

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1475-24

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 28 , 2024

RE: H.C.R. No. 124

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Water & Land, to which was referred H.C.R. No. 124 entitled:

"HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO CONVENE A SEARCH AND RESCUE WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO DETER HIKERS FROM ENTERING ILLEGAL HIKING TRAILS AND TO ADDRESS RISING SEARCH AND RESCUE COSTS FACING THE STATE AND COUNTIES DUE TO INCREASED ILLEGAL HIKING TRAFFIC,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request the Department of Law Enforcement to convene a Search and Rescue Working Group to develop and make recommendations to deter hikers from entering illegal hiking trails and address rising search and rescue costs facing the State and counties due to increased illegal hiking traffic.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Law Enforcement and two individuals.

Your Committee finds that hiking is a popular outdoor activity to enjoy the State's unique natural environment. Your Committee further finds that certain areas within the numerous hiking trails available to the public throughout the State pose safety concerns and consequently have been closed to the public. Despite warnings, some individuals and groups unlawfully enter

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trails that have been closed to the public due to safety concerns, ultimately putting themselves at risk of significant injury and risking damage to native habitats and other natural resources that may be in those closed areas for preservation purposes.

Your Committee also finds that an increase in hiking in Hawaii requires more emergency responders to be readily available in case hikers are in need of search and rescue, increasing the risks posed to emergency responders. Your Committee notes that the State and counties of Hawaii incur significant costs associated with the rescue of hikers who choose to go on illegal hikes and often ignore signs prohibiting access, with each rescue costing upwards of thousands of dollars, and nearly one thousand rescues are made every year in Hawaii. Because of the considerable costs associated with the search and rescue of individuals who willfully disregard their and others' safety by ignoring warning signs, your Committee believes that it is critical to develop policies concerning hiking that encourage public safety and accountability.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water & Land that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.C.R. No. 124 and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Water & Land,

FOR   
LINDA ICHIYAMA, Chair



