



CITY COUNCIL

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Brian J. Neilson
Dept. of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Aquatic Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 330
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

April 27, 2021

Re: Support for Waikiki Marine Life Conservation District Coral Restoration Project

Dear Mr. Neilson,

This letter is provided to express our strong support for the State of Hawaii's proposal for coral restoration within the Waikiki Fisheries Management Area (FMA). This project will use existing resources at the Division of Aquatic Resources' Hawaii Coral Restoration Nursery (HCRN) to produce large living coral modules for outplanting in a concentrated area within Waikiki FMA, thereby enhancing shallow-water marine tourism for the area.

The work of the HCRN is crucial to preserving and restoring valuable reef resources, particularly in the face of vulnerability from tourism and environmental pressures, and their previous work speaks loudly to the benefits of the program for restoring Hawaii's degraded nearshore reefs. This project provides an opportunity to expand the benefits of the HCRN to degraded areas within one of Oahu's few no-take areas. Waikiki is a primary destination for tourism, and this project would contribute to an enhanced free and maintained reef snorkeling experience that will also help relieve intense visitor pressure on reef habitats around the island. In addition, the proposed work will support revival of Hawaii's tourism industry following the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I've had the opportunity to personally see HCRN's current facilities and the great work done by the organization. It is also clear to me that there is a clear and critical need to provide additional facility space that will allow HCRN to move to a more hardened biosecure facility. I thus encourage the reviewers to support funding of this project, as it is in alignment with goals for restoration of both nearshore reef environments and Hawaii's post-pandemic recovery.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 808-768-5004.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tommy Waters". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Councilmember Tommy Waters

District 4 (*Hawaii Kai, Kuliouou, Niu Valley, Aina Haina, Wailupe, Waialae-Iki, Kalani Valley, Kahala, Wilhemina Rise, Kaimuki, portions of Kapahulu, Diamond Head, Black Point, Waikiki, and Ala Moana Beach Park*)