HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-262

RESOLUTION

ENDORSING THE DESIGNATION OF WAIKĪKĪ AS A WORLD SURFING RESERVE.

WHEREAS, Hawai'i is the birthplace of he'e nalu, now commonly known as the sport of surfing; and

WHEREAS, Hawaiian oral tradition records as far back as the 15th century describe surfing as an integral part of ancient Native Hawaiian culture that often involved competitive sporting contests; and

WHEREAS, Waikīkī, a hub for Native Hawaiian surfers, is often referred to as the birthplace of the sport of surfing and is an iconic image intrinsically linked with surfing in Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i is universally acknowledged worldwide as the cradle of surfing culture and is the birthplace of renowned surfing athletes such as Duke Paoa Kahanamoku, who is regarded as the "Father of International Surfing"; Carissa Moore, who won the inaugural Olympic Gold Medal for the USA in women's surfing in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games; and John John Florence, who represented the USA in the Paris 2024 Summer Games and won his third World Surf League Men's Title in 2024; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of surfing's deeply rooted role in Hawai'i's culture and way of life, the State of Hawai'i ("State") Legislature, through the enactment of Act 174 (1998), officially designated surfing as the State's official individual sport; and

WHEREAS, Waikīkī is home to multiple annual surf competitions and more than a dozen popular surf breaks that are used year-round by surfers with a wide variety of skill levels; and

WHEREAS, Waikīkī is also located at the base of an ecologically rich watershed that supports critical natural resources and is home to multiple protected and endangered species, including the green sea turtle and Hawaiian monk seal; and

WHEREAS, Waikīkī is threatened by the impacts of climate change, as evidenced by the bleaching of coral reefs, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion; and

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WHEREAS, the Save the Waves Coalition is a nonprofit organization created in 2003 that is dedicated to preserving the world's most iconic surfing spots through the protection of the biological, geophysical, and socio-economic environment or "surf ecosystems" of these renowned surf spots; and

WHEREAS, the World Surfing Reserves is a program administered by the Save the Waves Coalition that identifies, designates, and works to preserve unique and outstanding surf zones and their surrounding environments worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the Save the Waves Coalition works collaboratively with local partners at each World Surfing Reserve site to create a Local Stewardship Council ("LSC") and a conservation plan (Reserve Stewardship Plan) that is managed by the LSC; and

WHEREAS, the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant Program, the Surfrider Foundation O'ahu, and Conservation International Hawai'i, with support from the Waikīkī Beach Special Improvement District Association, are leading the efforts to apply for Waikīkī's designation as a World Surfing Reserve; and

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2026, the State Legislature adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 94 (2026), which endorsed the recognition of Waikīkī as a World Surfing Reserve; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the designation of Waikīkī as a World Surfing Reserve by the Save the Waves Coalition will further governmental and local community and stakeholder efforts to protect, preserve, and effectively manage Waikīkī's world-famous surf spots and its "surf ecosystem"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the Council endorses the designation of Waikīkī as a World Surfing Reserve; and

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor; the Managing Director; the Governor of the State of Hawai'i; the Speaker of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives; the President of the Hawai'i State Senate; the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; the Board of Directors of the Waikīkī Improvement Association; the Board of Directors of the Waikīkī Beach Special Improvement District Association; the Surfrider Foundation O'ahu; the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program; Conservation International Hawai'i; and the Save the Waves Coalition.

INTRODUCED BY:

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

NOV 9 2026
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

Report Title:
Waikīkī; Waikiki; Waikīkī Beach; Waikiki Beach; Save the Waves Coalition; World Surfing Reserve; University of Hawai'i Sea Grant Program; University of Hawaii Sea Grant Program; Surfrider Foundation O'ahu, Surfrider Foundation Oahu; Conservation International Hawai'i; Conservation International Hawaii; Waikīkī Improvement Association ("WIA"); Waikiki Improvement Association; Waikīkī Beach Special Improvement District Association ("WBSIDA"); Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association

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