

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
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DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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FIRST DEPUTY

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
CULTURE & ARTS

Wednesday, February 5, 2025
10:30 AM

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 345
RELATING TO THE STATE SHRIMP

House Bill 345 proposes to establish the 'ōpae 'ula (*Halocaridina rubra*) as the state shrimp to promote the protection of anchialine pool ecosystems throughout Hawai'i. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (“Department”) supports this measure.**

Anchialine pool ecosystems, also known as wai 'ōpae, are land-locked coastal bodies of water that are connected underground to both marine and freshwater sources through porous basalt lava rock and limestone. While anchialine ecosystems exist elsewhere around the world, Hawai'i is home to approximately 700 of these habitats, and arguably has the highest concentration of anchialine pools in the world.

Anchialine ecosystems provide habitat for numerous native species, including at least eight anchialine shrimp species (3 endemic, 5 indigenous) and a rare species of anchialine crab only known to occur at a single site on Maui. Anchialine pools were a vital source of water and provided sustenance to Native Hawaiians. These pools are also frequently mentioned in mo'olelo (stories) and are important to the revival of traditional practices, such as the harvest of 'ōpae 'ula for use in 'ōpelu fishing in parts of West Hawai'i.

'Ōpae 'ula is the signature species of Hawaiian anchialine pools. While being culturally significant, it also plays a critical role in maintaining a healthy anchialine pool ecosystem by its intensive grazing of algae. 'Ōpae 'ula are endemic to Hawai'i and are known to have genetically distinct populations across the islands and across moku (island districts). Although only growing

to roughly half an inch in size, these tiny shrimps have surprisingly long life-spans of over 20 years. Further, 'ōpae 'ula display amazing resilience to natural events such as recent lava flows and can thrive in these dynamic conditions. A pool that is red with 'ōpae 'ula is indicative of a healthy and flourishing anchialine ecosystem. Unfortunately, these ecosystems are highly threatened by the spread of invasive plants, fishes and invertebrates, coastal development, human-sourced pollution, sea level rise, and changes to upland sections in the watershed.

Establishing 'ōpae 'ula as the Hawai'i state shrimp is an important step in recognizing these habitats as particularly valuable, and identifying natural and cultural resources within anchialine pools that warrant conservation attention.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force



February 5, 2025

House Committee on Culture & the Arts
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 345, Relating to the State Shrimp

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and members of the committee,

The Ocean Legislative Task Force, a coalition of over 100 individuals from diverse organizations and communities across Hawai'i, strongly supports House Bill 345, relating to the state shrimp, which establishes the 'ōpae 'ula as the state shrimp to protect anchialine pool ecosystems throughout Hawai'i.

This recognition is more than symbolic—it highlights the vital role of anchialine pools in our island's ecology and the urgent need to protect these fragile freshwater and coastal resources. Anchialine pools, or wai 'ōpae, are culturally sacred and ecologically unique ecosystems found throughout Hawai'i, with the majority located in North and South Kona and Ka'ū. These pools are home to the endemic 'ōpae 'ula, a species of shrimp that serves as a key indicator of ecosystem health. When these shrimp populations thrive, it signifies that the water quality and ecological balance of the anchialine pool remain intact. Unfortunately, habitat destruction, pollution, and invasive species threaten these pools, jeopardizing not only the 'ōpae 'ula but also the broader interconnected health of our freshwater and ocean systems.

Designating the 'ōpae 'ula as the state shrimp will raise public awareness and encourage greater stewardship of anchialine pool ecosystems across the islands. This bill aligns with the Ocean Legislative Task Force's commitment to safeguarding Hawai'i's natural resources for future generations while also respecting and supporting traditional practices, such as the cultural use of 'ōpae for 'ōpelu fishing.

Protecting our fresh and coastal waters is essential—not just for the survival of endemic species like the 'ōpae 'ula, but for the overall health and sustainability of our island communities. Clean, thriving ecosystems are fundamental to food security, climate resilience, and the well-being of both people and nature.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support this measure.

The Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that promote funding for natural resource protection and restoration, ocean resources, coral reefs, subsistence fishing, and coastal resilience, and other priorities.



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Culture & Arts (CAA)
IN SUPPORT OF HB345
February 5, 2025, 10:30 a.m., Room 309 & Via Videoconference

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Kevin Chang, Kua'āina Advocate and Executive Director, respectively, testifying on behalf of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" stands for "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym "KUA" means "backbone." **Our mission is to connect and empower communities to improve their quality of life through the collective care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage, serving as a "backbone organization" that supports creative, community-driven solutions to problems stemming from environmental degradation.** Hawai'i's biocultural resources continue to be negatively impacted by political, economic, and social changes, and the increasing dangers of climate change make fostering and empowering resilient communities acutely critical.

Currently KUA supports three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally-grown "seaweed." **Our shared vision is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'ĀINA MOMONA – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.**

KUA strongly supports HB345 as an incremental step towards 'āina momona.

This bill would establish the 'ōpae'ula as the state shrimp to gain more awareness, education, protections, and resources for not only the 'ōpae'ula themselves, but also their main habitat in wai 'ōpae (anchialine pools). Wai 'ōpae are wahi pana, sacred places, and there are at least 700 recorded pools across Hawai'i. Several of our KUA community members help to protect these special places and the 'ōpae'ula that they house. The 'ōpae'ula is endemic to Hawai'i and hold several important uses including for 'ōpelu fishing and as food for loko i'a. They are also important grazers keeping bacteria and algae in balance with the overall ecosystem. Habitat loss through pollution and coastal development, as well as invasions of invasive species, continue to threaten the 'ōpae'ula and their wai 'ōpae.

We know that the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has been working on a Protection and Restoration Strategy for wetland ecosystems as a part of the Hawai'i Wetland Program Plan. One of the wetland types covered under this strategy is anchialine pools. With this plan nearing completion and implementation, we find that HB345 comes at an ideal time to also increase the necessary hand-in-hand community awareness and education for wai'ōpae and 'ōpae'ula in Hawai'i.

A primary function of KUA includes support for the development of an ‘auwai, or a system of resources, tools, bridges, relationships, and networks that cultivate and elevate our communities’ efforts to greater levels of collective impact in the care of our biocultural resources. In 2023, KUA was so grateful that your legislature designated Limu Kala as the state’s limu through passage of [Act 230](#) (HB819 HD2 SD1). Act 230 has since paved the way for more education and awareness of limu kala and other Native Hawaiian limu, and more communities are expressing interest in learning about and advocating for limu. We hope to do the same here with formal designation of ‘ōpae‘ula as our state shrimp and we would really appreciate your Committee’s support of this effort.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources. They have depended on them for generations. **We believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of ‘āina momona.** To get there it requires, among other things, taking the steps toward greater self-sufficiency including development of innovative and sustainable career pathways, mindsets, relationships, and resource flows for mālama ‘āina. Passing this bill out of your committee will open an essential ‘auwai system toward reaching this vision.

Mahalo nui for considering our testimony. Please **PASS** HB86 for our ‘ōpae‘ula and wai ‘ōpae.

Aloha ‘Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:54:02 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition COMMENTS that we should protect anchialine pools!

TESTIMONY OF PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS
WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2025
10:30 AM

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 345

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Satoru Kong, and Members of the Committee,

Pacific Whale Foundation (PWF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the ocean through science and advocacy and inspiring environmental stewardship, supports HB345, which would establish the 'ōpae 'ula as the state shrimp of Hawai'i. This designation is a crucial step toward increasing awareness and protection of anchialine pool ecosystems, which are unique to Hawai'i and critical to maintaining the health of our coastal environments.

Anchialine pools are rare and fragile ecosystems found only in a few places worldwide, with Hawai'i hosting the largest concentration of these unique habitats. These pools, which are connected to underground freshwater and seawater systems, support a variety of native and endemic species—including the 'ōpae 'ula, a tiny, resilient shrimp that plays a key role in maintaining the balance of these ecosystems. Protecting 'ōpae 'ula and their habitats is essential for preserving Hawai'i's biodiversity and ensuring the health of these irreplaceable ecosystems.

As an ocean conservation organization, PWF understands that healthy wetlands and coastal ecosystems are essential to protecting water quality and marine life. Anchialine pools act as natural filtration systems, helping to regulate nutrient levels and prevent pollution from reaching nearshore environments. The protection of these ecosystems benefits not only 'ōpae 'ula but also the health of our reefs, fisheries, and marine species that depend on clean coastal waters.

As an organization based on Maui, PWF supports the work of local organizations such as Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA), whose vision of 'ĀINA MOMONA emphasizes the connection between thriving ecological systems and resilient communities. Protecting 'ōpae 'ula is an opportunity to honor Native Hawaiian stewardship practices and ensure that anchialine pool ecosystems remain healthy for future generations.

We urge the committee to pass HB345 to bring awareness to 'ōpae 'ula and anchialine pool ecosystems. Recognizing this species as the state shrimp will foster greater appreciation and conservation efforts for these rare and ecologically valuable habitats. Mahalo for your leadership on this issue and for considering the testimony of Pacific Whale Foundation and its supporters.

Sincerely,



Dayna Garland
Interim Executive Director



Susan Frett
Conservation Director



Protecting the ocean through science and advocacy, inspired by environmental stewardship



Hawai'i Wildlife Fund

Post Office Box 1801, Kealahou, Hawaii, HI 96750 &
Post Office Box 790637, Paia, Maui, HI 96779

Celebrating 28+ years of protecting Hawaii's native wildlife through
research, education and conservation.

4 February 2025

Re: Strong Support for House Bill 345 for CAA Hearing (2/5/25 @ 10:30 AM)

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Satoru Kong, and other Representatives on the Committee on Culture and Arts,

Hawai'i Wildlife Fund (HWF) is pleased to provide **strong support for the proposed state shrimp bill (HB345)**, which officially designates our endemic ōpae'ula (or "red shrimp", *Halocardina rubra*) as Hawaii's state shrimp 🍤! This important bill will provide more opportunities for awareness, education, protection, and resources for Hawaii's wai'ōpae and ōpae'ula.

With others from the Hui Loko network (a collective of fishpond and anchialine pool researchers, caretakers, and managers on Hawai'i Island), HWF worked with Rep. Lowen in 2019 to first introduce this measure that was never issued a hearing. We hope that this legislative session the measure will be passed with strong support across the chambers. We are still strong proponents of this effort and have been working to restore anchialine ecosystems across Hawai'i for nearly two decades. We feel that this effort, alongside the ongoing state DLNR efforts to better protect, restore, and manage anchialine ecosystems, will bring the right kind of attention and awareness to this "charismatic minifauna" and the fragile native habitat they reside in.



Anchialine pools are rare worldwide, but common in Hawai'i, especially across Moku o Keawe. Please help us protect these unique environments and VOTE 'Ae for the 'ŌPAE ULA bill.

Founded in 1996, Hawai'i Wildlife Fund is a nonprofit organization with a mission to conserve Hawai'i's native wildlife through research and education. We engage and inspire communities through outreach, education, conservation and habitat restoration activities, conducting environmental research, supporting community-driven management efforts, and initiating advocacy campaigns. We have been working to protect native wildlife and restore coastal / nearshore ecosystems across the Hawaiian Archipelago for the past 28 years with community and partner support.

In conclusion, **HWF strongly supports the 'ōpae'ula and asks for your vote.** Thank you for considering this testimony. Should you have any questions, please contact me at megan@wildhawaii.org. Including some 'ōpae'ula and anchialine pool (and restoration) photos for your viewing pleasure.

Sincerely,



Megan Lamson Leatherman, M. Sc.

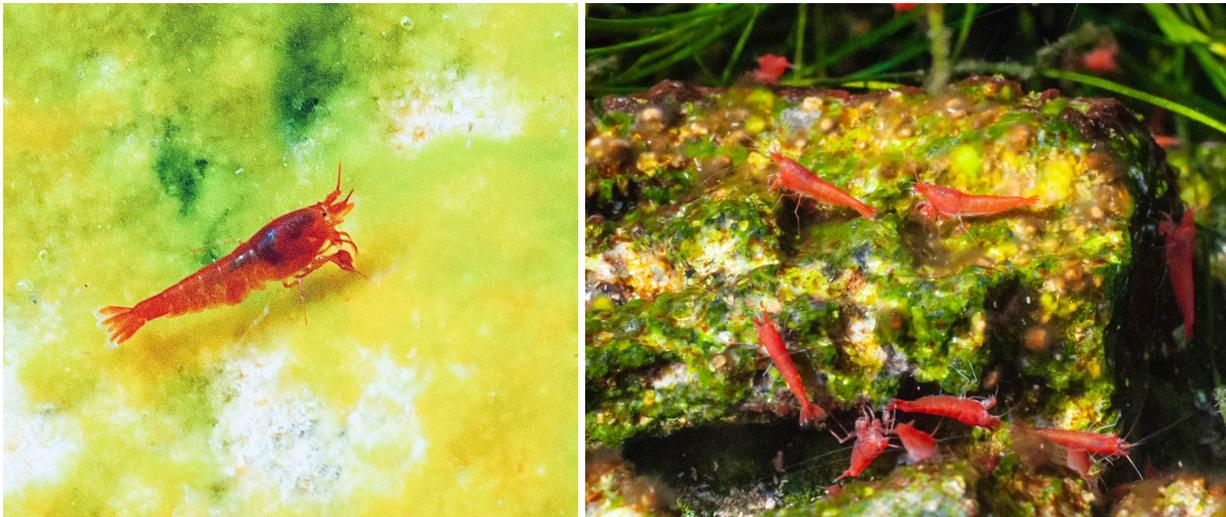
Hawai'i Wildlife Fund, President and Hawai'i Program Director

megan@wildhawaii.org | (c) 808-217-5777 | (w) 808-769-7629 (HWF Marine Debris Hotline)

K Lindsey Kramer, M. Sc.

Hawai'i Wildlife Fund, Coral Reef & Resources Specialist

Lindsey@wildhawaii.org



Above 'ōpae photos by L. Kramer / HWF. Below anchialine pool landscape photos by miscellaneous HWF staff / volunteers.





**House Committee on Culture and Arts
Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action Supports: HB 345
Wednesday, February 5th 2025 at 10:30am - Conference Room 309**

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) is submitting testimony in support of HB345, which designates the 'ōpae'ula as Hawai'i's official state shrimp. This proposed status for the 'ōpae'ula will establish the necessary protections for the species, as well as the sacred ecosystems (wai'ōpae) and other interconnected practices that support the health of Hawai'i's waters, lands, and peoples.

The 'ōpae'ula is an endemic species that maintains the health of over 600 recorded wai 'ōpae (anchialine pools) across Hawai'i. The health of this species is integral to various sustainable fishing practices, including the restoration of Hawai'i's loko i'a and food sovereignty efforts. Currently, the shrimp faces habitat loss due to coastal development, pollution, and invasive species. These threats continue to grow without proper protections on the shrimp's environment, or community education.

HB345 would increase community awareness of the importance of 'ōpae'ula, wai'ōpae, allowing collective responsibility in the rehabilitation and protection of our sacred waters. This bill would also minimize the threat to the 'ōpae'ula and wai'ōpae by reinstating important values that reflect and support Native Hawaiian ways of knowing. While limiting invasive interactions, this bill also secures space for traditional harvesting practices. Please consider the passing of this bill in support of the people of Hawai'i's vital relationships with our environment.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the typed name.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

HB-345

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 5:40:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our endangered opae ula and anchialine ponds do not get the recognition nor the help that they deserve, and need to survive. This measure should bring more attention to this element of our ecosystem. Please pass HB345.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 2:14:09 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Avalon Paradea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Avalon Paradea and I fully support HB345. State Shrimp! It's brilliant! Opaepala remain poorly understood and even unknown to faaar too many people in our communities. Let's give them a hand in advocating for their wellbeing in an uplifting, educational way!

Mahalo,

Avalon Paradea, Waikōloa, Hawai'i

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 3:24:02 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keili McEvelly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai, my name is Ke'ili and I support this bill. I believe it will support Hawaiian culture and ecosystems for future generations.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:08:00 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seaenna Correa-Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Passing HB345 would play a huge role in sharing and shedding light on the importance of our beloved ‘ōpae‘ula as well as their main habitat, wai ‘ōpae (anchialine pools) which has been overlooked in recent years. As a very important resource for our kupuna, this establishment may help us revitalize many of the practices we've lost. Passing up this opportunity could lead to the loss of this practice, like many of our other practices.

Please PASS HB345, mahalo!

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:16:39 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kodie Solis-Kalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui. My name is Kodie Solis-Kalani, I come from Pa‘auilo, Hāmākua, Hawai‘i. In recent, I have seen firsthand a few rivers dry up in our community. As we continue to lose habitat, our native species need more recognition and awareness. That is why I support HB345. Mahalo.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:27:37 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheena Lopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Sheena Lopes a kānaka maoli living on Hawai‘i Island. My first time ever seeing ‘ōpae ‘ula was in a jar on a desk, I then was able to see them in real life at one of the alkaline ponds. I think these native species deserve the recognition it deserves and we should be giving them a spotlight to becoming more educated about them state wide. Naming them the state shrimp will allow broader education efforts to make its way into the mainstream realm and I believe through better education we can start moving towards saving this species the best that we can. Please and thank you for honoring a special species like our ‘ōpae‘ula.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:28:24 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Wong-Ala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB345 to establish the 'opae'ula as the state shrimp to gain more awareness, education, protections, and resources for not only the 'opae'ula themselves, but also their main habitat in wai 'opae or waikai (anchialine pools). Wai 'opae are wahi pana, sacred places, and there are at least 600 recorded pools across Hawaii. The 'opae'ula is endemic to Hawaii and hold several important uses including for 'opelu fishing and as food for loko i'a. They are also important grazers keeping bacteria and algae in balance with the overall ecosystem. Habitat loss through pollution and coastal development, as well as invasions of invasive species, continue to threaten the 'opae'ula and their wai 'opae.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 6:46:44 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Sanchez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protecting our native ‘ōpae ‘ula is vital to healthy achialine systems. Make this the state shrimp!

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:12:14 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Yagodich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT for HB345 to establish the ‘ōpae ‘ula as the state shrimp to protect anchialine pool ecosystems throughout Hawai‘i.

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:25:06 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Isabel Riethbrock and I am standing with Hawai'i Wildlife Fund to support HB345. I am in favor of this bill to establish the 'ōpae'ula as the state shrimp of Hawaii. We must prioritize our sacred places, our wetlands, and giving more protection of this species would coincide with more protection of these wahi pana.

This bill HB345 serves as an important vehicle to gain more awareness, education, protection, and resources for 'ōpae'ula and wai'ōpae in Hawai'i. Mahalo for your consideration

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:53:05 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosanne Shank	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. I think opae ula are incredible shrimps and their involvement with the anchialine ponds is so important to maintaining Hawaii's nature.

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Satoru Kong, and other Representatives on the Committee on Culture and Arts,

My name is Maya Goodoni, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of Hawai‘i House Bill 345.

Anchialine pools are extraordinary coastal ecosystems that feature a delicate mix of salt and freshwater, connected to the ocean and groundwater through Hawai‘i’s unique lava formations. These habitats are home to native biodiversity, including the endemic and culturally significant ōpae‘ula (*Halocaridina rubra*). The ōpae‘ula plays a critical role in maintaining the health of these ecosystems by balancing bacteria and algae levels, and it holds deep cultural importance for Native Hawaiian communities.

Unfortunately, these fragile ecosystems and their inhabitants face increasing threats from human activity, invasive species, development, and the effects of climate change, including sea level rise. Without protection and restoration efforts, we risk losing both the ecological balance and cultural heritage that these pools and their species represent.

Hawai‘i House Bill 345, which proposes to establish the ōpae‘ula as the official state shrimp of Hawai‘i, is a meaningful step towards raising awareness, promoting education, and ensuring protection for these ecosystems. Passing this bill will provide essential opportunities for safeguarding the anchialine pools and the ōpae‘ula for generations to come.

I strongly urge you to vote YES on HB345. Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s unique natural and cultural resources.

Sincerely,
Maya Goodoni

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:41:06 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joseph simpliciano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Mahalo for letting me testify today. Opae Ula has taken some significant damage due to human interference. The protection is long overdue and needed.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

February 5, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB345: Relating to the State Shrimp

To: Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the House Committee on Culture & Arts

From: The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

Date: February 5, 2025, 10:30 a.m.

Re: HB345: Relating to the State Shrimp

Position: Strong Support

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the House Committee on Culture & Arts,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, strongly supports HB345, which establishes the 'ōpae 'ula as the state shrimp to protect anchialine pool ecosystems throughout Hawai'i.

Key Points

- Conservation of Anchialine Pools:** HB345 recognizes the ecological importance of anchialine pools and the 'ōpae 'ula shrimp, which play a crucial role in these unique ecosystems.
- Environmental Protection:** By designating the 'ōpae 'ula as the state shrimp, the bill raises awareness about the need to protect and conserve these fragile habitats.
- Educational Value:** The designation will help educate the public about the unique biodiversity of Hawai'i and the importance of preserving natural ecosystems.
- Cultural Significance:** The 'ōpae 'ula holds cultural significance for Native Hawaiians, and its recognition as the state shrimp honors this heritage.

Arguments in Favor

- Promoting Conservation:** HB345 promotes the conservation of anchialine pools, which are vital habitats for many endemic species.
- Raising Awareness:** The bill helps raise public awareness about the ecological and cultural importance of anchialine pools and the 'ōpae 'ula shrimp.
- Supporting Biodiversity:** Protecting anchialine pools contributes to the overall biodiversity of Hawai'i, ensuring the survival of unique species.

4. **Honoring Cultural Heritage:** Recognizing the ‘ōpae ‘ula as the state shrimp honors the cultural heritage of Native Hawaiians and their connection to the land.

Conclusion

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii urges the Committee to support HB345. This bill represents a significant step toward protecting Hawai‘i’s unique ecosystems and honoring the cultural heritage of Native Hawaiians.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-chairs, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

HB-345

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 7:36:26 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/5/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.