

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii went from having one of the lowest unemployment rates of any state in the United States to one of the highest, leaving many skilled and promising young people out of work. Given the impact that prolonged youth unemployment can have on the lifetime earnings and well-being of individuals, the limited work opportunities for youth and young adults require action on the part of the State.

The legislature further finds that the Civilian Conservation Corps was a work relief program created in 1933 to employ Americans during the Great Depression through conservation projects of local, state, and national benefit, providing opportunities for displaced young adults. The State of Hawaii established the Hawaii youth conservation corps, which provided young people with opportunities in conservation on a much smaller scale. This program currently operates within the policies set out under chapter 193, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Nationally and in Hawaii, the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps continues through local and state service and conservation corps, especially those accredited under the national corps network.

The legislature also finds that during the regular session of 2020, the legislature passed Act 9, Session Laws of Hawaii 2020 (Act 9), which used funds designated for the State by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act to establish a workforce and training program that, among other accomplishments, funded a short-term green jobs program in partnership with the nonprofit Kupu. Under the Kupu Aina Corps, over three hundred fifty displaced workers and recent graduates were matched with work and training opportunities across the State. Kupu's partnership with conservation and agricultural host sites enabled individuals to work in their own communities while also giving back to Hawaii's economy and environment.

The legislature additionally finds that more must be done in order to support the diversification of Hawaii's economy, but that the program established under part XV of Act 9 is no longer active.

The purpose of this Act is to enable the same benefits of the workforce program under Act 9 in terms of economic diversification and stimulus, but with a greater focus on young adults, and placing it within an existing, permanent program established in law under the administration of the agency most familiar with conservation and oversight of a conservation corps. While retaining the State's existing authority to administer the existing program, this Act also provides the authority to administer a green jobs youth corps in partnership with a qualified community organization.

SECTION 2. Section 193-32, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"~~§193-32~~¹ **Administration.** To carry out the program authorized by this part, the governor may:

- (1) Enter into an agreement or agreements, or designate the department of land and natural resources, or any other state department or de-

- partments as the state agency or agencies to enter into an agreement or agreements, with the proper authorities of the United States;
- (2) Designate the department of land and natural resources, or any state department or departments to design programs to provide healthful outdoor training and employment for young persons and to advance the conservation, development, and management of natural resources and recreational areas, in accordance with the applicable federal law; provided that the designated department or departments may also adopt appropriate rules under chapter 91 to carry out the programs so designed;
- ~~[(3) Designate the department of land and natural resources to administer or enter into an agreement or agreements for the administration of a green job youth corps program that provides temporary work and training opportunities in one or more of the following fields: natural resource management, agriculture, conservation, renewable energy, or other sustainability professions. The program shall prioritize work and training opportunities for young adults who are between twenty years of age and forty years of age and economic diversification; provided that the department of land and natural resources shall partner with organizations that have experience providing similar programming in the State; and~~
- (4) (3) Defray one-half of all costs incurred with respect to the programs or any other proportion of the costs of the programs, which may be required by the applicable laws of the United States, out of any moneys appropriated to the department or departments designated to participate in the programs, without regard to the original purpose of the appropriations[-]; and
- (4) Designate the department of land and natural resources to administer or enter into an agreement for the administration of a green jobs youth corps to provide temporary work and training opportunities in one or more of the following fields:
- (A) Natural resource management;
- (B) Agriculture; or
- (C) Other sustainability-related professions;
- provided that these opportunities shall be available to young adults who are thirty-eight years of age or younger; provided further that the department shall partner with an organization that received accreditation from the Corps Center of Excellence Accreditation Program or has at least ten years of experience providing similar programming statewide in the State, or both.”

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$5,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the green jobs youth corps as provided in this Act; provided that the sum appropriated shall be used only for the payment of salaries for not more than one thousand participants with experience in the green jobs youth corps for a period of nine to twelve months, subject to sufficient funds; provided further that notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the department of land and natural resources and its partner or partners shall be permitted to obtain and utilize federal or other outside funding for the purpose of matching state funds provided for the green jobs youth corps.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

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SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

(Approved June 8, 2022.)

Note

1. So in original.