HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ENCOURAGING ALL STATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES TO COOPERATE AND ASSIST KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION WITH TECHNICAL, ENGINEERING, OR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT IN HELPING THE ISLAND OF KAHO'OLAWE TO RECOVER FROM THE DEVASTATING FIRE THAT BEGAN ON FEBRUARY 22, 2020.

WHEREAS, on February 22, 2020, a large brush fire ignited on the western end of the island of Kaho'olawe; and

WHEREAS, the fire blazed for days, with Maui firefighting crews unable to actively combat the fire because of the danger of unexploded ordnance still present on Kaho'olawe, including rifle bullets and other munition from the over fifty years the United States Navy used Kaho'olawe for bombing practice; and

WHEREAS, since the United States Navy conveyed deed of ownership of Kaho'olawe to the State of Hawaii in 1994, about sixty-five percent of the island has been cleared of surface unexploded ordnance, while ten percent has been cleared to a depth of four feet; and

WHEREAS, the remaining twenty-five percent of the island, or 6,690 acres, is uncleared; and

WHEREAS, during the first days of the fire, the fire swept past Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission's base camp located on the western end of the island; and

WHEREAS, the terrain on the western end of Kaho'olawe, consisting of invasive non-native grasses and shrublands, made the highly fire-susceptible, non-native grasses contributing factors to the extent and intensity of the Kahoolawe fire; and
WHEREAS, though Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission's Honokanai'a base camp was initially spared from severe fire damage, Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission's upland field storage area suffered complete loss of several storage structures, including equipment, supplies, and materials that were stored in the buildings; and

WHEREAS, the loss of several motor vehicles, construction equipment, and all-terrain vehicles are especially worrisome since those things are essential to maintain the island infrastructure and carry out Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission's restoration efforts; and

WHEREAS, despite tradewinds that made extinguishing the fire more difficult, after six days, heavy rains on Kaho'olawe began to douse and put out the fire; and

WHEREAS, all told, the Kaho'olawe fire burned about nine thousand acres, or about one-third of the island of Kahoolawe; and

WHEREAS, Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission now begins the long road to recovery and restoring its ability to conduct effective and long-term ecological restoration efforts on Kaho'olawe; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, the Senate concurring, that all state departments and agencies are urged to cooperate and assist Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission with technical, engineering, or logistical support in helping the island of Kaho'olawe to recover from the devastating fire of February 22, 2020; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and Executive Director of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission.

OFFERED BY:

[Signatures]