HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF PLANNING, IN COLLABORATION WITH VARIOUS AGENCIES, TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH A STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN HAWAII.

WHEREAS, Hawaii has an abundance of geologic resources, such as soil, rock, and mineral resources; groundwater; and geothermal resources; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii faces a wide range of geologic hazards, including coastal erosion, landslides, flash flooding, earthquakes, volcanism, and ocean hazards; and

WHEREAS, sediment-laden surface water runoff is an environmental hazard that threatens nearshore water quality; and

WHEREAS, watershed management planning is recognized as the best approach to identify where to implement best management practices to reduce surface runoff into nearshore receiving waters; and

WHEREAS, hazard mitigation planning is needed to reduce the risk to island communities from landslides, flash flooding, and wildland fires; and

WHEREAS, geologic maps are essential tools for watershed mapping and the development of effective watershed management plans and hazard mitigation plans; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii's mapping capability for purposes of watershed management and hazard mitigation is insufficient because of the lack of a centralized scientific office to provide expertise, conduct research, and map the State's resources and hazard zones for public safety and for resource management planning; and
WHEREAS, many other states have an established geological survey responsible for producing maps of natural processes, assessing threats, compiling and centralizing data, coordinating with other agencies, and adding a scientific dimension to planning; and

WHEREAS, these state geological surveys are able to receive federal funding to meet their states' geological mapping priorities through the United States Geological Survey's National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program; and

WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey created the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program to produce accurate geologic maps and three-dimensional framework models in the United States to be used for land-use management, threat assessment, conservation of natural resources, groundwater management, natural-hazard mitigation, and environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program is the primary source of funds for the production of geologic maps in the United States; and

WHEREAS, one component of the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program is the STATEMAP program, which provides federal funds to state geological surveys to enable new geologic mapping projects determined to be vital to the economic, social, or scientific welfare of individual states; and

WHEREAS, geologic maps produced through the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program provide useful data for decision-makers in interpreting and evaluating their state's unique natural resources and hazards and in creating effective management plans; and

WHEREAS, as of 2020, STATEMAP has invested more than $150,000,000 in forty-eight state geological surveys to complete geologic mapping projects critical to the health and security of the residents and natural resources of individual states; and
WHEREAS, Hawaii is currently unable to participate in the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program and therefore unable to receive STATEMAP funds because it has no state geological survey; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii is the only state in the nation without a geological survey and is one of only two states in the nation that has never received federal funds to perform geological studies; and

WHEREAS, without a geological survey, Hawaii is currently monitoring and researching natural resources and hazards through an unorganized combination of federal, state, and county engineers and consultants; and

WHEREAS, this unorganized system has led to a gap in mapping for Hawaii, thereby limiting its mapping capability, especially for purposes of watershed management and hazard mitigation; and

WHEREAS, a state geological survey in Hawaii would unify the State's mapping capability, make Hawaii eligible to compete for applicable federal funds, and provide a broader range of geological information for public and state decision-makers to use in mitigation and management planning; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, that the Office of Planning, in collaboration with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, University of Hawaii, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, Department of Transportation, and the appropriate county planning departments and county emergency management agencies, is requested to develop a plan to establish a state geological survey in Hawaii; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Planning is requested to evaluate in the plan:
(1) Proposed scopes of work for the state geologic survey, including proposed ways to consolidate existing functions into a state geological survey;

(2) Proposed organizational structures of the state geological survey, including advantages and disadvantages of each proposed structure;

(3) Proposed staff positions that would be needed for the state geological survey, including salary levels;

(4) Proposed sources for funding or other necessary resources; and

(5) Enabling legislation to create the state geological survey; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Planning is requested to consult also with the United States Geological Survey and any other organization or person that the Office deems appropriate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, upon request of the Office of Planning, the Legislative Reference Bureau is directed to assist in the preparation of any proposed legislation that may be required to implement the Office of Planning's findings and recommendations; provided that, before December 1, 2022, the Office of Planning submits any draft documents, including information and materials deemed necessary by the Legislative Reference Bureau, for the preparation of proposed legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Planning 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 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Director of Transportation, Director of
the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, Director of the Office of Planning, Chairperson of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents, President of the University of Hawaii System, and Directors of the applicable planning department and emergency management agency of each of the counties.