WHEREAS, in 2005, the Legislature established a dedicated source of state funding to buy interests in private land to preserve and protect natural, cultural, and agricultural resources, open spaces, and lands for the public benefit; and

WHEREAS, the LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM, based in the Department of Land and Natural Resources, has built a strong base of private and public partners while conserving thirty-seven properties to date, stretching from Waikapuna and Kahuku along the Ka'ū coast to Black Pot Beach Park in Hale'ele'a, Kaua'i, and totaling about 21,600 acres across five islands; through these efforts, the State of Hawaii continues to preserve and protect agricultural, natural, and cultural resources throughout Hawaii'i Nei, creating a legacy of "Aloha 'Aina" for local communities on all the islands; and

WHEREAS, the LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM started in 2006 with a grant that secured a conservation easement to protect 167 acres of prime agricultural land at Kainalu Ranch, Molokai; today, the Ranch continues to produce food and conserve rare and endangered plants while remaining under private, family ownership; other agricultural ventures bolstered by program support include two properties that MA'O Organic Farms purchased in Lualualei Valley in Wai'anae, O'ahu, as well as conservation easements that prevent land use conversion at the Hawaii Agricultural Research Center in Kunia and on private farmland above Turtle Bay; and

WHEREAS, in December of 2019, the LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM protected over 2,300 acres of land near Na'alehu, Hawai'i Island, associated closely with the famed Hawaiian historian and scholar, Mary Kawena Pukui; and
WHEREAS, over the years, one of the largest grants for legacy land conservation went to a nonprofit that in 2015, acquired land with immense cultural and historical resource value at the Kuamo'o Battlefield and Burial Ground in Kona; the Office of Hawaiian Affairs also provided substantial funding and holds a conservation easement that adds an additional layer of protection for this historical site; and

WHEREAS, at the end of 2019, the State bought, from Dole Food Company, the biggest tract of land that has ever changed hands in a program-funded transaction, expanding the existing Pūpūkea Forest Reserve in northern O'ahu to over five times its original size, from 782 acres to 4,482 acres; and

WHEREAS, when the Legislature established the Land Conservation Fund and authorized the Department of Land and Natural Resources to conduct the LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM, it recognized "the value of Hawaii's natural resources to its economy, culture, and quality of life" while cautioning that only "an alarmingly small amount of money is invested each year to protect our natural capital base"; and

WHEREAS, as noted by the 2005 Legislature and as demonstrated through the experiences of the LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM, "the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the State's land, coastal areas, and natural resources are of central importance for current and future residents and for the state economy"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that this body recognizes the 15th Anniversary of the LEGACY LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM, and commends the Program for helping to strengthen the connections between our communities, places, and important resources and to maintain the integrity of our unique landscape by preserving open spaces and scenic views.

OFFERED BY: [Signature]

FEB - 6 2020