HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO FACILITATE MOLOKINI SHOAL MARINE LIFE CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMERCIAL USE PERMIT REVISION AND REISSUANCE BY CONSULTING AND PROVIDING ADVANCED NOTICE TO PERMITTEES.

WHEREAS, the ocean tourism industry is a vibrant and important industry to the State of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the National Ocean Economics Program has reported that Hawaii's direct ocean economy generated $5.4 billion in 2004, which represents about 10.7 percent of the State's gross domestic product; and

WHEREAS, this industry employs almost 100,000 people with total wages exceeding $2.5 billion, making Hawaii the lead state for employment in the ocean economy sector; and

WHEREAS, the health of the ocean tourism industry is dependent upon the health of Hawaii's unique yet fragile ocean environment; and

WHEREAS, the ocean and its resources must be managed to accommodate not only commercial operators, but all the people of Hawaii, including those with recreational and cultural interests in such resources; and

WHEREAS, a limited number of commercial tour operators have the privilege to conduct tours to the Molokini Shoal Marine Life Conservation District under permits issued by the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), which are typically issued for a set amount of time and subject to certain terms and conditions; and

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WHEREAS, these terms and conditions are important for the maintenance of a pristine ocean environment at Molokini, and must be adjusted from time to time to respond to legitimate concerns regarding the future health of ocean resources; and

WHEREAS, these terms and conditions may also have an important economic impact on the operation of the tours, the conduct of passengers, employment and sales contracts, working conditions, advertising materials, and the fulfillment of expectations by those who pay to participate in such tours; and

WHEREAS, thorough discussion with affected operators prior to the establishment of new permit terms and conditions may alleviate unnecessary impacts on their operations, while still providing for the resource protection concerns that fall under the primary responsibilities of DLNR; and

WHEREAS, advance notice of new permit terms and conditions may also provide operators adequate time to adjust their operations to further alleviate such impacts; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that DLNR, through its various divisions and by use of its regulatory authority, is hereby requested, where possible, and with due consideration for the protection of marine resources to:

(1) Ensure that Molokini Shoal tour operators are provided with no less than 90 days written notice of any new final permit conditions; and

(2) Seek the input of Molokini Shoal tour boat operators for the advisability, practicality, and ease of implementation of any proposed new permit conditions; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Natural Land and Resources.

OFFERED BY:

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