



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

April 27, 2021

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

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

Dear Mr. Neilson,

I write in strong support of 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. HCRN's 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 tourist destination, and this project would contribute to an enhanced free and maintained reef snorkeling experience that will also relieve intense visitor pressure on reef habitats around the island. In addition, the proposed work will support Hawaii's tourism industry overcome the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the foregoing and, as importantly, the alignment of this project with the goals of restoring nearshore reef environments and Hawaii's post-pandemic economy, I strongly urge your favorable consideration of this coral restoration project. Your funding will enable the needed expansion of the HCRN's coral restoration efforts to improve Hawaii's reef habitats as well as to enhance recreation opportunities for visitors and local communities alike.

Sincerely,

Senator Sharon Moriwaki