Thank you for your time.

Kaitlyn Stewart

SCR-41

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 6:50:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 4/13/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of [SCR41](#).

Thank you.