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# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO WORK WITH THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER EXPERTS TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE POPULATION STATUS OF DEPLETED CORAL REEF HERBIVORES AROUND THE ISLAND OF OAHU AND DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE POLICIES FOR SUBSTANTIALLY REPLENISHING THOSE POPULATIONS WITHIN A DECADE.

1           WHEREAS, coral reefs provide extremely valuable ecosystem  
2 goods and services for the people of Hawaii, including habitat  
3 for nearshore fisheries, opportunities for various tourism and  
4 recreational activities, coastal protection from waves, storms,  
5 and erosion as sea level rises; and

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7           WHEREAS, reefs are also fundamental to the fabric of local  
8 communities, providing a source of food, materials, and  
9 traditional activities; and

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11           WHEREAS, Hawaii's coral reefs generate over \$800,000,000  
12 per year in gross revenues, with coral reefs in the main  
13 Hawaiian Islands having an estimated total economic value of  
14 over \$33,000,000; and

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16           WHEREAS, many reefs around the island of Oahu are degraded  
17 from poor land use practices, resulting in reefs dominated by  
18 dead coral covered by seaweeds; and

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20           WHEREAS, maintenance and recovery of coral reefs requires  
21 abundant and diverse herbivores, which are fishes that eat  
22 seaweeds, including parrotfishes (uhu), surgeon fishes (kala,  
23 kole, manini, etc.), chubs (nenu), and others; and

24  
25           WHEREAS, parrotfishes are also known producers of sand that  
26 replenishes beaches; and

27



1 WHEREAS, abundant and diverse populations of coral reef  
2 herbivores are known to keep reef surfaces clean so corals may  
3 flourish; and

4  
5 WHEREAS, declining coral reef herbivore populations result  
6 in reefs dominated by seaweeds rather than corals, reducing  
7 fishing opportunities and impacting other goods and services;  
8 and

9  
10 WHEREAS, the abundance of coral reef herbivores around the  
11 island of Oahu is five percent below its potential, the lowest  
12 in the State; and

13  
14 WHEREAS, coral reef herbivores are frequently targets of  
15 spearfishing at night around the island of Oahu when the fish  
16 are inactive and highly vulnerable, resulting in unsustainable  
17 exploitation and unreported catch; and

18  
19 WHEREAS, ever-increasing ocean warming has caused coral  
20 bleaching events that kill corals and are predicted to occur  
21 every year in Hawaii before 2040; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, reefs that bleach are known to recover more  
24 quickly and fully when coral reef herbivores are abundant; and

25  
26 WHEREAS, current statewide herbivore fishing rules are  
27 insufficient to replenish herbivore populations around the  
28 island of Oahu before coral bleaching becomes an annual event;  
29 now, therefore,

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31 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second  
32 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the  
33 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of Land  
34 and Natural Resources is requested to:

- 35  
36 (1) With support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
37 Administration Pacific Islands Fisheries Science  
38 Center and other experts, to conduct a study on the  
39 population status of individual species and families  
40 of coral reef herbivores around the island of Oahu,  
41 prioritizing the severely depleted uhu and kala  
42 populations; and



1  
2 (2) Conduct an analysis of alternative policies for  
3 substantially replenishing populations of coral reef  
4 herbivores around the island of Oahu within the  
5 decade; and  
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and  
8 Natural Resources is requested to submit a report of its  
9 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
10 legislation, to the Legislature no later than December 1, 2024;  
11 and  
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
14 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the  
15 Board of Land and Natural Resources and Administrator of the  
16 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.  
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OFFERED BY: 

