

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1967 -24

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 01 , 2024

RE: H.R. No. 178

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.R. No. 178 entitled:

"HOUSE 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,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to request 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.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Friends of Hanauma Bay.

Your Committee finds that discarded or lost fishing nets in the ocean, otherwise known as ghost nets, entangle, injure, and kill hundreds of thousands of marine animals and coral reefs every year. Because ghost nets are non-biodegradable, these fishing debris can pollute the ocean for up to six hundred years after initially entering the ocean.

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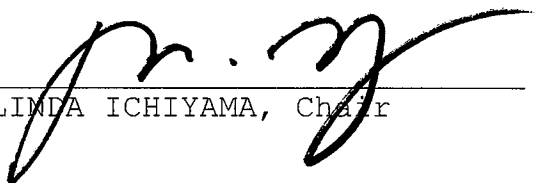


Your Committee further finds that international waters are the most common location for fishing vessels to dump ghost nets, and one hundred fifteen thousand pounds of ghost nets wash in from international waters to the reefs of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Papahānaumokuākea) annually, harming coral reefs and marine wildlife. Your Committee notes that there is a backlog of ghost net accumulation of approximately one million pounds in Papahānaumokuākea, despite ongoing clean-up efforts by government agencies and non-profit organizations.

Your Committee also finds that the International Maritime Organization's London Dumping Regime and International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships Annex V specifically prohibit discharge of synthetic ropes and fishing gear. The International Law of the Sea allows states to take action against vessels entering their ports if there is evidence that they have abandoned or negligently lost fishing gear, although gear is not marked in such a way as to trace ownership. Your Committee believes that the United States Congress should take action to reduce ghost nets entering in Hawaii.

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.R. No. 178 and recommends its adoption.

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

*FOR*   
LINDA ICHIYAMA, Chair



