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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Monday, March 31, 2025
1:01 P.M.**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 157 / SENATE RESOLUTION 127
URGING THE STATE TO ADOPT THE AGREEMENT UNDER THE UNITED
NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA ON THE CONSERVATION
AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS
BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION AND SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE,
ADMINISTRATIVE, AND POLICY MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE
AGREEMENT AT THE STATE AND COUNTY LEVELS**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 157 / Senate Resolution 127 encourages the State of Hawai'i to adopt applicable recommendations from the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of these measures and offers the following comments.**

The BBNJ Agreement provides regulations for four main objectives: marine protected areas, marine genetic resources, marine research, and environmental impact assessments for commercial activities in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). United States Senate ratification would adopt this treaty into federal law.

ABNJ account for more than half of the global ocean surface. As an island state isolated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the health of Hawai'i's waters is dependent on the health of the

surrounding ocean. ABNJ are critical habitat for a variety of species and play a key role in regulating climate.

Many of Hawai‘i’s marine and aquatic species rely on the open ocean for development at the egg or larval stage. These eggs and larvae drift into the open ocean where they grow and develop until they return to Hawaiian waters. Pollution in ABNJ from commercial activities contributes to the significant amounts of marine debris that wash into Hawai‘i’s nearshore waters posing a threat to a variety of marine species due to entanglement or ingestion. Hawai‘i already has some of the highest reported debris accumulation rates in the United States.

Climate change continues to threaten Hawai‘i’s fragile ecosystems due to rising temperatures, increased severe weather events, sea level rise, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification. The world’s oceans play a large part in sequestering and storing carbon, acting as a carbon sink. Protection of ABNJ from pollution and biodiversity loss is one of many nature-based methods to combat climate change.

The Department recognizes that ABNJ are environmentally, economically, and culturally significant to Hawai‘i but notes that the Department’s marine jurisdiction does not extend into ABNJ.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

SCR-157

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 2:40:55 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/31/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **STRONGLY SUPPORTS!**

SCR-157

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 12:52:13 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/31/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SCR157 / SR127