WHEREAS, cacao, derived from the *theobroma cacao* tree, is the dried and fermented seed from which chocolate is obtained, native to the central and western Amazon region and is widely distributed throughout the humid tropical regions with commercial production concentrated in Brazil, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Nigeria; and

WHEREAS, cacao was first introduced to the Hawaiian Islands in 1850; Hawai‘i's environment and climate position it as the only state in the United States that can commercially grow cacao and as the state which is in close proximity to both Asia and mainland U.S.A and is ideally located to capture and prosper from the opportunities of a growing cacao market which currently generates $75 billion worldwide annually; and

WHEREAS, Asia has already developed into a major chocolate market with Japan experiencing significant increases in chocolate consumption during the past decade and leading hotels and businesses are offering chocolate tastings to educate consumers on cacao's benefits; and

WHEREAS, according to E. Guittard Chocolate, Hawai‘i-grown cacao is currently enjoying a price premium two to four times higher than fine flavor cacao that is traded in world markets; and

WHEREAS, cacao butter, rich in specific antioxidants is used as a medicine for healing bruises and is also utilized in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries; the alkaloid found in the cacao seed, theobromine (xantheose), is a stimulant similar to coffee and theobromine is also used in medicine today.
as a vasodilator (blood vessel widener), a diuretic and heart stimulant; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that the cacao industry is poised to heighten the State's economy with a broad range of job opportunities and increased revenue from diversified agriculture, production and processing, in addition to research and development with the potential to attract federal funds; further, cacao possesses a propitious opportunity to develop a new industry in the growing, cultivating, processing, and shipping of Hawai‘i-grown cacao to the mainland United States and the rest of the world; and

WHEREAS, House Concurrent Resolution 216 was adopted in 2003, supporting the many benefits of Hawai‘i-grown cacao to our state and diversified agriculture and House Concurrent Resolution 270 was adopted in 2008, which called for a task force to devise a plan to expedite the introduction and delivery of Hawaiian Cacao to the marketplace; and

WHEREAS, the cacao industry in Hawai‘i is in its infancy stage with fewer than 30 growers and a total acreage of approximately 50 acres and holds the promise of helping diversified agriculture markets and the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH-CTAHR) has conducted series of meetings including the one-day workshop entitled "Future of Cacao in Hawai‘i" held October 23, 2008, involving key stakeholders in the local cacao industry and representatives statewide to strategize on methods for positioning Hawai‘i in the growing cacao market; and

WHEREAS, although some progress has been made in promoting Hawai‘i-grown cacao, the Legislature finds that additional effort is needed to accelerate the growth of the cacao industry, increase the manufacture and supply of locally grown cacao, promote its use and products; and

WHEREAS, worldwide, chocolate festivals have achieved outstanding success for international tourist destinations; and locally, the Hawai‘i Cacao Festival at Haleiwa Farmers' Market in January 2010 reflected highest attendance ever with sold-out
tours and vendors, promising success for agri-tourism, and the 9th Annual Kona Chocolate Festival & Symposium will take place April, 2010 in Kealakekua, Big Island, and next year the Hawai‘i Chocolate Festival is scheduled for February 2011 at Aloha Tower Marketplace; and

WHEREAS, the month of February the Nielsen Company reports, reflects high chocolate consumption nationally, with consumers purchasing more than 58 million pounds of chocolate, producing upwards of $345 million in sales; 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 the legislature hereby urges the Governor through the Department of Agriculture to prioritize cacao as the crop that Hawaii can most benefit from and for the purpose of economic growth and job creation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and the Director of the Department of Agriculture.

OFFERED BY: 

[Signatures]