

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Transmittal Cover Sheet for
Department of Land and Natural Resources Testimony

Date Submitted: March 2, 2009

Testifier's Name/Position/Title: Morris Atta, Land Division Administrator

Committee the comments are directed to: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (FIN)

The Date & Time of Hearing: Wednesday, March 4, 2009
10:30 AM, Conference, Room 308

Measure Number: HB 1665 RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS

Number of Copies the Committee is Requesting: In paper, 2 copies (including original) to
Room 306 in the State Capitol

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2009
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1665
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS**

House Bill 1665 proposes to prohibit the sale of public lands on which government-owned Hawaiian fishponds are located. Whereas government-owned fishponds are considered ceded lands, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) respectfully defers to the Department of the Attorney General with regard to providing specific comments on this measure as part of the overall ceded lands issue before this Legislature.

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RUSSELL V. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
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AQUATIC RESOURCES
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAIHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS



Legislative Testimony
HB 1665, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS
House Committee on Finance

March 4, 2009

10:30 a.m.

Room: 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS, with amendments,** House Bill 1665, which would prohibit the Board of Land and Natural Resources from selling public land on which government-owned Hawaiian fishponds are located. While OHA supports the intent of this bill, we are concerned that it would preclude the state from transferring fishponds to certain organizations, such as OHA, whose objective in acquiring these properties would be to restore and mālama them.

Fishponds were and continue to be important cultural resources to Native Hawaiians. While fishponds today still serve as a source of sustenance for communities, they also offer a wide range of educational opportunities. Fishponds are used to teach students about math, science and Hawaiian culture. In addition, fishpond restoration has become a major part of the Hawaiian cultural revival movement, with a number of groups across Hawai'i taking on the kuleana of bringing once-forgotten fishponds back to life. Considering the number of fishponds that have already been lost to development, we understand the desire to safeguard these cultural resources from falling into the wrong hands. However, we must also ensure that we do not prevent these cultural resources from being placed into the right hands.

Therefore, we recommend an amendment that would allow the state to sell government-owned fishponds to Native Hawaiian organizations, such as OHA, land trusts and educational institutions that plan on restoring and maintaining these cultural resources.

OHA respectfully requests that the committee amend and then PASS HB 1665. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting the Intent of H.B. 1665 Relating to Hawaiian Fishponds
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 4, 2009, 10:30am, Rm. 308

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawaii's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy supports the intent of H.B. 1665 to help preserve and restore Hawaiian fishponds. In addition to the historic and cultural value of Hawaiian fishponds, we believe that the modern social and conservation value of Hawaiian fishponds may be significant and that, in fact, fishponds may be a very important marine conservation tool in 21st century marine resource management efforts.

Today, Hawaii's marine environment faces threats from anthropogenic sources of pollution, sedimentation, overharvesting, lack of community ownership, and an overall decrease in competitive advantage native species against non-native species. Present day fish stocks within Hawai'i are dwindling. For restoration of fish stocks there is a lack of: (1) stable breeding populations; (2) primary productivity; (3) a stable population of grazers; and (4) natural nurseries for fish. We believe fishponds can assist in increasing species diversity and juvenile survival rate of certain reef species. In addition fishponds can provide sediment mitigation, nutrient sinks, and water recharge. Their rock walls mitigate wave effects on springs, which attract and serve as habitat for fish. More inland terrestrial fishponds absorb riparian water pulses, retain sediment and allow for an increase in water recharge to the aquifer thus increasing the presence of springs that increase levels of productivity along the fringe reefs.

Through partnership with communities, cultural practitioners, fishers, scientists and others, The Nature Conservancy is very interested in exploring ways to systematically test and demonstrate the social welfare and biological conservation values that Hawaiian fishponds can provide to the modern day Hawai'i and, possibly, other tropical high islands in the Pacific. Central to this analysis is understanding the role of fishponds to help address management efforts related to: (1) climate change (sea level rise, temperature rise, mitigating storm intensity); (2) biodiversity and habitat conservation (sediment mitigation, coastal wetland habitat enhancement, fish species diversity increases, biomass increases); (3) invasive species control; (4) stock enhancement (nursery recruitment); and (5) community resiliency.

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MAUNALUA FISHPOND HERITAGE CENTER

March 2, 2009

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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Hearing: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 at 10:30 am in Conference Room 308
HB 1665 - RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Honorable Committee Members,

Maunalua Fishpond Heritage Center is a non-profit community organization whose mission is to preserve Maunalua's last fishponds for education. It is a sad fact that many O'ahu youth have never seen a traditional fishpond. East O'ahu was formerly home to a great abundance of fish and fishponds. Since ancient times, stories recorded the great schools of mullet that traveled through Maunalua each year. Fish were so abundant that they would stretch as far as the eye could see. The Punakou (Wailupe) and Kupapa (Niu) Fishponds were filled in the '50s. In the '60s, Henry J. Kaiser dredged and filled in most of the 523 acre Keahupua-o-Maunalua Pond, the largest fishpond in Polynesia. In addition to the Kamoana Fishpond, at least five other smaller fishponds whose names were not recorded were destroyed. Today, the only fishponds in Honolulu outside of Mokauea Island are still located in Maunalua.

The Maunalua Fishpond Heritage Center has a vision for East O'ahu where the fish are once again plentiful, cultural and historical Hawaiian sites, especially fishponds, are restored and Native Hawaiian practices are perpetuated. We strongly support HB1665 which prevents the sale of public land on which government-owned Hawaiian fishponds are located. Fishponds are a valuable cultural resource that must be preserved for future generations. Your support of HB1665 is respectfully requested.

Mahalo nui loa,

Chris Cramer, President

Jeannine Johnson, Legislative Sub-Committee Chair

Kuli'ou'ou / Kalani Iki Neighborhood Board #2

5648 Pia Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821

Phone: 373-2874 (h) / 537-7261 (w)

March 2, 2009

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Hearing: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 at 10:30 am in Conference Room 308
HB 1665 - RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Honorable Committee Members,

As Committee Chair of the **Kuli'ou'ou / Kalani Iki Neighborhood Board #2** Legislative Sub-Committee, I am pleased to inform you **Neighborhood Board #2** supports HB1665 which prohibits the sale of public lands on which government-owned Hawaiian fishponds are located. **Neighborhood Board #2** represents over 6,000 households, with a population of almost 20,000 people (State of Hawaii Data Book 2002) in East Honolulu.

Before Westerners arrived in Hawai'i, native Hawaiians lived a life of self-subsistence and harmony with the land and sea. Native Hawaiians understood that by caring for the land and sea, they too, would be cared for by the land and sea. A great example of this is a native Hawaiian fishpond (loko i'a or loko kuapā) which were first built around the fifteenth century. Hawaiians built 488 fishponds statewide, however only about 60 fishponds remain recognizable today. O'ahu alone had 97 fishponds, but only six accessible ponds remain today and all are located on the windward side. Thirteen fishponds have been restored statewide, with six ponds currently in use: three on Moloka'i, one on the island of Hawai'i, and two on O'ahu.

Currently, the Maunalua Fishpond Heritage Center is working to stop the sale of two remaining fishponds at auction by the Department of Transportation. They are Kanewai Fishpond, a royal pond assessed to have the properties that make it eligible for listing on the National Historic Register, and Kalauha'eha'e (Lucas Spring and Fishpond) reported to be the location of a summer home of Kamehameha I and where Ka'ahumanu was said to have stayed.

Recognizing the important cultural significance these fishponds represent, at its November 6, 2008 meeting, **Neighborhood Board #2** voted to support preventing any governmental entity from selling culturally significant Native Hawaiian treasurers such as fishponds. Your support of HB1665 is respectfully requested.

Mahalo,



Legislative Sub-Committee Chair

Kuli'ou'ou / Kalani Iki Neighborhood Board #2

cc via email: Chair Robert Chuck
Sen. Sam Slom
Rep. Lyla Berg
Rep. Barbara Marumoto



Email: hawaiiikaihui@aol.com ~ Website: www.hawaiiikaihui.org

BOARD OF
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Defend Ka Iwi Coast
Preserve Kamilo Nui Valley
Hold the Urban Growth Boundary
Enforce Public Right of Way Beach Access
Uphold the East Honolulu Sustainable Communities Plan
Protect the authentic characteristics & natural beauty of East Honolulu

March 2, 2009

Elizabeth Reilly
President

Marian Grey
Vice President

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Gayle Carr
Secretary

Hearing: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 at 10:30 am in Conference Room 308
HB 1665 - RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS

Tai Hong
Treasurer

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Honorable Committee Members,

Jeannine
Johnson
Director

Livable Hawai'i Kai Hui (LHKH) is a non-profit, bipartisan community action group. We strive to promote sensible growth and respect for the land as well as upholding the integrity of the East Honolulu Sustainable Communities Plan (EHSCP).

Jacquelin Miller
Director

LHKH encourages grass roots organization, community awareness and education of laws, rules, and regulations that guide sensible growth and development to enhance the quality of life for residents, focusing on the preservation of the agricultural lands in Kamilonui Valley, natural watersheds and adequate open spaces and community stewardship for the protection of watersheds, wetlands, natural and irreplaceable resources and cultural and historic areas in East Honolulu.

Allen Tateishi
Director

Fishponds are an irreplaceable cultural and historic resource that must be preserved for future generations. Therefore, as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation, we are the fiscal sponsor for Maunalua Fishpond Heritage Center whose mission is to preserve Maunalua's last fishponds for education. We strongly support HB1665 which prevents the sale of public land on which government-owned Hawaiian fishponds are located and humbly as for your support.

Gary Weller
Director

Sincerely,

Thomas Yamabe
Director

Elizabeth Reilly

Elizabeth Reilly, President

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair
Senator Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair

March 4, 2009

RE: HB1665 scheduled to be heard by FIN on Wednesday, 3/3/09 at 10:00 am in conference room 308.

My name is Brian F. Funai and I am testifying in support of HB1665.

Countless research efforts and historical records have shown that the fishpond, a man made feature, was an integral part of the vitality of the Hawaiian ecosystem. The productivity of the near shore ocean resource was amplified by the active management of fishponds and the implementation of the fishpond system. This system, in essence, created a reciprocating balance which used cultivated sea life (primarily fish) to supplement the natural stock, which in turn, was used as seed stock to maintain the continuous cycle. This made it possible for large communities throughout the island chain to subsist on primarily fish and seafood diets without jeopardizing the natural resource.

In addition, many of these fishpond sites were chosen to take advantage of freshwater streams and springs that flowed naturally. Today, while a few remain, most of these springs have been cut off and streams channelized or diverted due to development.

On the island of Oahu alone where there were over 100 as late as 1900, most have been destroyed, covered over or filled in again for development. Today there are only 30 fishponds left, with most in disrepair. The following handful are the only fishponds owned by the State:

Kalou	Waiale'e/5-8-01:15
Nameless	Kualoa/submerged
Pouhala	Waikele/9-3-01:4
Pukoko	Kahana

Huilua	Kahana/5-2-05:21
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The situation is similar on the Island of Hawaii, Kauai and Maui. On Molokai, the majority of ponds are owned by the State but on Lanai, all are owned by private landowners.

As there are precious few fishponds left to begin with and even fewer that remain throughout the island chain as property of the State of Hawaii, we must assure that they remain in public hands so that future generations and our marine ecosystem can benefit from their restoration and preservation. Please pass HB1665 for the continuation of our island culture and the health of Hawaii's ocean resource.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to testify.

Brian F. Funai
Kaneohe, HI 96744

JEANNINE JOHNSON

5648 Pia Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821

Phone: 373-2874 (h) / 537-7261 (w)

March 2, 2009

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

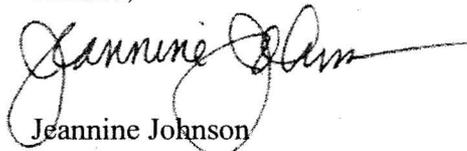
Hearing: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 at 10:30 am in Conference Room 308
HB 1665 - RELATING TO HAWAIIAN FISHPONDS

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Honorable Committee Members,

I strongly support HB1665 which prevents the sale of public land on which government-owned Hawaiian fishponds are located. Many Hawaiian communities are becoming revitalized by strengthening cultural and spiritual connections and using the knowledge of cultural practitioners that was passed down through our kupuna (elders) and experienced farmers (mahi'ai) and fishers (lawai'a) to engage and enhance both sustainability and subsistence and self-sufficiency. My father was a fisherman from Miloli'i and my 'ohana knows how important it is to protect our valuable resources we have left so that our keiki and mo'opuna will be able to fish like our kūpuna.

E ola ke kai, e ola kākou (as the ocean thrives, so do we.) Please kōkua and help preserve fishponds wherever they are located, and especially those on government lands.

Mahalo,



Jeannine Johnson

cc: Sen. Sam Slom
Rep. Gene Ward
Rep. Lyla Berg
Rep. Barbara Marumoto

Thomas T Shirai Jr
P O Box 601
Waialua, HI 96791
Email: Kawaihapai@hawaii.rr.com

Hearing Notice
Wednesday, March 4, 2009 / State Capitol Conference Room 308
House Committee on Finance (FIN)
Representative Marcus Oshiro (Chair) / Representative Marilyn Lee (Vice Chair)

March 2, 2009

RE: Testimony Supporting HB 1665 (Relating to Hawaiian Fishponds)

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee & Committee Members,

I'm a lifetime resident of *Mokule'ia* which is located with *Waialua Moku*. I support HB 1665. Within *Waialua Moku* is *Loko Ea* fishpond which is owned by *Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate (KSBE)* and they currently are pro active in cleaning up involving our Community to eventually restoring this once great resource for the *Po'e Kanaka of Waialua Moku*. This legislation would also protect these living classrooms for generations of today and the future. *Malama Aina*.

Thomas T Shirai Jr
Mokule'ia, Waialua

March 3, 2009 – via email.

Testimony in Favor of HB 1665

Government-owned Fishponds

The ancient Hawaiian fishponds (*loko i'a*) and fishtraps are unique cultural resources and food production systems. Although practically every culture has practiced aquaculture to some degree, the ancient Hawaiians and their extensive system of fishponds are cited as one of the premier examples of successful fish farming in the world. Nowhere else is there found such a diversity and profusion of aquacultural devices as in prehistoric Hawai'i. Fish, crustaceans, shellfish, and seaweed were some of the products of the totally indigenous aquacultural system.

Fishponds have declined statewide in importance and value yet many of them are in restorable condition and can be a vehicle for providing employment, economic opportunity, fisheries enhancement, education and cultural values for the people of Hawaii.

There is a growing movement statewide to restore and reuse the fishponds. Community-based organizations have restored a number of the fishponds and once again are cultivating fish and other products in addition to hosting students and visitors interested in these ancient sustainable aquaculture systems.

We need to protect all the remaining fishpond, regardless of the condition, so that future generations will have the opportunity to reuse them. They are cultural treasures and a direct link to the past that have much to teach us today about protecting and enhancing our land and water resources, mauka to makai.

I support **HB 1665** to keep government owned Hawaiian fishponds in the public trust.

Mahalos,

Joseph Farber
2722 Ferdinand Ave.
Honolulu HI 96822
joefarber@hotmail.com

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
ent: Monday, March 02, 2009 7:08 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: programs@mokuula.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1665 on 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM HB1665

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jessica Thompson
Organization: Individual
Address: PO BOX 1164 HI
Phone: 808 276-6068
E-mail: programs@mokuula.com
Submitted on: 3/2/2009

Comments:

I support keeping government owned Hawaiian fishponds in the public trust. As the program director for a Hawaiian non-profit dedicated to restoring a sacred site that includes a fish-pond, I see daily the need to protect all Hawaiian fishponds. They are all a vital part to protecting and preserving Hawaiian culture and practices for future generations. Thank you for keeping them in the public trust.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 8:20 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: halawanui@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1665 on 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM HB1665

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Kekoa Wong
Organization: Individual
Address: 6053 Summer St Kuliouou, Oahu, Hawaii 96821
Phone: 808-394-9415
E-mail: halawanui@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:

I support keeping government owned hawaiian fishponds in the public trust could save some of the ponds that have been threatened. In these hard economic times I see no reason for the sale of any hawaiian fishponds, since they may used for sustainable foods and as a food source. Sale of these ponds will eventually end in their historical demise of our hawaiian culture.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 10:17 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: kaumaka@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1665 on 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM HB1665

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Kaumaka Wong
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: kaumaka@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:

I support any government owned Hawaiian fishponds to stay in the public trust to help keep the ones that are thriving alive and those that are not, protected and possibly rebuild them.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 3:23 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: healanibabe808@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1665 on 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM HB1665

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: ashlyn
Organization: Individual
Address: mililani, hawaii
Phone:
E-mail: healanibabe808@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:

this is ridiculous to be selling fishponds. you can't own water and all of the other components of fish ponds! there may be personal histories and stories behind each fishpond, whether the government realizes this or not. they need to just leave the hawaiian land, fishponds, everything, alone. haven't our people suffered enough; from them illegally overthrowing hawaii, now they want to sell our ceded lands and fish ponds? a'ole to dat.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 9:51 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: bkfisle@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1665 on 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM HB1665

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Kimo Franklin
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: bkfisle@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:

I support keeping government owned Hawaiian fishponds in the public trust.

FINTestimony

n: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
t: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 10:25 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: annmarie@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1665 on 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM

Testimony for FIN 3/4/2009 10:30:00 AM HB1665

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Ann Marie Kirk
Organization: Individual
Address: PO Box 25342 Honolulu, Hawaii
Phone: 371-3072
E-mail: annmarie@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 3/3/2009

Comments:
House Bill 1665

March 4, 2009 Wed. 10:30am in Room 308

Aloha Finance Chair Rep. Oshiro and Vice Chair Rep. Lee and Honorable Members of the Finance Committee of the House,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1665 which states there will be no selling of public land on which Hawaiian fishponds are located.

Hawaiian fishponds are unique. There is nothing like them found any where else in the world. Fishponds are absolute engineering masterpieces created by the Hawaiian people. Most importantly, fishponds provided food for generations upon generations of families and communities throughout all the Hawaiian islands.

In all cases fishponds must be protected, especially when found on public lands. Hawaiian fishponds must never be sold for it is in the public interest that they are cared for, studied and hopefully one day brought back to their full potential as fully functional fishponds in our communities state wide.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB 1665.

Mahalo,
Ann Marie Kirk

PO Box 25342
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825

371-3072

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2009

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
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Rep. Chris Lee	

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, March 04, 2009
TIME: 10:30 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1665

From: Tony Costa
Hawaii Nearshore Fishermen
Honolulu, Hawaii
540-1308 office

Testimony

HNF are in strong support of HB1665

Fishermen believe there is nothing more important you can do for our nearshore fisheries than rehabilitate the nearshore estuarine habitat – one most important first step component being the fresh spring water revival.

Much has been proclaimed over the past ten years or so about “resource decline” and failed fisheries or other negative assessments about our oceans and reef. Never before has so much attention been given to nearshore resource conditions.

As the various groups rush to promote favorite measures to “save the reef”, we note that habitat loss, fresh water diversion, siltation or pollution rarely gets any attention as an important component in the condition of the reef. Yet, most all State and Non-Governmental groups do seem keener to focus on and malign traditional fishing practices as the single most urgent thing to prohibit as a fix.

While we understand the shortsighted world view most lay people have regarding the nearshore, fishermen remain optimistic that the misunderstanding about our ocean environments and the fishermen themselves will in time, evolve into a better awareness that will eventually lead to a spirit of shared responsibility and coexistence.

The fishermen believe habitat loss is the primary culprit of any downside in fish population with recruitment being the important factor. Recruitment (new babies surviving) depends on many factors but condition of habitat surely is great. You can't have one without the other.

Biologists also tell us that recruitment is independent of spawning stock biomass (amount of pregnant egg bearing mothers). In other words, if conditions are just right (nursery habitat, water, temp, nutrients, stars lining up etc.) one single pregnant female can be responsible for millions of offspring (hypothetical).

When the *kalalimu* disappeared from Maunalua Bay due to the siltation associated from the dredging of Koko Marina in the 1950's, the *Kala* (fish) also disappeared -

We believe the single most effective thing you could do to help in recruitment of nearshore reef species and nearshore pelagic species would be to rehab the nursery grounds. One important ingredient in our nearshore nursery ground is the underground artesian spring waters that naturally percolate into our nearshore areas.

HB 1665 is one small step in insuring that some of these nearshore spring water systems remain not disturbed and as functional as possible by not allowing the sale of public fishpond lands.

Currently, there are public owned fishponds on Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Hawaii, and Kauai.

HB1665 would protect fishponds on all these islands in each of their respective districts.

For example, Oahu has 26 government owned fishponds. One in Kapalama, one in Kahana, two in Kaneohe, two in Moanalua, one in Waikeke, one in Waiale'e, two in Kualoa, one in Kailua, five in Halawa, one in Kalauao, one in Waimano, one in Honouliuli, one in Puuloa, one in Waikele, one in Waianae, one in Kahana, one in Kahauiki, one in Niu, one in Kuliouou, one in Kalihi (Mokauea).

For an inventory of all government owned and privately owned fishponds in Hawaii, I have a list documented by UH Manoa Department of Ocean and Resources Engineering available should you have further interest.

The Fishermen want to commend the efforts and energies by all legislators and community members who wrote and are in support of this bill.

We strongly support HB1665

Tony Costa
Hawaii Nearshore Fishermen