URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO ADDRESS MICROPLASTICS BY DESIGNATING PERSONNEL, IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY, AND ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROJECT AT KAILUA BEACH PARK TO DEPLOY AND TEST NEW SAND-CLEANING TECHNOLOGIES FOR STATEWIDE USE.

WHEREAS, Hawaii is known worldwide for its beautiful beaches and rich ocean habitat that have provided residents with sustenance, recreational opportunities, and other resources for generations; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii's location in the center of the Pacific Ocean, just east of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, ensures that countless tons of marine debris from around the world, including very small pieces of plastic particles known as microplastics, wash up on the State's beaches; and

WHEREAS, the health of our beaches, ocean resources, and fragile marine ecosystems are seriously threatened by pollution from microplastics; and

WHEREAS, scientists have documented at least six hundred ninety species of wildlife that have been impacted by the ingestion of microplastics, including the beloved green sea turtles, which lay their eggs on the State's beaches; and

WHEREAS, plankton, invertebrates, fish, sea birds, and marine mammals are also all known to absorb, ingest, or otherwise uptake microplastics; and

WHEREAS, the microplastics absorbed or ingested by these organisms eventually impact humans as the microplastics make their way up the food chain; and
WHEREAS, because microplastics are less than five millimeters in size, it is extremely difficult to remove them from the environment; and

WHEREAS, although microplastics are deposited at beaches statewide, Kailua Beach on the island of Oahu has been especially prone to microplastic pollution due to onshore winds and other natural conditions; and

WHEREAS, despite regular beach cleanups by volunteer groups, including a recent clean-up effort that resulted in the removal of five thousand pounds of plastics, the ocean continually deposits new plastic debris onto Kailua Beach; and

WHEREAS, Kailua Beach has consistently been voted as one of the best beaches in the United States; however, the continued influx of plastics onto Kailua Beach may threaten the beach's reputation and status as a gathering place for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, researchers have been developing new technologies to remove microplastics from the coastline, including one used in a recent pilot project conducted by the University of Hawaii at Hilo, the Hawaii Wildlife Fund, and engineering students from the Université de Sherbrooke in Québec, Canada, that tested a machine designed to filter microplastics from sand at Kamilo Point on Hawaii Island; and

WHEREAS, the State must support efforts like the pilot program at Kamilo Point in order to find viable solutions to protect our beaches from microplastic pollution, with the ultimate goal of deploying these solutions statewide; 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 the Department of Land and Natural Resources is urged to specifically address microplastics by designating personnel to address the issue and implementing technology that removes microplastic debris from the sand and ocean water; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is urged to develop and implement a pilot program at Kailua Beach, which has been subject to disproportionately large sums of microplastics, to deploy and test new sand-cleaning technologies for statewide use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources and Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation of the City and County of Honolulu.

OFFERED BY: __________________________

MAR 03 2020