



To: The Honorable Chair Nicole Lowen,
The Honorable Vice Chair Elle Cochran
Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Re: **HR26 – Relating to Seabed Mining; Prohibition; DLNR; Department of Transportation**
Position: **Strong Support**

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your leadership on this resolution, HR26/HCR24, urging the Department of Land and Natural Resources to protect Hawaii's waters and resources by prohibiting seabed mining. I appreciate the opportunity to testify and express my strong support for this resolution. Every new research dive to the seafloor reveals amazing wildlife and new discoveries about the role the deep sea plays in the health of our ocean and our lives. Seabed mining directly destroys whole communities of life on the seafloor, leaving behind habitat that may never recover. Mining also creates extremely large and potentially toxic sediment plumes; as well as noise, light, and thermal pollution that disrupt marine habitats. [More than 700 ocean scientists](#) have called for a halt to seabed mining citing the risks it poses to ocean health and the well-being of coastal communities. [Major companies](#) including Google, BMW, Philips, Volkswagen, and more also support an international moratorium, [alongside major NGOs](#) such as World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Pew Charitable Trusts, and many others.

This extractive industry of seabed mining poses many risks that are yet to be fully understood. The fishing and tourism industries are likely to feel the impacts of mining, even mining that happens in the high seas outside of the Hawaiian EEZ. I ask that you please pass this resolution, reinforcing Hawai'i's role as leaders in environmental stewardship. Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,
Douglas McCauley

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas McCauley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director, Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory



Aloha Committee Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran, and members of the Committee,

I submit written testimony supporting HR26 as a marine biologist focused on the little-known habitats and animals of the deep ocean, and how our actions are impacting them. Although now based at the Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I spent many years as a researcher at the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and express my strong support for HR26 urging the Department of Land and Natural Resources to protect Hawaii's waters and resources by prohibiting seabed mining, preventing transboundary impacts from other jurisdictions, and prohibiting use of State ports by seabed mining vessels.

Most of Hawai'i's deep sea is unexplored and poorly understood, but despite this, we know it is home to incredible biodiversity. This includes some of the world's oldest gold and black corals, aged at many thousands of years old. The richness and diversity of life in Hawai'i's deep sea supports ecosystem processes necessary for ocean and planetary systems to function, and is connected to Hawai'i's shallow seas, coasts and land. It is also an integral part of the culture and well-being of local communities, as well as ocean-dependent industries.

Deep-sea mining would result in the irreversible loss of biodiversity, ecosystems and their functioning before we know, understand and value them. These impacts could have far-reaching effects, from the potential contamination of commercially important species of food fish, such as ahi and opah, to impacts on carbon sequestration dynamics and climate regulation.

As a scientist, I deeply value evidence-based decision making, especially in instances as consequential as a decision to open up an entirely new frontier of the ocean to large-scale industrial resource exploitation. This is why [more than 700 scientists](#) have signed a statement calling for a delay to the start of deep-sea mining in international waters. The sheer importance of the ocean to Hawai'i's planet and people, and the risk of large-scale and permanent loss of biodiversity and ecosystems necessitates a pause of all efforts to begin mining of the deep sea, in line with the precautionary principle, and an acceleration of research so that we can gain a better understanding of what is at stake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diva Amon".

Diva Amon, Ph.D.

Science Advisor

Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory & Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative

HR-26

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 6:10:23 PM

Testimony for EEP on 3/28/2023 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

HR-26

Submitted on: 3/24/2023 11:25:47 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/28/2023 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this resolution.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

HR-26

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 10:29:27 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/28/2023 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The rising ocean temperatures and increased acidification have already damaged Hawaii's coral reefs and marine ecosystems. Seabed mining poses an unacceptably high risk of further damage and disruption to the marine environment of the State. It is imperative that action be taken to ensure the protection of our environment for present and future generations. Please support this important resolution.

HR-26

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 11:18:31 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/28/2023 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Takamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please accept this testimony in support. Keep Ala Wai for public use for our communities.

HR-26

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 11:24:26 AM

Testimony for EEP on 3/28/2023 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellie S. Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Committee hearing HR26,

My name is Ellie and I am a resident of Senate District 11 and House District 22 in Mānoa Valley. I testify in strong support of this resolution as a marine scientist, conservationist, fisher, diver, and science communicator living on O‘ahu.

I used to work in a laboratory studying deep-sea ecology for three years, and what was always the most striking to me was how fragile submarine environments are. Yes, the deep ocean is widely unexplored, and more new species are discovered each year in the deep than any other marine habitat, but from the research we have done with the advanced technology available, it is apparent that the deep sea houses a diverse set of invertebrates and fish unlike any other on earth.

Deep-sea mining poses an immediate threat to these diverse ecosystems by churning up the seafloor and wiping out any cold-water corals, sponges, crabs, and other small microfauna that live among the rocks and sediment. This method of mining is akin to bottom trawling for fish, a method of fishing that rakes a net across the seafloor and scoops up anything in its path. This method of fishing has been deemed massively destructive, and legislators are working globally to prohibit bottom trawling in fisheries. Why then would we utilize this same method for mining? The earliest research on deep sea mining from 1989 has shown over the years that the site ploughed for mining in the study has never recovered all the way up until 2015, causing serious harm to the environment.

The argument has been made that mining the deep ocean will not have that big of an impact because it is such a vast environment that our tiny impact will not matter in the grand scheme of the ecosystem itself - but haven't we heard this argument before? We humans thought the ocean was so massive that we would never be able to damage it with our carbon emissions, with our pollution, with our overfishing, and look at the consequences we are dealing with now. To this point, I published a paper in 2021 noting the presence of microplastics in deep-sea sediments at the bottom of a submarine canyon in the Atlantic - the deep sea is not out of our reach of potential destruction. The mindset that the ocean is so big that we cannot damage it is archaic and needs to be taken off the table in discussions about how we interact with the ocean.

The deep ocean ecosystems in Hawai‘i are unique and hold special cultural value. Mining them and seeing widespread loss of species and irreversible damage to marine ecosystems would be devastating, but if we act now and prohibit mining in our state waters, we can join other US

states such as Washington, Oregon, and California in setting an example for protecting our deeply important oceans. I strongly support this resolution, and urge you to do the same to preserve the welfare of the deep oceans in Hawai'i and all of us who depend on them.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration of this resolution,

Ellie S. Jones