

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

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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Monday, February 10, 2025
1:00 PM

Via Video Conference, State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 561
RELATING TO CONSERVATION ENFORCEMENT

Senate Bill 561 proposes to appropriate funds for equipment for the Oahu Branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

As mentioned in this measure, there has been an increase in fishing intensity around the island of Oahu, particularly at night. The proposed funding this bill provides would be used to increase DOCARE's Oahu Branch capabilities to address violations by purchasing much needed equipment including watercraft, detection equipment such as night vision goggles and unmanned aircraft systems, vehicles and communication equipment. This will provide DOCARE's Oahu Branch with resources that enhances its abilities to detect, deter and respond to violations in state waters and fisheries, and can also be used in other areas under the department's management such as State Parks, Forest and Natural Area Reserves and unencumbered state lands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96813

Attn: WTL, WAM
RE: SB561

February 6, 2025

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Committee Members,

My name is Jonnetta Peters and I am the Executive Director for Conservation Council for Hawai'i (CCH). CCH strongly supports SB561 to appropriate funds for equipment for the O'ahu Branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

Herbivorous fishes, such as parrotfish, play a critical role in the health of a coral reef ecosystem by feeding on the seaweeds covering parts of the coral and therefore allowing new coral to grow. Unfortunately, the population of these crucial species has drastically declined, as recognized by the December 2023 fishing rules for herbivorous fishes. However, enforcement for these illegal fishing activities is challenging under current DOCARE resources. It is our responsibility to ensure the return of these populations and protection begins with DOCARE being able to properly carry out their mission.

SB561 will help to bolster the resources essential for DOCARE officers to enforce fishing regulations, especially assisting with night-time protections and enforcement. The specialized equipment, such as night-vision goggles, drones, and additional vessels and watercraft, will provide DOCARE with the best chance of protecting our herbivorous reef fish from night-time poaching.

I strongly urge you to support SB561 and help protect our herbivorous fish from illegal fishing.

Mahalo,

Jonnetta Peters
Executive Director
jp@conservehi.org

Telephone/Fax: 224.338-6511 | email: info@conservehi.org

web: www.conservehawaii.org | P.O. Box 2923, Honolulu, HI 96802

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National Wildlife Federation Region 12 Director: Rachel Sprague

National Wildlife Federation Pacific Region Associate Director: Emily Martin

Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu – Hawai'i's voice for wildlife | State Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:32:51 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lavinia Currier	Testifying for Pu'u O Hoku Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a property owner on Oahu's Gold Coast and also a landowner on Molokai, with 15 miles of coast. I swim and snorkel on Oahu and see the difference between Oahu's paucity of Uhu and other reef fish compared to Molokai. I support SM561 to prevent the fish's decline by banning night fishing which puts fish at risk of overfishing and non-enforcement.

Mahalo,

Lavinia Currier



Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea
Post Office Box 188
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

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Jenny Yagodich, Director of
Educational Programs &
Makai Watch Coordinator

Federal Nonprofit Organization
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info@pupukeawaimea.org

February 8, 2025

To: Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Re: **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB561: Relating to Conservation Enforcement

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is the grassroots, community non-profit that actively works to care for, educate about, and protect our fragile, near-shore marine ecosystems. Our mission is "working to replenish and sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community stewardship, education, and partnerships.

We write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB561 which would appropriate funds for equipment for the O'ahu Branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

We are proud to have been the first State of Hawai'i Makai Watch program on O'ahu, a collaborative statewide program where citizens and NGOs become directly involved with DLNR in the management of marine resources through promoting compliance to rules, education, and monitoring.

We collaborate closely with DOCARE and rely on their ability to effectively respond to violations and enforce the rules and regulations protecting our marine resources. SB561 appropriates moneys to DOCARE for purchasing much needed equipment that will directly benefit the health and abundance of our nearshore marine resources.

For these reasons, we **STRONGLY SUPPORT SB561**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Jenny Yagodich

Director of Educational Programs &
Makai Watch Coordinator

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:19:03 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!

More funding for DOCARE is critical for protecting the reefs, ocean and aquatic life!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:14:30 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniela Escontrela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support SB561 which would appropriate funds for equipment for the O‘ahu Branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

SB561 will fund equipment that is essential for DOCARE officers to enforce night-time fishing regulations. Without night-vision goggles, drones, and other specialized equipment, the number of apprehensions of lawbreakers is far too low to save the parrotfishes and other herbivores.

These fishes, the “lawnmowers of the reef,” are especially important for keeping dead reef surfaces clean so new corals can settle and grow. Our fishing regulations must be enforced more effectively so populations of these important reef saviors can recover.

I urge you to support SB561 and help stem the illegal take of herbivorous fishes.

Testimony in Support of SB561

February 6, 2025

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support SB561 which would appropriate funds for equipment for the O'ahu Branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

SB561 will fund equipment that is essential for DOCARE officers to enforce night-time fishing regulations. Without night-vision goggles, drones, and other specialized equipment, the number of apprehensions of lawbreakers is far too low to save the parrotfishes and other herbivores.

These fishes, the "lawnmowers of the reef," are especially important for keeping dead reef surfaces clean so new corals can settle and grow. Our fishing regulations must be enforced more effectively so populations of these important reef saviors can recover.

I urge you to support SB561 and help stem the illegal take of herbivorous fishes.

Mahalo,

Sherri Rigg
Honolulu, Hawai'i

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:02:05 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to ensure Oahu DOCARE officers have the equipment they need to do their job!

Please pass this important bill!

Lisa Bishop

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:09:17 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Shepherd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 6, 2025

Dear Senators:

I write in support of SB561 regarding enforcement of fishing regulations.

Although a Maui resident, I was on Oahu for two years 2019-2020 to study marine biology at UH Manoa. On the occasions when I went diving on Oahu I was shocked to see the conditions of the reefs. While Maui has suffered reef degradation, it is nothing in degree to the state of Oahu nearshore reefs. Off Waikiki the reef are shrunken and filled with holes. Off Kailua there were some sickly corals but no robust stands. There are several causes for reef degradation, but one that can be controlled is the take of herbivorous fishes. These fishes clear off algae so that corals can settle. There should be strict limits on the take of herbivorous fishes so that reefs have a chance to grow. Night fishing for parrotfishes is particularly damaging since they are the largest herbivores on our reefs.

Night fishing with scuba is banned in most Pacific nations. Since Hawai'i has resisted this common sense measure, at least DOCARE should be funded to enforce regulations.

I ask that for the sake of Hawai'i reefs and people, present and future, that this bills be enacted.

Aloha,

Diane E Shepherd DVM diane.shepherd@outlook.com 808-283-2024

3329 Kehala Dr., Kihei, HI 9653

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:24:01 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Emile DeMartini	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support the Senate bill SB561 to provide the desperately needed assistance in replenishing herbivorous fishes on O‘ahu’s coral reefs. The herbivorous fishes on the reefs of O‘ahu, as on reefs of the other Hawaiian Islands, are mostly parrotfishes (uhu), surgeonfishes (like kala, kole, manini), and chubs (nenu). These fishes clean reef surfaces, preventing seaweeds from smothering corals. Coral reef habitats are most degraded on Oahu among all of our islands. Although fished-down throughout our islands, reef herbivores are most depleted on O‘ahu. Recent scientific research has shown that the abundance of these fishes around the island of O‘ahu is less than 5% its potential (Donovan et al. 2023 Transactions of the Royal Society B). Many reefs around O‘ahu are already degraded from poor land management practices, coral bleaching from warm water episodes in recent years, and this ever-warming ocean is predicted to cause coral bleaching and death every year by 2040 (van Hooidonk et al. 2016 Scientific Reports).

Enforced measures of herbivore protection are desperately needed on O‘ahu. Especially deleterious is the rampant nighttime spearfishing of uhu by poachers, particularly the largest bodied species, the spectacled parrotfish *Chlorurus perspicillatus*. This species is clearly the most greatly over-fished uhu on Oahu. It is the most important “scraper” that controls algal seaweed overgrowth of corals in the Hawaiian Islands. An enforced temporary moratorium on its extraction or otherwise greatly reduced magnitude of uhu extraction is urgently needed. SB561 would provide this.

We need more and better enforcement by DOCARE: namely, increased funding of staff to better detect, capture and prosecute poachers. Increased funding for better detection equipment like night-vision goggles and drones are further needed. SB561 would provid this. SB561 will sufficiently enable the prohibition of commercial nighttime poaching by spearfishing uhu while ensuring the continuing recreational/artisanal fishing and continuing legal commercial take of uhu.

Please pass SB561 so that Hawai‘i can take realistic steps to replenish these essential, natural lawnmowers of the reef before we exceed the functional resilience of uhu and the tipping point for corals on our O‘ahu reefs.

Mahalo,

Edward E. DeMartini, Ph.D.

Kaneohe, Hawai'i

Retired Fisheries Research Biologist, NOAA, NMFS (1990-2016) and

Adjunct Professor, HIMB, SOEST, University of Hawaii Manoa (2006-present)

Aloha Legislators,

As a professional marine biologist who has studied O'ahu's coral reef fishes since the 1970s, I strongly support of SB561.

SB561 will fund much needed equipment to help the woefully understaffed DOCARE marine patrol stop the rampant overfishing of O'ahu reefs that occurs at night. It is common knowledge that groups of spearfishers illegally plunder entire reefs as fishes like uhu (parrotfish) sleep helplessly under ledges at night. I have heard multiple stories from neighbors witnessing this pillaging. At my home beach, a dozen trucks unloaded about 30 divers for a night dive. They cleaned-out our reef.

I understand that there are currently only 3 DOCARE officers dedicated to night marine patrols around O'ahu, an island of 1 million people. Without night-vision goggles, drones, and other specialized and otherwise needed equipment, the number of apprehensions of lawbreakers is far too low to save fishes that are essential for legal fisheries and critical for the survival of our coral reefs.

Why is overfishing on O'ahu an important issue that must be addressed? First, it is very well documented that populations of reef fishes around O'ahu are by far the most depleted in Hawai'i. Second, especially depleted on O'ahu are uhu and other herbivores like kala (a surgeonfish) and nenu (chubs) that are critically important for keeping dead reef surfaces clean so new corals can settle and grow. These fishes eat seaweeds and other benthic algae that would otherwise smother and kill corals.

Many of O'ahu's reefs are now covered by seaweed and there are not enough herbivores to remove them. We know from the Kahekili Herbivore Fisheries Management Area on Maui that more herbivores means less algae and better conditions for coral growth. In short, no herbivores means no reefs, and no reefs means no new sand for our beaches, no natural breakwaters for our coasts as sea levels rise, no fisheries, and no coastal economy and traditional ways of life.

Those who argue that there are plenty of reef fish around O'ahu or that scientific surveys are mistaken are simply wrong. Our fishing regulations must be enforced more effectively so populations of coral reef fishes, especially herbivores, can recover and continue to save our coral reefs, feed our people, and support our economy and our way of life. I urge you to support HB561.

Mahalo,
Mark Hixon

Testimony Supporting – SB 561

6 February 2025

Aloha Legislators,

I support the SB 561 to fund the necessary equipment for DOCARE officers to enforce night-time fishing regulations for the following reasons.

Nearly all tropical countries (e.g., Philippines, Okinawa, New Caledonia, Galapagos, Palau, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Northern Marianas, French Polynesia, Queensland Australia (Great Barrier Reef), Tahiti and the rest of the Society Islands, Vanuatu, Marquesas, Tuamotus, Gambier Islands, Austral Islands, Seychelles, Cocos Keeling, Mexico, Bahamas, Bermuda, Belize, Curaçao, Bonaire and most others) have banned the use of spearfishing with SCUBA at night because viable fisheries cannot be maintained if the removal of the breeding stock of larger fishes becomes too thorough. Daytime spearfishing with free-diving (mask, snorkel and fins) is an honorable sport and a viable fishery can be maintained, but the added technology of SCUBA and night-lights allows the fishers to be very effective in targeting sleeping parrotfishes at night and can be selective in targeting the larger fishes.

Studies of hundreds of species of fishes have demonstrated that when the age or size structure of a fish population is “truncated” (older or larger individuals are “chopped off” and the size distribution is abbreviated) by selective removal of larger individuals, then recruitment or population replenishment seriously declines, becomes sporadic, and the fisheries population loses resilience and sustainability (Longhurst 2002; Anderson et al. 2008; Venturelli et al. 2009, 2010; Hidalgo et al. 2011; Rouyer et al. 2011; Stewart, J. 2011). Although gill nets can be detrimental because of wasted bycatch and by catching large numbers of fishes, spearfishing with SCUBA can have a greater effect on the sustainability of fisheries by selectively targeting the larger fishes which can lead to the exponential reduction in the number of eggs and larvae produced (i.e. fecundity), shorten the population’s reproductive season and thereby reducing the chance that some of the larvae will encounter favorable conditions, lowering the average survival potential of larvae produced, selection for slower growth and reproduction at a smaller size, and in extreme cases, lowering genetic heterogeneity (Birkeland and Dayton 2005).

How does effectively catching large fish have a greater impact on population replenishment than several times the total weight of medium-sized fishes? In nature, the fecundity goes up by about the *cube* (volume of gonads are length X height X width) of the gonads. It has been measured that a large snapper (61 cm length, 28 lbs. weight) has the same fecundity as 212 medium-sized snappers (42 cm each totaling 514 lbs). Therefore, some Pacific islanders wisely harvest medium-sized fishes and leave the big ones, because taking only one big one has the same effect on the sustainability of the population as taking 212 medium sized ones. In the modern world, people tend to be disconnected from nature and want the glory of taking a big one and don't think about the sustainability of the harvest, nor the value of leaving the big ones behind to breed.

The late Dr. Robert Johannes spent much of his career learning the wisdom of the elder fishermen in Micronesia in resource management. He pointed out that the wise elders could see through the complex interactions and unpredictable recruitment patterns in assessing the state of their fisheries resources with straightforward observations as to whether the big ones were still there. Although there is still a great diversity and large numbers of colorful aquarium fishes on our reefs, the large fishes are scarce. The movies by Louis K. (Buzzy) Agard show that there was an abundance of large fishes immediately following World War II. But this was the time that SCUBA arrived and the large ones have substantially decreased since fishers have been given the power of high technology of SCUBA. It does not take rocket science to realize that we must ban the use of SCUBA with spearfishing.

In addition to reducing the sustainability of the fisheries, the taking of a substantial portion of large individuals of parrotfishes can have serious detrimental effects on the coral-reef ecosystem. Larger parrotfishes actually scrape the substratum when removing seaweed, thereby keeping the seaweed under control and facilitating coral growth for healthy systems. The smaller parrotfishes are relatively ineffective and so the decrease in large parrotfishes in Hawaii can lead to an increase in seaweed and the resulting degeneration of the Hawaiian coral-reef ecosystem. Kathrine Howard (2008) in her PhD dissertation on the "Community structure, life history, and movement patterns of parrotfishes: large protogynous fishery species" found that large individuals of the parrotfish *Scarus rubroviolaceus* were ten times as abundant in Hanauma

Bay where they were protected from spearfishers than other places with similar reef structure around Oahu. She calculated that only Hanauma Bay and a couple of other small areas largely inaccessible to divers had viable populations. It is urgent to ban the use of high technology such as SCUBA and night lights to harvest parrotfishes. For both the viability of parrotfish populations and the health of coral reef ecosystems, we must not allow SCUBA to be used with spearfishing. In the late 1970s, I observed the elimination of the large humphead parrotfish *Bolbometopon muricatum* from Guam. They were spectacular to observe until they were removed by commercial spearfishers when they began using SCUBA. The same was observed in American Samoa when commercial fishers began to use SCUBA (Page 1998).

I have heard several times in Micronesia and in American Samoa, the fishers say “Our resources do not belong to us, we are borrowing them from our children and our future generations.” This is why most other countries and coastal villages allow spearfishing by free-diving, but prohibit the use of high-technology SCUBA.



Charles Birkeland

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Page, M. 1998. The biology, community structure, growth and artisanal catch of parrotfishes of American Samoa. Report to the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, P.O. Box 3730, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799. 87 p.

Rouyer, T., G. Ottersen, J.M. Durant, M. Hidalgo, D.Ø. Hjermann, J. Persson, L.C. Stige, and N.C. Stenseth. 2011. Shifting dynamic forces in fish stock fluctuations triggered by age truncation? *Global Change Biology* 17: 3046 - 3057

Stewart, J. 2011. Evidence of age-class truncation in some exploited marine fish populations in New South Wales, Australia. *Fisheries Research* 108: 209 - 213

Venturelli, P. A., B. J. Shuter, and C. A. Murphy. 2009. Evidence for harvest-induced maternal influences on the reproductive rates of fish populations. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 276:919–924

Venturelli, Paul A., Cheryl A. Murphy, Brian J. Shuter, Thomas A. Johnston, Peter J. van Coeverden de Groot, Peter T. Boag, John M. Casselman, Robert Montgomerie, Murray D. Wiegand, and William C. Leggett. 2010. Maternal influences on population dynamics: evidence from an exploited freshwater fish. *Ecology* 91:2003–2012

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 4:49:39 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan Friedlander	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing in strong support of SB561, which would improve DOCARE’s ability to enforce existing fishing regulations and improve the health of fish populations around O’ahu. Studies authored by myself and others have shown a severe decline in herbivorous fish populations across Hawai’i, some dangerously low, imperiling our coral reefs statewide. Maintenance and recovery of coral reefs require herbivores, which graze on limu and help reefs recover from climate-driven bleaching, as well as local threats from poor water quality, overfishing, and habitat loss. O’ahu’s herbivore populations are in crisis with populations at less than 5% of their potential capacity. A major contributor to herbivore depletion is illegal spearing and lay gillnetting, especially at night and in marine protected areas. This bill would help to address this issue and aid in the recovery of these keystone species. I have worked on nearshore fisheries and coral reefs in Hawai’i and across the global for over 4 decades and have documented significant declines in fish stocks, particularly in populated islands such as O’ahu. Many locations have passed the tipping point but there is still hope for Hawai’i. One of the main complaints from fishers is the lack of enforcement of existing regulations. This legislation is a critical step in helping to ensure we can restore severely depleted herbivore populations and build coral reef resilience in the face of climate impacts. Restoring herbivore populations is essential for reef recovery and for the people of Hawai’i.

Mahalo, Alan Friedlander, Ph.D

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:52:14 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cora Currier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support SB561 which would appropriate funds for equipment for the O‘ahu Branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

SB561 will fund equipment that is essential for DOCARE officers to enforce night-time fishing regulations. We desperately need to save parrotfishes and other herbivores from over-fishing.

These fishes, the “lawnmowers of the reef,” are especially important for keeping dead reef surfaces clean so new corals can settle and grow. Our fishing regulations must be enforced more effectively so populations of these important reef saviors can recover. As a free diver I see every day the increasing damage to our reefs and I long to see them restored to the way they were when I snorkeled as a child.

I urge you to support SB561 and help stem the illegal take of herbivorous fishes.

Mahalo,

Cora Currier, Molokai

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 7:51:40 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kosaki, Randall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing to ask for your support of SB561, which will equip DLNR DOCARE enforcement officers with equipment that is essential for night-time enforcement of fishing regulations. Illegal night spearfishing and gill-netting of reef fishes, especially in marine protected areas and in the newly created Maunalua Bay Fisheries Management Area, will exacerbate depletion of populations of herbivorous fishes (especially uhu or parrotfish, family Scaridae). **These herbivores, the “lawnmowers of the reef”, are essential to keeping algal growth from smothering our corals**, especially in the wake of coral mortality driven by climate change driven events such as coral bleaching (and subsequent death), and damage from major storms and hurricanes.

I have worked as a professional marine biologist here in Hawaii for nearly 40 years. I am also an avid recreational spearfisher. Whether on the job as a biologist, or in the water as a fisher, I have witnessed a serious decline in the abundance of these ecologically important fishes during my lifetime. O’ahu’s abundance of herbivores has been reduced through human activities to less than 5% of their abundance on the pristine reefs of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands where I work. These observations come from peer-reviewed scientific studies of the highest caliber.

Thank you for your support of HB506, and for helping to stem the illegal take of herbivorous fishes.

Sincerely yours,

Randall Kosaki, Ph.D.

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 11:53:12 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsie Counsell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support SB561 which would greatly increase the ability to protect key herbivorous fishes on our reefs. Herbivorous fishes, including parrotfishes, are especially important for keeping dead reef surfaces clean so new corals can settle and grow. When reefs face other stresses like extreme water temperature or nutrient runoff, having a healthy herbivore population can be an incredible buffer to keep a reef healthy.

SB561 will fund equipment that is essential for DOCARE officers to enforce night-time fishing regulations (e.g., night-vision goggles, drones, and other specialized equipment). Our fishing regulations must be enforced more effectively to keep our reefs vibrant and healthy.

I urge you to support SB561 and help stem the illegal take of herbivorous fishes.

Mahalo,

Chelsie Counsell

Kailua, Hawai'i

LATE

SB-561

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:07:52 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Philip Fernandez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

While DOCARE have graduated new officers from the DOCARE Academy, the officers need equipment to be effective. While this bill is limited to Oahu, every resource will help the enforcement of wildlife laws. I support this bill.

Please vote in favor of this bill.

Phil Fernandez

Fisherman

Testimony in Support of SB561

Hearing Date: February 10, 2025



Dear Chair(s) and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tashane Tyson, and I am writing in strong support of SB561, which allocates funding for much-needed equipment for the Oahu branch of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE).

As someone with a background in law enforcement, I understand firsthand how critical it is for officers to have the right tools to do their jobs effectively. DOCARE plays a vital role in protecting Hawaii's natural resources, ensuring that our land, waters, and wildlife are safeguarded against illegal activity. Upgrading patrol vessels, watercraft, surveillance systems, and communication equipment will enhance their ability to enforce conservation laws efficiently and safely.

Hawaii's natural resources are irreplaceable, and without proper enforcement, they are at risk of exploitation. This bill is an investment not only in law enforcement but also in the long-term sustainability of our environment. Strengthening DOCARE's capabilities will help deter violations, improve response times, and ensure that those who harm our ecosystems are held accountable.

I urge the committee to pass SB561 and provide DOCARE with the necessary resources to continue their critical work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Tashane Tyson