

MAR 10 2023

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO MINIMIZE  
HUMAN INTERACTION AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS DURING CORAL  
SPAWNING EVENTS.

1           WHEREAS, Native Hawaiians have a unique and sacred  
2 relationship with the ocean and corals, in which the health of  
3 the corals and ocean are essential to the health of the islands  
4 of Hawaii and its people; and

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6           WHEREAS, healthy coral reefs are critical to the economic,  
7 cultural, and environmental well-being of Hawaii; and

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9           WHEREAS, coral reefs in Hawaii and worldwide are currently  
10 threatened by oceans becoming warmer and more acidic, sediments,  
11 sewage and runoff nutrients, and other factors; and

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13           WHEREAS, to protect our economy, connections to culture,  
14 and environment, Hawaii should act to encourage greater coral  
15 survival; and

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17           WHEREAS, cauliflower coral, also known as head coral, rose  
18 coral, or Ko'a in Hawaiian, is a major reef-building coral that  
19 protects Hawaii's shorelines and provides habitat for fish and  
20 crab; and

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22           WHEREAS, many cauliflower coral colonies experienced  
23 bleaching and death from 2014-2016 due to abnormally high ocean  
24 temperatures; and

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26           WHEREAS, these events and other stressors have left the  
27 cauliflower coral imperiled, though not officially endangered,  
28 throughout a significant portion of its range in Hawaii; and

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30           WHEREAS, cauliflower corals reproduce by spawning, in which  
31 the corals synchronize their release of massive numbers of eggs  
32 and sperm to spread over a broad area during, or a few days  
33 after, the full moon once a year in April or May, and this event  
34 can be predicted reliably by the National Oceanic and  
35 Atmospheric Administration; and



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WHEREAS, cauliflower coral's fertilized eggs form free-floating coral larvae that die at a high rate unless they settle into a reef; and

WHEREAS, coral larvae survive interferences/activity at higher rates if they are not disturbed by human interaction such as swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving in the first few days after they form; and

WHEREAS, the Kohala Center's Kahalu'u Bay Education Center on Hawaii Island has been educating visitors to minimize human interaction during spawning for several days per year since 2020; and

WHEREAS, there have been increases in juvenile cauliflower corals in Kahalu'u Bay as a result of these efforts to minimize human contact after spawning; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the successful program at Kahalu'u Bay, the Department of Land and Natural Resources has ordered brief spawning closures at Wai'akea Bay State Park, providing a strong foundation for extending closures to other suitable areas; and

WHEREAS, more reef-building cauliflower corals could survive without human interaction in the few days after spawning; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2023, that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is urged to determine priority locations around the State where minimizing human interaction immediately after cauliflower coral spawning may contribute to greater coral reef formation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested to take actions to support healthier coral reefs, including public education, to minimize human interaction following coral spawning periods; and



# S.R. NO. 106

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the  
3 Board of Land and Natural Resources, and Mayor of each county.

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OFFERED BY

