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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE STATE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO ADVOCATE FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL LAWS TO REDUCE GHOST NETS ENTERING THE STATE FROM INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND TAKE OTHER ACTIONS TO REDUCE MARINE DEBRIS FROM FISHING GEAR.

1           WHEREAS, discarded or lost fishing nets in the ocean,  
2 otherwise known as ghost nets, entangle, injure, and kill  
3 hundreds of thousands of marine animals and coral reefs every  
4 year; and

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6           WHEREAS, because ghost nets are non-biodegradable, these  
7 fishing debris can pollute the ocean for up to six hundred years  
8 after initially entering the ocean; and

9  
10          WHEREAS, international waters are the most common location  
11 for fishing vessels to dump ghost nets; and

12  
13          WHEREAS, one hundred fifteen thousand pounds of ghost nets  
14 wash in from international waters to the reefs of  
15 Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Papahānaumokuākea)  
16 annually, harming coral reefs and marine wildlife; and

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18          WHEREAS, there is a backlog of ghost net accumulation of  
19 approximately one million pounds in Papahānaumokuākea, despite  
20 ongoing clean-up efforts by government agencies and non-profit  
21 organizations; and

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23          WHEREAS, Papahānaumokuākea encompasses 582,578 square miles  
24 of marine conservation area and is home to twenty-three  
25 endangered species, including the Hawaiian monk seal, green sea  
26 turtle, and humpback whale; and

27



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1 WHEREAS, between 2006 and 2014, eighty-seven endangered  
 2 Hawaiian monk seals in Papahānaumokuākea were recorded as  
 3 entangled in ghost nets; and

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 5 WHEREAS, the International Maritime Organization's London  
 6 Dumping Regime and International Convention for the Prevention  
 7 of Pollution from Ships Annex V specifically prohibit discharge  
 8 of synthetic ropes and fishing gear; and

9  
 10 WHEREAS, the International Law of the Sea allows states to  
 11 take action against vessels entering their ports if there is  
 12 evidence that they have abandoned or negligently lost fishing  
 13 gear, although gear is not marked in such a way as to trace  
 14 ownership; now, therefore,

15  
 16 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
 17 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
 18 Session of 2024, the Senate concurring, that the State's  
 19 congressional delegation is requested to:

- 20  
 21 (1) Advocate for the enforcement of existing international  
 22 laws to reduce ghost nets entering the State from  
 23 international waters;  
 24  
 25 (2) Advocate for the establishment of a requirement for  
 26 United States fishing vessels to mark their fishing  
 27 gear; and  
 28  
 29 (3) Create financial incentives to retrieve and dispose of  
 30 floating fishing gear; and

31  
 32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
 33 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the State's  
 34 Congressional delegation.

35  
 36  
 37 OFFERED BY:

*Lisa Mertes*

MAR - 8 2024

