

## ACT 230

H.B. NO. 819

A Bill for an Act Relating to Limu Kala.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that limu holds ecological and cultural significance to the State. Four endemic species of limu kala grow in Hawaii waters: *S. echinocarpum*, *S. hawaiiensis*, *S. obtusifolium*, and *S. polyphyllum*. Limu kala grows in the nearshore ecosystem and is abundant seasonally in many intertidal and subtidal habitats, including tidepools and reef flats in areas with moderate to high wave action.

The legislature further finds that limu is a critically important component of a healthy and productive reef ecosystem. Limu is a primary producer and the base of the nearshore marine food chain. Herbivorous fish rely on limu to survive and due to a steep decline of limu throughout Hawaii, there has been a correlating decline in fish abundance. Limu kala is used as a traditional bait for reef fish, including species of kala fish, also known as unicornfish, and lack of limu knowledge and limu awareness hinders any work or effort to increase the nearshore fish population. Limu, especially limu kala, is also an important habitat for many marine creatures and is a key indicator of the health and resilience of the ahupuaa.

The legislature additionally finds that limu is an important food source; is rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber; and has many uses for traditional medicine. Limu kala is used to treat minor cuts and scratches, and has many uses for Native Hawaiian cultural ceremonies. Limu kala, specifically, is used in the conflict resolution process of ho‘oponopono and in the protection of ocean voyagers. While much of the limu-based cultural knowledge has been lost over many generations, the recapture, retention, and sharing of limu cultural knowledge will benefit the nearshore fishery and all people of Hawaii for future generations.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to designate the limu kala as the official limu of the State.

SECTION 2. Chapter 5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“§5- State limu.** Limu kala (*Sargassum echinocarpum*), the Hawaiian word for the water plant endemic to Hawaii, is adopted, established, and designated as the official limu of the State.”

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.<sup>1</sup>

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 6, 2023.)

**Note**

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.