WHEREAS, increasing population growth and mounting demands on natural resources have raised public concern over Hawaii's carrying capacity and created a pressing need for the implementation of sustainable solutions; and

WHEREAS, the concept of sustainable development was explained by the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development as, "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs"; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Legislature officially embraced sustainability as a guiding principle in the future development and land use management of the Hawaiian Islands, and subsequently created the Hawaii 2050 Task Force (Task Force); and

WHEREAS, the role of the Task Force was to guide the creation of the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan, which focused on respecting the host culture, history, and natural resources of the islands, as well as striking a balance between economic, social, communal, and environmental priorities; and

WHEREAS, in the native Hawaiian land tenure system, Hawaii's natural resources were valued primarily for their self-sustaining benefits and extended from the mountains to the sea and afforded its habitants agricultural products from lowlands
and mid-elevation lands, forest products from the uplands, and
more significantly, marine products from the fishponds; and

WHEREAS, the ahupua'a (land management) system recognized
the interconnectedness of island ecosystems, whose health was
necessary to the survival of native Hawaiian communities; and

WHEREAS, to increase the provision of proteins for ancient
Hawaiian populations, extensive fishpond systems were
constructed by Hawaiian settlers as early as the 13th century,
and by the early 19th century nearly 350 fishponds were in
operation throughout the Hawaiian Islands; and

WHEREAS, the fishponds contained a diverse array of fish
species, which included awa (milkfish), 'ama'ama (mullet),
'awa'awa (ten pounder), and ahole (flagtail), as well as 'opae
(shrimp), and several varieties of limu (seaweed); and

WHEREAS, while some attempts have been made to restore
fishponds to functioning fish production farms, none constitute
models of economic sustainability, where the money generated is
used to maintain the ponds and support the community; and

WHEREAS, increasing costs of food and energy worldwide have
highlighted the vulnerability of Hawaii's economy because of its
dependence on imports for most of its food, energy, and income;
and

WHEREAS, the diversification of Hawaii's economy and
agricultural base through such initiatives as the development of
fish farms would enable the State to be self-sufficient; and

WHEREAS, the development of native Hawaiian fishponds as
actively producing fish farms serves not only as a valuable and
viable aspect of agricultural diversification, but also provides
important cultural, educational, and environmental benefits to
the people of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the traditional and current scientific knowledge
regarding the building, managing, and use of native Hawaiian
fishponds has the potential to play a vital and viable role in restoring Hawaii's fragile ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being historically important, native Hawaiian fishponds are ecologically highly productive zones, as they are, in essence, small artificial reconstructed estuaries; and

WHEREAS, because the construction of fishponds is labor intensive, communal support is an integral feature of their successful restoration; 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 Department of Agriculture (DOA), Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) are requested to:

1. Investigate the feasibility of using native Hawaiian fishpond construction as a foundation in the development of a new sustainable aquaculture industry in Hawaii;

2. Develop a list of recommendations regarding the feasibility of developing a new sustainable model for culture-based aquaculture development in Hawaii; and

3. Promote and encourage all efforts to enhance aquaculture ventures that incorporate native Hawaiian fishpond construction in the effort to create a sustainable and economically sound future for Hawaii;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED DOA, DLNR, and DBEDT are requested to report back to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Chairperson of the Board of Land and
Natural Resources, and Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

OFFERED BY:    

FEB 25 2010