
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO PROTECT
HAWAII'S WATERS AND RESOURCES BY PROHIBITING SEABED MINING.

1 WHEREAS, the ocean is of significant economic,
2 environmental, and cultural importance to the State; and

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4 WHEREAS, over millennia, Native Hawaiians have developed a
5 unique and sacred relationship with the ocean, in which the
6 health of the ocean is essential to the health of the islands of
7 Hawaii and its people; and

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9 WHEREAS, the waters of the State are known to contain
10 living resources in the form of abundant and diverse marine
11 biodiversity; and

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13 WHEREAS, the waters of the State are known to contain
14 mineral resources in the form of polymetallic nodules on abyssal
15 plains and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts on seamounts; and

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17 WHEREAS, there is a critical lack of rigorous scientific
18 information regarding the potential negative impacts that seabed
19 mining could cause on ocean health, from the deep ocean to the
20 coasts, through:

- 21
22 (1) The production of large, persistent sediment plumes
23 that could have negative impacts on seafloor and
24 midwater species and ecosystems;
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26 (2) Direct loss of unique, fragile, and ecologically
27 important species and populations as a result of
28 habitat degradation or elimination, some even before
29 they have been discovered;
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- 1 (3) The interruption of important ecological functions in
- 2 midwater and benthic ecosystems;
- 3
- 4 (4) The resuspension and release of metals and toxins that
- 5 might contaminate seafood;
- 6
- 7 (5) Noise pollution arising from seabed mining that could
- 8 cause physiological and behavioral stress to marine
- 9 mammals and other marine species; and
- 10
- 11 (6) Uncertain impacts on ecosystem services including
- 12 ocean carbon sequestration and storage dynamics, as
- 13 well as fisheries; and
- 14

15 WHEREAS, these and other impacts could, individually or
 16 collectively, cause impossible-to-reverse harm to ocean
 17 biodiversity, ocean ecosystems, marine ecosystem functioning,
 18 and human well-being; and

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 20 WHEREAS, in September 2021, members of the International
 21 Union for Conservation of Nature passed a motion calling for a
 22 moratorium on deep seabed mining, the issuance of new
 23 exploitation and new exploration contracts, and the adoption of
 24 seabed mining regulations for exploitation, including
 25 "exploitation" regulations by the International Seabed
 26 Authority; and

27
 28 WHEREAS, as of November 2022, six hundred fifty-three
 29 marine science and policy experts from more than forty-four
 30 countries have signed a public statement recommending that the
 31 transition to the exploitation of mineral resources be paused
 32 until sufficient and robust scientific information has been
 33 obtained to make informed decisions regarding whether seabed
 34 mining can be authorized without significant damage to the
 35 marine environment and, if so, under what conditions; and

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 37 WHEREAS, Hawaii's waters provide residents approximately
 38 \$13,400,000 in fishing income annually, of which approximately
 39 \$10,000,000 is from non-commercial catch; and

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1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's waters also provide an estimated
2 \$1,230,000,000 in tourism-related income annually, including but
3 not limited to income attributable to marine mammals; and
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5 WHEREAS, the health and sustainability of the State's
6 communities and economy are closely intertwined with the health
7 of the State's ocean ecosystems; and
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9 WHEREAS, the health and function of Hawaii's waters are
10 threatened by global stressors related to climate change, and by
11 local stressors from land-based sources of pollution,
12 unsustainable fishing practices, and invasive species; and
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14 WHEREAS, protection of deep-sea ecosystems is essential to
15 mitigating the impacts of climate change and preventing further
16 rises in atmospheric carbon dioxide, as the deep ocean below one
17 thousand meters contains eighty percent of the carbon stored in
18 the ocean; and
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20 WHEREAS, the United States, as the only maritime power that
21 has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the
22 Sea, bears responsibility to fully utilize its power to
23 safeguard its own waters from the exploitative national security
24 interests of foreign entities; now, therefore,
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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
27 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023, the
28 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Land
29 and Natural Resources is urged to prohibit mining of the seabed
30 within Hawaii state waters; and
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and
33 Natural Resources is requested to take actions to prevent
34 transboundary impacts of seabed mining from other jurisdictions,
35 including areas beyond national jurisdiction; and
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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of
38 Transportation is requested to prohibit the use of state ports
39 by commercial vessels affiliated with seabed mining in other
40 jurisdictions, including areas beyond national jurisdiction; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,
3 Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director
4 of Transportation, and Mayor of each county.

