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

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Monday, March 2, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2101, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

House Bill 2101, House Draft 1 proposes to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

Pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapters 187A and 189, the Department has managed the Hawai'i aquarium fishery for sustainable commercial use based on science and monitoring, gear restrictions, and in West Hawai'i, Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs), which have contributed to increased populations of the two most heavily collected aquarium fish species. For example, in West Hawai'i, populations of yellow tang and goldring surgeonfish (kole), which together accounted for 91% of the total FY2017 aquarium catch, increased significantly within FRAs between 1999/2000 (when FRAs were first implemented) and 2021/2022.

In 2024, the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources conducted an independent review and analysis of available data for West Hawai'i and concluded that existing and proposed aquarium fish management measures provide significant safeguards against threats to populations of target species as well as threats to the ecosystem.

Since the 2017 Hawai'i Supreme Court ruling that aquarium fish permits are subject to the environmental review requirements of the Hawaii Environmental Policy Act (HEPA),

aquarium collectors from Oahu and West Hawai'i have been required to prepare Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements to analyze the impacts of aquarium collecting. This HEPA compliance requirement greatly reduces the number of aquarium collectors eligible to participate in the fishery. To date, only seven collectors in West Hawai'i have completed the HEPA review process and are eligible to obtain aquarium fish permits.

The Department is currently developing administrative rules to regulate the commercial aquarium fishery through a combination of statewide and regional regulations. These rules are designed to ensure that any authorized aquarium collection activity will be strictly regulated and monitored for compliance and sustainability. The proposed regulations include a mandatory commercial aquarium fishing permit, a limited "whitelist" of species that may be harvested, total annual catch limits for each species, area restrictions, and reporting requirements.

The Department is proceeding under the existing legal and administrative framework to determine whether commercial aquarium collection is appropriate or inappropriate in Hawai'i. The Department recognizes, however, that there may be other reasons to prohibit commercial aquarium collection based on cultural or social values, which the Legislature must consider. Should a statutory ban be enacted, the Department will implement that direction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2101_HD1
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

House Committee on Finance
Hawai‘i State Capitol

March 2, 2026

10:00 A.M.

Room 308

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

Mahalo for setting this HB2101_HD1 for hearing. This bill is part of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ (OHA’s) 2026 Legislative Package and OHA submits this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT, with an additional request that the HD1 be amended to apply statewide, as originally drafted by OHA.¹

As set forth below, OHA’s position is based on repeat requests from our beneficiaries whose communities have been negatively affected by commercial aquarium collection to help ensure the current ten year judicial pause in commercial collection is extended permanently to protect their nearshore ecosystems.

OHA’s Board of Trustees voted to include this bill in its legislative package following the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs’ (AOHCC) decision in October 2025 to support a resolution calling on the legislature to ban commercial aquarium collection, and the publication of proposed rules to reopen West Hawai‘i to commercial collection.² Shortly thereafter the County of Hawai‘i also unanimously adopted a resolution setting forth the same kāhea to this representative body. Other representative entities that have taken similar positions in the past include County of Kaua‘i and the Neighborhood Boards of Kahalu‘u, Kāne‘ohe, Kailua and Waimānalo.

Commercial Aquarium Collection Is A Relic of the Past

Established pursuant to the terms of Section 5 of the Admissions Act and the Hawai‘i State Constitution, Article XII, sections 4, 5, and 6, OHA serves as a semiautonomous agency and trust vehicle for the betterment of the conditions of Native

¹ This can be accomplished by deleting language at page 3 line 17-18 limiting the applicability of the ban to counties with populations of 200,000-300,000

² See AOHCC Resolution 2025-40, “Calling for a Ban on Commercial Aquarium Collection in State of Hawai‘i’s Waters,” [2025-AOHCC-ADOPTED-RESOLUTIONS.pdf](#).

Hawaiians. OHA's constitutional duties include administering its pro rata share of public trust revenues for the benefit of its Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, and formulating policy related to Native Hawaiians. HRS Chapter 10 further expands upon OHA role and duties in protecting and promoting Native Hawaiian rights across state agencies that have practices and policies that impair the exercise of such rights or affect OHA's mission to improve Native Hawaiian social and economic conditions. See HRS § 10-3.

The proposed ban set forth in HB2101 is consistent with OHA's existing duties to advance Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights under Article XII, section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution and longstanding OHA policy to protect natural resources that are important to the culture and lifestyle of Native Hawaiians. The current law allowing commercial aquarium collection, HRS § 181-33, is an unfortunate relic of the territorial period when reef fish were erroneously considered inedible and without any other recognized value. In reality, herbivorous reef fish most heavily targeted for commercial collection such as lau'īpala (yellow tang) have been valued, managed, and revered by Native Hawaiians as a food source and for use in healing rituals and other traditional practices for generations. This antiquated law no longer reflects contemporary values let alone legal duties related to protection of our 'āina, kai and Native Hawaiian practices that depend upon those resources.

Commercial Collection Negatively Affects Other Ocean Users

Commercial aquarium collection has divided our communities for decades due to the observed, negative impacts of the industry in marine areas targeted heavily for collection. Supplementing kama'āina observation and testimony, the industry's own West Hawai'i environmental impact statement (EIS) documented the negative impact of commercial aquarium collection on lau'īpala (yellow tang), a species heavily targeted by the industry which has been valued, managed, and revered by Native Hawaiians as a food source and for use in healing rituals and other traditional practices for generations.³ Nonetheless, in early October 2025, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) proposed rules to reopen commercial aquarium collection in the West Hawai'i Regional Fishing Management Area (WHRFMA).⁴ DAR's proposed rules limit collection to the seven industry participants who contributed to the EIS, indicating the limited economic potential of this industry.

On October 15, 2025, West Hawai'i beneficiaries attended OHA's Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment to testify in opposition to DAR's proposal, and to ask OHA for support in addressing the observed, negative effects of commercial aquarium

³ Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits and Commercial Marine Licenses for the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (EIS) at p.122 (May 26, 2021), [2021-06-08-HA-Revised-FEIS-Hawaii-Island-Commercial-Aquarium-Permits.pdf](#).

⁴ Significantly, three Board members voted to approve the 2023 EIS and three voted to reject it; therefore, it was deemed approved by operation of law. See HRS § 343-5(e).

collection in their communities. Subsequently, on October 24, 2025, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) received over five hours of community testimony on the proposal to reopen the industry, overwhelmingly in opposition. During the public hearing, some Board members expressed the opinion that existing law *allowing* DLNR to issue commercial aquarium collection permits, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 188-31, *requires* that it permit industry participants after they comply with HEPA.⁵ This is also a position advanced by the Attorney General’s Office in related litigation.

Following five hours of primarily opposition testimony, the Board voted to send the rules out for public hearing, moving this industry one step closer to reopening in West Hawai‘i. OHA’s Board of Trustees voted to adopt a ban on collection as part of its legislative package shortly thereafter, in response to calls for help from West Hawai‘i beneficiaries, and consistent with OHA policy related to protection of natural resources.

Commercial Aquarium Collection Has Limited Economic Benefits

According to the industry’s own advocates, the aquarium trade in WHRFMA generates between \$499,416 to \$2,022,686 of income per year within the state (as 67% of statewide industry activity).⁶ In contrast, healthy coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security, further enhancing their economic value.⁷

At the same time, costs for DAR to administer the permitting program and police compliance with geographically defined marine protected areas under the proposed rules reduce the economic value of this industry to the state. Moreover, DAR’s sustainability conclusion for West Hawai‘i is based on a permit-quota system that rests, in turn, upon untested enforcement and closes this industry to newcomers, further limiting the extent to which this industry benefits the public beyond existing industry participants.⁸ Whether DOCARE can in fact enforce the permit-quota system to maintain “sustainability” is unknown.

The Public Trust in Natural Resources Further Supports a Ban

Hawai‘i’s constitutional public trust doctrine, Haw. Const. Art. XI, § 1, requires that public resources be managed for the benefit of present and future generations, with

⁵ See Board members statements on the Board’s purported lack of authority to ban commercial aquarium collection, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=PLDh6ZXzdUvQkHtgVoauOkfa26NfNLh2pK&index=4> at 8:10:27; 7:22:09; 7:55:33.

⁶ RFEIS at p.102.

⁷ [Restoring Hawai‘i’s Reefs | The Nature Conservancy](#) (Sept. 16, 2018).

⁸ OHA is sensitive to concerns of industry participants but notes that because the industry was judicially banned, there has been no collection for the better part of a decade, and a ban would not displace existing jobs. Further OHA is committed to developing programs to help beneficiaries pursue other maritime career pathways.

commercial uses that negatively impact these resources disfavored under the law. Where commercial uses are permitted, commercial users have a high burden to justify their needs considering negative consequences on public trust uses including long term preservation of the resource itself. Moreover, where there is scientific uncertainty concerning the effects of commercial use, the public trust doctrine cautions application of the precautionary principle to preserve resources long term. Native Hawaiian cultural practices are one of the uses constitutionally protected under the public trust doctrine. *See In re Waiāhole*, 94 Haw. 97, 115-142 (2000).

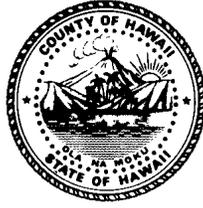
These constitutional principles clearly caution the state against permitting an industry shown to repeatedly impinge upon the interests and concerns of the general public and those most intimately connected to the affected place and ecosystems. Beyond the specific interests of affected communities, businesses, and Native Hawaiian practitioners, up to 84% of Hawai‘i Island and O‘ahu residents favor banning the industry.⁹

This widespread concern with the aquarium industry points to a fundamental policy question that this legislature must confront: in an age of ecological uncertainty, with coral reefs facing potential extinction within the next fifty years, does the commercial extraction of reef fish serve a beneficial public purpose? OHA respectfully submits that it does not, and urges the legislature to pass this ban to protect Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, Hawai‘i’s nearshore ecosystems, and the broader public interest.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to present testimony. OHA asks that the Committees PASS this bill, but to remove the language at page 3 line 17-18 limiting the applicability of the ban to counties with populations of 200,000-300,000, to ensure the ban applies statewide as originally drafted.

⁹ See [Earthjustice Press Release](#), “Land Board Advances Plan to Re-Open West Hawai‘i Waters to Aquarium Pet Industry,” (Oct. 27, 2025) (citing a recent poll conducted by conducted by Honolulu-based Anthology | FINN Research).

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



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jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: March 1, 2026
TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB2101

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and esteemed Committee Members,

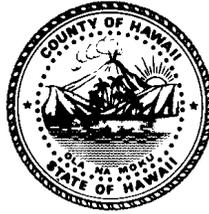
I am writing in **strong support of HB2101**. Hawai'i's reefs are under increasing pressure from climate change, bleaching events, and other human impacts. Protecting native fish populations is critical to maintaining reef resilience and preserving marine ecosystems for future generations.

The Hawai'i County Council adopted Resolution No. 422-25 urging the legislature to prohibit commercial aquarium collection, reflecting concern about the long-term stewardship of our marine resources. This policy aligns with Hawai'i's constitutional responsibilities of safeguarding natural resources, upholding the right to a healthy environment, and protecting traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jenn Kagiwada



HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

February 28, 2026

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

RE: **Support for HB2101, HD1, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.**

Prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000.

Hearing: **March 2, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.**

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

I write in strong support of H.B. No. 2101, H.D. 1, relating to commercial aquarium collection.

H.B. 2101, H.D. 1 prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000 . This measure reflects a clear legislative intent to protect Hawai'i's native reef ecosystems while recognizing the unique population and environmental pressures facing Hawai'i County.

As outlined in the bill's findings, the capture and sale of Hawai'i's native reef wildlife for ornamental display and commercial profit are inconsistent with foundational Hawaiian values such as mālama 'āina, aloha 'āina, and kuleana to our surrounding environment . The measure further recognizes that many reef fish species targeted by aquarium collection have long been used for subsistence and cultural purposes and play a critical role in maintaining reef resilience, particularly as climate change intensifies ocean warming and acidification .

Healthy reef systems are essential to Hawai'i Island. They protect our shorelines from erosion and storm surge, support subsistence fishing and traditional practices, and sustain a visitor industry that depends on vibrant, living reefs. In the face of accelerating environmental stressors, preserving herbivorous reef fish populations is a prudent and necessary conservation strategy.

Importantly, H.B. 2101, H.D. 1 preserves traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights protected under the State Constitution, as well as lawful fishing for consumption or bait and

legitimate aquaculture and scientific activities . This balanced approach safeguards cultural practices while ending the commercial aquarium harvest within the affected county.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and passage of H.B. No. 2101, H.D. 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holeka Goro Inaba". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

HOLEKA GORO INABA, Ed.D.,
Council Chair, District 8, North Kona

HGI.wpb



February 28, 2026

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

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

Aloha, my name is Jonnetta Peters, Executive Director of Conservation Council for Hawai'i (CCH), a non-profit environmental and conservation organization who serves to protect and save native species and their habitats. CCH is also the Hawai'i affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. **CCH STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB2101 HD1.**

This measure would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai'i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons.

Commercial aquarium fishing flies in the face of Hawai'i's constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good, rather than private gain. The aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly die during, or within a year after, collection.

At the same time, this commercial activity has diminished the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef systems, undermined the state's food security and climate resilience, and degraded a cornerstone of our tourism-based economy. Not surprisingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

While commercial aquarium collection has not been allowed for the better part of a decade, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai'i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. Moreover, on-reef tourism activities that are dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Given the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, such as climate change impacts, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations. Vigorous eco-conscious tourism is dependent on a vibrant and healthy environment.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



Jonnetta Peters
Executive Director

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President: Bret Nainoa Mossman | Vice President: Les Welsh | Secretary: Colleen Heyer

Treasurer: Mashuri Waite, PhD |

**Directors: Erica Amundson, Puanani Anderson-Fung, Maka'ala Ka'auomoana, Steven Lee Montgomery, PhD,
Emily Sarasa |**

Executive Director: Jonnetta "Jonee" Peters Operations and Events Manager: Leah Kocher

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

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 10:35:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Niki Roderick	FreediveSafe! Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2101 From FreediveSafe! Hawaii.

I write in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101** because it is necessary to restore balance in the management of our public trust marine resources and to protect the communities most directly affected by commercial aquarium collection. As the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has emphasized, this practice is rooted in an outdated territorial-era law that treated reef fish as having little value beyond export. Today, we know that species such as lau'īpala (yellow tang) are vital to the health of reef ecosystems and to the food security, cultural practices, and subsistence traditions of Native Hawaiian families. For those who rely on nearshore waters for subsistence spearfishing, these fish are not ornamental commodities—they are sustenance, cultural inheritance, and a living connection to 'āina and kai. Protecting them through a legislative ban is fully consistent with OHA's constitutional and statutory duties to safeguard Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights and to ensure that public trust resources are managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

This measure is also forward-looking. Commercial aquarium collection has already been halted for years due to legal challenges and the absence of required environmental review, meaning this bill would not disrupt any active, ongoing industry. Instead, it would provide long-term certainty that our reefs will be managed in a way that prioritizes ecosystem health and community well-being over short-term extraction. Subsistence spearfishers and lawai'a depend on abundant, functioning reef systems—especially herbivorous species that maintain reef resilience. Allowing renewed commercial harvest of these species threatens to undermine both reef recovery and local food systems at a time when climate change and other stressors already strain our marine resources. By passing HB2101, the Legislature affirms that protecting resources for subsistence use and for our keiki is not just a policy choice, but a kuleana to the future.

Niki Roderick

Founder and CEO,

FreediveSafe! Hawaii, West Hawaii

HB 2101 Strongly Opposed To HB 2101

Dear Esteemed House Representatives,

Compiled by Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM with all sources, no misinformation here!

Please do not pass HB 2101; it would be the wrong decision. To base decisions on biased, untrue testimony opposed to the fishery would go against a long legal process!

The aquarium Fishery has undergone a full Environmental review taking over 4 years and passed. The fishery also has DLNR support, DAR scientist support, and full science review DAR presentation Rules Package submission and passage, BLNR 7-0 passage of rules package to give fishers hearings to return permits, the Supreme Court upholding permits issuance and EIS passage, Hawai'i Small Business Regulatory Review Board recent passage of BLNR rules package in hearing, and the non-passage of HB companion bills SB2996. SB 2996 did not pass in the Senate, solidifying Senate opposition to the closure of the fishery.

It has endured more scrutiny than any other DLNR permit unfairly.

HB2101 ignores the latest Supreme Court decision supporting the EIS-approved fishery opening and contravenes EIS laws and the EIS approval process.

Pro-Hawaiian-based BLNR, Board of Land and Natural Resources, passes rules to proceed with permitting laws and supports the fishery in a unanimous 7-0 vote. Every year, DAR, Department of Land and Natural Resources, testimony based on science supports the return of the aquarium fishery. Passage of this ban bill would contradict the EIS and BLNR decisions and the courts' rulings, and it would not be based on science.

Please do not send messages to other businesses stating that Hawaii is closed to businesses, even if they are eco-friendly, pass an EIS, and are sustainable.

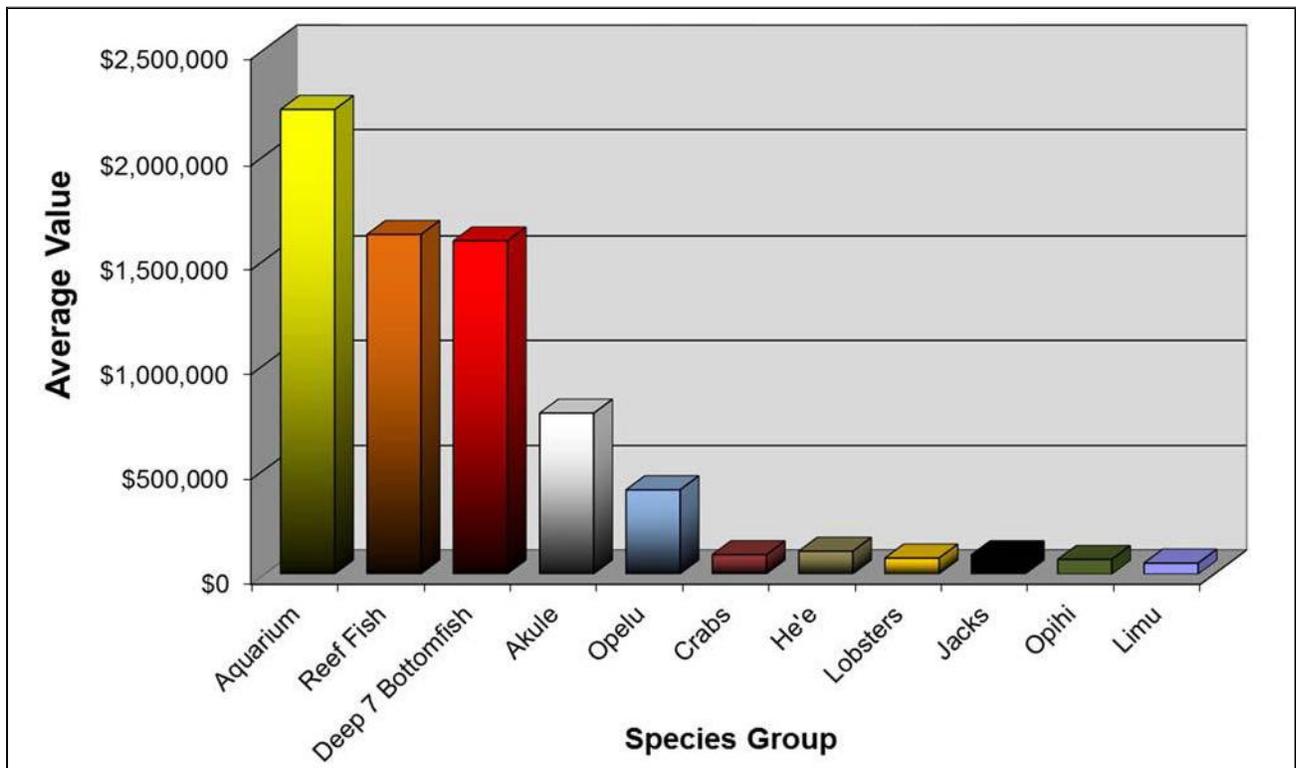
“Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Economic Value with Sustainability”

When the Hawaii Aquarium Fishery was active, up to 2017, it was the most valuable and most sustainable fishery in the State of Hawaii. 2026

Aquarium Fish are Ambassadors for Tourism

Hawaii's colorful reef fish are "**ambassadors**" for the state's marine ecosystems, exported globally to aquariums and private collectors, raising awareness and promoting tourism, science, sustainability, and fishery husbandry worldwide.

1980’S FISHERY VALUE CHART



“Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Economic Value with Sustainability”

During the fishery collections, the highest fish populations were shown. If the fishery were not sustainable, there would have been a decline.

Currently, the most historically collected aquarium fish species are also among the most abundant in the ocean!

Kole Tangs *Ctenochaetus Strigosus* , **Yellow Tangs** *Zebrasoma flavescens* are currently the third and fourth most abundant reef fish. They were also the most fished species. See the findings in the chart below.

Hawaii DC114 2020 Rpt; Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) Report; DLNR.

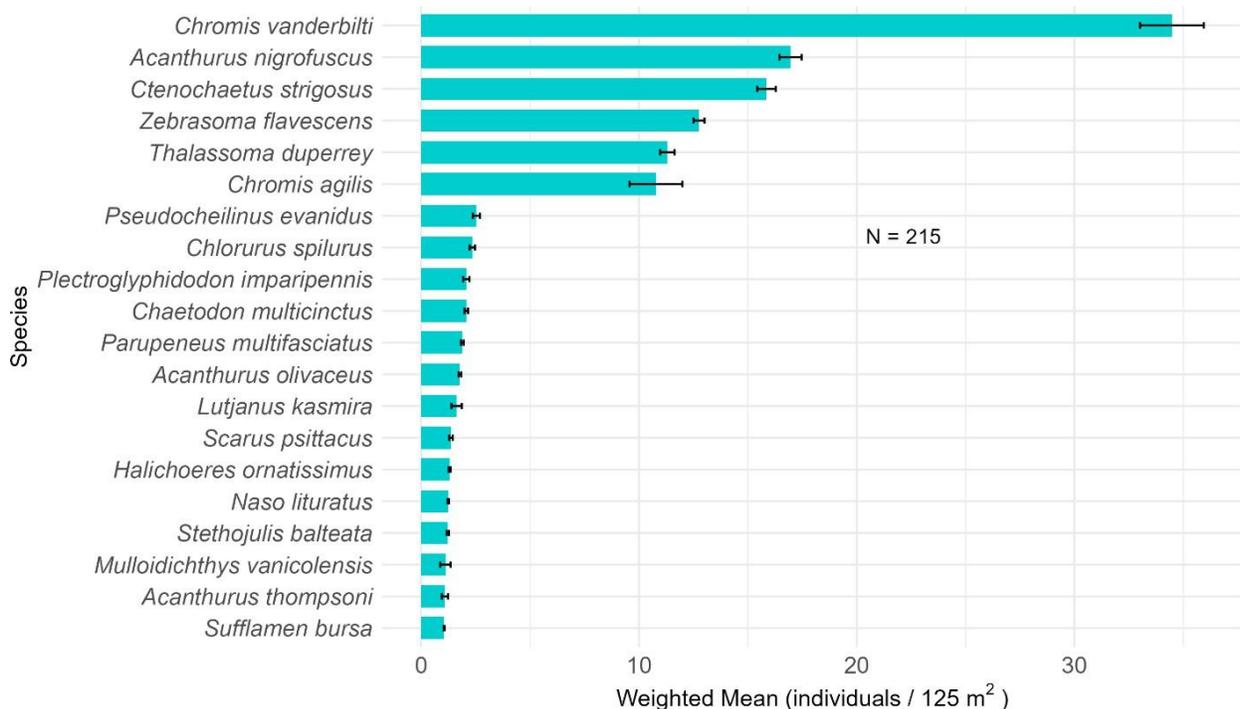


Figure 20. The 20 most abundant reef fish species recorded during 2022-2023 FAHU surveys. Mean density per transect (125 m²) weighted by stratum weights with error bars to show weighted standard error for the sample size of 215 surveys across nine strata. Scientific names were used to distinguish species with overlapping Hawaiian names. Translations can be found in Appendix table A-1.

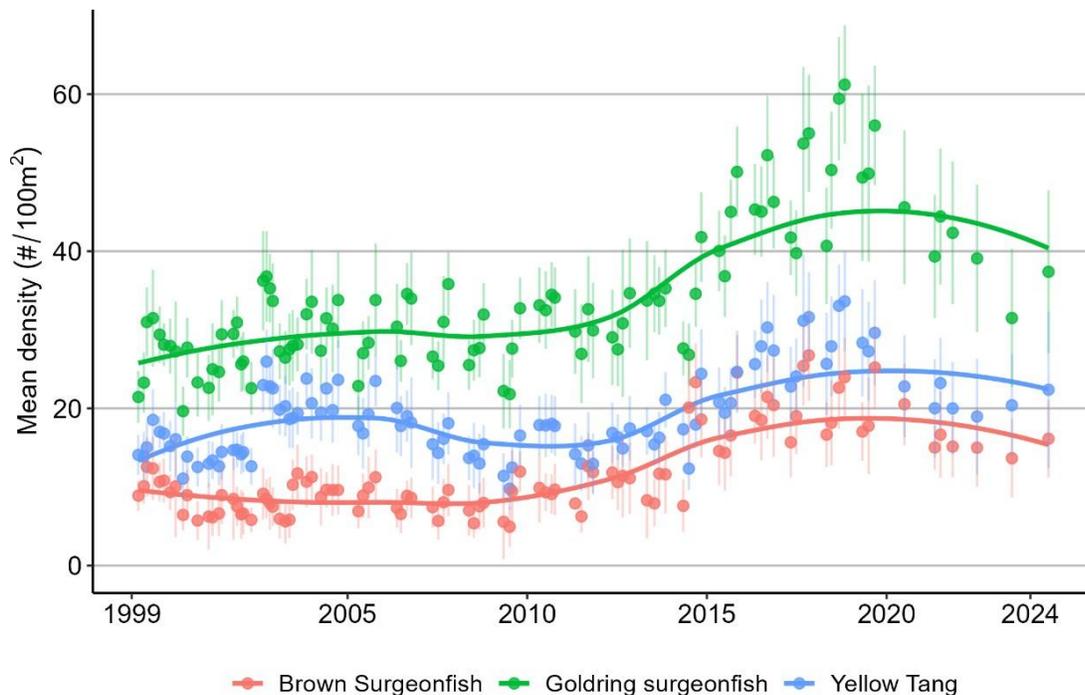


Figure 23. Mean density of select small surgeonfishes in WHAP surveys. Points represent mean density across 25 WHAP sites for each survey round per species. Error bars represent standard deviation to depict the level of variability between sites. Recruit sized individuals are removed from these data for *ma'i'i'i* (red), *kole* (green), and *lau'ipala* (blue).

The overall mean value shows an increase in populations from 1999 to 2024. Until 2017, the aquarium fishery was open, indicating no significant long-term impacts on overall fish populations.

High and low fish counts can be attributable to El Niño and La Niña years, count-month variations, and other natural non-fishery factors. Most fish, while breeding daily or a few days a month, result in larger reproductive fecundity in the hotter summer months. The summer counts before fish fry return to reefs in huge numbers. This reproductive increase during fall months is usually not attributed to the data. Counts if made during the reproductive period would be even higher.

Tourism

Dive shops and Ocean Tour Operators have benefited greatly from the aquarium fishery connection. From sharing great dive spots and sealife locations with tour operators over the years, increasing their experience. Many divers purchase used boat motors from whale and dolphin operators when purchasing new motors, thereby financially supporting these operators' businesses. We have towed tour operators into the harbor and pulled tour boats off the reef countless times.

Fishers, over the years, have avoided and have freely given some of the best fishing spots solely to tour operators, despite laws allowing them to fish there. Filling tanks multiple times a week at dive shops, buying expensive dive gear, and supporting the dive shops' operations are invaluable to tour businesses. This aquarium fishery business provides dive shops with a more stable source of income during periods of economic downturn, such as 9/11 and COVID-19. Tourism declined after the shutdown of the aquarium fishery; see the data below.

Tourists worldwide see Hawaiian fish in Public aquariums that showcase Hawaii's beauty, alluring tourists to Hawaii. These same aquaria learn and educate others about reef biology and marine biology through fishery husbandry.

Who Benefits?

The Hawaii businesses that have greatly benefited from the tropical fish industry are: boat dealers, boat repair shops, outboard motor mechanics, dive shops, fishing supply stores, aquarium pet stores, pet store wholesalers, box suppliers, bag suppliers, oxygen gas suppliers, aquarium maintenance companies like those in Hospitals and doctor offices, tourist aquariums in Hotels, Sea Life Park, Waikiki Aquarium, gas stations, computer repair, office supply, interisland cargo shippers, Fish and Wildlife inspections fees, USDA inspections fees, Department of Agriculture fees, DNLR permit fees, and many more.

All public and private aquaria, aquaculture facilities, and even fishponds in the state rely on live fish.

Natural Energy Center Kailua Kona and its numerous facilities. Sea Life Park, Waikiki Aquarium, Oceanic Institute, Nui Nui Fisheries, Aulani Disney Resort, Maui Ocean Center, UH Hilo Pacific Aquaculture and Coastal Resource Center (PACRC), Kaua'i Ocean Center, Mokupapapa Discovery Center Hilo, Doctor and Hospital, and Aquariums like Shriners for Children.

All fishponds must rely on wild-caught fish kept alive, and aquarium fishers have supplied broodstock to many fish ponds and aquaculture facilities over the years. Some fish entered the gates and then grew to adult food size; however, with current runoff and pollution, an increasing amount of wild-caught broodstock will be needed.

No one knows the fishing grounds and techniques better than aquarium fishers, who provide egg-viable, swim-bladder-intact, healthy brood stock for fish ponds. [Fishponds \(Loko I'a\)](#): Ancient Hawaiians constructed nearly 500 walled, brackish, or saltwater ponds for aquaculture, providing a steady food source. One of the 500 pond examples is the Huilua Fishpond.

Following the closure of the fishery in 2017, these businesses lost millions in income. Just one of the 15 aquarium fish wholesalers reported a gross yearly income of over 1.2 million, most of which was allocated to air cargo fees for out-of-state shipments.

Air Cargo support for the Airlines. Just one example is Hawaiian Airlines, which experienced severe financial distress, culminating in a \$1.9 billion acquisition by Alaska Air Group, finalized after the carrier suffered over \$1 billion in losses since 2019 due to the pandemic, high fuel costs, engine issues, and the Maui wildfires.

Despite being acquired, Hawaiian continued to lose approximately \$518,000 daily in 2025, posting a \$189 million loss for the year, which significantly dragged down Alaska Air Group's overall profitability.

In late 2025, monthly imports could exceed \$200 million while exports were under \$40 million, highlighting the imbalance. Significantly less cargo leaves Hawaii, and the HERO reports below stress the importance of increased sustainable renewable exports from the State and its dangerously high

dependence on imports. The aquarium fishery could help fulfill those states' needs.

We haven't even touched the surface of the impact that would be felt on the 302-billion-dollar U.S. pet industry. Many companies produce products that benefit from the collection of tropical fish. The following businesses impacted are Aquarium manufacturers, filter manufacturers, aquarium ornament manufacturers, filter, pump, UV sterilizers, protein skimmers, sand filters, pipes, plumbing, fish foods, pet stores, mainland distributors, other countries directly selling into other countries, and the US, Aquarium fish book printers and distributors, all major mainland air carriers, etc.

[Adjusted for local prices, Hawai'i's economy among worst in nation, UHERO finds | University of Hawai'i System News](#)

Adjusted for local prices, Hawai'i's economy among worst in nation, UHERO finds

<https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2024/07/02/economic-diversification-opportunities-uhero/>

[Beyond the price of paradise: Is Hawai'i being left behind? - UHERO](#)

Where can Hawai'i diversify its economy? UHERO finds areas

[UH News](#) » [Research](#) » [Where can Hawai'i diversify...](#)

Hawai'i's economy depends heavily on tourism, and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers as well as inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years.

A new report, 2024, by the [University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#) (UHERO) identifies potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy by analyzing the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawai'i.

“Based on industries already in Hawai'i, the study shows Hawai'i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as fishing, fish farming and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging.

Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism”.

Sustainability is Key to Hawaii’s future. As the most isolated island in the world, Hawaii is too dependent on tourism, the military, and other non-sustainable, [unreliable economic sources](#). [UHERO Forecast for the State of Hawai‘i: Mild recession and weak recovery in 2026 - UHERO](#)

The [value of Hawaii’s nearshore oceans](#) is worth [15.3 billion dollars](#) (low non-fishery value estimate) in highly renewable resources in 2024, with a current 50% estimated increase every 20 years, which means one of the state of Hawaii’s most valuable resources is our Ocean. *Tourism impacts are Hawaii’s biggest ocean ecological offender and the largest source of carbon emissions, and it is not sustainable, especially in regard to the 2030 zero-carbon footprint goal plans.*

Reports show global aquaculture production (including aquatic plants) in 2016 was 110.2 million tonnes, with the first sale value estimated at US \$244 billion. Three years later, in 2019 the reported output from global aquaculture operations was over 120 million tonnes valued at US \$274 billion. Managing fisheries to their safest environmental output, improving ocean marine management science, and Aquafarming should be Hawaii’s "[Blue Revolution](#)" to ensure a sustainable future. *Without decades of expertise and the ability to catch broad stock on a regular basis, aquaculture in Hawaii will not exist with aquarium fishers.*

The aquarium fishery, with its higher biomass value and sustainable, highly renewable resources, should be utilized to its fullest to aid the state's plan for a sustainable future.

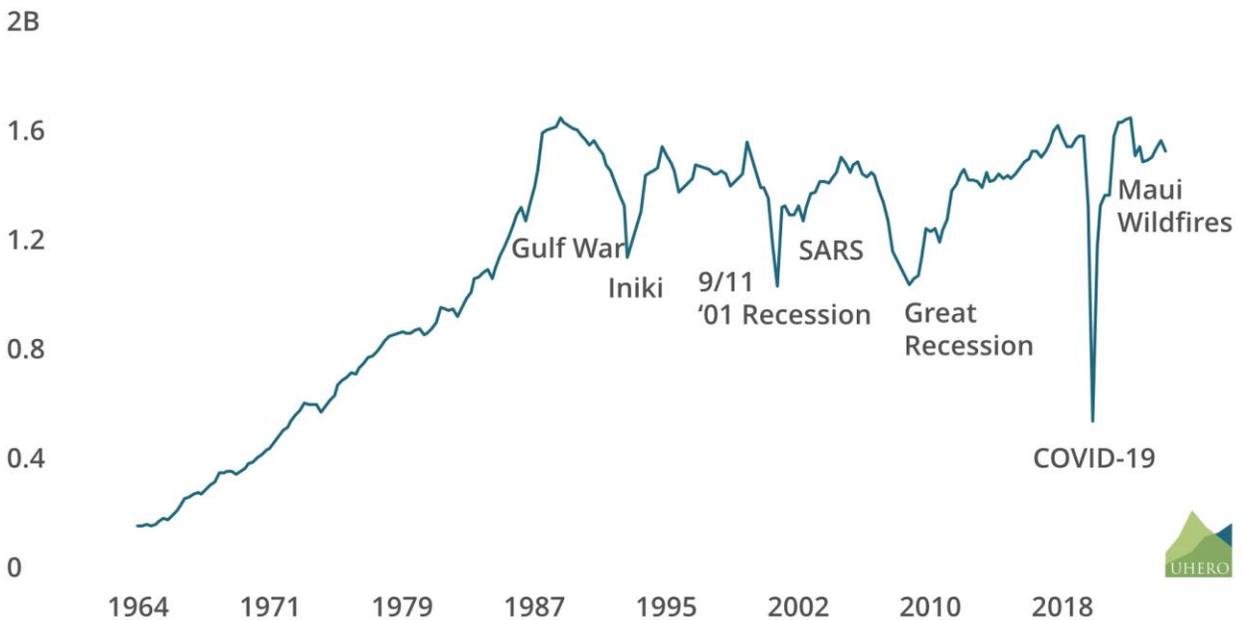
[University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization](#) report in 2024 by UHERO.

“Hawai‘i’s economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years”. The

[University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#) (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawai'i to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

Over time, these conditions fuel what scholars call the “geography of discontent” and the “revenge of the left-behind places”—communities where the mix of slow growth and fading opportunity translates into declining civic trust, sharper political polarization, and growing skepticism toward economic development itself. These dynamics often reinforce themselves. When growth stalls, public investment erodes and private confidence weakens, making it harder for regions to adapt. At the same time, frustration can fuel political reactions that undermine the very institutions needed to support recovery—further, slowing growth and amplifying the sense that opportunity lies elsewhere. In other words, without careful intervention, it could get worse. UHERO chart below.

Figure 1. Real Tourism Spending, 1964 to 2025 (constant 2024 dollars)



Tourism boomed after statehood but has plateaued since 1989, interrupted mainly by crises.

PAN Chart Below and The American Pet Products Association (APPA) Releases 2025 State of the Industry Report
<https://share.google/aAgaazPhzkhuJRgfP>

The U.S. pet industry has experienced massive, near-continuous growth from 1960 to 2025, driven by a cultural shift toward viewing pets as family members (humanization) and increased spending on premium products. Total U.S. pet industry expenditures have surged from modest levels in the 1960s to a projected **\$302 billion in 2026**.

2020–2026: The pandemic triggered a massive surge, with sales jumping from \$103.6 billion in 2020 to \$302 billion in 2026.

West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Closure 2017, Oahu Closure 2020. Both closures probably resulted in fewer tourists, but, more importantly, hundreds of well-paid, sustainable-resource-use jobs were lost, costing tens of millions of dollars to Hawai'i's economy.

Based on industries already in Hawai'i, the study shows that Hawai'i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as *fishing, fish*

farming and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.

With science supporting the sustainability of the aquarium fishery an approval of fishery permits could aid the state in its greatly needed shift to sustainable renewable resource uses.

Out of the national 277-billion-dollar pet industry, Hawaii pet owners spent 355 million dollars on pets in 2021. Providing 21.8 million state tax revenues and 27.3 million local tax revenues. Hawaii residents have 1.7 pets per household on average. Nearly 57% of Hawaii households have one pet. That is 11% of U.S. household's fish. Taping into the sustainable renewable income aquarium fishing can provide sustainable economic benefits. **Marine fish used as pets are worth per fish as much as % 400 more than those similar fish used for food purposes.** Pet fish leave breeders' sizes to make it a **"Model Fishery."** Declines in food fish near shore near human-populated areas have not been seen in reef fish used for aquarium purposes.

Hawaii Controls It's Own Future

Demographic studies have shown that in the future, many of our global, nonrenewable resources, such as oil and minerals, will be depleted as the world population increases, leaving states to rely more on their own resources.

In years to come, it will be crucial for Hawaii to rely more on its own renewable marine resources. Restricting access to marine resources without fully considering the impact of legislation on the future of Hawaii's fishermen and the State's economy would be a grave mistake.

To maintain our economy, we must utilize our renewable resources with wisdom.

<https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/databook/>

https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/databook/2020-individual/_23/

Fish counts from 1999 to 2017 show an increase in fish counts according to the 2020 West Hawaii report to the Legislature, Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish within this depth range alone.

Why are declines in fish populations reported at tourism dive and snorkel sites? Are they really attributed to the aquarium fishery?

Tourism Effects on Fish Populations

[News article](#) discusses the loss of fish in tourist areas.

Ocean tourism has been linked to declines in ocean fish. [Recent studies](#) have shown that fish returned to Hanauma Bay when tourism ceased due to COVID-19. Now that tourism has returned to the bay, more research has shown that [fish are disappearing](#) again! The large groups of tourists have scared the fish out of these areas. A similar study was done on Maui

Graham, Andrew T. *The Effects of Human Presence on Fish Behavior at the Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve, Hawai'i During and Immediately Following the COVID-19 Pandemic Closure*. Diss. 2024.

Molokini also showed a decrease in fish populations due to tourism.

Weng, Kevin C., et al. "Decreased tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic positively affects reef fish in a high use marine protected area." *Plos one* 18.4 (2023): e0283683.

We found that when tourism shut down due to COVID restrictions in 2020, fish biomass increased and predatory species increased usage of shallow habitats, where tourists typically concentrate. When tourism resumed, fish

biomass and habitat use returned to pre-pandemic levels. These displacement effects change fish community composition and biomass, which could affect key processes such as spawning, foraging and resting, and have knock-on effects that compromise ecosystem function and resilience. Management of non-consumptive uses, particularly in heavily visited MPAs, should be considered to sustain these ecosystems.

The large groups of tourists have scared the fish out of these areas. Large groups of tourists snorkeling and diving significantly affect fish feeding and reproductive behavior, thereby influencing fish populations. Unlike tourists, fishermen do not frequent the same areas repeatedly in large numbers; they rotate their sites to prevent overfishing. Are tourism impacts being used to blame the aquarium fishery? Aquarium fishermen do not go to tourist areas. The 20-year fish replenishment aquarium fish counts from West Hawaii show an increase in overall fish populations; why are tourist areas experiencing fewer fish?

To address this, tourist dive sites should be rotated to maintain high fish populations.

State researchers have reported high sustainability and low environmental impacts from the fishery; no coral or algal changes have been observed in the fishery's fishing areas. In fact, coral damage was greater in tourism areas, as reported in the West Hawaii Report to the Legislature ([link above](#)).

Populations of the most targeted fishery and their value.

So on Oahu alone, 414 billion 550 million new yellow tang fry <98ft times 1% survival adult stage per year, divided by two for one male and one female pair, results in an estimated 4 billion 145 million potential new adult stage yellow tangs on Oahu reefs every year. The estimate does not account for reduced fecundity at larger sizes or for increased populations at depths greater than 98 feet. It also does not account for the much greater populations that we know exist and extend deeper than 98 feet, so these figures are very conservative.

With a conservative maximum sustainable yield of 25%, catch that would equal 1 billion 36 million sustainable catches, with a 2024 value of \$169.00 per tank-raised yellow tang. Here are some numbers for just one fish in the trade.

That would mean a potential income of \$175 billion in highly renewable, sustainably caught fish for yellow tangs on Oahu alone.

This total would be substantially higher in West Hawaii, which has a population of 5.7 million yellow tang. A sustainable catch of 1.425 million would be valued at \$240 billion for West Hawaii.

Tourism Economic Impact of Aquarium Fishery, The Data

West Hawaii Tourist Accommodations for Hawaii County declined following the closure of the fishery in 2017. See totals in red. Similar declines are noted in overall tourism income for the years following the 2017 aquarium fishery closure.

The relevance of these declines in room occupancy may not be fishery-related; **there is no statistical evidence of any decline in Tourism economic value while the fishery was open!**

Opening the aquarium fishery, however, would greatly increase the potential for GDP growth and even tourism growth.

Table 23.31-- VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS, BY COUNTY: 1985 TO 2

[Number of units]

Year	State total	City & County of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Kauai County
1985	65,919	38,600	7,511	5,656
1986	66,308	39,010	7,280	5,922
1987	65,318	38,185	7,328	5,956
1988	69,012	37,841	8,823	7,180
1989	67,734	36,467	8,161	7,398
1990	71,266	36,899	8,952	7,546
1991	72,275	36,623	9,383	7,567
1992	73,089	36,851	9,170	7,778
1993	69,502	36,604	9,140	4,631
1994	70,463	36,194	9,595	5,870
1995	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
1996	70,288	36,146	9,558	6,760
1997	71,025	35,971	9,913	6,589
1998	71,480	36,206	9,655	6,969
1999	71,157	35,861	9,815	6,872
2000	71,506	36,303	9,774	7,159
2001	72,204	36,824	9,944	7,202
2002	70,783	36,457	9,297	7,037
2003	70,579	35,541	9,478	7,257
2004	72,176	35,769	9,857	8,105
2005	72,307	33,926	10,940	8,221
2006	72,274	33,606	10,831	8,266
2007	73,220	33,588	11,061	8,692
2008	74,177	34,081	11,240	9,203
2009	75,198	34,027	11,541	9,469
2010	74,988	33,782	11,479	9,344
2011	77,731	35,001	11,113	9,872
2012	74,650	35,326	10,594	8,289
2013	73,959	35,690	10,903	8,675
2014	73,716	35,864	10,666	8,492
2015	77,138	36,058	11,085	8,582
2016	79,092	37,400	11,349	8,444
2017	80,709	38,879	11,286	8,821
2018	80,751	39,089	10,811	9,022
2019	80,554	39,240	10,505	9,036
2020	81,188	38,806	11,123	9,250

NA Not available.

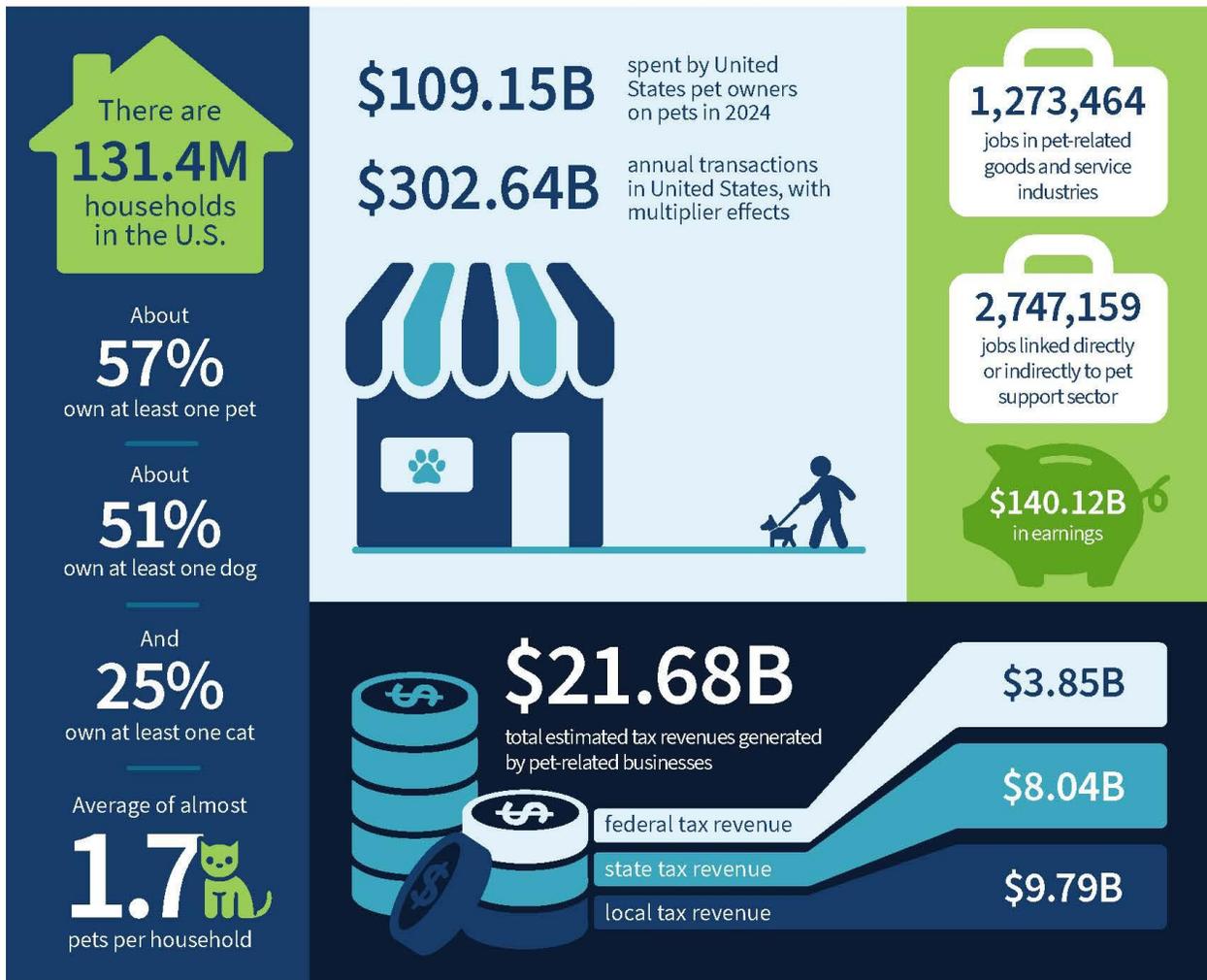
Source: Hawaii Tourism Authority, *2020 Visitor Plant Inventory*, "Table 1: Available Units by to 2020" <<https://www.hawaiitourismauthority.org/research/visitor-plant-inventory/>> accessed Ma

Thus, the loss of the Aquarium Trade harms tourism economically.

The loss of the Hawaii Aquarium Trade and its effects on the worldwide pet trade are even deeper. Here are some economic numbers behind the benefits of the aquarium trade.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE U.S. PET SECTOR

The American pet sector that supports 2.75 million jobs nationwide. The U.S. pet sector contributes \$303 billion directly and indirectly to America's economy and \$217 billion in annual gross domestic product. The care and companionship of pets is integral to not only the emotional and physical well-being of people, but also to the strength and stability of our economy.



* Expenditures of United States pet-owning households include all related expenditures based on a survey of pet owners conducted by the American Pet Products Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association. Economic Impact Data sourced from: Knudson B, Miller S. The Economics of the US Pet Food and Pet Supply Industry. Product Center and Center for Economic Analysis, Michigan State University, March 2024. Pet ownership data sourced from: APPA National Pet Owners Survey: 2023-2024.



Sources:

An extensive, detailed environmental review is available upon request.

Source [in-text links](#) and now below:

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ME Bushnell, [JT Claisse](#), CW Laidley - *Journal of Fish Biology*, 2010

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(Adey, Walter H. "Coral reefs: algal structured and mediated ecosystems in shallow, turbulent, alkaline waters." *Journal of Phycology* 34.3 (1998): 393-406).

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(<https://www.iucnredlist.org/>)

Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that overall fish populations of targeted aquarium fish species increased significantly in West Hawaii over 20 years. "Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish within this depth range alone. Over time, management and habitat increases due to coral growth contribute to increased fish populations. Overall Kole abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased 118% (>5.1 million fish) during this time period with a current estimated population of almost 9.6 million fish. As with Yellow Tang, summer 2014 recruitment for Kole in many areas was very strong.

Recruitment at the Manuka survey site for example was 254% higher than on any other previous survey at the site over the last 20 years." (WHRFMA)

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DAR BLNR Presentation 2024 <https://youtu.be/djltlsvg7qs?feature=shared>

Oahu there is a much greater refuge area than West Hawaii. Sources; 2013 By [Friedlander, Alan M. \(Alan Marc\) ; Donovan, Mary K. ; Stamoulis, Kostantinos ; ...](#)
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Regulated Fishing Areas on O'ahu

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/fishing/fishing-regulations/regulated-areas/regulated-fishing-areas-on-oahu/>

Eble, J. A., Toonen, R. J., Sorenson, L., Basch, L. V., Papastamatiou, Y. P., & Bowen, B. W. (2011). Escaping paradise: larval export from Hawaii in an Indo-Pacific reef fish, the yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens*. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 428, 245-258.

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Claisse, Jeremy T., et al. "Habitat-and sex-specific life history patterns of yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens* in Hawaii, USA." *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 389 (2009): 245-255.

Cultural Significance

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:42:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Godfrey Akaka	The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

We are in opposition of HB2101. This is another ridiculous attack on sustainable fishing by environmentalists who believe they need to systematically stop fishing to save the environment.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:37:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Moran	Kihei Community Assoc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and FIN members',

Please support this measure. KCA, www.gokihei.org, has advocated for banning collection of Hawaii's reef fish for well over a decade, in conjunction with so many statewide. It is time to stop the loss of our natural resource.

Mahalo

Mike Moran for KCA



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 27, 2026

To: Chair Rep. Chris Todd
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi
and Members of the Committee on Finance

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Vice President of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in support of HB 2101, HD1:
Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection
Monday, March 2, 2026, 10 a.m., Room 308 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 2101, HD1, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000.

While the Hawaiian Humane Society promotes pet ownership, capturing wild animals and transporting them thousands of miles in conditions that are often fatal is not humane. More than 40 percent of wild caught fish bound for pet stores die before they arrive on the sales floor. Collection methods include cruel practices such as puncturing swim bladders to bring fish to the surface more quickly and cutting fins and spines to enable the use of cheaper, thinner bags for transport.

This balanced bill provides exemptions for captive-breeding, which is a more sustainable approach to providing fish to the aquarium trade. It also provides for the capture of aquatic life for scientific, educational, management, or propagation purposes. And it protects traditional and customary practices, as well as taking for consumption or bait.

We want to acknowledge the powerful role that the Hawai'i County Council and residents of Hawai'i Island have played in keeping this measure alive over the strident objections of a handful of commercial collectors. But support has been overwhelming from across the state. We urge the committee to apply the provisions accordingly. The reef fish around O'ahu face more stress than any other population and they also deserve protection from commercial aquarium harvest.

Please pass HB2101, HD1. Mahalo for your consideration.



A Community Dedicated to Saving Puakō Reef

Return the reef to its historic 70% coral coverage from its existing 7%.

www.Puako4reefs.org * [Puako for Reefs Facebook](#)

Story map of Puakō: [Wahi Pana -A Sacred Place](#)

HEARING FOR STATE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Wednesday, March 2, 2026 10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 308, State Capitol

TO: House Committee on Finance Chair Chris Todd, and Vice-Chair Jenna Takemouchi, and all members

RE: HOUSE BILL 2101 HD1. Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collecting.

Puakō For Reefs respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of HB 2101, HD1, which would prohibit the collection of aquarium fish from Hawai'i's waters.

Our organization fully supports the intent and purpose of this measure. Puakō For Reefs is investing extraordinary effort to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems along the South Kohala coastline. Through millions of dollars in community donations and countless volunteer hours, we are working to remove a significant stressor, wastewater pollution, from our reefs and nearshore waters. To see these restoration efforts undermined by another preventable stressor, intensive aquarium fish collection, is deeply concerning and discouraging for our community.

While HD1 limits the prohibition to Hawai'i Island, it is widely recognized that the vast majority of aquarium fish collection occurs here. In addition, illegal poaching remains widespread. The current regulatory framework, constrained by limited enforcement resources, has proven insufficient to prevent ongoing poaching.

Several critical considerations support passage of this bill:

- 1. Chronic Enforcement Challenges and Rampant Poaching**

Due to extremely limited enforcement capacity, illegal aquarium fish collection continues to occur on a regular basis. A clear, statewide prohibition would significantly simplify enforcement, eliminate regulatory ambiguity, and provide a practical solution to ongoing poaching.

- 2. Ecological Harm and Loss of Key Reef Species**

The reef fish most heavily targeted for aquarium collection include herbivorous species that play a vital role in controlling algae growth. These fish are essential to coral health and reef resilience. The notion that reef fish populations are limitless is demonstrably incorrect. Continued removal of key species compromises ecosystem balance and threatens long-term reef survival. Moreover, such extraction disregards longstanding local stewardship practices and Native Hawaiian values that emphasize mālama 'āina and responsible care for our ocean resources.

- 3. Public Trust Responsibilities**

Hawai'i's State Constitution affirms the public trust doctrine and the State's obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations. Strengthening protections for reef ecosystems aligns directly with these constitutional responsibilities and reflects a renewed commitment to safeguarding our shared natural heritage.



**PUAKŌ FOR
REEFS**

A Community Dedicated to Saving Puakō Reef

Return the reef to its historic 70% coral coverage from its existing 7%.

www.Puako4reefs.org * [Puako for Reefs Facebook](#)

Story map of Puakō: [Wahi Pana -A Sacred Place](#)

4. Economic Reality and Public Burden

The economic benefits of the legal aquarium trade accrue to a very small number of individuals, never mind the illegal trade. The broader public bears all the environmental degradation, diminished reef health, and the costs of enforcement. Residents and taxpayers shoulder all these harms without any benefit.

Our coral reefs are foundational to Hawai'i's cultural identity, food security, shoreline protection, and tourism-based economy. They are already under immense stress from climate change, land-based pollution, and ocean warming. Reducing preventable, extractive pressures is both prudent and necessary.

We respectfully urge you to vote in favor of HB 2101, HD1 and take a decisive step toward meaningful, long-term protection of Hawai'i's reefs and ocean waters.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bell for Puakō for Reefs Board members and its many volunteers

Karen Anderson, Board Chair,
Stephanie Erickson, Board Treasurer,
Barbara Bell, Board Secretary, and
George Fry, Board member

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:32:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have been trying for many many years to stop the rape of our fish populations in the reefs along the Kona Coast. Just when we think such activities are pau, they reemerge again. We know the role these "aquarium fish" play in the larger ecosystem. We know why we should not be doing this and we do it anyway. Let's finally put a stop to this practice, and encourage the companies who do this to find another source of income. We also know that ALL of these fish will die either on the way to mainland aquariums, or at some point in those aquariums. Please let's respect the wildlife of the State of Hawai'i and stop this practice once and for all. Mahalo.



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

March 2, 2026 10:00 AM

Conference Room 308

Testimony in support of HB2101 in original form.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mendy Dant, President of Fair Wind Cruises and Kona Sunrise Charters, a family-owned snorkel business that has operated in Kona since 1971.

I am writing in support of HB2101, with the **exception of the population stipulation** included in the proposed language: “§188- Harvesting aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes; prohibition. (a) No person shall harvest aquatic life from state marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000.”

I respectfully request that this population-based limitation be removed so that the prohibition applies statewide.

We need to stop the aquarium fish collection trade for the pet store industry. The practice is inhumane and harmful to our marine environment. Removing reef fish disrupts the delicate ecological balance that keeps our coral reefs healthy. Many of these species play a critical role in controlling algae and maintaining reef resilience. Healthy reefs are essential for protecting our shorelines from storm damage and erosion.

Additionally, our reefs are the foundation of Hawai'i's marine tourism industry. For over five decades, our family business has depended on vibrant, living reefs to share the beauty of Hawai'i with residents and visitors alike. Depleting reef fish populations directly threatens this sustainable economic engine.

For the long-term health of our reefs, our communities, and our local economy, I urge you to pass HB2101 and remove the population restriction so that it provides consistent protection for all state marine waters.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Mendy Dant
President
Fair Wind Cruises

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:48:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Asner	Center for Global Discovery and Conservation Science	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Milolii in South Kona District, and I represent the organization that has done detailed analyses of fish population densities and declines in West Hawaii. I write to strongly support Bill HB2101 to ban aquarium collection of fish statewide.

Our team has testified numerous times and provided detailed scientific data disputing the sustainability of aquairum collection in West Hawaii Island.

Healthy reefs require healthy populations of reef fish. As our 20+ year research and monitoring record has clearly shown, Hawaii's reefs are in decline due to three factors, and over-collection of reef fish is one of the primary factors. In a warming ocean climate, the importance of high densities of reef fish is greatly increasing. Reef fish are critically needed to reduce the overgrowth of macroalgae that smoothers corals and destroys benthic habitats for numerous other species.

Secondly, our studies have documented declines in reef reef populations in areas critical for local community subsistence. Families in rural areas have suffered major losses in food security.

HB2101 is a key contribution to the solution. Aquarium collection favors the livelihoods of a tiny number of operators who generate an outsized negative effect on the reef and the vast majority of the community. Support our communities by passing HB2101.

Moana Ohana

PO Box 4454, Kailua Kona, HI 96745

mike@moanaohana.com

February 28th, 2026

Monday March 2nd, Conference room 308



Aloha mai Kakou, Chair Todd & Vice Chair Takenouchi and other honorable house members of this conference committee.

Moana 'Ohana submits this testimony in **strong support** of HB 2101 HD1, which would ban commercial aquarium collection statewide.

My name is Mike Nakachi, I am from Kekahawaiole, on Moku o Keawe. I come to you humbly and with aloha! I bring into this conversation and testimony the legacy of my 'ohana, my kūpuna, my 'aumakua, with my steadfast love for our pae 'āina. I am a dive professional with over 40 years of experience, a practitioner of traditional Native Hawaiian customary rights and principles of aloha 'āina, to mālama this 'āina and try as best as we can to restore the abundance of 'āina momona. I am blessed to have a mo'okū'auhau that has guided me in the lineage as Kahu Manō. Through these practices it has allowed me the privilege and the honor to be blessed by forms of akua and kinolau in the realm of Kanaloa throughout our pae 'āina.

I have dived extensively our home waters for well over several thousands of scuba/rebreather dives with the majority of this experience conducted within the West Hawai'i regional fisheries management area. With pure intent to be as one with Kanaloa, dives are always conducted with proper protocol, asking permission of people, communities place or wahi pana. Our Home waters are in desperate need of relief, HB2101 HD1 will do just that.

I am a small business owner in West Hawaii, called Moana Ohana, we have 15 employees, some of whom have been with me for over thirty years. We have all witnessed the decline of our precious ancestors (Aquarium fish) of aina over the decades that is a direct impact on us as cultural partitioners as well as a business that needs a healthy, vibrant ecosystem of aina to be successful.

When I started in the 1980s abundance was different with many fish along West Hawai'i. Despite a seemingly flourishing abundance, a lot of damage was already inflicted by tropical aquarium fishermen from the 1960's when it first really got going in West Hawaii. Aquarium collectors used destructive and self-serving methods to collect fish such as breaking corals and making flat trenches along the reef to create barriers and dividing sections of the reef to lay their nets flat and herd the fish to be collected. These harmful methods continued into the 1990s and 2000s. We saw significant changes to our home waters with a drastic increase of the number of

collectors with no regulation and an unlimited catch limit. The invasive nature of humans not of place, in search of aquarium fish caused millions of fish to leave their home. The practice of greed and being for themselves driving the high take of fish and caused ecological damage. This irreparable harm to coral, fish, ecosystems over the last few decades is glaring and polarizing, this is NOT sustainable. It should NOT be acceptable that these non-pono ways of fishing are allowed.

DAR is again going in another direction, saying AQ is low impact, this is a breach of trust to many in West Hawaii. They have clearly stated here that they have worked closely with the 7 collectors but have reached out to any of us small business owners in this community last month to ask us about the negative and cumulative impacts that this particular fishery has had on us as Kanaka Maoli, and Native Hawaiian business owners. Please reject this request. DAR who works closely with these destructive fisheries, enables these AQ collectors, who do nothing to show Aloha for our aina, Malama our aina or restore Aina Momona in any way!

I ask that you do the right thing: Strongly support HB 2101 HD1.

Malama Pono,

Michael Nakachi,
Moana Ohana



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

House Committees: FIN
Hawai'i State Capitol - Room 401
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

28 February 2026

Subject: Support for HB2101 from Hui Aloha Kiholo

Dear Honorable Representatives:

The Native Hawaiian Organization Hui Aloha Kiholo strongly supports HB2101 to prohibit commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

Our 501(c)3 organization formed 18 years ago. Guided by kupa 'āina with at least 400 years of presence in the ahupua'a of Pu'uwa'awa'a and the Kona region of Kekahawai'ole, our Vision is: *A thriving cultural landscape inspiring pono connection between people and place.*

We support this measure for the following reasons, and thank you for taking the time to read this important information:

Interdisciplinary Science

- **Inclusive `Ike:** Inter-disciplinary "convergence" science, honors and respects modern science as a vital addition to ancestral knowledge to guide better decision-making in a dynamic world. Hui Aloha Kiholo has worked and/or continues to work with NSF-NCAR¹, DLNR DAR², DOFAW³, NOAA⁴, NPS⁵, TNC⁶, CI⁷ USFS⁸, UH⁹, and others to co-develop/learn from science.

¹ National Science Foundation National Center for Atmospheric Research (NSF-NCAR)

² Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (HDLNR) Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)

³ HDLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)

⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Department of Commerce (NOAA)

⁵ National Parks Service, United States Department of Interior (NPS)

⁶ The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

⁷ Conservation International

⁸ United States Forest Service (USFS)

⁹ University of Hawai'i (UH)



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

- **Traditional Management Cultivates Abundance:** Pacific Island marine life management empowered peoples of place to ensure wise decision-making that sustains abundant marine life¹⁰.
- **Fish Reproduction is Cyclical:** Seasonal and lunar rhythms in spawning are well documented by UH scientists in the Pacific and Kona¹¹, in full alignment with Hawaiian management practice and knowledge cultivated over hundreds of years.

Fishery Sustainability

- **Scientific Sustainability Recommendations Never Implemented:** While research showed that yellow tang populations responded positively to protection in west Hawai'i, scientific recommendations to improve sustainability by limiting effort and protecting spawners were never implemented.¹²
- **Hawai'i Island is a Source not a Sink:** Although strongly protecting source populations is a sound fishery management strategy, large protected areas (e.g. Papahānaumokuakea) to the north are unlikely to re-seed surgeonfish (e.g. Yellow Tang) lost from southern islands¹³. Larval west Hawai'i Yellow Tang travel up to 114 miles from south to north¹⁴.
- **Most Yellow Tang do not Survive to Adulthood:** Even when protected from fishing, only about 1% of Yellow Tang recruits to a west Hawai'i reef survive to adulthood¹⁵.
- **Surgeonfish Develop Slowly:** Yellow tang recruits to deeper finger coral reefs move to shallow habitats upon reaching sexual maturity; yellow tang mature between 4.6 and 11.6 years in west Hawai'i; they can live at least 41 years¹⁶.

¹⁰ "The right to harvest marine resources in the waters in the vicinity of a village or municipality is controlled by families, clans or chiefs, and no outsiders can use these resources without permission" (Johannes, 1977)

¹¹ UH - Johannes, 1978; Walsh, 1987

¹² DAR/NOAA - Williams et al, 2008

¹³ UH, University of Arizona, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, University of Florida - Eble et al, 2009

¹⁴ Oregon State University, Washington State University, UH, NOAA - Christie et al, 2010

¹⁵ UH - Claisse et al, 2008

¹⁶ UH, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (AUS) - Claisse et al, 2009.



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

- **Habitat Damage Occurs:** Accounts of nets, crowbars, poison, and trampling being used to capture cryptic fish for the aquarium trade, including insider knowledge from former fishers, is manifold. Science is unable to refute these observations as data are inadequate to substantiate a claim of no impact of aquarium collecting on live coral habitat, by design. The WHAP research design did not take into account confounding factors beyond aquarium fishing known to impact reef health. Survey sites were selected in areas exposed to proven coral threats including sedimentation, sewage pollution, golf course run-off, groundwater withdrawal, storm exposure, SCUBA diver damage, trampling, anchoring, stormwater, grey water, and petrochemical pollution yet these did not factor into any analyses¹⁷.

Cultural Impact

- **Fish Sustain Us:** Kiholo is and has long been a fishing village - a place that feeds our active community.
- **We Sustain Fish:** Songs, chants, stories, names, hula, and the first written records in Hawaiian and English highlight the original inhabitants of these lands as fishers and cultivators of fish in nearshore marine and inland waters.
- **Abundance is Vital to Resilience:** Our region was known for an abundance of fish. It was long said that, "A blind fisherman can catch fish at Kiholo." This is no longer the case.
- **We Must Respect the Ocean:** Commercial aquarium fish collection has devastated coral habitat and overharvested fishes upon which cultural practice relies with no give back to the ocean or our community.

Authority and Accountability

- **Kuleana - People of Place:** The people of place are accountable for the health of the ocean and must mālama the generative life upon which we all depend.
- **Kuleana - Decision-makers:** The State of Hawai'i has a Constitutional mandate - decisions must not negatively

¹⁷ Humbolt State University, UH, DAR - Tissot et al, 2004



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

impact traditional and protected native Hawaiian practice, yet has not yet invited consultation with Kiholo rights-holders to follow up on what we shared during the Environmental Impact Statement Cultural Impact Assessment about ways commercial aquarium fish collecting harms protected practice.

- **Kuleana - Kākou:** We all have a role to play in making the best decisions for our ocean. Kākou is inclusive of all, and we embrace kākou. This includes all who are currently living, those who have gone before, those who will come after, and the non-human relatives who make life in these islands possible from the plankton that make most of our oxygen to the corals that are foundational to our cosmology, to the Koholā that travel the vast Pacific to birth their young here. No one is unimportant or to be disregarded, whether they have deep genealogy or just arrived.

We have kuleana for all life and all life contributes to our health and Mission at, for, and with Kiholo. The Kona coast is a source of reef fish for our islands. Because the science demonstrates what the community contends, namely that the west Hawai'i commercial aquarium fishery is unsustainable, we encourage this body to honor sound scientific evidence and Constitutional mandates to protect cultural practice by prohibiting this harmful activity in Hawai'i. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Chad Wiggins
Executive Director
Hui Aloha Kiholo
cwiggins@kiholo.org
808-756-2080
hualohakiholo.org



Scientific Literature Cited

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HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:37:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Culbertson	Big Island Reef Keepers hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members!

My name is Rob Culbertson and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species such as Yellow Tang, targeted by aquarium collectors, are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the errant belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the *Board of Land and Natural Resources* itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. NOT SO! It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1. *Let's get over this and put the matter behind us!*

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

R A Culbertson

Honokaa

member,

Big Island Reef Keepers hui



Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026
10:00AM Conference Room 308

RE: HB2101 HD1 Commercial Aquarium Ban - Support

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Chamber of Sustainable Commerce, we strongly support HB2101 HD1 to prohibit commercial aquarium collection. The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents more than 580 small businesses, entrepreneurs, creatives, and sole proprietors across Hawai'i committed to a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity. We are working to create a regenerative economy.

A regenerative economy does not extract short-term private gain from public trust resources at the expense of community well-being. Healthy coral reefs are foundational natural infrastructure. They sustain food systems, protect shorelines, support cultural practice, and generate over a billion dollars annually in tourism and ecosystem value. By contrast, the commercial aquarium trade represents a narrow, extractive use of reef species with limited economic return to the broader public.

To quote Dr. Holeka Inaba, Hawaii County Council Chair, "HB2101 reflects a necessary evolution in public policy. While commercial aquarium collection was once permitted under statute, we now have decades of scientific research, court decisions, and lived community experience demonstrating the ecological and cultural costs of removing reef fish for export. The cumulative impacts of extraction, particularly of key herbivorous species, undermine reef resilience at a time when we can least afford further stressors."

Hawai'i's Constitution requires that our natural resources be managed for the benefit of present and future generations. In a time of climate stress and coral reef decline, reopening commercial extraction of reef fish moves us

Hawaii Legislative Council Members

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life Natural Foods
Hilo

Chamber of
Sustainable Commerce
808.445.7606
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI 96823

backward – toward an outdated model of resource use that no longer reflects Hawai‘i’s values or economic realities. In the face of accelerating climate impacts and challenges, prioritizing reef recovery over commercial exploitation is not only precautionary—it is responsible stewardship for our future. Healthy reefs generate long-term economic value through food systems, shoreline protection, biodiversity, and reef-based tourism.

For these reasons, the Chamber respectfully urges the Legislature to pass this ban and affirm that our reefs – and the communities that depend on them – are worth more alive than extracted for profit.



FRIENDS of HANAUMA BAY

CONSERVE • PROTECT • RESTORE

*Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments,
emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay*

March 2, 2026

To: House Finance Committee

Re: **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2101 HD1 – Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support for HB2101 HD1, although we would prefer that the ban be extended statewide.

In 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources **unanimously** passed an overwhelmingly supported, community-led proposal to permanently ban commercial aquarium collecting statewide through rulemaking — but was then abruptly told it lacked the legal authority to do so. Instead, it directed communities and advocates to pursue a legislative solution. So here we are.

Friends of Hanauma Bay joins the vast majority of Hawaii residents before this Legislature testifying in **strong support of HB2101** for many reasons, including:

- The aquarium trade is in **fundamental conflict** with **local culture and Native Hawaiian values**, including pono fishing practices that limit take to what is truly needed.
- The aquarium trade is **inconsistent with mālama ‘āina** and the State’s **constitutional public-trust obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations**.
- According to the Hawai‘i Supreme Court, submitting an EIS does not guarantee issuance of an Aquarium Collection Permit, just like turning in your completed homework assignment does not guarantee an A grade.
- **Published cost-benefit analyses** show residents receive **no public benefit** from the aquarium trade while bearing **all environmental and enforcement costs**.
- On O‘ahu, the most heavily targeted aquarium species—again, largely herbivores—have been depleted by approximately 90% on average due in part to aquarium collecting (Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020).
- The trade uses unimaginably cruel methods and tolerates obscenely high mortality rates absolutely unthinkable for any other pet trade. But it’s acceptable for our reef wildlife.

HB2101 represents a responsible, science-based, and culturally grounded solution that aligns with public opinion, protects reef ecosystems under increasing climate stress, and fulfills the State's constitutional public-trust obligations.

We urge you to **pass HB2101 HD1!**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop, MS
Friends of Hanauma Bay I President

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:03:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerdine Markus	Pacific Academy of Music	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please keep our waters protected and ban aquarium fishing. More than 70% of the fish taken out of its habitat, dies in transportation!! NOt only us, but also future generations need to be able to see a large diversity of fish when they go swimming and snorkeling and diving in our beautiful waters! It is a cruel trade and should be discontinued.

Thank you,

Gerdine Markus, Director Pacific Academy of Music ,since 1990

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:39:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Dean	Clean the Pacific	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We at Clean the Pacific strongly support HB 2101. With the climate crisis accelerating exponentially, development, exploitation, over fishing, plastic, toxic chemicals, sonic pollution and tourism, the last thing our reef fish need is to be kidnapped and shipped to a doctor's office in Iowa. The overwhelming majority of citizens in the state of Hawaii support the total state wide and permanent band of the aquarium industry. There is simply no other reason for this industry to exist, other than for the few people who want the convenience of being able to see our beautiful fish from the comfort of their living room couch. That is not a good enough reason to take our fish away from us. What gives anyone the right to take our fish? Every fish that is taken from the reef is one less fish I get to enjoy. Who's gonna compensate me for my loss? For your loss? For everyone's loss?

When I snorkeled on the West Coast of Hawaii Island back in the 80s, there were huge clouds of yellow tang. There was always multiple schools of over 100 yellow tang wherever you went. Now, if you see a few, it's rare. With all the stressors facing our reefs, it's the aquarium industry, that's the most devastating and it's just a frivolous luxury, there's absolutely no need for it.

Can't humans leave one thing alone on this planet? Why must we turn everything into a for-profit scheme? We're wiping out the entire planet. We're not the only animal on this planet who deserves to live their lives the way they were meant to. Millions of other species deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, but instead hundreds of species of animals go extinct every day. We're losing everything beautiful in this world and no one seems to care. We can't survive without the other animals, no matter what Elon Musk thinks. Please, we're begging you, stand up for the fish and the corals and all of our precious marine life. They don't have elected representatives. They don't have a voice in our government. If we have no empathy for them, their fate is sealed. And so is ours.



TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 2101 HD1
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

HOUSE COMMITTEE on FINANCE
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 2, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the FIN committee,

Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN) is in **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2101 HD1**, which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000. (HD1)

HKN has concerns that the commercial aquarium pet trade will consume far greater tax payer's funds to support and regulate an industry that is unconscientious of their negligence to Public Trust resources. There is no evidence that removal of herbivore fish, regardless of population and abundance, supports the viability of corals; the current data reports that coral continues on a massive decline with the current population of herbivores. Therefore, removal of those species would counter and cause any progress to halt. The State of Hawai'i and the Federal Government are investing millions of dollars to support coral and other marine rehabilitation, which in turn is supporting the generational fishers' sustainability and managed tourism throughout the state, only to be undermined by an extractive industry. Further, since the 1980's the state has been working hard to build co-managing communities and several bills are going through this legislative session, only for it to be undermined by an extractive industry. There is no sustainability or reciprocation within the commercial aquarium pet trade industry to support the cumulative negative impacts on marine ecosystems. Even if the legislature mandates an increase in the budget for 24/7 enforcement, the commercial aquarium pet trade industry will have to deplete our resources before their revenues can subsidize enforcement support.

HKN believes this measure will reinforce the State's statutory obligation to uphold the Public Trust Doctrine (PTD) that the State government, as trustee, must protect natural resources - including wildlife and reefs - for public benefit and future generations. The commercial collection of reef fish constitutes a breach of this trust, with cumulative impacts against the viability of our delicate reefs. shall be held for the public, rather than held as private property, especially in the face of climate change, pollution, and the massive declining reef health.

In 1969, Kealakekua Bay became a Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD), the highest form of protection legally offered by the State. MLCDs are only pockets of sanctuaries that are sporadically placed around the state, yet provide insight on how the entire state can support socially responsible enterprises. The Hawaii Tourism



Authority (HTA) is providing avenues to maintain one Hawai'i's largest economic engine, only for another state agency to tear it down by allowing the desecration of fish populations that support coral reef health. The economic ramifications to the coral reef outweigh the profits generated by the commercial AQ Pet Trade.

This measure will further assist the DLNR in upholding their Hierarchy of Use Policy (1998), which provides guidance in prioritizing natural and cultural resources over commercialization¹.

HKN would like to thank this committee for hearing this measure and the opportunity to provide a voice. We strongly urge this committee to pass HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo Nui,

puakalo!

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen
Executive Director/C.E.O.

¹ "The Department, when considering commercial activity proposals or management actions on state owned lands and waters, will use the following hierarchy priorities:

- A. The Natural and Cultural Resources - The highest priority should go to the conservation of the resource.
- B. The General Public - If use or activity by the public can be done without undue damage to the resource, it should be the next priority.
- C. Commercial Activities - Commercial activities should be considered only if their impacts do not impinge on the resource, #A, or use by the general public, #B, above."

Policy for Commercial Activities on State Owned and Managed Lands and Waters Department of Land and Natural Resources. (approved January 30, 1998, BLNR)

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:07:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Free Access Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports HB2101.

Let's not kill off our reef fish in aquariums. A business that raids reefs for profit don't belong in business.

Mahalo for your time.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Saturday, February 28, 2026

To: House Committee on Finance
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2101, HD 1, relating to Commercial Aquarium Fish Collection
Hearing: Monday, March 2, 2026, 10:00 am, Conference Room 308 & video
Position: SUPPORT

Aloha, Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committees on Finance!

The approximately 6,680 members of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i support HB 2101, even though, by HD 1, the Committees on Energy and the Environment, and on Water and Land have limited the scope of the prohibition on collection of reef fish to Hawai'i Island for reasons that are not explained. We would much prefer to see the prohibition continue to be State-wide.

We have joined other groups in struggling to keep the prohibition on the environmentally wasteful and devastating, rampant collection of our reef fish for the aquarium pet trade. As the first section of this bill notes, our coral reefs are already being severely damaged by climate change. The species of reef fishes that are popular with the aquarium trade are precisely the herbivorous species that protect the reefs from overgrowth of algae, which kills the reefs.

The Environmental Caucus would additionally note that the continued use of **cesspools** is also killing our reefs, and the unrealistic far-out deadline of 2050 for upgrade of all cesspools encourages people not take any action for another quarter century!! This is especially true on Hawai'i Island, which has the most cesspools.

Our reefs need this long-overdue relief to be maintained by statute! Please pass this bill! Mahalo!

Respectfully,

Alan B. Burdick and Mike Ewall, co-chairs
Melodie Aduja, co-chair *emerita*
Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i
Burdick808@gmail.com 808-927-1500
Mike@energyjustice.net Legislativepriorities@gmail.com



*He Lawai'a no ke kai papa'u, he pōkole ke aho; He Lawai'a no ke kai hohonu
he loa ke aho" "A fisherman of shallow seas uses a short line; a fisherman
of the deep sea uses a long line."*

KALANIHALE

Aloha e Chair and committee members,

RE: Strong Support for HB 2101 (Relating to Environmental Protection) — Prohibiting Commercial Aquarium Collection

On behalf of Kalanihale, I write in strong support of HB 2101, which establishes a statewide statutory prohibition on the commercial collection of marine life for sale and export as aquarium pets, while explicitly preserving scientific research, education, and aquaculture/captive breeding.

This bill resolves a fundamental policy question that agency rulemaking cannot: whether nearshore reef species should be treated as export commodities or protected as public trust resources for Hawai'i's people—especially for Native Hawaiian and local subsistence communities whose customary and traditional practices depend on healthy nearshore ecosystems.

Commercial aquarium collection has fueled decades of conflict by extracting culturally and ecologically significant species, including reef herbivores, from our nearshore waters for private profit—primarily for off-island consumers. This has impaired reef integrity and disrupted subsistence fishing practices, while treating public trust marine resources as ornaments rather than living resources central to food security, culture, and community resilience.

HB2101 is also critical for good governance. It would prevent the Division of Aquatic Resources from asserting that state law compels reopening commercial aquarium collection and would eliminate the need to spend scarce public resources on a costly permitting system designed to support an industry with negligible benefits to the state and its residents. Instead, DAR's limited capacity can be directed toward what communities across the pae 'āina are calling for: co-management support, reef stewardship, and addressing urgent, escalating threats to nearshore ecosystems.

Healthy coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security. A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection protects this economic engine and foundation of resilience and preserves Hawai'i's marine resources for future generations.

For these reasons, Kalanihale respectfully urges the committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Ka'imi Kaupiko

Executive Director, Kalanihale

Miloli'i, Hawai'i Island

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Captain Cook, HI 96704

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

My name is Maki Morinoue, and I am testifying on behalf of HULI PAC. HULI PAC is a grassroots organization dedicated to endorsing and supporting leaders of integrity who prioritize the 'āina and people of Hawai'i Island.

In January 2026, the Hawai'i Island County Council unanimously passed Resolution No. 422-25, sending a clear and unified message to the State Legislature to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for ornamental commercial aquarium purposes. The will of Hawai'i Island has been clearly expressed.

HULI PAC strongly supports HB2101, which permanently bans commercial aquarium collection. However, we respectfully urge you to amend the current version by **removing the population-based limitation** that applies only to Hawai'i Island and reinstating the original **statewide ban**. Our reefs function as one interconnected ecosystem. Protection should not depend on county population thresholds.

Healthy reefs depend on fish abundance. Herbivorous reef fish like surgeonfish and tangs are essential reef caretakers. They graze algae that would otherwise smother coral, particularly following bleaching and heat-stress events. Scientific research consistently shows that reefs with higher herbivore biomass recover faster and are significantly more resilient to climate change impacts.

When fish are removed for the aquarium trade, reefs lose this natural defense system. Fewer fish lead to increased algal overgrowth, weakened coral systems, biodiversity loss, and long-term ecosystem decline. No level of "managed extraction" can replace the ecological role these fish evolved to serve.

This is also a matter of pono and kuleana. Reef fish sustain food systems, cultural practices, shoreline protection, and Hawai'i's ocean-based economy. Removing them for ornamental display provides private profit while diminishing public trust in resources guaranteed under our Constitution.

Living reefs generate far greater long-term economic value through snorkeling, diving, subsistence fishing, and coastal protection than extraction ever will. A reef full of fish supports communities. An emptied reef does not.



HB2101 protects:

- Reef resilience in a warming ocean
- Cultural and subsistence practices
- Public trust resources
- Future generations' right to healthy oceans

We need fish on our reefs — not in tanks.

Please pass HB2101, remove the population stipulation, reinstate the statewide ban, and stand firmly on the side of science, culture, and intergenerational responsibility.

Mahalo,
Maki Morinoue
HULI PAC, Hawai'i Island



March 2, 2026

TO: House Finance Committee

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for HB2101 HD1 – Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

We are Native Hawaiian, environmental, marine, and animal-protection organizations and businesses writing in **strong support of HB2101 HD1**, which would permanently prohibit the commercial capture of Hawai'i's marine life for the aquarium pet trade, while preserving exemptions for public aquariums, research, education, and aquaculture.

We sincerely thank the Committee for considering this critically important measure, which affects Hawai'i's reefs, cultural practices, local communities, and the public trust resources held for present and future generations.

We respectfully urge the Committee to restore HB2101 to its original statewide application. O'ahu's reefs, which have been hardest hit by decades of intensive aquarium collecting and have not demonstrated meaningful recovery, should not be excluded from permanent protection.

For decades, communities across Hawai'i have sought to end this destructive trade, which has removed millions of reef animals—primarily herbivores—for sale outside the state. Mortality throughout the supply chain is well documented and would not be tolerated for other animals sold as pets.

Public opposition to the aquarium trade has been overwhelming and consistent for decades. Polling has shown that approximately **84% of Hawai'i residents support ending aquarium collecting for the pet trade**, due to environmental, cultural, and ethical concerns and conflicts with local values.

This measure is urgently needed because:

- Herbivorous fish are essential to reef resilience as Hawai'i faces escalating climate stress. Since 2014, marine heat waves have caused widespread coral loss, and scientists project annual heat-stress events by as early as 2030. Up to 70% of Hawai'i's reefs could be lost by mid-century without strong local protections, including maintaining herbivore abundance.
- **Food fishers and subsistence communities have borne the impacts** of decades of aquarium collecting. The trade historically removed **1.8 times more fish from West Hawai'i than all food fishers combined**, primarily herbivores (DLNR 2020 Report to the Legislature). The recent prohibition on take of paku'iku'i followed years of DLNR reporting that aquarium collecting was a major driver of population decline.
- **On O'ahu, the most heavily targeted aquarium species—again, largely herbivores—have been depleted by approximately 90% on average** due to aquarium collecting (Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020).

What DAR's own data now show:

- **Contrary to earlier assumptions, yellow tang populations have not recovered as biologically or historically expected** following the court-ordered cessation of aquarium collecting in late 2017. A recent independent expert analysis of DAR’s long-term monitoring data found that recovery patterns observed after earlier closures have **not re-occurred**, raising serious concerns about reef resilience and management assumptions (see attached).

- **At the same time, DAR has sharply reduced reef fish monitoring effort.** After more than 20 years of statistically robust monitoring using 4–6 survey rounds annually in West Hawai‘i, survey effort was reduced to **a single round per year beginning in 2022**, significantly weakening the State’s ability to detect trends, evaluate recovery, or responsibly manage renewed extraction.

- **This loss of monitoring power comes precisely as DLNR seeks to reopen commercial aquarium collection**, leaving the State effectively blind to the status of reef fish populations already depleted by decades of take.

Additional benefits of HB2101 include:

- **Saving taxpayer money.** DLNR has estimated that administering the aquarium trade costs the State **hundreds of thousands of dollars annually**, excluding enforcement, while generating only minimal permit revenue. Ending the trade would eliminate these ongoing public costs.

- **Clear economic benefits to Hawai‘i residents.** A peer-reviewed cost-benefit analysis found that ending the aquarium trade yields **net positive economic benefits**, supporting over **\$440 million annually** in direct and indirect reef-related tourism value.

- **Supporting truly sustainable alternatives.** The only sustainable aquarium trade is one based on aquaculture. Thanks to advances by Hawai‘i researchers and businesses, including the Oceanic Institute and Biota, popular species such as yellow tang are now **captive-bred and commercially available** without harming wild reef populations.

Conclusion

HB2101 represents a responsible, science-based, and culturally grounded solution that aligns with public opinion, protects reef ecosystems under increasing climate stress, and fulfills the State’s constitutional public-trust obligations.

We respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101** and restore it to apply statewide to ensure Hawai‘i’s reefs and reef wildlife are protected for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.

Sincerely,

The ‘A‘ole AQ Hui:

For the Fishes, Moana Ohana, Kalanihale, The Center for Biodiversity, Kai Palaoa, Sierra Club of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Hawaiian Humane Society, Friends of Hanauma Bay, Conservation Council for Hawaii, Fair Wind Cruises, Surftrider Foundation | Hawai'i Region, Keiko Conservation, Legacy Reef Foundation, Haereticus Environmental Laboratory, Ocean Defenders Alliance | Hawai'i, Oceanic Preservation Society

HAWAII RESIDENT ATTITUDE STUDY

FEBRUARY 2025

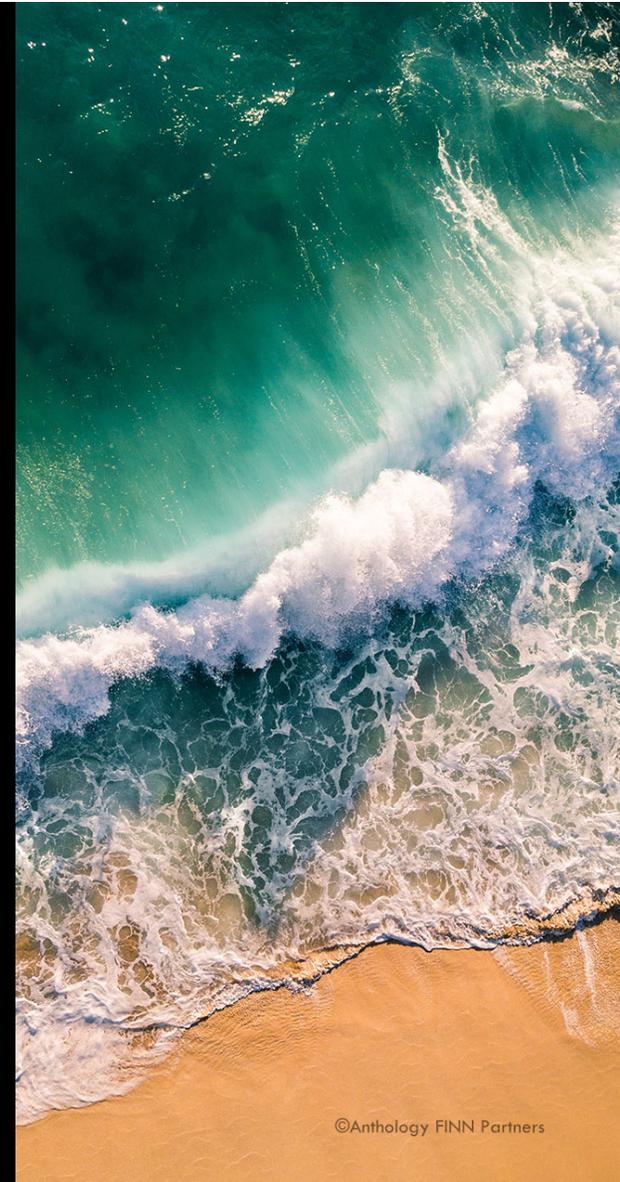
METHODOLOGY

- For the Fishes has contracted Anthology Research to conduct a quantitative study in the form of an online survey of Hawaii residents.
- A total of 407 respondents statewide took part in the study with fieldwork beginning on January 31, 2025, and ending on February 21, 2025.
- The margin of error for a sample this size is +/- 4.86 percentage-points with a 95% margin of error.
- The sample was culled using a combination of sources that included Anthology Research's panel of respondents along with other third-party sample providers.
- The data was weighted to reflect population estimates of adults 18+ by ethnicity by island.

BACKGROUND

Some people want to permanently end the commercial capture of Hawaii's marine life for the mainland aquarium pet trade because it threatens Hawaii's reefs and unique fish species. Those people believe the science showing the trade has depleted fish abundance and reduced biodiversity. They also believe the evidence showing that upwards of 40% will die within a month of capture and most of the rest will likely die within a year, including those known to live for decades in the wild.

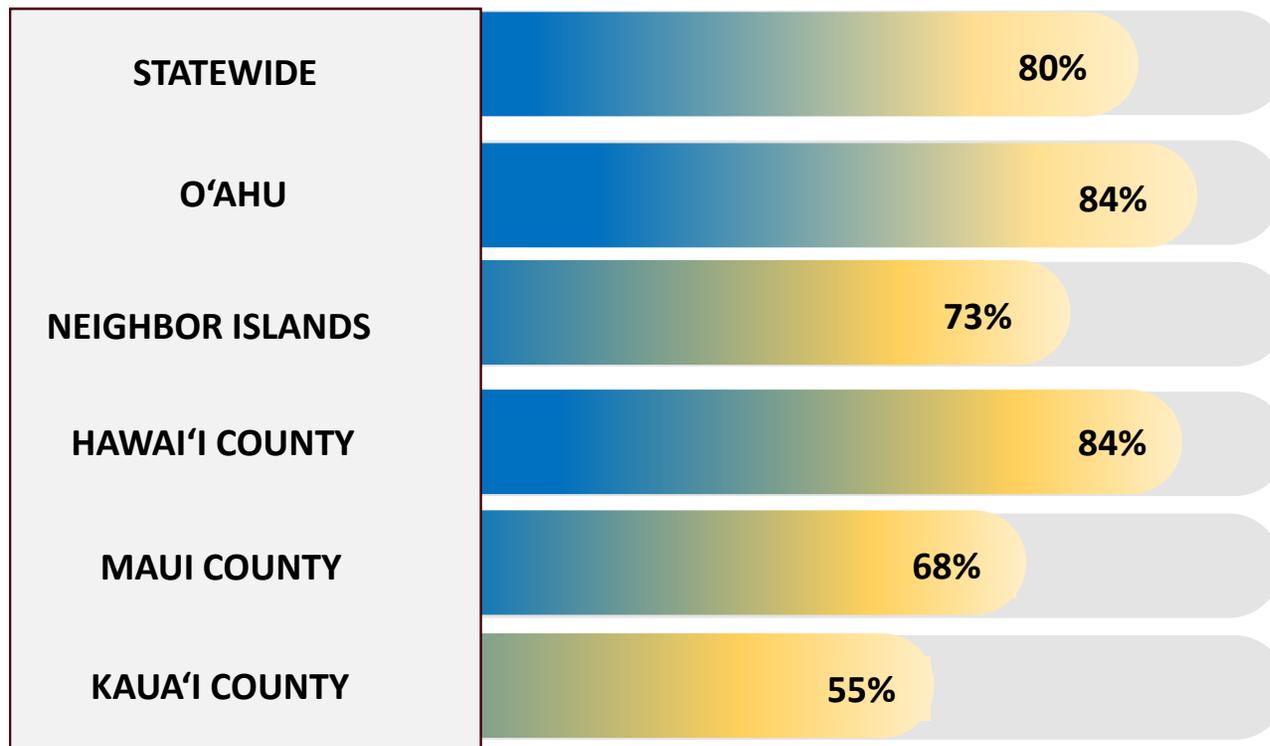
Some people support the commercial capture of Hawaii's marine life for the mainland aquarium pet trade because it provides a few dozen part-time jobs in Hawaii. Those people believe there are plenty of fish on Hawaii's reefs. They also believe that limits on the aquarium trade are not necessary because the impacts are insignificant and so concerns are unwarranted.



SUPPORT FOR ENDING COMMERCIAL CAPTURE



Support for ending the practice of capturing Hawaii's marine life for personal aquariums is statistically higher on O'ahu than it is on the Neighbor Islands. 81% of registered voters supports ending commercial capture.



Q: Would you support or oppose ending the commercial capture of Hawaii's reef fish for the mainland aquarium pet trade? Capture for local, scientific and educational use would still be allowed.

01 March 2026

I am a scientist and kama‘āina who has worked in Hawai‘i’s forests, oceans, and communities for over 20 years. I collaborate regularly with County, State, and federal agencies, the University of Hawai‘i, other universities, and nonprofit—including Native Hawaiian—organizations to support natural resource management and community stewardship. I submit this testimony as a private citizen and as President of the Hawai‘i Marine Education and Research Center.

I strongly support HB2101 to prohibit the commercial collection of reef wildlife for aquarium purposes, regardless of method.

- First, Hawai‘i’s reefs are foundational to Native Hawaiian culture, food security, biodiversity, and our way of life. Commercial extraction for the aquarium trade conflicts with longstanding traditional and customary practices and has contributed to documented declines in species diversity, abundance, and biomass—particularly among herbivorous reef fish relied upon by local food fishers.
- Second, from an ecosystem management perspective, continued commercial harvest undermines reef recovery and resilience. In some areas, nearly 80 percent of certain herbivorous species have been removed for the aquarium trade. Such severe depletion disrupts ecological function, weakens reefs’ ability to recover from disturbance, and compounds accelerating stress from climate change and ocean warming. Continued extraction is inconsistent with precautionary, ecosystem-based management and the State’s duty to protect public trust marine resources.
- Third, prohibiting commercial aquarium collection is consistent with existing constitutional and statutory protections upheld by the Department of Land and Natural Resources to safeguard Hawai‘i’s natural resources, including longstanding prohibitions on the removal of coral, sand, and other marine materials.

HB2101 provides clarity and strengthens protections necessary to restore and preserve Hawai‘i’s reefs for future generations.

Respectfully submitted,



Roberta (Robin) Martin PhD
President
Hawaii Marine Education and Research Center

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:47:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michael lauterman	Snorkel Bob's	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha OHA,

On behalf of my colleagues and fellow ocean advocates across the islands, I am writing to express my strong **support for HB 2101**. For far too long, the aquarium trade has been allowed to decimate our reef wildlife and destroy critical habitats.

It is time to put an end to this practice. The people of Hawaii do not want aquarium collectors on our reefs—whether on Hawaii Island, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Oahu, Kauai, or Niihau. We do not want to see our reefs emptied or trashed, and we certainly should not be responsible for the costs of enforcement or mitigation caused by the trafficking of our wildlife for the mainland amusement industry.

We have seen enough destruction. It is time to protect our reefs for future generations.

Mahalo,



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

March 2, 2026

10:00 AM

Conference Room 308

In **SUPPORT** of **HB2101 HD1**: RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly supports HB2101 HD1**, which would prohibit the commercial collection of marine life for the aquarium trade in Hawai'i Island's waters.

Hawai'i's coral reefs and the larger living systems dependent upon them are being severely threatened by human-induced global warming, pollution, and the largely unchecked profit-driven extraction of marine life – including, until recently, commercial aquarium collection. Before the local aquarium collection industry was effectively shut down by court rulings in 2017 and 2021, millions of specimens of marine life, including ecologically and culturally important herbivore species, were taken from our reefs and shipped to private aquarium collectors each year. Not surprisingly, the industry has been and continues to be the center of significant conflict and controversy, with the vast majority of the public, and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and subsistence communities in particular, objecting to such large-scale extraction of public trust marine resources solely for ornamental purposes, and the financial benefit of a select few.

Despite this, and even after the Board of Land and Natural Resources voted in support of rules to end commercial aquarium collection, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would instead reopen this industry, starting in West Hawai'i. DAR staff have justified their rule proposal by citing obligations under existing statutes. As agency rulemaking determines *how* an activity is conducted, not *whether* it should be allowed, it is now up to the Legislature to affirm that Hawai'i's ocean wildlife should be used and conserved for the public benefit, not exploited for a gratuitous, harmful, and now defunct industry. The Sierra Club strongly urges the Legislature to take such action and end decades of painful controversy once and for all.

Notably, DAR already struggles to meet urgent needs relating to our reefs and ocean environment. This includes addressing the numerous threats to our marine resources from irresponsible or uninformed harvesting practices, and leveraging the willingness and ability of communities throughout the islands to help co-manage their nearshore waters. By prohibiting commercial aquarium collection on Hawai'i Island, this measure would allow DAR to avoid committing hugely disproportionate resources catering to the profit-seeking demands of a handful of private entities, and to instead focus on upholding its critical mission and the public trust in our marine ecosystems.



SIERRA CLUB
OF HAWAI'I

For these reasons, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:35:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As amended in HB2101, HD1, this bill prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, but it only applies in Hawai‘i County.

We have protested on more than one occasion about the stripping of your native – often endangered – fishes from the reefs and agree with HHS that it is vitally important to protect them wherever they are.

We beg to support this bill, but, given the stress on marine life across the island chain, we are asking that its provisions apply statewide.



March 1, 2026

HB2101 In support

Aloha OHA

On behalf of Snorkel Bob's staff across Hawaii Island, Maui, Oahu and Kauai, we ask that you pass HB 2101. The aquarium trade has decimated reef wildlife and habitat for too many years. How many years has this taken? It's time to stop.

Hawaii people don't want aquarium collectors on any Hawaii reefs, not on Hawaii Island, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Oahu, Kauai, Niihau and the rest—don't want reefs emptied, trashed or Cloroxed and sure as hell don't want to pay for enforcement, mitigation or consequence of reef wildlife trafficking for a mainland amusement industry. Enough. It's time!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Wintner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Wintner



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Finance (FIN)
IN SUPPORT OF HB2101 HD1

March 2, 2026, 10:00 a.m., Room 308 & 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 and 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 supports HB2101 HD1 as an incremental step toward 'āina momona, but in its original form also covering O'ahu fisheries.

A popular quote of community leader Mac Poepoe is “**we do not play with our food.**”

KUA supports this bill in its original form covering all islands, based on the long term place-based opposition by traditional fishing communities in West Hawai'i and the growing sentiment of support for a statewide approach to addressing this matter within our networks. **O'ahu, which many consider to be the most depleted fishery among the state, should still be offered the same protection from this proposed prohibition on AQ fishing.**

E Alu Pū members in West Hawai'i have long opposed commercial aquarium (AQ) collection in their region. Their opposition to AQ collection is based on their Native Hawaiian cultural philosophies, values, and traditions of lawai'a pono and place-based fishery management. In 1998, the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) was created along with the West Hawai'i Fishery Council (WHFC), largely in response to the AQ trades' decimation of their fishery. WHRFMA and WHFC were built upon the strong community efforts to make fishery governance more local and pertinent to the communities most dependent

on the fishery. Further, the litigious history of the AQ trade shows the strong West Hawai'i pushback to this commercial industry that nearly eradicated entire fish species before the communities started taking formal action.

Some of these species are traditional food species and are necessary for upholding our unique and important reef ecosystems which should be a priority of our state. The highly lucrative aquarium trade primarily serves extractive interests for sales to an industry outside of our state for a non-essential, non-food use. Further, it is becoming feasible to grow the very species that go for the highest dollars in the aquaculture trade.

How does allowing for statewide AQ fishing, at the very least before completing the Holomua process for all islands, align with our Hawai'i State Constitution Article XII, Section 7 to protect all rights, customarily and traditionally, for Native Hawaiian ahupua'a tenants, as well as the public trust doctrine in Article XI, Section 1? We cannot see how it does. We question further why the push for AQ collection rules is being prioritized over other longstanding community efforts and management needs, especially those in West Hawai'i by Native Hawaiian and local communities in Ho'okena and Ka'ūpūlehu.

Although our focus at KUA has never been the economic value of our i'a, it is hard to ignore the flagrant economic imbalance at play between what little money would come back to DLNR through just \$100 per AQ permit, versus and the retail price \$100+ per AQ fish sold. It also seems imprudent and irresponsible as a management decision. With the only seven known potential AQ permittees, that would mean a mere \$700 annually going back to the state – for the care of 'āina and kai on behalf of Native Hawaiian and local people. Meanwhile, it is our understanding that the state management costs (excluding enforcement of the rules) is estimated at \$300,000 - \$500,000 annually.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **We believe protecting our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about sustained and long-term commitments toward achieving 'āina momona abundance once again.** To get there requires maintaining protections for mālama 'āina, including through this bill to prohibit an extractive, non-essential practice not rooted in Native Hawaiian culture or practices. Our decisions today will continue to shape the future that our keiki's keiki's keiki will one day inherit – we hope for a future of shared and harmonious abundance, and hope you do, too.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to submit testimony. **Please PASS HB2101 HD1, but amend it to once again cover O'ahu fisheries as well.**

Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:54:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika Ruddle	Ruddle Ohana	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To: House Committee on Finance

Hearing: Monday, March 2, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

Re: House Bill Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kawika Ruddle, and I am in full support of this measure to prohibit commercial aquarium fish collection in Hawai‘i.

As this bill is now before the House Finance Committee, I respectfully ask you to evaluate the fiscal implications of continuing the aquarium trade versus transitioning toward more sustainable economic models such as captive breeding and aquaculture.

Hawai‘i’s coral reefs are public trust resources. Extracting adult breeding fish from those reefs for export generates relatively limited statewide economic benefit while placing long-term strain on ecosystems that support tourism, local fisheries, and cultural practices. When breeding biomass is removed from nearshore waters, it diminishes natural replenishment and shifts ecological risk onto the public.

From a financial perspective, continued aquarium collection carries measurable and recurring costs:

- Enforcement and patrol expenditures through the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE)
- Administrative costs associated with permitting, monitoring, reporting, and compliance review
- Litigation exposure and rulemaking expenses when regulations are challenged
- Ongoing management costs to address illegal take and poaching

Even during periods when aquarium collection has not been permitted, poaching continues. That reality underscores the enforcement burden placed on the State. Maintaining a regulatory framework for wild collection requires public funds to monitor extraction of a public trust resource that yields relatively narrow private gain.

By contrast, encouraging captive breeding and sustainable aquaculture represents a fiscally responsible shift:

- Land-based aquaculture creates stable, year-round employment in hatcheries, farming operations, research, processing, and distribution
- It generates taxable business activity within Hawai‘i rather than exporting raw ecological value
- It supports food security and reduces reliance on imported seafood
- It relieves harvest pressure on wild reef systems

Aquaculture development also aligns with long-term economic resilience. Healthy reefs support tourism, shoreline protection, recreational use, and subsistence fishing. Reef degradation imposes economic losses that far exceed the limited revenue generated by aquarium exports.

From a stewardship standpoint, my family has worked and operated on the Kohala Coast for decades. We have witnessed firsthand the decline in reef fish abundance and size over time. The reef is not an unlimited resource. When extraction targets breeding-age fish, recovery becomes more difficult and costly.

This bill is not simply about prohibiting one industry. It is about directing Hawai‘i’s economic future toward higher-value, sustainable, and locally grounded industries instead of continued depletion of publicly owned marine life.

For these fiscal, environmental, and stewardship reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kawika Ruddle

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:20:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nedi McKnight	Rights of Coral Reefs	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2101

Chair and Members,

My name is Nedi McKnight. I work with Rights of Coral Reefs. I support HB2101 to end commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i.

Herbivorous reef fish like yellow tang are not decorative, they are reef maintenance crews. They graze algae so coral can survive. When their numbers drop, algae can overgrow reefs. That risk is higher now, with warming seas and repeated bleaching events.

After the 2017 shutdown of aquarium collection on the West Hawai‘i coast, populations were expected to show strong recovery. An independent review of DAR’s own data indicates yellow tang did not rebound as biologically and historically expected. At the same time, reef fish monitoring has been reduced from multiple survey rounds per year to just one.

Reopening large-scale collection under reduced monitoring creates unnecessary risk.

You may hear that the trade is sustainable or that only a small percentage of fish are taken. But even limited removal of key herbivores can affect reef balance during climate stress. And these are wild fish taken from functioning ecosystems- once removed, they no longer play their ecological role on the reef.

In 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously supported a ban but said it lacked authority and directed the community to the Legislature. HB2101 provides that clarity.

When reefs are under pressure and recovery is uncertain, the responsible path is precaution.

Please pass HB2101, and if possible, apply it statewide to prevent shifting extraction pressure from one area to another.

Mahalo nui loa,

Nedi McKnight

Pa'auilo Hawai'i & Te Hiku o te Ika, Aotearoa

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:34:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nakoʻolani Warrington	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2101 HD1

We, Kūpuna for the Mo‘opuna, a hui of Hawaiian Homes Commission Act kūpuna beneficiary farmers from Pana‘ewa, Hawai‘i, **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2101 HD1.**

HB 2101 HD1 would stop the ecologically and culturally harmful commercial aquarium industry on Hawai‘i Island, already shut down since 2017, from being re-started under pending rules proposed by the DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate.

Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.

DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

SUPPORT and PASS HB 2101 HD1. Mahalo.



REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY IN **STRONG SUPPORT** OF HOUSE BILL 2101 HD1

Monday, March 2, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

Earthjustice submits this testimony in **strong support** of HB 2101 HD1, which would prohibit commercial aquarium collection in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000 by adding a new section to Haw. Rev. Stat. ch. 188. Because there is ample justification to ban commercial aquarium collection *statewide*, we prefer the original version of HB 2101, which does not contain the county population limitation that the HD1 version added.

Earthjustice is a public interest environmental law organization with a Mid-Pacific Office based in Honolulu for nearly 40 years. For over a decade, we have represented a hui of reef advocates—including Native Hawaiian subsistence fishers and cultural practitioners from throughout the pae ‘āina—to protect Hawai‘i’s reefs from the extraction hundreds of thousands of fish each year to supply the global aquarium pet industry.

An Opportunity To Reverse A Historical Injustice

In 1953, Hawai‘i’s territorial legislature passed a law allowing “aquarium fish permits” that would enable collectors to use fine-meshed nets to capture juvenile fish targeted by the commercial aquarium trade. See Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31. This law’s passage was based on the ignorant view by those in power that the fish species sought after by the industry are “not edible.” S. Stand. Comm. Rep. 442, in 1953 Senate Journal, at 669. ***Such a finding would never stand today.*** Commercial aquarium collectors target popular food fish including kole (goldring surgeonfish) and pāku‘iku‘i (achilles tang), herbivorous fish that are essential to coral reef health, and other colorful fishes that are found nowhere else in the world—all of which are culturally significant for Native Hawaiians. Because of this outdated legislation, commercial aquarium collectors have enjoyed a ***decades-long pass to extract hundreds of thousands of fish from Hawai‘i’s reefs annually***, which has devastated nearshore ecosystems by reducing fish populations and directly damaging reefs through harmful collection methods.

Litigation And Other Community-Led Advocacy

Due to Hawai'i Supreme Court and environmental court rulings mandating environmental review, *no legal commercial aquarium collection has occurred in West Hawai'i since 2017, or anywhere else in the state (including O'ahu) since 2021.*¹ In 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously approved a community-led petition to ban commercial aquarium collection by administrative rule. The rulemaking petition was filed by reef advocates including lawai'a pono practitioners from West Hawai'i, which has been ground zero for commercial aquarium collection for decades, and Kāne'ohe, which experienced a dramatic increase in commercial aquarium collection after collectors depleted West O'ahu reefs.

Rather than initiating rulemaking to ban commercial aquarium collection, as the unanimously approved rulemaking petition proposed, Department of Land and Natural Resources staff instead *ran in the opposite direction by developing rules to authorize aquarium collection.* The Board is now planning to resume issuing aquarium fish permits, starting with seven West Hawai'i permits. O'ahu's reefs are next in line for permits that could be issued to fifteen collectors upon completion and acceptance of an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS").

The Board is taking these steps based on its *erroneous view that it lacks the power to ban commercial aquarium collection and that only the legislature can ban this extractive activity.* Indeed, at the October 24, 2025 Board meeting approving rulemaking proceedings to reopen West Hawai'i to commercial aquarium collection, Chair Chang directed the dozens of community members who testified in opposition to the Board's action as follows: *"I would urge you to talk story to the legislators for a different fix."*²

Meanwhile, in 2024, the Hawai'i Supreme Court affirmed the Board's default decision to approve an industry-sponsored EIS for West Hawai'i commercial collection. The EIS was approved by operation of law when the Board failed to reach a majority vote and instead reached a 3-3 tie decision. The Hawai'i Supreme Court *did not endorse* the EIS's findings and conclusions that commercial aquarium collection has insignificant environmental effects, or the EIS's failure to propose measures and alternatives to reduce environmental harm. Rather, the

¹ Given the lack of any legal collection in five years or more, any claims that a ban would negatively affect current livelihoods is disingenuous at best and, at worst, suggests ongoing illegal poaching.

² See Board of Land and Natural Resources Oct. 24, 2025 Meeting, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=PLDh6ZXzdUvOkHtqVoauOkfa26NfNLh2pK&index=4> at 8:10:27; see also *id.* at 7:22:09 and 7:55:33 (Board Members Denise Iseri-Matsubara's and Riley Smith's statements on the Board's purported lack of authority to ban commercial aquarium collection).

court held that the EIS contained sufficient information—including the concerns, data, and studies that reef advocates had submitted in commenting on the EIS—to inform future permitting decisions. Under well-settled Hawai‘i Supreme Court precedent, *EIS approval does not guarantee permit approval*. Rather, an EIS is an informational document that informs agency decision-making.

Community Sentiment Strongly Opposing Commercial Collection

Three public opinion polls conducted since 2012 have repeatedly shown overwhelming public support for ending commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i. The 2025 poll showed that **84% of O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island residents support a ban**, while only 10% support collection. The following government and non-government entities have passed resolutions supporting and urging a state legislative ban:

- Hawai‘i County Council;
- Kaua‘i County Council;
- Neighborhood boards for Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u;
- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs;
- Ko‘olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club;
- Ko‘olau Foundation; and
- Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council.

The public and government entities have called upon the legislature to act.

Hundreds Of Thousands In State Subsidies For The Trade

If the legislature does not act and the Board proceeds as planned, collectors would pay just \$100 per year (just **\$700 total** for 7 West Hawai‘i collectors, which are the only permits even potentially on the table at this time) for a program that the Division of Aquatic Resources has estimated would cost the state **\$300,000-\$500,000** annually to administer **for Hawai‘i Island alone**.³ Enforcing the Board’s proposed aquarium catch quotas—*if it even were possible*—would be extremely resource-intensive, since enforcement would require counting live fish at sea and onshore, further straining the Division of Conservation and Resources and Enforcement’s limited resources. Collectors would extract hundreds of thousands of fish and ship them overseas to sell as ornamental pets, while Hawai‘i’s reefs increasingly struggle to feed local families and withstand climate change. The legislature should prioritize pono food fishing and reef resilience to benefit all Hawai‘i citizens over an extractive practice that benefits only a handful of commercial collectors.

³ See Schaar & Cox, The future for Hawai‘i’s marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact statement, Marine Policy (2021) (attached).

Harmful Impacts Of The Trade

Data from the industry-sponsored West Hawai'i EIS show that fish populations are significantly lower in areas open to commercial aquarium collection than in areas closed to collection. For example, the diagram below from the EIS shows significantly lower lau'ipala (yellow tang) density in open areas (green) than in closed areas (blue and red). It is also our understanding that the Division of Aquatic Resources is collecting significantly less fish population data along West Hawai'i than it has in prior years, which will hinder the agency's ability to assess how resumed collection would affect West Hawai'i populations. The Division's claim that collection is "sustainable," therefore, cannot be validated and is mere guesswork *at best* under this scaled back data collection regime.

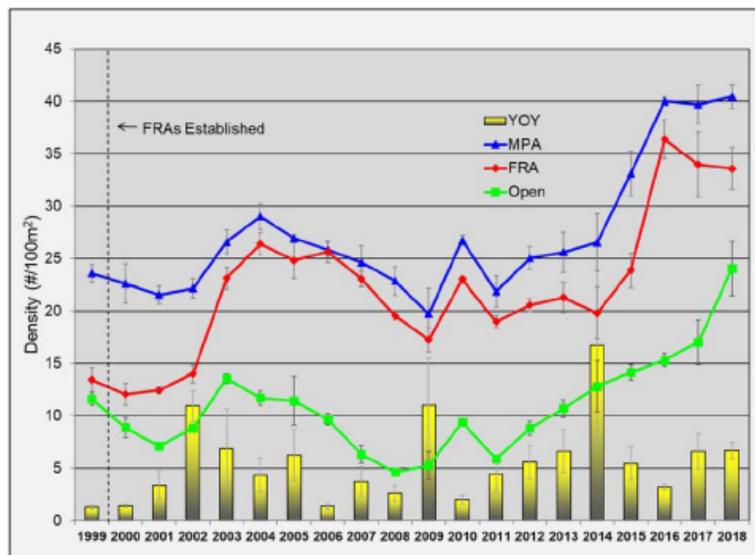


Figure 5. Overall changes in Yellow Tang density (Mean ± SE) in FRAs, MPAs, and Open Areas, 1999-2018. Yellow vertical bars indicate mean density (MAY-NOV) of Yellow Tang YOY. YOY are not included in trend line data (DAR 2019a).

Availability of Reef-Safe Alternatives

Rather than propping up a wasteful and costly industry that stands to benefit only a handful of collectors, Hawai'i should continue to invest in reef-safe alternatives to commercial aquarium collection. Biota Aquariums operates a Waimānalo-based facility that has been successfully aqua-culturing and selling lau'ipala (yellow tang)—the Hawai'i reef fish most sought-after by the aquarium pet trade—for years. Prohibiting wild catch of reef life for the aquarium pet trade would enable modern, reef-safe aquarium fish operations to flourish and thrive in Hawai'i. Such operations create jobs and provide economic opportunities without threatening further harm to public trust resources.

For the first time since the territorial legislature enacted Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31, Hawai'i's reefs have finally had a break from commercial aquarium collection. Now that the Board is on the precipice of reopening Hawai'i's reefs to this destructive activity, the legislature is presented with a rare opportunity to right historical wrongs and fulfill its constitutional duties to protect Hawai'i's reef ecosystems as public trust and culturally significant resources for present and future generations. See Haw. Const. art. XI, § 1; Haw. Const. art. XII, § 7.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or for further information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kylie W. Wager Cruz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kylie W. Wager Cruz, Esq.
Senior Attorney
Earthjustice, Mid-Pacific Office

Attachment

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting HB2101 HD1, Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection
Committee on Finance
March 2, 2026 at 10:00 am
Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports HB2101 HD1, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000.

TNC's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends, and we strongly support policies that recognize Indigenous rights, strengthen community governance, and support sustainable livelihoods. TNC works closely with dozens of communities and individuals leading community-based makai management efforts across five Hawaiian Islands. We carry kuleana to the places where we work and to the people and communities we work alongside, including those directly impacted by, and continuing to raise concerns about, the effects of the aquarium trade on their livelihoods, culture, and ways of life.

As a science-based organization dedicated to conserving the biodiversity that underpins all life on Earth, we are deeply aware that biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate. To reverse this trend, we must find better, more inclusive ways to manage humanity's footprint on land, freshwater, and the ocean. Addressing the twin crises of rapid climate change and biodiversity loss requires strong partnerships among communities, governments, and businesses—and above all, a foundation of respect for peoples, communities, and cultures. When policy aligns with people and place, we strengthen the conditions for the lands, waters, and communities of Hawai'i to thrive now and into the future.

In Hawai'i, we rely heavily on the partnership and stewardship of communities that mālama 'āina. These are the people with intimate, place-based knowledge of our nearshore ecosystems. That knowledge must inform and guide the management of our shared resources, for the health of our reefs and the well-being of the people connected to them.

As documented by the Division of Aquatic Resources' William Walsh (2014), the rise of the aquarium trade in the 1970s ignited longstanding conflict among collectors, fishers, and community members, leading to Act 306 and the creation of Fish Replenishment Areas. Opposition to aquarium harvest and trade in West Hawai'i is longstanding, spanning over 50 years. This

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The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i and Palmyra

March 2, 2026

Page 2

opposition is not simply about resource use; it is about deeply held values. According to West Hawai'i community partners that we deeply engage with, harvesting reef fish for commercial aquarium sale is not viewed as a culturally acceptable use of fishery resources.

In that spirit, we urge the Committee to move forward legislation that reflects the values of communities and protects the integrity of ecosystems for all of Hawai'i. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2101 HD1 and for your continued commitment to thoughtful, community-based resource management.

Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.



SIERRA CLUB

HAWAI'I ISLAND GROUP



Representative Chris Todd
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 1, 2026

Re: Support for House Bill 2101 HD1

Aloha House Committee Chair Todd and Committee on Finance,

It is with immense hope that the Hawai'i Island Group of the Sierra Club of Hawai'i (HIG) strongly supports HB2101 HB1 with a recommendation that it be applied to all islands in the state, not just Hawai'i island .

For many, many years, the Sierra Club and countless other organizations and individuals on Hawai'i Island and across the state have worked with a consistent determination to manifest a ban on the coral reef commercial aquarium trade in Hawai'i.

Most recently, this past January 23rd, the Hawai'i County Council voted unanimously in favor of a resolution asking our state Representative and Senators to ban the commercial aquarium trade in Hawai'i. During that hearing a former aquarium trade collector who had not signed up to testify was compelled to do so as the Chair was about to end public testimony. He described how they would drop the anchor onto the reef, which would chase the fish out from hiding places. Then they would smash the reef to prevent the fish from getting back into hiding places. Those who snorkel and dive realized this may explain why, over the years, an increasing number of corals were laying on the ocean floor in pieces. It takes courage to admit one's mistakes, much less in a public hearing. HIG hopes that these Committees will gather the same courage to pass this bill out of committee.

P O Box 1137 Hilo, HI 96721-1137 | hawaiiislandsierraclub@gmail.com sierraclubhig.org

On February 10th, the Department of Aquatic Resources (“DAR”) acknowledged in a joint Senate committee hearing that Hawai‘i’s coral reefs would likely be destroyed as a result of climate change within the next 30 years due to climate change. But then DAR effectively contradicted itself by stating that permitting commercial aquarium fishers to take coral reef species was “sustainable”. Scientists are warning that, given the lack of urgency and action to achieve a carbon neutral global socio-economic system, the Earth’s tropical coral reefs will likely be rendered completely lifeless in just 20 years.

There is no reality in which cutting down trees in a forest that is burning is sustainable. Rather than creating a firebreak, permitting this trade effectively throws fuel on the fire. in violation of the Precautionary Principle, Public Trust Doctrine, state Constitution, scientific evidence, the rights, traditions, and practices of kanaka maoli, as well as overwhelming public support.

HIG has no doubt that these Committees will be receiving expert testimony in support of this bill, but please also consider the following comments and opinions.

The Hippocratic Oath to which all physicians commit, states in part, “Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm,…”

Despite years of public opposition, the state Department of Aquatic Resources (“DAR”) continues its efforts to authorize the preparation of terms and conditions for permits to enter the home of coral reef life and cause further harm to already stressed and degraded inhabitants.

Further, DAR has sought to delegate the state Board of Land and Natural Resource’s (“BLNR”) kuleana and discretionary authority to issue permits to the Department of Land and Natural Resources Director as an administrative approval. So the currently transparent discretionary approval process in which the public has an opportunity to comment and participate would instead become a non-transparent ministerial approval.

The Hawai‘i Supreme Court (“Court”) created legal precedent to guide this Committee when it ruled that the Precautionary Principle is a duty under the Public Trust Doctrine. It further clarified that the Precautionary Principle is an inherent attribute of the Public Trust Doctrine and, therefore, the Public Trust Doctrine is a preventative doctrine, not a remedial one. In endorsing the Precautionary Principle, the Court rejected the requirement of scientific certainty before acting to protect public trust purposes because requiring certainty would only allow for reactive, not preventive regulation. It found, where scientific evidence is not conclusive regarding the management of public trust resources, it is prudent to adopt ‘precautionary principles’ in protecting the resource...and do no harm.

2023 BLNR Petition for Rules to Prohibit

In 2023, Kalanihale, KUPA Friends of Ho‘okena Beach Park, Moana ‘Ohana, Ko‘olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and For the Fishes filed a Petition for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of

Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes (With Exemptions). At its December 8, 2023 meeting, the BLNR granted the petition.

However, the DAR ignored this decision and has now proposed rules that would allow permits to once again be issued for the taking of marine life for commercial purposes.

The Purpose section of DAR's submission to the BLNR in April 2024 stated: "While DAR recognizes that there are also ethical and cultural values that the Board must consider in any future aquarium permitting decision, a comprehensive discussion of those factors is beyond the scope of this briefing."

This begs the question, do the DAR's practices and procedures within its decision-making processes improperly ignore Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i constitution, which states: "The State reaffirms and shall protect all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes and possessed by ahupua'a tenants who are descendants of native Hawaiians who inhabited the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778..."?

The Hawai'i Supreme Court has ruled that traditional and customary Hawaiian rights are a part of the public trust. Again, the Court, along with the state legislature, have taken the position that the Precautionary Principle should be applied when there are current or potential threats of serious damage to cultural resources, which include traditional and customary Hawaiian rights and practices.

The state Supreme Court has also ruled a permit applicant bears the burden of proof that their proposed activity does not result in harm or loss to the public trust. Where uncertainty exists, the State's duty to perform as a public trustee requires a presumption in favor of public resource protection. There is no scenario in which a commercial aquarium fish collection permit application can be presumed to be in favor of public trust resource protection when the resource is already in danger of destruction from climate change.

Documentation submitted by the DAR to the BLNR in April 2024 used terms such as "does not find clear evidence to suggest" and "would most likely mitigate" in its Summary of Finding. These are explicit statements that there is no scientific certainty in its decision-making process.

The only scenario in which there is a consensus of scientific certainty is the one in which commercial aquarium fish harvesting is disallowed. This is the only option that will result in an already endangered resource not being further harmed. Again, the Precautionary Principle supports a ban on permitting commercial aquarium harvesting permits.

In summary, what may seem to some as one small step for the Committees is actually one giant step towards accepting the reality of our world and facing its challenges with eyes wide open.

Please pass HB2101 HD1 out of the Committee amended to apply to all coastal areas statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Sierra Club of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Island Group



March 1, 2026

To: Members of the EEP, WAL & FIN Committees

From: Dr. Roxane keli'ikipikāneokolohaka, Executive Director, Kia'i Kanaloa

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1

Aloha,

On behalf of Kia'i Kanaloa with members across the pae'āina, mahalo for this opportunity to provide written testimony regarding HB2101 HD1. Kia'i Kanaloa stands in firm opposition to any aquarium fish collecting in our waters, as it does not benefit our ocean ecosystem, nor does it lend to the state's trust responsibility to our elder environment and the people of Hawai'i.

In emulating the essence of Kanaloanuiākea, Hawai'i must think more deeply and long (the essence of Kanaloa thinking) when it comes to protecting our elder environment. Thinking deeply means we must consider all threats to our sources, from the shoreline to the depths of the moana, including threats right here in Hawai'i, such as the aquarium fish trade, as well as current threats beyond our shores, such as seabed mining and fossil fuel exploration in conservation areas. Add to that the stresses of climate change we are currently experiencing, as well as the future climate stresses we have yet to comprehend fully. Included in that consideration is factoring in the potential term or irreparable harm of all these combined threats in all decision-making.

The state must dramatically shift from prioritizing extractive industries that serve the short-term interests of individual proprietors at the expense of a healthy and balanced marine environment that supports Hawai'i residents over generations. Furthermore, we support successful models of Hawaiian-centric, community-based management, such as those on Molokai and Kaua'i. They reflect the potentiality of a better way for Hawai'i to fulfill its trust responsibilities pae'āina-wide. We ask you to think deeply and long, placing our Kanaloa at the center of your decision-making by prohibiting commercial aquarium collecting in our waters.

In service to our Kanaloa,

Roxane K. Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka

Dr. Roxane Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka

Kia'i Kanaloa, Executive Director



(808) 987-0453



kiaikanaloa@gmail.com

Mailing Address

1889-A Kīlauea Ave.
Hilo, HI. 96720



March 2, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the House Committee on Finance
In Support of

HB 2101 HD1 - RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

The Association of Hawaii Civic Clubs submits testimony in **support** of HB 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection which would prohibit the harvesting of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. The proposed legislation aligns with Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs Resolution 2025-40 “Calling for a Ban on Commercial Aquarium Collection in The State of Hawai‘i’s Waters”, which was passed at our 2025 convention in Keauhou, Hawai‘i. The commercial aquarium fish trade has removed millions of reef fish from our native waters for shipment to pet stores and private aquariums across the United States; endangering the health of our coral reefs and the availability of native species for traditional subsistence fishing practices.

We recognize that the HD1 limits the scope of this prohibition to counties with populations greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000. This will effectively apply a ban to Hawai‘i County, where the impacts to fisheries have been most acute. Perhaps, the legislature could consider expansion of the prohibition to all state waters in a future session.

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs supports the public protection of Hawai‘i’s reefs and native reef fish for the benefit of our people and the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit confederation of 60 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,500 members located across Hawai‘i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this measure.

ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

A RESOLUTION

NO. 2025 - 40

CALLING FOR A BAN ON COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION IN THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I’S WATERS

WHEREAS, the coral reef ecosystems of Hawai‘i are immeasurably important to the people, environment, and way of life of Hawai‘i, with a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study estimating their total economic value at \$33.57 billion; and

WHEREAS, Hawai‘i’s reefs are already under significant threat from climate change, with forecasts predicting the loss of up to seventy percent of Hawai‘i’s coral reefs within the next twenty-five years, underscoring the need for strong protections of reef ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, herbivore fish, which graze on algae and protect reefs from harmful algae overgrowth, are essential for the survival of coral reefs and also serve as important subsistence and cultural food sources for Native Hawaiian communities and local fishers; and

WHEREAS, for decades the commercial aquarium pet trade has removed millions of reef fish from Hawai‘i’s waters for shipment to pet stores and private aquariums on the continental United States, leading to a documented decline in fish abundance, diversity, and biomass, with some species reduced by as much as eighty percent in areas targeted for commercial extraction; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Hawai‘i, in *Kaupiko v. BLNR* (2025), upheld the commercial aquarium industry’s environmental impact statement, potentially reopening nearly the entire West Hawai‘i coastline to commercial collection, despite widespread community opposition and the serious ecological risks involved; and

WHEREAS, Native Hawaiian families and communities, such as in Hāena, Miloli‘i, Kipahulu and Mo‘omomi have fought for and established community-based subsistence fishery areas to protect reef resources for future generations, exemplifying pono stewardship and reaffirming that Hawai‘i’s marine resources must be managed for the benefit of the people, not for private profit; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources estimates it costs Hawai‘i taxpayers approximately \$500,000 annually to manage the aquarium pet trade, while generating less than \$25,000 in revenue, thereby draining public resources while harming public trust resources; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting the commercial collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium trade is consistent with existing state laws protecting Hawai'i's environment, including the 1988 prohibition on the extraction of sand, rocks, soil, live rock, and coral; and

WHEREAS, such a prohibition is further supported by the Hawai'i State Constitution, Article XI, Section 1 (conservation, control, and development of resources), Article XI, Section 9 (environmental rights), and Article XII, Section 7 (traditional and customary rights of Native Hawaiians).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at its 66th Annual Convention in Keauhou, Hawai'i, in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Mōhalu, this 1st day of November 2025, calling for a permanent ban on commercial aquarium collection in the State of Hawai'i's waters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs urges the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Governor of Hawai'i, and the Legislature of the State of Hawai'i to enact permanent statewide regulations prohibiting the issuance of commercial aquarium collection permits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs affirms that Hawai'i's coral reefs and reef species must be managed in the public trust for the benefit of Hawai'i's people, future generations, and the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Hawai'i's Congressional delegation, as well as the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Chair of the State Senate subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the State House subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and all County Mayors.



The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Mōhalu, on the 1st day of November 2025, at the 66th Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in Keauhou, Hawai'i.

DreanaLee Kalili

DreanaLee Kalili, President

HAWAI'I OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



March 2, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature
House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** for HB 2101, HD1, Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and esteemed members of the committee,

The Ocean Legislative Task Force—a coalition of more than 150 individuals across over 20 organizations statewide—**supports** HB 2101, HD1, relating to commercial aquarium collection. This measure prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection. This version of the measure limits the prohibition to only counties with populations greater than 200,000 but less than 300,000, which we understand to be Hawai'i county.

HB 2101, HD1, responds to long-standing concerns about the ecological and cultural impacts of removing native reef organisms from Hawai'i's waters for the aquarium trade. Coral reef ecosystems are essential to Hawai'i's environment, shoreline protection, and cultural practices, and their long-term health must remain a top priority.

Commercial collection has historically targeted species that play important roles in maintaining reef balance, and heavy extraction can undermine reef resilience and ecosystem function. Prohibiting commercial harvest for aquarium purposes aligns with Hawai'i's public trust responsibilities and strengthens protections for nearshore waters relied upon by communities across the state.

The Task Force also appreciates that the measure preserves allowances for traditional and customary practices, scientific research, and aquaculture under existing authorities, ensuring cultural rights and community uses remain respected while addressing unsustainable commercial extraction.

For these reasons, the Ocean Legislative Task Force respectfully urges the committees to support HB 2101, HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

The Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that advance cesspool conversion and wastewater management, protect Hawai'i's coral reefs and reef fish, ensure transparent and sustainable implementation of the Green Fee program and long-term environmental staffing, and support other measures that strengthen Hawai'i's coastal and marine ecosystems.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:57:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby Billionaire	Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

****Testimony in STRONG Support of HB2101 HD1 – WITH RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS FOR FAIRNESS** **Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection****

**** Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committees,**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of ****HB2101 HD1****, a key Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) package bill that prohibits the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for ****commercial aquarium purposes**** (defined as taking for profit to sell into the aquarium trade for captivity as pets or ornamental display). It repeals outdated permit/export provisions (§§188-31, 188-31.5) and ensures protections for:

- Traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices - Personal consumption or bait - Captive-breeding/aquaculture (§187A-3.5)

- Special activity permits for scientific/educational/propagation (§187A-6)

- Traditional fishponds (loko i‘a) This is pono. Commercial wild collection is unsustainable, harms reef resilience (especially herbivores like lauipala/yellow tang and kole/goldring surgeonfish), and contradicts mālama ‘āina, aloha ‘āina, and kuleana. ****84%**** of O‘ahu/Hawai‘i Island residents support ending it (recent scientific poll). Reefs and nature-based tourism (****hundreds of millions in annual value****) outweigh the small industry.

****However, some families do rely on this for livelihood.****

With only ****7** proposed permits statewide (per recent DLNR proposals for West Hawai‘i; historically 10–50, but currently banned), and a ****\$100 Commercial Marine License fee**** (resident rate under HRS §189-2), the economic reality is stark. Yellow tang (lauipala) fetch ****\$100–\$500**** in the trade (e.g., captive-bred \$170–\$300, wild \$300–\$470 based on 2025–2026 retailer data; not \$5k as sometimes exaggerated, but still profitable at volume—20 fish could yield \$2,000–\$10,000). I agree we cannot "rape" the ocean, but a full ban without transition risks sudden hardship for the ~41 active collectors (2020 data; ~3,000 total CMLs, but few aquarium-specific).

Recommended Amendments for Balance and Pono

1. **18–24 Month Phase-Out Period**: Grandfather current Commercial Marine License holders who reported aquarium catch in the last 3 years. Allow continuation under existing rules until [date 18–24 months post-approval] for wind-down or transition—preventing abrupt loss while reefs recover.
2. **Economic Transition Fund**: Appropriate **\$500,000–\$750,000** (fraction of tourism reef value) for DLNR/DOL/DHHL grants: retraining, low-interest loans for aquaculture startups, skills in sustainable fishing/reef tourism guiding/restorative aquaculture. Prioritize Native Hawaiian fishers.
3. **Aquaculture Incentives**: Direct DLNR to fast-track permits/grants for captive-breeding (e.g., yellow tang success at Oceanic Institute). Shift displaced collectors to farm-raised supply without wild harm.
4. **Annual Reporting**: Require DLNR reports for 3 years on transitioned workers, new jobs, and reef health metrics (e.g., herbivore populations up **20–50%** post-ban in similar areas).

Supporting Data on Impacts & Urgency

- **Reef Harm**: Commercial collection removes **hundreds of thousands** of fish annually (pre-ban: ~400,000–1 million from West Hawai‘i alone). Herbivores like yellow tang control algae; their depletion reduces reef resilience by **20–30%** (studies: Tissot et al., 2003; Earthjustice reports). Hawai‘i reefs face bleaching/climate threats—banning extraction protects biodiversity for subsistence/cultural fishing.
- **Industry Scale**: Only **7 permits** proposed statewide (DLNR 2024–2025); generates **\$1.2–\$2 million** annually (pre-ban data)—dwarfed by reef tourism (**\$1 billion+** economic value). **41 CML holders** reported aquarium catch in 2020 (out of ~3,000 total CMLs).
- **Economic Fairness**: Permit fee **\$100** (resident CML); yellow tang trade prices **\$100–\$500** each (retail averages: \$170 captive-bred, \$300–\$470 wild per 2025–2026 sources). Volume profits exist (e.g., 20 fish = \$2,000–\$10,000), but sustainable alternatives like aquaculture can maintain livelihoods without ecosystem "rape."

These amendments honor small-scale fishers while advancing the bill's core: protecting kai for future generations. I've testified on every OHA bill this session—pass **HB2101 HD1** with these fair amendments to mālama our reefs and people.

Mahalo nui loa. Imua!

Respectfully submitted,

Pikachu Shelby “Pikachu” Billionaire HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman



KO'OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

March 1, 2026

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
And Members of the House Finance Committee

From: Charles Naumu, President
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club
Via Leialoha "Rocky" Kaluhiwa, Vice President

Re: H. B. 2101, H. D. 1 – Commercial Aquarium Collection - Support

Aloha Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club supports H.B. 2101, H.D.1, relating to the collection of aquarium fish, but our support comes with a plea to amend this bill to extend it statewide or – at the very least, to include Kane'ohu Bay in the protected areas.

Our organization has been actively monitoring the management of our bay and encourages full community engagement and partnership with the State of Hawai'i to ensure wise policies are adopted to protect our endangered and diminishing native marine life and support the Kaneohe Bay Regional Master Plan.

The numbers of native reef fish are diminishing rapidly due to commercial fish gathering for aquarium sales, where some fish are sold for up to \$5,000 apiece in foreign countries. Some collectors come at night, when DLNR conservation officers are not at work.

Our club, in the past, provided free boat tours of Kane'ohu Bay on the glassbottom boat. After giving tours to groups of school children, we received notes back from them telling us they enjoyed the boat trip but were disappointed that they couldn't see any fish. That is how seriously the aquarium fish-collecting has impacted our bay.

We urge you to add your support by passing this bill with the amendment we have requested.

Mahalo,

Charles Naumu, President
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians. One of the largest of the Hawaiian Civic Clubs, its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart".



To: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair, the Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee.

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

Re: Hearing HB2101 HD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

Hearing: Monday March 2, 2026 10:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Finance Committee!

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** HB2101 HD1!

This measure is urgently needed because:

- Oahu's coral reefs are threatened by climate heating, pollution, and insufficient numbers of herbivorous fish to clean the reefs. Scientists project annual heat-stress events by as early as 2030. Scientific consensus indicates that **up to 70% of Hawai'i's reefs statewide could be lost by mid-century without strong local protections, including increased herbivore abundance and biomass to control algal overgrowth.**
- **On O'ahu, the most heavily targeted aquarium species—again, largely herbivores—have been depleted by approximately 90% on average due in part to aquarium collecting** (Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020).
- Food fishers and subsistence communities are paying the price for decades of aquarium collecting.

- Data from the DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources show that, contrary to earlier assumptions, **yellow tang populations have not recovered** as biologically or historically expected following the court-ordered cessation of aquarium collecting in late 2017.

Additional benefits of HB2101 HD1 include:

- **Clear economic benefits** to Hawai'i residents. A peer-reviewed cost-benefit analysis found that **ending the aquarium trade yields net positive economic benefits**, supporting over \$440 million annually in direct and indirect reef-related tourism value.

- **Saving taxpayers money.** DLNR has estimated that administering the aquarium trade costs the State hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, excluding enforcement, while generating only minimal permit revenue. Ending the trade would eliminate these ongoing public costs.

- Supporting truly **sustainable alternatives.** The only sustainable aquarium trade is one based on aquaculture. Thanks to advances by Hawai'i researchers and businesses, including the Oceanic Institute and Biota, **popular species such as yellow tang are now captive-bred and commercially available without harming wild reef populations.**

HB2101 HD1 represents a responsible, science-based, and culturally grounded solution that aligns with public opinion, protects reef ecosystems under increasing climate stress, and fulfills the State's constitutional public-trust obligations.

Please pass HB2101 HD1 to help protect Oahu's reefs and reef wildlife!

Mahalo!

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



Ko`olau Foundation

P. O. Box 4749 / 46-005 Kawa St., #205
Kane`ohe, HI 96744

March 1, 2026

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
& Members, Committee on Finance

From: Mahealani Cypher, President

Re: H.B. 2101, HD1, Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection - Support
With Recommendations for Amendment

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation offers our support for H.B 2101, H.D.1, which prohibits commercial aquarium gathering in certain parts of the State of Hawai`i.

However, we strongly urge that you consider adding Kane`ohe Bay into the body and purpose of this bill, which would provide continue protection for the marine resources of Kane`ohe Bay.

As the previous two committees that reviewed this bill state in their standing committees report, “the capture and sale of Hawaii’s aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes is contrary to Hawaiian values that emphasize land and ocean stewardship.” The report makes further declarations that maintaining our aquataic life in the ocean ecosystems that surround us are “an essential environmental purpose” and bolsters reef resiliency against the effects of climate change and other adverse marine conditions.

Nevertheless, the amendments to the bill which reduced its impact to neighbor islands – removing O`ahu’s marine resources as open to exploitation by aquarium fish collectors – is not just troubling but also appears to contradict those findings in the standing committee report.

We are offering this testimony to you today to ask that the island waters of O`ahu be included in amendments to this bill to protect diminishing numbers of native fish from being collected from Kane`ohe Bay and O`ahu’s coastal waters.

Please amend this bill to make the aquarium collection ban statewide, or at least include Kane`ohe Bay in this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration of our mana`o.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:04:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Art Parola	Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council opposes this bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:01:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for hearing this very important bill. Please support HB2101 HD1. As an island state, we must protect our ocean and our reefs. The herbivorous fish who groom the reef are prime target for the captivity industry. Please stop the rape of our reefs. So many who are collected, die. Captivity is cruel and wasteful.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:18:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Do NOT re-start the ecologically harmful commercial aquarium industry on Hawaii Island. It does not benefit the people of Hawaii



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

March 2, 2026

Supports HB2101HD1

Aloha Chairs Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Committee Members,

My name is Antoinette Davis, Executive Director of the Activities and Attractions Association of Hawai'i (A3H). I am writing in **strong support of HB2101**, which would prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for **commercial aquarium purposes**.

Healthy, fish-filled reefs are not just a natural treasure, they are essential community infrastructure. Abundant reef fish, especially herbivores, help keep reefs resilient by grazing algae that can otherwise smother corals, particularly as climate change increases heat stress and ecological imbalance. Reefs also protect our shorelines by reducing wave energy and erosion, helping safeguard homes, roads, and nearshore ecosystems.

These reefs are also the foundation of Hawai'i's **snorkel and dive economy**. Thousands of residents are employed in ocean recreation—captains, crew, guides, instructors, and shoreside staff—whose livelihoods depend on vibrant, living reefs and thriving fish populations. Visitors do not come to Hawai'i to see depleted reefs; they come for the extraordinary experience of healthy marine life. When reefs decline, our communities feel it immediately through lost jobs, reduced visitor satisfaction, and increased pressure on already-stressed areas.

HB2101 HD1 aligns with the Legislature's findings that commercial aquarium collection is unsustainable and contrary to mālama 'āina and responsible stewardship, and it takes a clear step toward protecting reef ecosystems for future generations.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and the opportunity to testify in support of HB2101.

Toni

Toni Marie Davis
Executive Director
Activities & Attractions Association of Hawaii, Inc.
Statewide 501 (c) (6) not-for-profit Trade Association
PO Box 598, Makawao, Hawaii 96768
(808)871-7947

HB 2101

Hello Chair and Board Members,

The Biota Group is in favor of HB2101 to ban the commercial aquarium collection.

Aquaculture is a sustainable alternative to wild collection, and our company has proven that this alternative is viable to meet global demand. Over the past seven years our company has invested millions in Hawaiian research and infrastructure to aquaculture popular ornamental species within Hawaii. This allows for consistent, sustainable, well-paid jobs and careers that are future proof given ever-changing global climate and increased environmental restrictions.

A commercial aquarium collection ban would increase the confidence of companies like ours to invest further in Hawaiian ornamental aquaculture. There is a significant risk of financial loss to Hawaii's established and growing aquaculture sector than there is to gain in the commercial fisheries sector- in both monetary value and job impacts.

Aquaculture allows Hawaiian reefs to stay stocked with marine life while still allowing the iconic animals as ambassadors to educate the world about Hawaii's reefs.

We urge you to pass HB2101 to solidify Hawaii's commitment to sustainable practices, future building, and protecting the reefs.



March 1, 2026

RE: HB 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance,

Since 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce has advanced the quality of life in West Hawai'i by supporting a strong, sustainable economy on Hawai'i Island. Representing more than 460 member businesses and organizations, we serve as the leading voice for the West Hawai'i business community and advocate for policies that support long-term community stability and regional economic resilience.

We support initiatives that promote coral reef health and ocean conservation, recognizing the vital importance of biodiversity, cultural heritage, and sustainable ocean ecosystems. For decades, West Hawai'i has worked to balance environmental stewardship with responsible commercial activity.

Healthy reefs and thriving fish populations are foundational to Hawai'i Island's environment, culture, and visitor economy. Protecting marine ecosystems helps preserve the natural resources that support local livelihoods, community well-being, and long-term economic sustainability.

For these reasons, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **supports** HB 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection.

We respectfully urge the House Committee on Finance to pass this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy J. Laros". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy J. Laros, President and CEO
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce

HB 2101 Strongly Opposed To HB 2101

Dear Esteemed House Representatives,

Compiled by Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM with all sources, no misinformation here!

Please do not pass HB 2101; it would be the wrong decision. To base decisions on biased, untrue testimony opposed to the fishery would go against a long legal process!

The aquarium Fishery has undergone a full Environmental review taking over 4 years and passed. The fishery also has DLNR support, DAR scientist support, and full science review DAR presentation Rules Package submission and passage, BLNR 7-0 passage of rules package to give fishers hearings to return permits, the Supreme Court upholding permits issuance and EIS passage, Hawai'i Small Business Regulatory Review Board recent passage of BLNR rules package in hearing, and the non-passage of HB companion bills SB2996. SB 2996 did not pass in the Senate, solidifying Senate opposition to the closure of the fishery.

It has endured more scrutiny than any other DLNR permit unfairly.

HB2101 ignores the latest Supreme Court decision supporting the EIS-approved fishery opening and contravenes EIS laws and the EIS approval process.

Pro-Hawaiian-based BLNR, Board of Land and Natural Resources, passes rules to proceed with permitting laws and supports the fishery in a unanimous 7-0 vote. Every year, DAR, Department of Land and Natural Resources, testimony based on science supports the return of the aquarium fishery. Passage of this ban bill would contradict the EIS and BLNR decisions and the courts' rulings, and it would not be based on science.

Please do not send messages to other businesses stating that Hawaii is closed to businesses, even if they are eco-friendly, pass an EIS, and are sustainable.

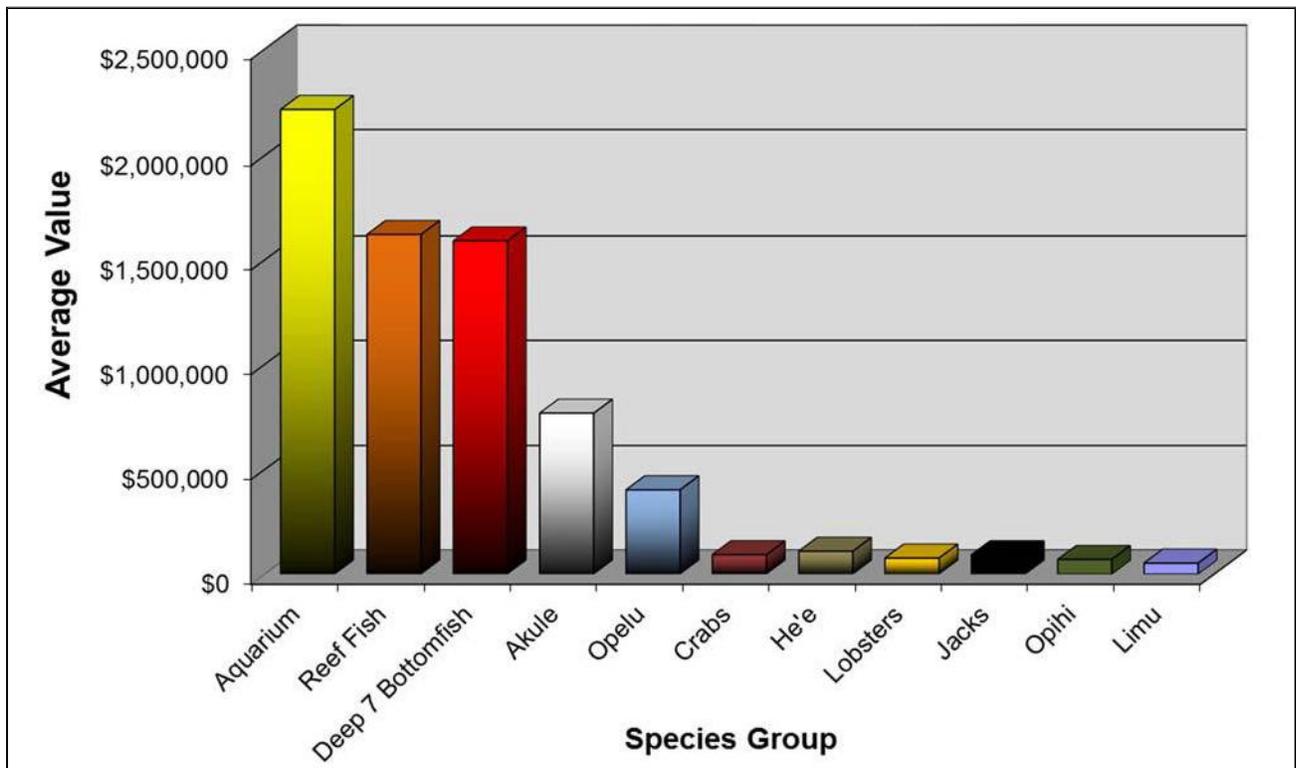
“Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Economic Value with Sustainability”

When the Hawaii Aquarium Fishery was active, up to 2017, it was the most valuable and most sustainable fishery in the State of Hawaii. 2026

Aquarium Fish are Ambassadors for Tourism

Hawaii's colorful reef fish are "**ambassadors**" for the state's marine ecosystems, exported globally to aquariums and private collectors, raising awareness and promoting tourism, science, sustainability, and fishery husbandry worldwide.

1980’S FISHERY VALUE CHART



“Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Economic Value with Sustainability”

During the fishery collections, the highest fish populations were shown. If the fishery were not sustainable, there would have been a decline.

Currently, the most historically collected aquarium fish species are also among the most abundant in the ocean!

Kole Tangs *Ctenochaetus Strigosus* , **Yellow Tangs** *Zebrasoma flavescens* are currently the third and fourth most abundant reef fish. They were also the most fished species. See the findings in the chart below.

Hawaii DC114 2020 Rpt; Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) Report; DLNR.

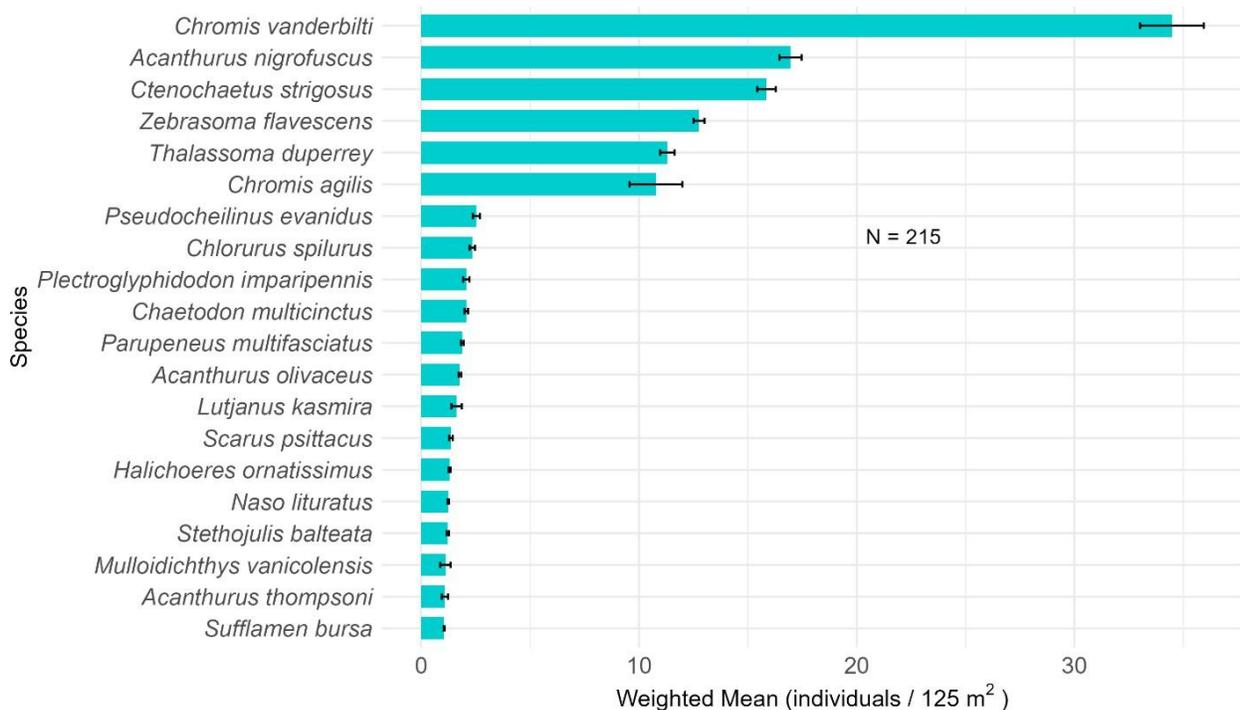


Figure 20. The 20 most abundant reef fish species recorded during 2022-2023 FAHU surveys. Mean density per transect (125 m²) weighted by stratum weights with error bars to show weighted standard error for the sample size of 215 surveys across nine strata. Scientific names were used to distinguish species with overlapping Hawaiian names. Translations can be found in Appendix table A-1.

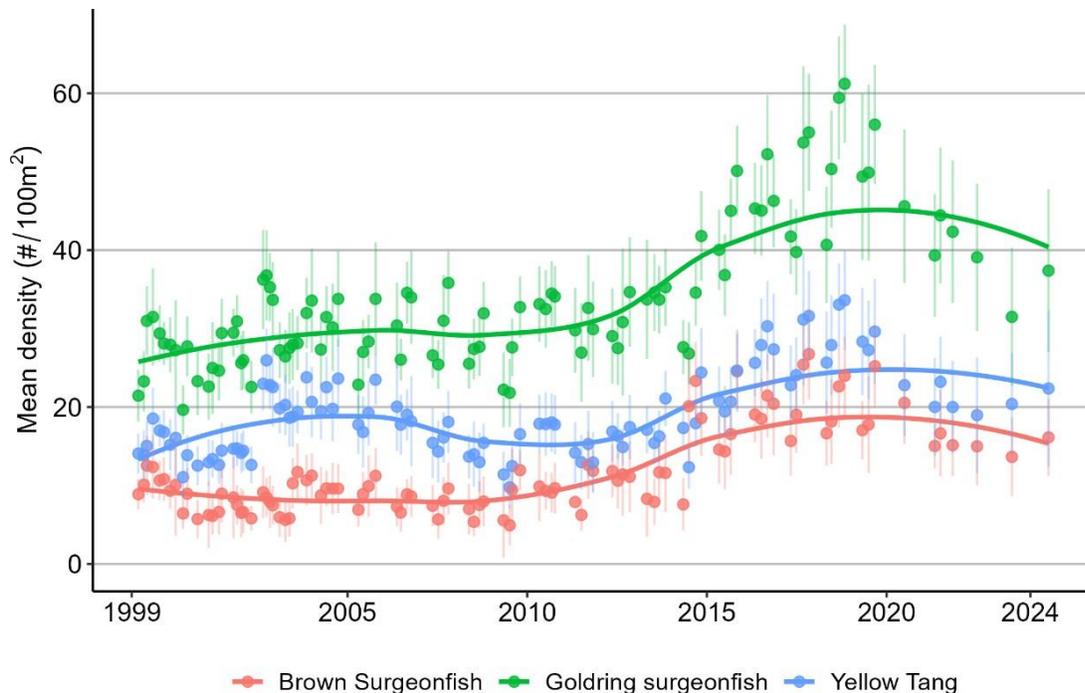


Figure 23. Mean density of select small surgeonfishes in WHAP surveys. Points represent mean density across 25 WHAP sites for each survey round per species. Error bars represent standard deviation to depict the level of variability between sites. Recruit sized individuals are removed from these data for *ma'i'i'i* (red), *kole* (green), and *lau'ipala* (blue).

The overall mean value shows an increase in populations from 1999 to 2024. Until 2017, the aquarium fishery was open, indicating no significant long-term impacts on overall fish populations.

High and low fish counts can be attributable to El Niño and La Niña years, count-month variations, and other natural non-fishery factors. Most fish, while breeding daily or a few days a month, result in larger reproductive fecundity in the hotter summer months. The summer counts before fish fry return to reefs in huge numbers. This reproductive increase during fall months is usually not attributed to the data. Counts if made during the reproductive period would be even higher.

Tourism

Dive shops and Ocean Tour Operators have benefited greatly from the aquarium fishery connection. From sharing great dive spots and sealife locations with tour operators over the years, increasing their experience. Many divers purchase used boat motors from whale and dolphin operators when purchasing new motors, thereby financially supporting these operators' businesses. We have towed tour operators into the harbor and pulled tour boats off the reef countless times.

Fishers, over the years, have avoided and have freely given some of the best fishing spots solely to tour operators, despite laws allowing them to fish there. Filling tanks multiple times a week at dive shops, buying expensive dive gear, and supporting the dive shops' operations are invaluable to tour businesses. This aquarium fishery business provides dive shops with a more stable source of income during periods of economic downturn, such as 9/11 and COVID-19. Tourism declined after the shutdown of the aquarium fishery; see the data below.

Tourists worldwide see Hawaiian fish in Public aquariums that showcase Hawaii's beauty, alluring tourists to Hawaii. These same aquaria learn and educate others about reef biology and marine biology through fishery husbandry.

Who Benefits?

The Hawaii businesses that have greatly benefited from the tropical fish industry are: boat dealers, boat repair shops, outboard motor mechanics, dive shops, fishing supply stores, aquarium pet stores, pet store wholesalers, box suppliers, bag suppliers, oxygen gas suppliers, aquarium maintenance companies like those in Hospitals and doctor offices, tourist aquariums in Hotels, Sea Life Park, Waikiki Aquarium, gas stations, computer repair, office supply, interisland cargo shippers, Fish and Wildlife inspections fees, USDA inspections fees, Department of Agriculture fees, DNLR permit fees, and many more.

All public and private aquaria, aquaculture facilities, and even fishponds in the state rely on live fish.

Natural Energy Center Kailua Kona and its numerous facilities. Sea Life Park, Waikiki Aquarium, Oceanic Institute, Nui Nui Fisheries, Aulani Disney Resort, Maui Ocean Center, UH Hilo Pacific Aquaculture and Coastal Resource Center (PACRC), Kaua'i Ocean Center, Mokupapapa Discovery Center Hilo, Doctor and Hospital, and Aquariums like Shriners for Children.

All fishponds must rely on wild-caught fish kept alive, and aquarium fishers have supplied broodstock to many fish ponds and aquaculture facilities over the years. Some fish entered the gates and then grew to adult food size; however, with current runoff and pollution, an increasing amount of wild-caught broodstock will be needed.

No one knows the fishing grounds and techniques better than aquarium fishers, who provide egg-viable, swim-bladder-intact, healthy brood stock for fish ponds. [Fishponds \(Loko I'a\)](#): Ancient Hawaiians constructed nearly 500 walled, brackish, or saltwater ponds for aquaculture, providing a steady food source. One of the 500 pond examples is the Huihua Fishpond.

Following the closure of the fishery in 2017, these businesses lost millions in income. Just one of the 15 aquarium fish wholesalers reported a gross yearly income of over 1.2 million, most of which was allocated to air cargo fees for out-of-state shipments.

Air Cargo support for the Airlines. Just one example is Hawaiian Airlines, which experienced severe financial distress, culminating in a \$1.9 billion acquisition by Alaska Air Group, finalized after the carrier suffered over \$1 billion in losses since 2019 due to the pandemic, high fuel costs, engine issues, and the Maui wildfires.

Despite being acquired, Hawaiian continued to lose approximately \$518,000 daily in 2025, posting a \$189 million loss for the year, which significantly dragged down Alaska Air Group's overall profitability.

In late 2025, monthly imports could exceed \$200 million while exports were under \$40 million, highlighting the imbalance. Significantly less cargo leaves Hawaii, and the HERO reports below stress the importance of increased sustainable renewable exports from the State and its dangerously high

dependence on imports. The aquarium fishery could help fulfill those states' needs.

We haven't even touched the surface of the impact that would be felt on the 302-billion-dollar U.S. pet industry. Many companies produce products that benefit from the collection of tropical fish. The following businesses impacted are Aquarium manufacturers, filter manufacturers, aquarium ornament manufacturers, filter, pump, UV sterilizers, protein skimmers, sand filters, pipes, plumbing, fish foods, pet stores, mainland distributors, other countries directly selling into other countries, and the US, Aquarium fish book printers and distributors, all major mainland air carriers, etc.

[Adjusted for local prices, Hawai'i's economy among worst in nation, UHERO finds | University of Hawai'i System News](#)

Adjusted for local prices, Hawai'i's economy among worst in nation, UHERO finds

<https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2024/07/02/economic-diversification-opportunities-uhero/>

[Beyond the price of paradise: Is Hawai'i being left behind? - UHERO](#)

Where can Hawai'i diversify its economy? UHERO finds areas

[UH News](#) » [Research](#) » [Where can Hawai'i diversify...](#)

Hawai'i's economy depends heavily on tourism, and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers as well as inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years.

A new report, 2024, by the [University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#) (UHERO) identifies potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy by analyzing the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawai'i.

“Based on industries already in Hawai'i, the study shows Hawai'i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as fishing, fish farming and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging.

Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism”.

Sustainability is Key to Hawaii’s future. As the most isolated island in the world, Hawaii is too dependent on tourism, the military, and other non-sustainable, [unreliable economic sources](#). [UHERO Forecast for the State of Hawai‘i: Mild recession and weak recovery in 2026 - UHERO](#)

The [value of Hawaii’s nearshore oceans](#) is worth [15.3 billion dollars](#) (low non-fishery value estimate) in highly renewable resources in 2024, with a current 50% estimated increase every 20 years, which means one of the state of Hawaii’s most valuable resources is our Ocean. *Tourism impacts are Hawaii’s biggest ocean ecological offender and the largest source of carbon emissions, and it is not sustainable, especially in regard to the 2030 zero-carbon footprint goal plans.*

Reports show global aquaculture production (including aquatic plants) in 2016 was 110.2 million tonnes, with the first sale value estimated at US \$244 billion. Three years later, in 2019 the reported output from global aquaculture operations was over 120 million tonnes valued at US \$274 billion. Managing fisheries to their safest environmental output, improving ocean marine management science, and Aquafarming should be Hawaii’s "[Blue Revolution](#)" to ensure a sustainable future. *Without decades of expertise and the ability to catch broad stock on a regular basis, aquaculture in Hawaii will not exist with aquarium fishers.*

The aquarium fishery, with its higher biomass value and sustainable, highly renewable resources, should be utilized to its fullest to aid the state's plan for a sustainable future.

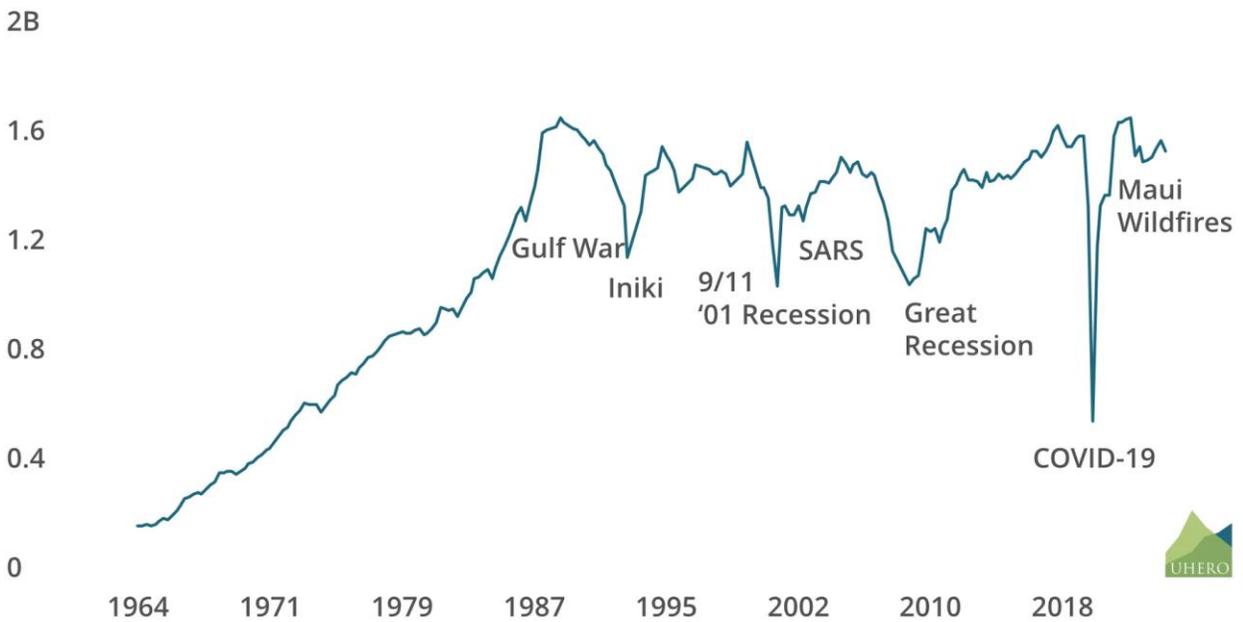
[University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization](#) report in 2024 by UHERO.

“Hawai‘i’s economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years”. The

[University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#) (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawai'i to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

Over time, these conditions fuel what scholars call the “geography of discontent” and the “revenge of the left-behind places”—communities where the mix of slow growth and fading opportunity translates into declining civic trust, sharper political polarization, and growing skepticism toward economic development itself. These dynamics often reinforce themselves. When growth stalls, public investment erodes and private confidence weakens, making it harder for regions to adapt. At the same time, frustration can fuel political reactions that undermine the very institutions needed to support recovery—further, slowing growth and amplifying the sense that opportunity lies elsewhere. In other words, without careful intervention, it could get worse. UHERO chart below.

Figure 1. Real Tourism Spending, 1964 to 2025 (constant 2024 dollars)



Tourism boomed after statehood but has plateaued since 1989, interrupted mainly by crises.

PAN Chart Below and The American Pet Products Association (APPA) Releases 2025 State of the Industry Report
<https://share.google/aAgaazPhzkhuJRgfP>

The U.S. pet industry has experienced massive, near-continuous growth from 1960 to 2025, driven by a cultural shift toward viewing pets as family members (humanization) and increased spending on premium products. Total U.S. pet industry expenditures have surged from modest levels in the 1960s to a projected **\$302 billion in 2026**.

2020–2026: The pandemic triggered a massive surge, with sales jumping from \$103.6 billion in 2020 to \$302 billion in 2026.

West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Closure 2017, Oahu Closure 2020. Both closures probably resulted in fewer tourists, but, more importantly, hundreds of well-paid, sustainable-resource-use jobs were lost, costing tens of millions of dollars to Hawai'i's economy.

Based on industries already in Hawai'i, the study shows that Hawai'i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as *fishing, fish*

farming and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.

With science supporting the sustainability of the aquarium fishery an approval of fishery permits could aid the state in its greatly needed shift to sustainable renewable resource uses.

Out of the national 277-billion-dollar pet industry, Hawaii pet owners spent 355 million dollars on pets in 2021. Providing 21.8 million state tax revenues and 27.3 million local tax revenues. Hawaii residents have 1.7 pets per household on average. Nearly 57% of Hawaii households have one pet. That is 11% of U.S. household's fish. Taping into the sustainable renewable income aquarium fishing can provide sustainable economic benefits. **Marine fish used as pets are worth per fish as much as % 400 more than those similar fish used for food purposes.** Pet fish leave breeders' sizes to make it a **"Model Fishery."** Declines in food fish near shore near human-populated areas have not been seen in reef fish used for aquarium purposes.

Hawaii Controls It's Own Future

Demographic studies have shown that in the future, many of our global, nonrenewable resources, such as oil and minerals, will be depleted as the world population increases, leaving states to rely more on their own resources.

In years to come, it will be crucial for Hawaii to rely more on its own renewable marine resources. Restricting access to marine resources without fully considering the impact of legislation on the future of Hawaii's fishermen and the State's economy would be a grave mistake.

To maintain our economy, we must utilize our renewable resources with wisdom.

<https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/databook/>

https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/economic/databook/2020-individual/_23/

Fish counts from 1999 to 2017 show an increase in fish counts according to the 2020 West Hawaii report to the Legislature, Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish within this depth range alone.

Why are declines in fish populations reported at tourism dive and snorkel sites? Are they really attributed to the aquarium fishery?

Tourism Effects on Fish Populations

[News article](#) discusses the loss of fish in tourist areas.

Ocean tourism has been linked to declines in ocean fish. [Recent studies](#) have shown that fish returned to Hanauma Bay when tourism ceased due to COVID-19. Now that tourism has returned to the bay, more research has shown that [fish are disappearing](#) again! The large groups of tourists have scared the fish out of these areas. A similar study was done on Maui

Graham, Andrew T. *The Effects of Human Presence on Fish Behavior at the Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve, Hawai'i During and Immediately Following the COVID-19 Pandemic Closure*. Diss. 2024.

Molokini also showed a decrease in fish populations due to tourism.

Weng, Kevin C., et al. "Decreased tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic positively affects reef fish in a high use marine protected area." *Plos one* 18.4 (2023): e0283683.

We found that when tourism shut down due to COVID restrictions in 2020, fish biomass increased and predatory species increased usage of shallow habitats, where tourists typically concentrate. When tourism resumed, fish

biomass and habitat use returned to pre-pandemic levels. These displacement effects change fish community composition and biomass, which could affect key processes such as spawning, foraging and resting, and have knock-on effects that compromise ecosystem function and resilience. Management of non-consumptive uses, particularly in heavily visited MPAs, should be considered to sustain these ecosystems.

The large groups of tourists have scared the fish out of these areas. Large groups of tourists snorkeling and diving significantly affect fish feeding and reproductive behavior, thereby influencing fish populations. Unlike tourists, fishermen do not frequent the same areas repeatedly in large numbers; they rotate their sites to prevent overfishing. Are tourism impacts being used to blame the aquarium fishery? Aquarium fishermen do not go to tourist areas. The 20-year fish replenishment aquarium fish counts from West Hawaii show an increase in overall fish populations; why are tourist areas experiencing fewer fish?

To address this, tourist dive sites should be rotated to maintain high fish populations.

State researchers have reported high sustainability and low environmental impacts from the fishery; no coral or algal changes have been observed in the fishery's fishing areas. In fact, coral damage was greater in tourism areas, as reported in the West Hawaii Report to the Legislature ([link above](#)).

Populations of the most targeted fishery and their value.

So on Oahu alone, 414 billion 550 million new yellow tang fry <98ft times 1% survival adult stage per year, divided by two for one male and one female pair, results in an estimated 4 billion 145 million potential new adult stage yellow tangs on Oahu reefs every year. The estimate does not account for reduced fecundity at larger sizes or for increased populations at depths greater than 98 feet. It also does not account for the much greater populations that we know exist and extend deeper than 98 feet, so these figures are very conservative.

With a conservative maximum sustainable yield of 25%, catch that would equal 1 billion 36 million sustainable catches, with a 2024 value of \$169.00 per tank-raised yellow tang. Here are some numbers for just one fish in the trade.

That would mean a potential income of \$175 billion in highly renewable, sustainably caught fish for yellow tangs on Oahu alone.

This total would be substantially higher in West Hawaii, which has a population of 5.7 million yellow tang. A sustainable catch of 1.425 million would be valued at \$240 billion for West Hawaii.

Tourism Economic Impact of Aquarium Fishery, The Data

West Hawaii Tourist Accommodations for Hawaii County declined following the closure of the fishery in 2017. See totals in red. Similar declines are noted in overall tourism income for the years following the 2017 aquarium fishery closure.

The relevance of these declines in room occupancy may not be fishery-related; **there is no statistical evidence of any decline in Tourism economic value while the fishery was open!**

Opening the aquarium fishery, however, would greatly increase the potential for GDP growth and even tourism growth.

Table 23.31-- VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS, BY COUNTY: 1985 TO 2

[Number of units]

Year	State total	City & County of Honolulu	Hawaii County	Kauai County
1985	65,919	38,600	7,511	5,656
1986	66,308	39,010	7,280	5,922
1987	65,318	38,185	7,328	5,956
1988	69,012	37,841	8,823	7,180
1989	67,734	36,467	8,161	7,398
1990	71,266	36,899	8,952	7,546
1991	72,275	36,623	9,383	7,567
1992	73,089	36,851	9,170	7,778
1993	69,502	36,604	9,140	4,631
1994	70,463	36,194	9,595	5,870
1995	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
1996	70,288	36,146	9,558	6,760
1997	71,025	35,971	9,913	6,589
1998	71,480	36,206	9,655	6,969
1999	71,157	35,861	9,815	6,872
2000	71,506	36,303	9,774	7,159
2001	72,204	36,824	9,944	7,202
2002	70,783	36,457	9,297	7,037
2003	70,579	35,541	9,478	7,257
2004	72,176	35,769	9,857	8,105
2005	72,307	33,926	10,940	8,221
2006	72,274	33,606	10,831	8,266
2007	73,220	33,588	11,061	8,692
2008	74,177	34,081	11,240	9,203
2009	75,198	34,027	11,541	9,469
2010	74,988	33,782	11,479	9,344
2011	77,731	35,001	11,113	9,872
2012	74,650	35,326	10,594	8,289
2013	73,959	35,690	10,903	8,675
2014	73,716	35,864	10,666	8,492
2015	77,138	36,058	11,085	8,582
2016	79,092	37,400	11,349	8,444
2017	80,709	38,879	11,286	8,821
2018	80,751	39,089	10,811	9,022
2019	80,554	39,240	10,505	9,036
2020	81,188	38,806	11,123	9,250

NA Not available.

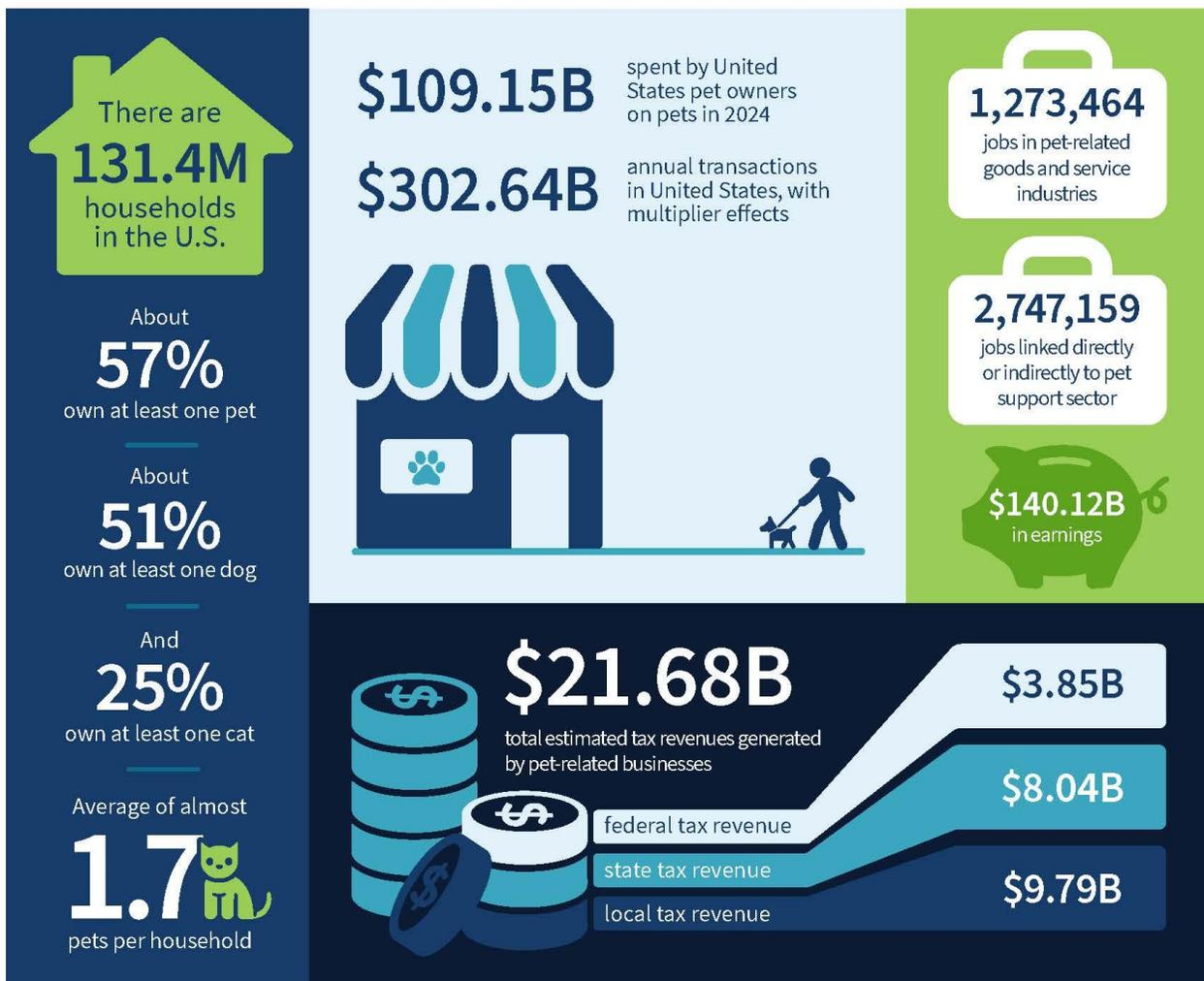
Source: Hawaii Tourism Authority, *2020 Visitor Plant Inventory*, "Table 1: Available Units by to 2020" <<https://www.hawaii-tourismauthority.org/research/visitor-plant-inventory/>> accessed Ma

Thus, the loss of the Aquarium Trade harms tourism economically.

The loss of the Hawaii Aquarium Trade and its effects on the worldwide pet trade are even deeper. Here are some economic numbers behind the benefits of the aquarium trade.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE U.S. PET SECTOR

The American pet sector that supports 2.75 million jobs nationwide. The U.S. pet sector contributes \$303 billion directly and indirectly to America's economy and \$217 billion in annual gross domestic product. The care and companionship of pets is integral to not only the emotional and physical well-being of people, but also to the strength and stability of our economy.



* Expenditures of United States pet-owning households include all related expenditures based on a survey of pet owners conducted by the American Pet Products Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association. Economic Impact Data sourced from: Knudson B, Miller S. The Economics of the US Pet Food and Pet Supply Industry. Product Center and Center for Economic Analysis, Michigan State University, March 2024. Pet ownership data sourced from: APPA National Pet Owners Survey: 2023-2024.



Sources:

An extensive, detailed environmental review is available upon request.

Source [in-text links](#) and now below:

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<https://www.westhawaii.com/2020/06/25/opinion/my-turn-we-expect-better-hawaiitropicalaquariumfish>

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ME Bushnell, [JT Claisse](#), CW Laidley - *Journal of Fish Biology*, 2010

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Two major West Hawaii studies show that the aquarium fishery has no major impact on corals or detrimental effects on algae growth compared to closed habitats without aquarium fishing. (B.Tissot, B. Walsh) Isoun, E., et al. "Multi-spectral mapping of reef bathymetry and coral cover; Kailua Bay, Hawaii." *Coral Reefs* 22 (2003): 68-82.

(Adey, Walter H. "Coral reefs: algal structured and mediated ecosystems in shallow, turbulent, alkaline waters." *Journal of Phycology* 34.3 (1998): 393-406).

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De Robertis, Alex, and Nils Olav Handegard. "Fish avoidance of research vessels and the efficacy of noise-reduced vessels: a review." *ICES Journal of Marine Science* 70.1 (2013): 34-45.

<https://www.fishbase.se/search.php>

(<https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that overall fish populations of targeted aquarium fish species increased significantly in West Hawaii over 20 years. "Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish within this depth range alone. Over time, management and habitat increases due to coral growth contribute to increased fish populations. Overall Kole abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased 118% (>5.1 million fish) during this time period with a current estimated population of almost 9.6 million fish. As with Yellow Tang, summer 2014 recruitment for Kole in many areas was very strong.

Recruitment at the Manuka survey site for example was 254% higher than on any other previous survey at the site over the last 20 years." (WHRFMA)

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Tissot, Brian N., William J. Walsh, and L. E. Hallacher. "The effectiveness of marine protected areas and the impacts of aquarium fish collecting in Hawai'i." *Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative, University of Hawaii* 1 (2002).

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[Friedlander, Alan M. \(Alan Marc\) ; Donovan, Mary K. ; Stamoulis, Kostantinos ; ...](#)
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Hoggarth, Daniel D. *Stock assessment for fishery management: A framework guide to the stock assessment tools of the fisheries management and science programme*. No. 487. Food & Agriculture Org., 2006.

DAR BLNR Presentation 2024 <https://youtu.be/djltlsvg7qs?feature=shared>

Oahu there is a much greater refuge area than West Hawaii. Sources; 2013 By [Friedlander, Alan M. \(Alan Marc\) ; Donovan, Mary K. ; Stamoulis, Kostantinos ; ...](#)
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Asher, Jacob. *A deeper look at Hawaiian coral reef fish assemblages: a comparison of survey approaches and assessments of shallow to mesophotic communities*. Diss. Curtin University, 2017.

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Regulated Fishing Areas on O'ahu

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Cultural Significance

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:14:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole LeClaire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm a Maui resident writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs are already under severe stress, enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 5:21:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Despite the current ban, studies show that fish populations have still not recovered.

If we don't act now, the damage may become irreversible.

Wouldn't you want to tell your children and families that you stood up when it mattered — that you helped save our reefs?

- Commercial aquarium collection has engendered decades of conflict over the profit-driven extraction of culturally and ecologically significant species, such as kole and other reef herbivores, from our nearshore ecosystems.
- Native Hawaiian subsistence communities, in particular, have called for the end of this extractive industry, which has impaired and disrupted subsistence fishing practices, and treats public trust marine resources as mere ornaments for off-island buyers.
- Studies show that 50% or more of targeted reef fish die during capture and transport, and most of the survivors die within the first year of captivity. In the wild, some species, like Yellow Tang, can live for decades.
- While the industry has been shut down for the better part of a decade pursuant to a court order, and despite surveys showing that the majority of Hawai'i residents support a ban, the state is now proposing rules to reopen collection in West Hawai'i.
- SB2996 would prevent the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) from claiming that state law requires them to allow commercial aquarium collection and eliminate the need to expend public resources on a costly permitting system.
- There are Native Hawaiian communities across kō Hawai'i pae 'āina waiting for DAR's support to co-manage their marine resources and address other urgent threats.
- This bill would allow DAR to focus attention where it is critically needed rather than on supporting an industry with negligible economic benefits to the state and its residents.

Mahalo,

Bob Douglas

Hilo, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:28:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

My name is Eileen McKee and I live in Kīhei, on Maui. I strongly support HB 2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs are already under stress and dying daily. Reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management of our gorgeous natural beauty that attracts tourist dollars. This ban should also be for the other islands, not just Hawai'i.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee, Kihie

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 6:47:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William K. Chang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose bill HB2101

I oppose the banning of aquarium fishing. I've read the scientific studies proving no threat to the local fish population. There have been numerous scientific studies and hours of research proving there are sustainable ways to keep the fishery open without harming the reefs, fish numbers or ecosystems. While protecting Hawai'i's marine resources is a shared priority, this bill would permanently ban a fishery that state agencies, fishery management, and Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) scientists have repeatedly concluded can be sustainable. DAR has provided sworn testimony and published multiple scientific analyses that the commercial aquarium fishery is sustainably managed. In their most recent submittal to the Small Business Review Board in October 2025, scientists and fisheries management stated all data supports re-opening of the aquarium fishery (under their rules package proposal for a new aquarium regulatory framework), and according to their extensive assessments of the fishery, the risk of the aquarium fishery causing widespread population decline is low. Scientific studies support reopening the aquarium fishery under a regulated framework, and include long-term catch data, underwater visual surveys, and biomass comparisons inside and outside closed areas. In West Hawai'i, key aquarium species remain stable or are increasing under managed conditions. This fishery is already one of the most regulated in the State. It operates under HEPA compliance, mandatory reporting, gear restrictions, area closures, species limits, limited permit issuance, and catch quotas. It is the only fishery in Hawai'i subjected to environmental review prior to permit issuance. Importantly, DLNR already has broad statutory authority to manage fisheries adaptively. If future data showed concern, the agency could act quickly and surgically through immediate administrative actions pursuant to Act 49 (2021) including closures, moratoria, and permit or catch quota limits, or through supplemental environmental review under HEPA. A permanent statutory ban overrides the regulatory tools the Legislature has already empowered DLNR to use. DLNR's purpose is to manage our natural resources. Shutting the resource down is not managing especially if the science says the resource is sustainable.

I respectfully urge you to defer or reject this bill and allow science-based adaptive management to guide fisheries regulation in Hawai'i.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony,

William Chang

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:10:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M Kim Ferris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a permanent resident of Maui County. Our coral reefs are so important to me and my 'Ohana. As a child I have very fond memories of our coral reefs being vibrant with many different species of fish -- some only found in our Hawaiian Islands! It saddens me to see our fish being removed and our sacred ocean being depleted due to excessive fishing and used for commercial purposes. I support HB2101 to protect our ocean, our fish and our coral reefs. Mālama pono 'o ke kai!

Mahalo nui loa

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:10:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tom Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is Tom Wallace in Hawai‘i Kai. I'm writing in support of HB2101.

The health of the reefs is important to me and the fish!

I snorkel several times a week and I'm very aware that there are less tropical fish in our reefs now than in years past. It is time to stop this trend. The benefit of reef tropical fish capture is to only a very small number of people. The benefit of healthy reefs is to our ecosystem, our tourism, and our ocean loving residents.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 7:12:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs are already under severe stress, enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill. Aloha

As an educator and data specialist in Hawaii public school children for 35 yrs., I am **OPPOSED HB2101** for 5 reasons:

- 1. Economic reasons. Aquarium fish are a sustainable resource which diversifies Hawaii's economy and brings in millions of dollars to our state economy which has been lost since the closure.** The fishery provides jobs for local suppliers of fish food, packing supplies, boat and engine repair men, cargo workers, trans-shippers, and the fishers. **Isn't the state short of funds? Why eliminate a sustainable resource that brings in taxes?**
- 2. Hawaii's aquarium trade is managed by DAR, as one of most highly regulated fisheries in the nation.** This bill ignores the statements of DAR, and an opinion letter from world renown oceanographers that **Hawaii's Aquarium fishery is SUSTAINABLE.**
- 3. The premise that the aquarium fishery did irreparable harm to yellow tang, years after closure – is false propoganda. Many factors affect fish counts.** Case in point is the *Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology's* finding published in *Ocean Sustainability* Aug.2025. They studied Hanauma Bay which was shut down to all for 7 months during Covid in 2020. Hanauma, which has always been off-limits to aquarium fishers, had an astounding revitalization in this short time without its' 1 million visitors/yr.! When the crowds left, the fish returned. Overcrowding is just one of many factors affecting fish counts.
- 4. Aquariums with local fish** are not "ornaments." Aquariums **teach the values of appreciating, respecting, and caring for nature. They ignite student understanding and passion about scientific concepts** like biodiversity, salinity, acidification, etc. **Aquariums are scientifically proven to reduce stress.**
- 5. HB2101 is unjust. It disregards the rights and efforts of aquarium fishers who were directed by the Hawaii Supreme Court to pursue an EIS. They complied, at great expense personally,** despite having lost 5-8 years of their primary income. It will put the state at risk of a lawsuit.

Please **VOTE NO on HB2101.**

Sincerely,

Mary Tubbs, M.Ed.,

National Education Association, Retired

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:34:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Fernley	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Please vote "NO" on HB 2101

In 2022, I lost my tropical fish business (Coral Fish Hawaii) in Aiea due to the shutdown of the aquarium fishery. Losing my business, which I put blood, sweat and tears into for over 50 years, was hard on me and especially hard on my wife and 12 employees. Over the years, we had educated hundreds of elementary school students on identification, management and conservation in our education program. Because of the shut-down, this program was also unfortunately shut down and now many of our youth's exposure to Hawaii's marine life has ceased. The exposure to Hawaii's marine life, we felt, was invaluable in a child's education.

Now that the fishery might start up again, this draconian bill would negate all of our efforts over the past few years to finally open up the fishery.

The Big Island has now completed all the state requirements to get back in the water including a completed EIS, a successful BLNR judgement and a successful Supreme Court ruling. The question why the fishery is still not open is that this sustainable fishery keeps getting thorted by many of the well funded animal rights organizations. Discrimination is the only word that describes our plight.

It must be noted that the aquarium fishery is the **ONLY** state user that has been held accountable to HEPA rules and regulations. No other user, including the many tourist related ocean activities, have been held accountable. Again, discrimination is the one word to describe our battle.

Please vote NO on SB 2101

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:42:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mouna ghossoub	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Mouna. I have lived in Kona for over 20 years. The reason I chose Hawaii was the ocean and the quality of life. Having experienced the Covid period in Hawaii, I realized the impact humans have on the reef. During that time of little human interaction with the island/ocean, the aquatic life doubled. We saw fish so close and plentiful so close to shore. It was paradise reborn. The reef was alive. Give nature a chance and it will thrive. Today I was having lunch at Magics overlooking the reef and I saw schools of yellow tangs for which Kona was named after, the golden cost. I just stared. I forgot where I was. My heart filled and my mind quieted and I realized the beauty this island has and without it, it would be a boring ocean sea side lunch experience. Without this a whole dive and snorkel and tourist industry Kona relies on, would be tremendously affected. Let's be the responsible keepers of our island. For generations to come. Thank you.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:42:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Poaipuni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons:

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas. Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lauī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang). Practitioners have observed a decline in abundance of these species over the years.

Ensuring Reef Health

Meanwhile, healthy and vibrant coral reefs generate more than **\$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue** and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security. A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection protects this economic engine and foundation of resilience, and preserves Hawai‘i’s marine resources for future generations by ensuring species that support reef health stay on the reef.

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost of this industry to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai'i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources created a quota-based permit system which essentially closes the industry to all but the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our DOCARE officers. This means that resources that could be directed elsewhere will be used to supervise a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Loriann Poaipuni

Waiehu, Maui

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:42:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lionel Ortiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai'i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons:

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas. Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lauī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang). Practitioners have observed a decline in abundance of these species over the years.

Ensuring Reef Health

Meanwhile, healthy and vibrant coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security. A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection protects this economic engine and foundation of resilience, and preserves Hawai'i's marine resources for future generations by ensuring species that support reef health stay on the reef.

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost of this industry to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai'i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources created a quota-based permit system which essentially closes the industry to all but the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our DOCARE officers. This means that resources that could be directed elsewhere will be used to supervise a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Lionel K. Ortiz

Kaneohe, Oahu

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 8:43:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai'i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons:

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas. Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau'i pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang). Practitioners have observed a decline in abundance of these species over the years.

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Meanwhile, healthy and vibrant coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security. A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection protects this economic engine and foundation of resilience, and preserves Hawai'i's marine resources for future generations by ensuring species that support reef health stay on the reef.

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For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Julia Estigoy-Kaho'onei

Pāhoa, Hawai'i

Letter in Opposition to HB2101 HD1 Geographic Limitation

February 27, 2026

To: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
House Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii State Legislature
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Strong Opposition to Geographic Limitation in HB2101 HD1 – Urging Restoration of Statewide Ban on Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is R. Kana‘iaupuni Gomes, and I am a Kumu Hula. I write to you today with deep concern regarding the amended version of HB2101 HD1, which currently limits the prohibition on commercial aquarium collection to Hawaii Island only.

While I appreciate the committees' recognition of the need to address commercial aquarium collection, I respectfully submit that limiting this ban to a single island falls short of what our marine ecosystems and Native Hawaiian communities across the pae ‘āina urgently need.

The Geographic Limitation Undermines the Bill's Purpose

HB2101 HD1 would prohibit the taking of Hawaii's marine life for sale as aquarium pets—a practice that has proven both ecologically harmful and culturally inappropriate. The bill correctly preserves collection for traditional and customary practices, scientific research and education (such as the work conducted by the Waikiki Aquarium), aquaculture and captive-breeding programs including fishponds, and personal use such as bait.

However, the amendment adopted in the recent hearing before your committees restricts the ban to Hawaii Island rather than implementing it statewide. This limitation creates an incomplete solution to a problem that affects all of our islands.

Why Commercial Aquarium Collection Must Be Banned Statewide

The impacts of commercial aquarium collection are geographically targeted and highly localized. Where extraction is concentrated, the damage to reef ecosystems and the

Native Hawaiian communities who depend on those reefs is profound. By limiting the ban to Hawaii Island, we leave the nearshore ecosystems of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, and Niihau vulnerable to the same destructive practices that have already harmed West Hawaii's waters.

Native Hawaiian communities across all islands have consistently called for an end to this industry. Cultural practitioners throughout the pae 'āina have made it clear: commercial aquarium collection conflicts with our responsibility to mālama 'āina and undermines pono fishing practices that prioritize taking only what is needed for family and community subsistence. The voices calling for protection should not be heard only when they come from Hawaii Island.

The legal reality is that commercial aquarium collection has been essentially shut down since 2017, when the Hawaii Supreme Court halted the practice under the Hawaii Environmental Policy Act. For nearly a decade, our reefs have had the opportunity to recover from the removal of hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of reef fish each year. Collectors have not legally engaged in this practice during this time, making the current status quo one of protection, not exploitation.

Yet now, the Division of Aquatic Resources is moving forward with rules to reopen West Hawaii to the seven businesses that completed the HEPA process. The proposed quota system would essentially close participation to new entrants while requiring intensive enforcement resources from the Department of Conservation and Resources Enforcement. At a time when DOCARE is already stretched thin, this is an inefficient and questionable use of limited capacity.

DAR's limited resources are desperately needed elsewhere. Native Hawaiian communities across every island are waiting for DAR's support to co-manage marine resources and address urgent threats to our ocean ecosystems—threats far more pressing than facilitating a defunct ornamental fish trade. Climate change, invasive species, pollution, and overfishing demand immediate attention and collaborative solutions.

A statewide ban would protect the nearshore resources of all islands and all Native Hawaiian communities while simultaneously enabling DAR to redirect its focus where it is most critically needed. Rather than expending time, money, and personnel on reviving an industry that has been dormant for nearly a decade, DAR could partner with communities to address the real and present dangers facing our marine environment.

The Path Forward

The protection of our marine ecosystems and the interests of Native Hawaiian communities should not depend on which island they call home. The ecological, cultural, and practical arguments for banning commercial aquarium collection apply equally to every shoreline in Hawaii.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Our reefs are not commodities to be extracted for profit. They are living ecosystems that sustain our culture, our food security, our spiritual practices, and our way of life. They deserve comprehensive protection, not piecemeal measures that leave some islands vulnerable while protecting others.

Mahalo nui for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical measure.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

R. Kana'iaupuni Gomes
Kumu Hula, Ka Pā Hula O Hakamaikalani
Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:25:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Christopher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members

As one of your constituents I would like to express my support of HB2101, a statewide ban on commercial aquarium fish collection in the state. I have personally watched the decline of our reef fish for the past 20 years. I swim the same spots and the difference is astounding and depressing. No one should be taking what belongs to everyone, especially for profit. I spent 10 years in the aquarium hobby and most of these fish can be captive-bred instead of taken from the ocean. I would be in support of a small number of fish being taken to set up captive breeding systems locally. That would provide jobs and income without taking our precious resources that belong to our children.

Ryan Christopher, Kamuela HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 9:37:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregg Gruwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I most strongly support this bill that would end aquarium fish collection in Hawai'i!

Gregg Gruwell, Kamuela

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 10:08:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fredrick Yomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons.

Commercial aquarium fishing flies in the face of Hawai‘i’s constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good, rather than private gain. The aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly die during, or within a year after, collection.

At the same time, this commercial activity has diminished the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef systems, undermined the state’s food security and climate resilience, and degraded a cornerstone of our tourism-based economy. Not surprisingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

While commercial aquarium collection has not been allowed for the better part of a decade, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. Moreover, on-reef tourism activities that are dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Given the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, such as climate change impacts, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Fredrick Yomes

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 11:08:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

I strongly support HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as in the original bill. Aquarium fishing threatens our irreplaceable reefs in order to benefit a small number of people. This is seriously at odds with native Hawaiian cultural values.

mahalo,
Cory Harden, Hilo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 11:56:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Gurewitsch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I'm writing for likely the 50th time in impassioned, unwavering support of banning aquarium fishing in any form. Do the Pono thing and pass HB2101! Please, no more temporary half-measures! I've been a full-time resident of Maui for 15 years. My wife and I moved here because we are avid snorkelers. Weather permitting, we're in the water every day. When we first moved here, Maui's near-shores waters still supported quite decent populations of fish and other wildlife. The decline since then has been heart-breaking. Species we used to see in large numbers, including Yellow Tang, have become scarce or have simply disappeared (Pennant Butterflyfish! Used to see beautiful schools--now they're just gone.) The specimens we do see are usually smaller, swimming solo, and spotted much less often. From the cultural, economic, and environmental points of view, commercial extraction for aquarium collections is totally irresponsible. If I had a dollar for every tourist who tells me they used to see a lot more fish, I'd be starting to be a rich man. If only in the interest of our tourist economy, prohibiting aquarium collecting is the right thing to do. But to me, that's the weakest argument. We owe it to the aina to preserve and protect.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:20:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs, our islands need protection!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:06:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorenn Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2101 HD1 Ban on Commercial Aquarium Collection

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 and urge the legislature to make the ban statewide, not just Hawai'i Island.

Commercial aquarium collection targets specific reefs and communities that Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners depend on. A limited ban leaves other islands unprotected.

Collectors have not legally operated since the Hawai'i Supreme Court halted the industry in 2017. Reopening it now serves a handful of businesses while stretching DOCARE enforcement resources thin and resources would be better spent helping Native Hawaiian communities co-manage their nearshore ecosystems.

This bill wisely preserves collection for traditional practices, scientific research, aquaculture, and personal use. It ends only commercial extraction for the pet trade. Please pass it with a statewide ban restored.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:42:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Schacht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Committee Members, please take a stand in support of healthy reefs and vibrant fish life by banning commercial aquarium harvesting activity. VOTE YES!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:42:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keynin kretz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 2101 opposed

HB 2101 hearing statements that are Not True.

Please listen to the science and researchers. I believe any bill permitly shutdown an industry or making rules that effectively shutdown a business should have overwhelming evidence with little to no opposing evidence. In HB2101 case I do not believe that is true. Please do not pass HB2101

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:46:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Venema	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha

I strongly support bill HB2101

I am a commercial boat captain on Maui and see the changes in the reef ecosystems. There is already stress on these reefs. Illegal catch and weak enforcement is not responsible management. Please support this bill. Thank you , Amy Venema

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:06:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Chinn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I write in strong support of HB2101 HD1, which would prohibit the commercial collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium trade and maintain the long-standing closure of West Hawai‘i and other heavily targeted areas. I respectfully urge the Committee to strengthen this measure by reinstating the original statewide ban.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Communities and Reefs

For decades, commercial aquarium harvesting has concentrated on particular coastal regions, extracting key reef species for sale in global markets. This targeted pressure has led to documented declines in fish populations in those areas. Species such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) hold not only ecological importance but also deep cultural significance. Community members and traditional practitioners have observed noticeable reductions in their abundance, underscoring the cumulative impact of commercial extraction.

Preserving Reef Ecosystems and Our Economy

Thriving coral reef systems are fundamental to Hawai‘i’s environmental and economic well-being. They contribute over \$1.2 billion each year in tourism revenue while also providing shoreline protection, sustaining fisheries, and supporting food security. Keeping reef species in their natural habitats strengthens reef resilience, supports biodiversity, and protects the natural resources that future generations depend upon.

Improving Efficiency and Reducing Enforcement Burdens

A straightforward statutory ban would provide clarity for regulators and reduce enforcement costs. The current quota-based permitting framework established by the Division of Aquatic Resources limits participation largely to a small number of existing operators and demands ongoing monitoring and oversight. This approach diverts valuable enforcement capacity from other pressing responsibilities carried out by DOCARE officers. A clear prohibition would eliminate these administrative burdens and allow state resources to be allocated more effectively.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee pass HB2101 HD1 and amend it to restore the comprehensive statewide ban as originally proposed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Allen Chinn

Hilo, Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:28:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandria Siwecki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Leave the fish in Hawaiian waters!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:54:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Landreau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oplease support a ban on commercial take of Hawaiian reef fish for commercial aquarium sales. Its an uphill battle to restore our reef and **HB2101 is crucial. This is a high priority issue.**
Mahalo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:58:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support. This is a much needed bill. Please move this measure forward.

However, this should be a statewide ban, not lone limited to the moku o keawe. Please amend the bill to make it statewide and reverse the decision of the previous committee.

lynne matusow

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:23:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vanessa Lee Miller	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons.

Commercial aquarium fishing flies in the face of Hawai‘i’s constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good, rather than private gain. The aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly die during, or within a year after, collection.

At the same time, this commercial activity has diminished the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef systems, undermined the state’s food security and climate resilience, and degraded a cornerstone of our tourism-based economy. Not surprisingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

While commercial aquarium collection has not been allowed for the better part of a decade, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. Moreover, on-reef tourism activities that are dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Given the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, such as climate change impacts, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Vanessa Lee Miller

Hilo, Hawai'i

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:54:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe Culbertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 28, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Hawai'i County and the State of Hawai'i, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB2101. My partner and I moved to this island because of its extraordinary natural beauty and unique environmental resources.

We believe Hawai'i's marine life should be protected and preserved in its natural habitat, not removed for commercial aquarium collecting and exported elsewhere. Hawai'i's reef ecosystems are limited and fragile, and continued commercial collection threatens these public resources for the sake of private profit.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support SB2101 and end commercial aquarium collecting in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Joe Culbertson
Kea'au, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:54:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanne Herbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am a resident of Oahu and I am strongly in support of permanently banning aquarium collection in our islands. The commercial practice is a relic of the "bad old days" when our 'aina was stripped for commercial purposes. This is not a pono praactice. Banning commercial aquarium collection will help keep our reefs healthy, while allowing our marine species to increase and thrive. Mahalo,

Jeanne Herbert

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:21:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Barnes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in support of HB 2101 to ban aquarium collection and to ask for amendments to remove the human population stipulations and to PLEASE reinstate the statewide ban. Our reef fish are under stress from many sources and it makes no sense to remove and sell them. None. Please protect what few we have left.

Mahalo.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:45:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Yen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101. I support that we pass the bill to Ban aquarium collection and reinstate statewide Ban from original bill. I support a permanent ban on aquarium collection.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:52:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Drout	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm a Maui resident calling in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs are already under severe stress, enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:55:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krista Cutter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm a big island resident writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. I have swum these waters for over 25 years and seen firsthand the decline in once flourishing reef species. Our reefs are already under severe stress, enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill. Thank you.



Testimony of SUPPORT
HB2101–HD1
Mar. 01. 2026

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Taha’a H. Kahele, I am a lineal descendant of Miloli’i, one of the last fishing villages on the island of Hawai’i (Moku O Keawe). I come before you all in **testimony in Strong Support of House Bill 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection** which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes—regardless of collection method—in counties with populations between 200,000 and 300,000. This measure directly protects the reefs and marine resources of Hawai’i County (our Big Island) while preserving important exemptions.

HB2101 HD1 simply codifies into permanent law the status quo that has existed since the aquarium trade was shut down by court order in 2017. For nearly a decade, Hawai’i’s nearshore waters have been free from the commercial removal of hundreds of thousands to millions of reef fish each year. These fish—especially herbivorous species like yellow tangs, kole, and others—are essential to coral reef health. They keep algae in check, protect corals from overgrowth, and support the entire marine food web that our reefs, shoreline protection, and local fisheries depend on.

It does **not** ban all collection—it stops only the commercial pet-trade harvest that treats our public trust resources as inventory for the global aquarium industry.

As a lineal descendant of Miloli’i who regularly enjoys our nearshore waters for diving, fishing, and simply being in nature, I have seen firsthand how healthy reefs benefit our community, our visitors, and our kama’āina way of life. Reopening commercial aquarium collection would once again prioritize corporate profits over reef resilience, especially in West Hawai’i where collection pressure was historically heaviest. At a time when our reefs already face coral bleaching, ocean acidification, pollution, and overfishing for food, we cannot afford to divert the Division of Aquatic Resources’ limited staff and budget toward regulating an industry that has no place in modern Hawai’i.



Testimony of SUPPORT
HB2101–HD1
Mar. 01. 2026

HB2101 HD1 frees DAR to focus on what truly matters: climate adaptation, marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, and reef restoration. It also honors the overwhelming support from the majority of Hawai'i residents and the Board of Land and Natural Resources for a permanent ban.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2101 HD1 without weakening amendments and send it forward for final passage. Our reefs, our fish, our culture, and our future generations deserve nothing less.

I would like to leave you all with this *'Olelo No'eau* that I constantly reminisce on. ***“He Ali'i Ka 'Aina He Kauwa Ke Kanaka.”*** (The land is a chief and man is its servant).

Mahalo for allowing me to present this testimony,

Me ka pomaikai a me ke aloha,

Taha'a H. Kahele

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:18:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jai Cox	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hi my name is Jai, I'm a fisherman from Ka'u and I am against this bill trying to close the fishery. I am in the water all the time and what I see is much different than what the opposition is saying. I see huge schools of yellow tang, large amounts of other fish as well. I believe in science, and the science supports this fishery.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:30:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Grutter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I am a marine biologist and I live in on the island of Hawaii.

Healthy reefs matter to me because they are a unique habitat and because they sustain us in many ways, including our health, economy, and society.

I urge you to passage of HB2101, amending it to apply statewide, if possible.

Sincerely,

Lexa

C

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:34:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee, My name is Frederick Smith. I live in Captain Cook and am a graduate student focused on marine science and policy at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I am writing in strong support of HB2101 HD1, which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000.

HB2101 HD1 is fiscally responsible and helps reduce long-term costs to the State. By preventing the commercial extraction of reef wildlife for ornamental sale in Hawai'i County, the measure supports healthier reef ecosystems, reduces future restoration expenses, and simplifies enforcement. A clear prohibition is far easier and less costly for DLNR to administer than ongoing monitoring, permitting, and compliance investigations, allowing limited staff resources to be redirected toward higher-priority conservation and public safety needs.

Many aquarium-targeted species play essential ecological roles that support reef resilience. When key populations decline, reef degradation accelerates, increasing public costs related to shoreline erosion, reduced fisheries productivity, and the need for expensive intervention projects. Preventing degradation through policy is far more economical than funding multi-million-dollar recovery efforts later.

HB2101 HD1 also upholds the State's constitutional public trust duties by leaving lawful fishing for consumption and bait unaffected and by retaining existing scientific and educational permit pathways. By ending only the commercial extraction of reef wildlife for ornamental sale, the bill protects essential reef species without burdening local subsistence or cultural practices.

HB2101 HD1 is exactly the type of fiscally prudent, enforcement-efficient policy the FIN Committee should support. It reduces future restoration costs, lowers enforcement burdens, and safeguards public trust resources for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Mahalo,
Frederick Smith

Captain Cook
Hawai'i Island

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:41:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Cox	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose the bill HB2101 of a total ban on the fishery. There have been numerous scientific studies and hours of research, proving there are sustainable ways to have well managed fisheries operating without harming the reefs, fish numbers or ecosystems. The fisherman have been cooperative and willing to follow all sustainable guidelines approved by the Division of Aquatic Resources.

The only thing this bill will harm and bring hardship to is the livelihood of permitted fishers and their families, local businesses, employees and their families, and the local economy.

Please follow the facts and the science that has been presented over and over.

Thank you,

Chelsea Cox

Kau, HI

Aloha Chair Todd and Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee.

I strongly support HB2101_HD1

The need is clear for effective and comprehensive reef protection:

Our coral reef ecosystems are challenged with ocean acidification and human caused ecological impacts. These conditions necessitate the utmost stewardship for optimum reef vitality. Reef corals and fishes are wild creatures and are a public good. The public good is not for the plundering and exploitation of the *commercial Aquarium Fish trade!*

I urge banning commercial Aquarium Fish taking in Hawaiian waters.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Neal
Waimea

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:17:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisa Plauche	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Elisa Plauche and I have lived on Maui since 1984 currently residing in Haiku. Over the years I've noticed while snorkeling that our coral reefs and the fish that rely on them have suffered a serious decline in health and number of fish. I am in total support of protecting our beautiful fish from aquarium collection. I know our tourists do too. I support passage of HB2101

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:26:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inam Rahman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

FROM: Inam Rahman, MD

Waipahu, Hawaii

RE: Testimony in Support of HB2101 HD1 – Relating to Aquarium Collection

DATE: March 2, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB2101 HD1, which prohibits the commercial collection of aquatic life for aquarium purposes in Hawaii.

Hawaii’s coral reef ecosystems are not only ecological treasures but economic pillars. Our reefs support tourism, subsistence fishing, biodiversity, and cultural identity. As an island state with limited marine resilience and high endemism, precautionary stewardship is not optional—it is essential.

Scientific consensus increasingly supports limiting extractive pressures on reef ecosystems. A prohibition on commercial aquarium collection aligns with long-term reef sustainability and protects species critical to reef health and ecological balance.

However, to ensure this bill is environmentally sound and economically responsible, I respectfully recommend the following amendments:

Recommended Strengthening Amendments

1-Transition Support for Affected Workers

Include a limited, time-bound transition program (12–24 months) to assist impacted collectors through:

- Workforce retraining grants (marine conservation, aquaculture, eco-tourism)
- Small business support for conversion to captive breeding or aquaculture
- Access to DLNR or UH Sea Grant technical assistance

This reduces abrupt economic harm while advancing sustainability.

2-Incentivize Captive Breeding & Aquaculture

Add language encouraging:

- Expansion of Hawaii-based marine aquaculture
- Permitting streamlining for captive-bred ornamental fish
- Public-private research partnerships with the University of Hawaii

This preserves local entrepreneurship while removing pressure from wild reefs.

3-Enforcement Funding Guardrail

To address fiscal concerns:

- Require DLNR to submit a cost analysis within 12 months
- Allow use of existing conservation enforcement funds where possible
- Explore modest permit fee reallocations rather than new general fund burdens

This ensures the bill does not create unintended fiscal strain.

4-Clear Scientific Review Mechanism

Include a provision requiring:

- Periodic reef health assessments (every 3–5 years)
- Transparent public reporting on reef recovery indicators

This strengthens accountability and provides measurable outcomes.

Why This Balanced Approach Matters

Protecting reefs and protecting livelihoods are not mutually exclusive goals. A structured transition toward aquaculture and conservation-based economic activity will:

- Preserve biodiversity
- Support eco-tourism

- Reduce regulatory ambiguity
- Provide long-term economic stability

Healthy reefs generate far greater long-term economic value than extractive short-term gain. Studies globally have shown that reef-based tourism yields significantly higher sustained revenue compared to ornamental fish extraction.

In conclusion, HB2101 HD1 represents prudent environmental stewardship. With the amendments above, it can become a model for balanced marine policy—protecting Hawaii’s natural heritage while supporting affected workers through thoughtful transition.

I respectfully urge passage of HB2101 HD1 with the recommended amendments.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Inam Rahman, MD

Waipahu, Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:14:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs & Members of the Finance Committee -

I am a resident of Hawaii County, the only county to be affected by this bill. My involvement with the aquarium collection trade began in 1972, when, as a student at UH Hilo, I was trained in conducting transect surveys to create population estimates of Hawaiian reef fish in anticipation of conducting a baseline study of West Hawaii reefs in the early days of aquarium fish collection, before widespread impacts from this trade. Unfortunately, that study was never funded, so no baseline was established to document the abundance of reef fish that I recall from those days. Now, however, we have a new baseline, established by surveys conducted by the DAR and the non-profit group REEF in the final years of intense collecting in West Hawaii before a court ruling paused that collection. Continuing surveys conducted by both DAR and REEF show an encouraging rebound in numbers of multiple species of reef fish, including most of our precious endemic species, in the years following the closure. There was a recovery in both species on the white list (which were legal to collect) and those not on the white list (prohibited from collection), showing that legal collection was providing cover for illegal poaching of protected species (which fetch higher prices). Throughout this period, the DLNR conducted minimal enforcement, and failed to inspect outgoing shipments. If collecting were to be allowed again, we can expect that fish populations will revert to lower levels, that DLNR will again fail to provide adequate oversight, and that the rarest fish will again become more rare. This affects my profession as a marine life photographer, because some species of native fish (which are my specialty) will again become impossible to find within safe scuba depths. Some collectors have framed this as a "user conflict" issue, but in this case not all users are equal. The marine tourism industry, marine photography industry, and ornamental aquaculture industry all leave the resource intact to perform its natural ecosystem functions and serve current and future generations. The aquarium collection industry, by contrast, removes the resource, meaning not only fewer fish to see, but fewer herbivores to keep the coral healthy, and lowered genetic diversity within the fish populations. Around Hawaii Island, we have a very narrow band of coral reef habitat before the bottom drops off quickly into deep water. There is not enough reef to support a large scale removal of fish. I strongly support HB2101 to disallow the reintroduction of an extractive industry that has been shown to have had negative consequences in the past. Mahalo for considering my mana'o.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:36:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary True	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I'm begging you to stop aquarium collecting in Hawaii. I've lived here 20 years. Long enough to see the decline of fish on our reefs. Aquaruim collecting is stealing from everyone to benefit the few. And what it does to our poor fish in unconscionable. The mortality rate during collecting and shipping is horrifying. Please take this opportunity to put a stop to it.

Thanks for your attention, Mary True, Pepe`ekeo.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:50:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Metzler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1. This bill would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale. I also request that this ban be extended statewide.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:17:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly urge support of this measure to ban aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,

Steve Holmes

former Honolulu City Councilmember

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:25:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert H Pecoraro Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's unfortunate that supporters of healthy Hawaiian reefs must keep fighting to defend the tropical fish that inhabit our waters and keep the aquatic environment in balance. You would think that it would be a no-brainer, and those charged with protecting it, would actually work toward those means. The Division of Aquatic Resources has a mission statement on the first page of their website, which reads: "The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawaii to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations." It seems to me that they are working for the benefit of a few of the people of Hawaii, to the detriment of all others. Our reefs are already suffering badly, because of climate change and sewage spills/leakages into our once pristine ecosystem. Now they want to add the pressure of removing the fish that keep the algae at bay. These herbivores give the reefs at least a fighting chance to survive. Since the tropical fish collecting ban, the populations of these fish, and other popular aquarium trade fishes have increased. We are finally seeing once rare fish, such as Longfin Anthias, Bicolor Anthias, Flame Wrasse and other fish that had all but disappeared whilst they were being collected. The fish that are collected have a high mortality rate. Those that survive end up in an aquarium, for a few to enjoy, rather than remaining on the reef, free for all to enjoy, while keeping the ecosystem in balance. Before we moved to Hawaii, we traveled here frequently to dive and enjoy a unique environment, where about 25% of the aquatic life is endemic to Hawaii. We should strive toward preserving these creatures in their natural environment, rather than allowing them to be collected, killed and/or shipped out of Hawaii. It makes no sense to allow tropical fish collection again, especially since it has been banned for six or seven years. Please consider the wishes of those who care, including Native Hawaiian groups, and do the right thing. Please put a permanent ban on tropical fish collection and help give the reefs a fighting chance to survive. Mahalo.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:25:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!!

-Kencho Gurung, Hilo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:29:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Evans	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

I am writing in **support of HB2104 HD1** for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of *appointed* members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Martha Evans anmevans@gmail.com

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:40:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Marvin Porter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB2101 HD1.

Studies show that 50% or more of targeted reef fish die during capture and transport, and most of the survivors die within the first year of captivity. In the wild, some species, like Yellow Tang, can live for decades.

Hawai'i's Constitution requires the state to conserve natural resources, protect environmental rights, and safeguard Native Hawaiian customary and traditional practices. These constitutional obligations are incompatible with the continued commercial extraction of reef species for aquarium resale.

Healthy coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security. A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection protects this economic engine and foundation of resilience and preserves Hawai'i's marine resources for future generations.

HB2101 would allow DAR to focus attention where it is critically needed rather than on supporting an industry with negligible economic benefits to the state and its residents.

Please vote for HB2101 and mahalo for your concern in this Matter,

Mary Marvin Porter

Island Eyes Video

15-1622 tenth ave., Kea'au, Hawai'i

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:34:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

My ancestors were lawai‘a (fishermen and women) and kālai wa‘a (canoe-builders) from Kapāhilua (Kona Hema) since 1777. My father was a lawai‘a from Miloli‘i and I spent many summers growing up there. The beauty of the fish and reefs near Miloli‘i were incomparable then. Many in my ‘ohana still live a life deeply connected to the land and sea and believe we should protect our ocean resources. It's my understanding that the aquarium fish collectors have caused significant reductions in the abundance of fish and their destructive fishing practices destroyed reefs all along the Kona coast. Hawaiians have a saying, “Ke ike a ka lawai‘a he na ka ‘upena.” (The knowledge of the fisherman is absorbed by the net.) Just like the ‘upena (fish net) which the Hawaiian people meticulously maintained to flourish and prosper, we need protect our coral reefs and ecosystems that support our cultural and subsistence practices. Allowing commercial aquarium fishing diminishes the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef system and flies in the face of Hawai‘i’s constitutional public trust doctrine which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good rather than private gain. In addition, the aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life, the vast majority of which die within a year after collection, for private primarily out of state profit.

E ola ke kai, e ola kākou (as the ocean thrives, so do we.) No laila, please kōkua and help protect and preserve the valuable ocean resources we have left so that our keiki and mo‘opuna will be able to fish like our kūpuna and support HB2101 too. Mahalo.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 1:38:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Rochevot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have a duty to protect the land and oceans from further human caused destruction. As a citizen of Hawaii I approve this bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:15:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Alworth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please add my name to this testimony to SUPPORT HB2101.

As a former resident of Honolulu and a long-time (40 years) visitor to Hawai'i Island, I wish to make my views known regarding the collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

This commercial trade is nothing short of resource extraction which benefits few at the expense of many. It is unsustainable and adds to stresses already affecting our unique island environment. It is short term thinking.

Healthy eco systems are what locals want to maintain.

Aquatic life in its natural habitat is *a gift to our children*. Please protect this treasure.

Mahalo nunui,

Joan Alworth

Seattle WA

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:51:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Fahy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB2101 HD1.

The reef fish are already decimated. As a diver I know the joy of seeing beautiful fish as I dive around the reefs.

However at this time in Hawaii its hard to even find clusters of fish.

Please save the fish from the hunters! Keep them for generations to come.

Pass HB2101 HD1

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:55:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lon Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha~

I am writing today to offer full support of and sincere urging for the complete ban of the aquarium gathering business here in our islands. I am a long-time resident of West Hawaii island, and avid waterman. Through the decades I have personally seen and experienced the grossly imbalanced impact this industry has had on our reef fish, from witnessing the large haul outs at Kawaihae Harbor with their collateral damage to more importantly the intense diminishing of the various populations out on our reefs. It was and is clearly an unsustainable practice that has negatively impacted the health of the waters and reef and clearly disturbed the ecological balance. Since the temporary ban went into effect around 2016, I and many others who use the waters for recreational, health and spiritual benefit have seen a slow but notable come back, even with the poachers still out there. It is FAR from back to a fully healthy, balanced state, especially with the added stressor of coral bleaching we have experienced, but the improvement is obvious and a welcome change. We desperately need to keep Hawaii's fish in our waters for the continued health and restoration of the reef, and for all those locals and tourists who enjoy and derive benefit on many levels from their presence and corresponding healthy reef; not be taken for the relatively VERY few who want to capitalize on their removal for monetary gains with little or no regard for the negative impact they generate and short-sighted damage they leave behind.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lon Wallace, PhD.

Kamuela, Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:00:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The provisions should apply statewide to protect all marine life

Hawaii Kai voter

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:22:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 1, 2026

Subject: Strong Support of HB 2101

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takehouchi and members of the Finance Committee

I am in strong support of HB 2101 to prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

This issue goes beyond resource management; it directly affects Native Hawaiian cultural values, ecosystem health, and our collective ability to prepare for accelerating threats such as ocean acidification and climate change.

In Hawaiian culture, the ocean is not a commodity—it is a living ancestor and source of sustenance, knowledge, and identity. Pono Practices such as kilo (careful observation), mālama (to care for), and kuleana (responsibility) guide how we interact with marine resources. Reef fish are not merely decorative species; they are integral members of a balanced ecosystem that feeds our people, supports subsistence practices, and maintains the health of coral reefs.

Banning aquarium fishing affirms the cultural principle that some resources are too important to remove, especially when their loss affects the entire ecosystem and future generations.

I ask you humbly to please support HB 2101.

Mahalo

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

Kalaoa, North Kona, Hawai‘i Island

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:26:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Tiare Smith, and I am a resident of Kahaluu, O‘ahu. I strongly support HB2101 HD1 to establish a ban on the commercial collection of Hawai‘i’s marine life for sale as aquarium pets. This practice has caused significant harm to our nearshore reefs and communities, and I urge the Committee to pass the bill while amending it to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted, rather than limiting it to Hawai‘i Island.

Commercial aquarium collection has disproportionately targeted specific areas, leading to localized declines in key reef species like lau‘ī pala (yellow tang) and umaumalei (clown tang), which hold cultural importance for Native Hawaiian practitioners. These removals disrupt reef ecosystems that provide essential services: food security, shoreline protection against erosion and storms, and resilience in the face of climate change impacts like bleaching.

Our vibrant coral reefs are also a cornerstone of Hawai‘i’s economy, supporting over \$1.2 billion in annual tourism revenue through on-reef activities. Exporting these living resources for private profit undermines the public trust doctrine in our state constitution, which calls for conserving natural and cultural resources for the benefit of all, not commercial gain. Most collected fish reportedly die soon after capture or during transport, making this industry unsustainable and wasteful.

The industry has been effectively halted since the 2017 Hawai‘i Supreme Court decision under HEPA, protecting reefs for nearly a decade. Yet DAR now proposes rules to reopen West Hawai‘i to a handful of existing businesses under a limited quota system. This would lock out new participants, demand heavy enforcement resources from DOCARE officers, and divert attention from more pressing needs—like supporting Native Hawaiian co-management of marine areas statewide and addressing broader threats to our nearshore resources.

Limiting the ban to Hawai‘i Island alone leaves vulnerable reefs on O‘ahu, Maui, Kaua‘i, Moloka‘i, and Lāna‘i exposed. Native Hawaiian communities across the pae ‘āina have long called for ending this extractive practice to mālama our kai and uphold aloha ‘āina. A clear statewide statutory ban would simplify enforcement, reduce costs to the state, preserve ecological and cultural integrity, and allow DAR to prioritize urgent conservation priorities where they are most needed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2101 HD1 with an amendment to restore the statewide scope of the ban.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify and for your kuleana in protecting our marine resources for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Tiare Smith

Kahaluu, O'ahu, Hawai'i

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:27:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Goodmanson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB 2101. Enough is enough. I have been in support of this measure for years, and it's about time the legislature passed what HI residents have been testifying for.

janet Goodmanson

PO Box 747

Kealakekua HI 96750

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:31:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Cadiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support banning aquarum collection on Hawaii's reefs because a healthy reef is important for a healthy beach. A healthy beach and dune is the best defense against Sea level Rise and King tides.

It is your fiduciary responsibility to preserve the "lands of Hawai'i" including the submerged lands.

Please wholeheartedly support this legislation to BAN Commercial Aquarium collection on our public trust asset - the reefs of Hawai'i.

With appreciation,

P. Cadiz, Maui Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:32:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Richardson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Patricia Richardson. I live in Hilo. I urge you to continue to support the bill to ban aquarium fishing in the state of Hawaii. Our reefs face many hazards and do not need the added hazard of aquarium fishing. Our reef fish deserve to remain alive on the reef where each species has a role to play. Banning commercial aquarium fishing will protect the diversity necessary for a healthy reef environment.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 3:50:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
anita wintnet	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support stopping commercial aquarium fish collecting for good. We have been through this for so many years and collecting needs to stop now. We all know there is poaching and reef destruction still happening. The reef fish belong on our reefs, not in a tank. Some species can be captive bred. Let collectors do that instead of raping th reef. All the fish have a perpose to keep the reefs clean and healthy. It is obvious the majority of Hawaiian residents want this practice stopped now, for good. Listen to the majority. Mahalo 😊

Candace Karvas

I oppose the Aquarium fishing ban HB2101. Aquarium fishing businesses gives jobs to people. Aquarium fishing is not bad for the ocean, so it should not be banned.

Scott Ramirez

I fully oppose HB2101 which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes regardless of the method.

Dustin Amaral

I respectfully request that you vote no on HB2101. I don't support banning aquarium fishing. The aquarium trade creates jobs in Hawaii. The Aquarium fishery has completed an EIS that shows that it doesn't harm the environment. A ban could eventually extend to all fishing, so I oppose HB2101.

Patrick Amaral

I oppose HB2101. Catching and selling fish for aquariums should be permitted. I do not support bans on fishing, as restricting aquarium fishing could set a precedent that leads to bans on food fishing as well.

Kaylee Amaral

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB2101. The collection and sale of aquarium fish should be allowed. I worry that banning this could pave the way for broader fishing restrictions, including for food.

Lisa Amaral

I testify to oppose HB2101 since aquarium fishing provides jobs to local people. It's important to support businesses so residents can make a living in Hawaii.

Chris Amaral

I oppose HB2101. I don't support an aquarium fishing ban. Aquarium fishing provides jobs and income for people. I support employment opportunities and local businesses in Hawaii. I ask you to oppose HB2101.

Jameson Powers

I testify in opposition to HB2101, I prefer rule-based management of the aquarium industry over an outright ban. Please vote no to HB2101.

Cory Shiraishi

I oppose HB2101. I don't support banning aquarium fishing. The aquarium fishery has an EIS that says there is no harm to the fish population.

George Karvas

I oppose HB2101 because it bans aquarium fishing rather than regulate the fishermen as the DAR plans to do. Effective environmental management comes from policies that encourage responsibility, not complete bans that restrict lawful behavior. Please vote no.

James Venable

I kindly ask you to look at options like fair regulations and public education and oppose this aquarium fishing ban. This would be a more effective approach to finding solutions to managing Hawaii's natural resources. Please vote no for HB2101.

Cecliy Okumoto

Chair and Members of the Committee of the Hawaii State Legislature, thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong opposition to HB2101. As a resident of Hawaii, I believe this measure moves our state in the wrong direction by expanding government bans rather than finding balanced solutions. I do not support banning aquarium fishing as a policy approach. Bans can create unintended consequences, including inequitable enforcement and strain on public resources. I respectfully urge you to reject HB2101 and pursue alternatives focused on education, responsible regulation, and community engagement. Please vote no on HB2101.

Lisa Amaral

I am writing in opposition to HB2101. While I understand the intent behind the bill, banning activities outright is not the most effective way to manage. Bans can disproportionately impact working families and small businesses while failing to address underlying concerns of pollution. When government overreaches, communities often experience confusion and compliance challenges. I respectfully ask you to oppose HB2101.

Chasen Komoto

Please accept this testimony in strong opposition to HB2101. I do not support an aquarium fishing ban. Public policy should be based on evidence and scientific research. Broad bans often lack flexibility and fail to consider responsible individuals who are not harming the the ocean's reef. Good governance requires careful consideration and not blanket restrictions. I ask the committee to stop this measure. Vote no on HB2101.

Clare Okumoto

I oppose HB2101 because it seeks to ban aquarium fishing instead of using thoughtful regulations. I do not support bans as an effective solution for environmental management. Hawaii will benefit when policies encourage responsibility and informed decision-making. Outright bans can erode public trust and foster resentment, especially when it restricts lawful behavior. I respectfully ask that you oppose HB2101.

Kevin Karvas

I strongly believe aquarium fishing bans are not the answer. Careful regulation and education would be more effective for managing our environmental resources. I urge you to vote no for HB2101. I oppose HB2101.

Heather Amaral

I am testifying in opposition to HB2101. I'd rather have the Aquarium industry managed by rules rather than an outright ban. I respectfully request that you vote no on HB2101.

Stacey Nakamoto

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony opposing HB2101. I support managing the aquarium industry with sensible regulations instead of a total ban. Please oppose HB2101.

Nick Ramirez

I respectfully requesting that you oppose and vote down HB2101 on Monday, March 2. I oppose HB2101.

Please don't ban commercial aquarium fishing in Hawaii. Allow the DAR to manage the fishery as it has done for decades. The EIS has shown that Hawaii's aquarium fishery with rules from DAR is and was sustainable and low impact to Hawaii. Please ask DAR to explain more about this and allow the EIS and rule making process to be completed. I'm an aquarium fisherman and food fisherman that was born in Hawaii. I, as well as my family and friends oppose HB2101. Today we live in a State where most of the houses are purchased by mainland people who can afford to pay 10x more than kamaaina; which has created the problem of higher rates of poverty, homelessness, lower education, lack of economic opportunity to make money, lower community and government involvement in the local people. Please don't allow wealthy mainland people who claim to be activists make rules and laws to oppress and harm Hawaii's local people, businesses, and government.

Carla Venable

I oppose HB2101. HB2101 is a bill that is neither fair or practical. Public trust is strengthened when laws are proportionate and clearly justified. I respectfully ask the committee to reject HB2101 and vote no.

Angelina Galiza

My testimony is in opposition to HB2101. Limiting lawful behavior can hinder innovation and the economy. I ask you to oppose HB2101 and consider more thoughtful policy options.

I am writing in Support of HB2101, HD1 **Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection.**

As amended in HB2101, HD1, this bill prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000, meaning it only applies in Hawai'i County. Protecting our beautiful reef fish on Hawai'i Island from risking starvation and death when shipped out of state is a worthy goal I support this bill although hope that its provisions will be extended to apply statewide.

Signed,

Judith Aikawa,MD

37 Apali Way

Kula, HI 96790

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:15:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Long	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai'i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons.

Commercial aquarium fishing flies in the face of Hawai'i's constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good, rather than private gain. The aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly die during, or within a year after, collection.

At the same time, this commercial activity has diminished the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef systems, undermined the state's food security and climate resilience, and degraded a cornerstone of our tourism-based economy. Not surprisingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

While commercial aquarium collection has not been allowed for the better part of a decade, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai'i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. Moreover, on-reef tourism activities that are dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Given the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, such as climate change impacts, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo,

James Long

Naalehu, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:35:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101 HD1. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live Sunset Beach, Oahu.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:41:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William L Kapaku Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairman Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and members

I support HB2101 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection prohibiting the harvesting of aquatic life for commercial purposes regardless of the method of collection. Our natural resources must be preserved for future generations and under no circumstance should it be sold to the highest bidder.

Sincerely

William Kapaku Jr

DHHL Wait List

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:47:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

- Commercial aquarium collection is geographically targeted and has highly localized impacts on reefs and communities where extraction is focused. Limiting the ban to Hawai‘i Island leaves the nearshore ecosystems of other islands vulnerable.
- Communities—and particularly Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners—have called for an end to the industry to protect nearshore ecosystems.
- In 2017, the Hawai‘i Supreme Court halted collection under the Hawai‘i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA), meaning that collectors have not legally engaged in the practice for nearly a decade.
- Now the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is proposing rules to reopen West Hawai‘i to the seven businesses who completed the HEPA process.
- Under the quota system established by DAR to support this proposal, collection is essentially closed to new participants and will require intensive DOCARE resources to enforce and police.
- There are Native Hawaiian communities across the pae ‘āina waiting for DAR’s support to co-manage their marine resources and address other urgent threats.
- Banning aquarium collection statewide not only protects the nearshore resources of all islands and Native Hawaiian communities but also enables DAR to focus its attention where it is critically needed.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:00:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Koch	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Strongly OPPOSE HB2101

Aloha Chair Todd and Representatives,

I am reaching out today to respectfully request that you vote down HB2101. This bill would effectively kill the aquarium fishery and all associated businesses throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The aquarium fishery on Hawai'i Island has been very well managed for nearly 30 years. It is the most rigorously managed fishery in the state. Its impacts have been thoroughly studied, disclosed through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and supported by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). Fishermen catch these fish and deliver them to land-based businesses that hold and care for them. These businesses provide good-paying jobs to many local community members. The fish are then shipped inter-island to O'ahu, where larger wholesalers consolidate yellow tang and other select species from the Big Island, add fish caught in local waters, and import other varieties from islands throughout Micronesia. Essentially, O'ahu serves as a consolidation hub. Banning the fishery on Hawai'i Island would destroy these interconnected businesses. O'ahu businesses cannot operate without Hawai'i Island, and vice versa. Communities in the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and other Pacific island nations would also be severely impacted, as we are all part of one interconnected network that trades island to island. If this bill passes, it will set off a chain reaction that will cripple so many people here in Hawai'i and even beyond. Local families and businesses across Hawai'i rely on this fishery for their primary income and livelihoods. The main reason Rep. Lowen included a regional provision—targeting the Big Island and West Hawai'i fishery—is that fishermen in West Hawai'i successfully completed the HEPA requirements following the activist lawsuit against DLNR. Activists now seek to prevent the fishery from reopening, even though we complied with every one of their demands. These activists are on record—at the BLNR, the Legislature, circuit court, and Supreme Court—stating that if fishermen complied with the review and disclosed the facts, that was all they ever wanted. They repeatedly insisted this was not about a ban to secure the court ruling for HEPA compliance. You can review the original court order and statements from Earthjustice lawyers before the justices—in particular, arguments made by Earthjustice lawyer Summer Kupau-Odo. They made these same assurances everywhere, all on the public record. Unfortunately, that was not true. After securing the court ruling, the fishermen (as "applicants") completed the EIS process. Our businesses and the fishery were closed in the meantime. We lost everything. Yet DLNR, the courts, and others assured us that completing HEPA would resolve the matter. Fishermen statewide dug deep—using savings, taking out mortgages, etc.—to fund this expensive process. The activists fought us at every step,

successfully getting our first EIS (for both islands) rejected. The West Hawai'i hui prepared a second one, which the BLNR approved. O'ahu is currently preparing its second EIS. The approved West Hawai'i Revised Final EIS (RFEIS) was then challenged again by the same activists (represented by Earthjustice), including Miloli'i Kaupikos, Mike Nakachi (Moana Ohana), Rene Umberger, the Center for Biological Diversity, and other NGOs. They took it all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled decisively in favor of the small group of fishermen. All of this fighting they caused was by design to obstruct and slow the process. They then tell decision-makers this has taken years and it's a dead issue. Not for us! Frustrated, the activists returned to the BLNR (now with new members and a new chair who were less familiar with the history) and demanded a ban. The BLNR ultimately stated it could not impose a ban but could manage the fishery. Two months ago, the BLNR unanimously approved a Chapter 91 rulemaking process, establishing specific rules statewide and for West Hawai'i. O'ahu's rules will be decided later, after its revised EIS is completed and—if approved—by the BLNR. In that process, the activists even requested the removal of any fish deemed "culturally important." Three species were removed from the whitelist of approved species, leaving only five. All commonly considered "kau kau" or "cultural" fish were restricted, even though scientific data shows they are abundant and increasing. Everyone else can take these fish with little to no restrictions—even for commercial purposes. I really don't like to speak on cultural practices out of respect, but in this circumstance, this bill forces me into somewhat of a self-defense situation where an OHA bill is asking to ban my way of life based on faulty logic and baseless claims. I would like to quote the former Chair of DLNR and former director of DHHL, William Aila—a man I have deep respect for. He gave testimony on this topic of aquarium fishing and its effect on cultural practices that is useful in this discussion. You can view his full relevant testimony in the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) meeting on April 12, 2024, here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/GeBFcLpUrxE?feature=shared&t=11190> (starts at approximately 3:06:30). He said the following: "Regarding the cultural aspects and impacts of aquarium fishing, there's a difference between a philosophical disagreement on what is a cultural practice and what is a practical impact on cultural practice. So, a practical impact on a cultural practice is that species is no longer available to me for Makana, for Ho'okupu...for basically these two things because that's what's involved in cultural practices. Uhm...having done a lot of cultural practices & being in charge of cultural practices...uh, as long as the species is available to me, the cultural practices are not negated...Right? Even though I may have to go to the next ahupua'a because somebody did a MLCD in my ahupua'a. Also the department has the ability to issue special use permits to collect in closed areas so that these species will always be available to cultural practitioners."— Bill Aila

Testimony to the BLNR, April 12, 2024. Many of the activists behind this bill won't tell you they have their own areas that have been kapu to aquarium fishing for decades! They won't tell you they were just at the Land Board two months ago asking for certain fish to be removed. They seem to forget to mention all this. Here we are today facing a full ban with HB2101, which glosses over all the process that has taken place—and is still ongoing. It lacks support from an EIS, DAR or NOAA scientists, or any hard evidence. It ignores how the fishery and businesses support local families, kama'aina, and Kanaka Maoli. The worst part is that they seek a ban without considering the enormous costs we have already paid—in health, finances, and well-being—after fulfilling every requirement through a multiyear nightmare that they requested. This has never been a cultural issue. The fishery has existed as long as any commercial fishery in Hawai'i—well before statehood. We understand decision-makers face a difficult position,

weighing two opposing groups. This is precisely why science and agency input must guide decisions. If the resource is healthy, fish populations are reproducing well, and there is enough for all needs, that is how resources should be managed. Populations, reef health, and long-term trends can all be measured—even within traditional systems. When you examine the data, West Hawai'i and the Big Island are in excellent shape. We humbly ask you: Please do not ban our way of life. Please do not cut us off after everything we have endured. Thank you so much for your time and consideration. It truly means a lot.

Mahalo nui loa,

Eric Koch

Ka'ū Hawai'i

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:02:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul S. Williams	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB2101. I stand with the scientific community in supporting diversity in our Island fisheries, we have in good faith met all conditions, including an environmentle impact statement! Our opposition continues repeating misinformation, disregarding any reason from our own most respected institutions, IE Bishop Museum, and our University system!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:05:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Preble	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jeff Preble and I am strongly opposed to HB 2101. The opponents of aquarium fishing repeat misinformation such as high mortality rates that simply isn't true. I collected fish for more than forty years and saw less than 2% mortality at my own and other facilities. The industry has done the EIS that was demanded and the process is moving forward under the rules we have with scientific facts. This bill at this time is deeply frustrating, especially since aquarium fishing already is banned and our state has so many other real environmental and economic problems

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:22:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nick Foti	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Nick Foti, and I am a multi generational Hawaii resident, ocean lover, former aquarium diver, and small business owner with deep ties to this community. I submit this testimony to OPPOSE HB2101 and instead support the reopening Hawaii's waters to regulated commercial aquarium collection. I have personally witnessed this industry operate as a responsible, sustainable fishery — one that provided meaningful livelihoods for local families while contributing to Hawaii's broader marine economy.

The proposed rules under DLNR and DAR represent years of rigorous scientific review, and the state's own independent risk assessment concluded that the proposed take limits pose low risk to fish populations and reef ecosystems. West Hawaii's aquarium fishery, and Oahus for that matter, if reopened under these rules, would be the most intensively managed fishery in state waters. After nearly a decade of legal delays, these skilled local fishers deserve the opportunity to return to work.

I am also deeply concerned about the precedent that a full closure sets for Hawaii's broader fishing community. When outside organizations successfully leverage litigation to shut down a scientifically managed, state-regulated fishery, they establish a blueprint to do the same to other fisheries across our islands — from nearshore commercial fishing to recreational harvest. If we allow the standard to become "closure until perfect," no fishery in Hawaii is safe from the same treatment. That is not a path toward healthier oceans; it is a path toward the erosion of Hawaii's fishing heritage and the livelihoods that depend on it.

Outright bans are not conservation — proper management is. Science-based quotas, species whitelists, permit caps, and mandatory reporting are the tools that protect reefs while keeping working fishers on the water. These are the very mechanisms embedded in the proposed rules. Every ocean user — snorkelers, divers, subsistence fishers, and commercial operators alike — benefits when fisheries are actively managed with transparency and accountability rather than simply shut down. Complete shut down could cause a "black market", while instead the legal fishers would then become the most vigilant observers within their industry.

Perhaps most importantly, we must consider what is being lost beyond the economic toll. Hawaii's youth are losing access to generational ocean knowledge — fishing practices, species identification, reef stewardship, and a deep relationship with the sea — that has been traditionally passed down through families for generations. When industries and

fisheries are closed, that knowledge disappears with them. This is not knowledge that can be recovered from a textbook or restored by a future court ruling. Once lost, it is lost forever. Protecting regulated fisheries is not just about today's catch — it is about preserving Hawaii's living connection to the ocean for the children and grandchildren who will inherit these waters.

I urge the Board to finalize these rules and restore a regulated, science-based aquarium fishery that reflects Hawaii's commitment to both environmental stewardship and the economic wellbeing of our local communities.

Thank you,

Nick Foti

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:03:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:17:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maureen Garry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I urge you to support HB2101 to ban commercial collection of aquarium fish.

Our reefs are not healthy, and need protection to rebuild. Allowing commercial collection neglects our responsibility for this natural resource.

Sincerely,

Maureen Garry

Waikoloa



Testimony of SUPPORT
HB2101–HD1
Mar. 01. 2026

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Sara Kahele. I am the wife of a lineal descendant of Miloli'i, one of the last fishing villages on the island of Hawai'i (Moku O Keawe). I come before you all in **testimony in Strong Support of House Bill 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection** which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes—regardless of collection method—in counties with populations between 200,000 and 300,000. This measure directly protects the reefs and marine resources of Hawai'i County (our Big Island) while preserving important exemptions.

HB2101 HD1 simply codifies into permanent law the status quo that has existed since the aquarium trade was shut down by court order in 2017. For nearly a decade, Hawai'i's nearshore waters have been free from the commercial removal of hundreds of thousands to millions of reef fish each year. These fish—especially herbivorous species like yellow tangs, kole, and others—are essential to coral reef health. They keep algae in check, protect corals from overgrowth, and support the entire marine food web that our reefs, shoreline protection, and local fisheries depend on.

It does **not** ban all collection—it stops only the commercial pet-trade harvest that treats our public trust resources as inventory for the global aquarium industry.

As a mana wahine and waterwoman who regularly enjoys our nearshore waters for diving, fishing, and simply being in nature, I have seen firsthand how healthy reefs benefit our community, our visitors, and our kama'āina way of life. Reopening commercial aquarium collection would once again prioritize corporate profits over reef resilience, especially in West Hawai'i where collection pressure was historically heaviest. At a time when our reefs already face coral bleaching, ocean acidification, pollution, and overfishing for food, we cannot afford to divert the Division of Aquatic Resources' limited staff and budget toward regulating an industry that has no place in modern Hawai'i.



Testimony of SUPPORT
HB2101–HD1
Mar. 01. 2026

HB2101 HD1 frees DAR to focus on what truly matters: climate adaptation, marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, and reef restoration. It also honors the overwhelming support from the majority of Hawai‘i residents to call for a permanent ban on the industry.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2101 HD1 without weakening amendments and send it forward for final passage. Our reefs, our fish, our culture, and our future generations deserve nothing less.

I would like to leave you all with this ‘*Olelo No’eau* that I constantly reminisce on. **“*He Ali‘i Ka ‘Aina He Kauwa Ke Kanaka.*”** (The land is a chief and man is its servant).

Mahalo for allowing me to present this testimony,

Me ka pomaikai a me ke aloha,

Sara Kahele

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:48:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noreen M Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

I support this sustainable fishery. Please do not ban AQ fishing.

Finance Committee,

I fully support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. Decades of research show Hawaii's aquarium fishery is sustainable and carefully managed, supporting healthy reef ecosystems. Reopening it would restore livelihoods of locals and community businesses that have been impacted by the ongoing closure of the fishery.

Thank you,
Eleni Laskaris

Finance Committee,

The aquarium fishery should be reopened because it has been through the HEPA process and is proven to be sustainable and well managed, which is what we all want to see in all fisheries. This fishery should not be excluded or banned from operating any longer and I support issuing permits as soon as possible.

Jake Pene

Finance Committee,

I'm supporting the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and feel strongly that it should be reopened. It has been and will be well managed so fish populations will continue to grow. It's the only fishery to complete HEPA and should be an open and active fishery in Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Angelina Louis

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery because it's the only fishery in Hawaii to complete the HEPA process. Science based management of the fishery includes catch limits, permit limits, and restrictions on the types of fish that can be caught. This a model fishery that the State should be proud of.

Mahalo,
Monica Romero

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in west Hawaii. A well regulated fishery supports local livelihoods while providing incentives for stewardship, compliance, and continuous improvement in sustainable practices.

Thank you,
Natalie James

Finance Committee Members:

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery again. The new management plan creates a clear, science backed framework for well-regulated activity with defined rules, catch limits, monitoring and oversight. This ensures protection of reef resources as well as local livelihoods.

Melvin Bustamante

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening Hawaii's aquarium fishery because long-term scientific studies demonstrate that well-regulated fishing has minimal impact on reef fish abundance and can coexist with healthy, resilient ecosystems.

Margot Tigas

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in Hawaii because it is a well-managed, highly regulated fishery that has repeatedly demonstrated minimal environmental impact through decades of scientific monitoring. It also has a positive impact on the local economy as well as promotes responsible stewardship of Hawaii's reef resources.

Mahalo,
Bryant Bacalso

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in Hawaii because it is a well-managed, highly regulated industry that has repeatedly demonstrated minimal environmental impact through decades of scientific monitoring. It also has a positive impact on the local economy as well as promotes responsible stewardship of Hawaii's reef resources.

Thank you very much.
Marilyn Ozaki

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in west Hawaii. A well-regulated fishery supports local livelihoods while providing incentives for stewardship, compliance, and continuous improvement in sustainable practices.

Thank you,
Michael Mkroyan

Finance Committee,

Please issue permits and reopen the aquarium fishery in west Hawaii. A well regulated fishery supports local livelihoods while providing incentives for stewardship, compliance, and continuous improvement in sustainable practices.

*Mahalo,
Angela Rotondi*

Finance Committee Members,

I am supporting the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery because it has been through HEPA as it was required to and because it has been proven through years of research and studies to be a viable and sustainable fishery.

Thank you very much,
Beverly Howard

Aloha Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery again. The new management plan creates a clear, science backed framework for well-regulated activity with defined rules, catch limits, monitoring and oversight. This ensures protection of reef resources as well as local livelihoods.

Thank you,
Pietra Waters

FINANCE COMMITTEE,

I SUPPORT REOPENING THE WEST HAWAII AQUARIUM FISHERY. THERE ARE LIMITED PERMITS AND LIMITED ALLOWABLE FISH TO CATCH. THE FISHERY HAS BEEN WELL MANAGED AND IS SUSTAINABLE ACCORDING TO THE SCIENTIFIC STUDIES THAT HAVE BEEN DONE. THIS FISHERY SHOULD NOT BE BANNED FOR REASONS NOT SUBSTANTIATED BY SCIENCE.

**MAHALO,
SKYLAR HUAN**

Finance Committee Members:

I support sustainable fisheries and encourage thorough review of all fisheries to ensure they are properly managed to safeguard future fish stocks. The aquarium fishery has been well-established as sustainable through good management and years of scientific studies that back it up. The fishery has been through the HEPA review and should be reopened without further delay. This is a great example for other fisheries in the state and I support issuing permits for the few who will be able to fish West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Lindsey Keil

Finance Committee–

I support issuing permits and re-opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery. It's proven sustainable and has years of data showing increasing aquarium fish populations which demonstrate how well proper management works.

Ed Nease

Finance Committee,

I respectfully encourage you to support the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery so permits can be issued once again. I support the fishery because it has been through HEPA and has good management behind it.

Mahalo,
Katherina Blair

Finance Committee Members,

I strongly support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. The aquarium fishery is now the only fishery to have completed the HEPA review and has the scientific data to prove its sustainability. It remains the most studied and well managed fishery in Hawaii, with two decades of scientific data showing increasing population trends for aquarium species. We need to support sustainable fisheries.

Thank you,
Luci Price

Finance Committee Members,

The aquarium fishery has been heavily managed over the years ensuring sustainability. I support issuing permits and reopening the fishery.

Kimo Aikawa

Finance Committee Members,

As the aquarium fishery has successfully been through the environmental review process, I strongly support issuing permits and re-opening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing. This is a well managed, robust fishery that is sustainable.

Mahalo,
Kory Giron

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and encourage you to vote in favor of issuing permits. The aquarium fishery is the only fishery in Hawaii to have completed the HEPA process and West Hawaii should be open for fishing again.

Thank you,
Adrien Madison

Finance Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. I support fisheries managed by science and DAR has done a good job of this with the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Bria Samson

Finance Committee,

I'm in support of re-opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. Please consider the science that backs this fishery and proves it is sustainable.

Mahalo,
Brian Lee

Finance Committee Members:

The aquarium fishery is the most heavily managed nearshore fishery in the State of Hawaii. Because of this, I SUPPORT issuing permits and reopening this fishery.

Thank you,
Gabriel Norris

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits. All fisheries need good management and DAR's scientific studies clearly show that management of this fishery has been highly effective. It's sustainable and the data showing increasing aquarium fish populations demonstrate how well proper management works.

Thank you,
Jaye Tiongco

Finance Committee Members,

I'm testifying in support of reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. I believe all the data and the entire process that this fishery has gone through upholds that it is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Vilma Diaz

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. It has passed HEPA and it's always been well managed by science with growing fish populations as proof.

Thank you!
Leslie Fermin

Finance Committee Members-

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Resources should be managed by science and this fishery has been a model of good management based on many years of studies and scientific data.

Thank you,
Mitzi Bue

Finance Committee,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits and believe this fishery has been proven sustainable. It should be allowed to operate like any other fishery in Hawaii.

Leanna Gonzalves

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery as it has years of scientific data that demonstrate the health and vitality of the fishery, which goes to show how effectively the state has managed it.

Thank you,
Flora Reyme

Finance Committee,

I support reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. Doing so would restore one of the most sustainable, well-studied and scientifically managed fisheries in the state. Decades of rigorous monitoring have shown that aquarium fish populations in the West Hawaii Fishery Management Areas remain healthy or have even increased under regulated collection. This fishery also provides valuable local livelihoods and encourages stewardship by connecting fishers directly to the health of the reefs they depend on.

Thank you,
Preston Aasen

Finance Committee,

I'm in support of reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii fishing. This fishery has been proven sustainable and with good management and far fewer permits being issued then it certainly will remain sustainable.

Mahalo,
Rob Alvare

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. This fishery has been through HEPA and has decades of studies and scientific data that support the sustainability of the fishery. It's well managed by DAR based on science.

Mahalo,
Joan Sydney

Finance Committee Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery in west Hawaii. It's the only fishery to successfully complete the environmental review and it's the only fishery to be so heavily managed which will help keep plentiful fish stocks.

Thank you,
Kathy Marnell

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in Hawaii because it is a well-managed, highly regulated fishery that has repeatedly demonstrated minimal environmental impact through decades of scientific monitoring. And it successfully completed the HEPA review. It also has a positive impact on the local economy as well as promotes responsible stewardship of Hawaii's reef resources.

Mahalo,
Drake Yoshimura

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. Aquarium fishing is recognized as a low-impact fishery because it targets small, abundant reef species using selective, non-destructive methods without damaging habitat. Scientific studies over decades have shown minimal ecosystem effects, with populations of most collected species remaining stable or increasing. Compared to other commercial fisheries, the aquarium fishery is one of the most sustainable and carefully regulated fisheries in Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Javier Ward

Finance Committee,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery because it has been through the environmental review and proven to be sustainable. Sustainable fisheries should be supported and used as examples of how to better those fisheries that are less studied and with less intensive management. DAR has done a great job with the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Phoebe Noi

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery again. The new management plan creates a clear, science backed framework for well-regulated activity with defined rules, catch limits, monitoring and oversight. This ensures protection of reef resources as well as local livelihoods.

Kelly Woods

Finance Committee Members,

The aquarium fishery on the Big Island has successfully been through the HEPA process and I wholeheartedly support issuing permits to reopen this fishery now.

Thank you very much,
Grant Owens

Finance Committee Members-

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery again. The new management plan creates a clear, science backed framework for well-regulated activity with defined rules, catch limits, monitoring and oversight. This ensures protection of reef resources as well as local livelihoods.

Thank you,
Voni McNabb

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. HEPA has been cleared, a strong management plan is in place, and catch limits are in place. Not many fisheries can say this. It's time to reopen.

Thank you.

Alana Bishop

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits. Reopening the West Hawai'i aquarium fishery would restore a well-managed, low impact fishery grounded in decades of scientific study. Long term monitoring has shown that fish populations within the West Hawai'i Fishery Management Areas remain stable or have grown under regulated fishing. Aquarium fishing is selective and does not remove biomass, making it one of the most sustainable forms of marine resource use. The fishery also supports local families and fosters a culture of stewardship, as fishers have a vested interest in maintaining healthy reef ecosystems.

*Mahalo,
Mae Mitchel*

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits to allow fishing in west Hawaii waters. All cumulative scientific data supports that this is a sustainable fishery that should be open and not banned.

Thank you,
Steven Balik

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening Hawaii's aquarium fishery. The fishery has strong science-based management and reopening it would help support local livelihoods and reef stewardship. When properly regulated, the fishery has been shown to operate sustainably while providing economic opportunity for local families and incentives to protect healthy reef ecosystems.

Thank you very much,
Finn Wetterling

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island. This fishery is the most heavily managed near shore fishery in the State. Catch limits are in place. This fishery is proven sustainable by years of scientific studies.

Thank you,
Jess Hong

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits. The Aquarium fishery has been through the HEPA review and is Hawaii's most heavily managed near shore fishery. Scientific studies show fish stocks trending up. It's a sustainable fishery and should be re-opened.

Thank you,
Niklas Meier

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. Fish stocks have been very well looked after and management has done a good job of protecting resources. There is no reason based in science to consider bans or keep the fishery closed.

Thank you,
Kiley Aurora

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawaii's aquarium fishery operates sustainably, with stable or increasing populations of targeted species. Reopening this well-regulated fishery would restore a model of science-based management that supports reef health and responsible stewardship of marine resources.

Mahalo,
Scott Brewer

Finance Committee,

I strongly support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing. The fishery has gone through the court ordered HEPA review process in order to determine if it was sustainable and environmentally safe to continue. The HEPA process was completed and accepted and the fishery still has the best management plan of all fisheries in the state.

Mahalo,
Edna Anderson

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits and reopening aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. This has been a well managed fishery and it will be only a handful of permits with catch limits so there's no danger of over fishing.

Mahalo,
Geo Tiongco

Finance Committee Members-

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. I believe there has been ample scientific data that confirms proper management of this fishery has worked to ensure it is sustainable.

Mahalo,
Yuen Fung

Finance Committee Members-

I fully support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. It completed the HEPA review. It's sustainable and good management based in science, as set forth by DAR, will see to it that it stays that way.

Thank you very much.

Walter Johnson

Finance Committee,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits on the Big Island. The fishery has completed the required HEPA review. As shown in studies done by DAR/DLNR, fish populations are increasing and this fishery is sustainable.

Mahalo,
Ben Chun

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. With so few permits allowed and catch limits in place for the only eight species that can be caught will really help ensure that fish populations will not be depleted.

Thank you,
Katalina Velasco

Finance Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and reissuing permits to allow fishing in West Hawaii again. Good management backed by science is key to ensuring it remains sustainable.

Mahalo,
Will Alvarado

Finance Committee Members-

I support opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. The scientific data proves this is a sustainable fishery with good management ensuring proper protection and growth of fish stocks.

Mahalo,
Marcey Levy

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. After completing the HEPA review, and being the only fishery to have done so, it's been proven to be sustainable and deserves to be in operation again.

Mahalo,
Sammy Byron

Finance Committee:

I support issuing permits. The aquarium fishery in West Hawaii is the best managed and most studied fishery in the State. Populations of aquarium fish species have risen over the years, showing how powerful good management can be. In addition, this fishery has completed the HEPA review process and is proven sustainable.

Mahalo,
Raine Moralez

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits...the aquarium fishery has completed the HEPA process and I support reopening the fishery. Studies have shown increasing fish populations, it has been well managed by the state and is proven sustainable.

Thank you,
Mitchell Freye

Finance Committee,

I support managing fisheries based on science. The aquarium fishery should have permits reissued and West Hawaii reopened as long as the scientific data continues to support that this is a sound and sustainable fishery.

Mahalo,
Dana Myers

Finance Committee,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. I support issuing permits. Numerous studies and numerous experts have demonstrated with clear scientific data that this is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Lee Ashford

Finance Committee Members,

I'm testifying in support of issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island. Scientific data gathered from DAR studies done over the years do support that this is a sustainable fishery.

Mahalo,
Maile Steele

Finance Committee,

I support opening the aquarium fishery. Please vote in favor of issuing permits. The scientific data proves this is a sustainable fishery with effective management ensuring proper protection and growth of fish stocks.

Thank you,
Candace Han

Finance Committee Members:

I support issuing permits to reopen the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.
This fishery completed the HEPA review.

This fishery is sustainable, as identified in the HEPA review. This fishery is well managed with multitudes of studies by DAR showing an increase in aquarium fish populations. Management does work and this fishery should be open.

Mahalo,
Ollie Byron

Finance Committee Members,

I'm in support of issuing permits and reopening the Aquarium Fishery in West Hawaii. It's proven to be sustainable and is the most studied and best managed fishery in Hawaii.

Thank you,
Kris Burgard

Finance Committee-

I support opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii fishing. I believe that resources should be managed by science and DAR has done a good job of this for this fishery. It is still the most heavily regulated fishery in Hawaii.

Thank you,
Jamie Murack

Finance Committee Members,

I support re-opening Hawaii's aquarium fishery. A carefully managed aquarium fishery in West Hawaii, grounded in science and sustainability, can help support local residents and small businesses while protecting the health of reef ecosystems.

Mahalo,
Ryan Novais

Finance Committee,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. This is the only fishery in the state to go through the HEPA process.

Thank you,
Kenzi White

Finance Committee Members,

I strongly support the reopening of the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. There is so much scientific data produced by studies done by the State that show steadily increasing fish population trends, due to excellent management that could be applied to other fisheries across the State of Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Stacey Jenson

Finance Committee:

I support issuing permits and feel the aquarium fishery should be reopened since it has completed the HEPA review and has been shown to be a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Kay Blust

Finance Committee Members:

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing. The fishery completed the environmental impact review and is the only fishery in Hawaii to have done so. It is studied and well managed, and I support reopening the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Megan Choi

Finance Committee,

I'm submitting testimony in support of the aquarium fishery and reopening West Hawaii by issuing permits. There is sound science that backs this fishery and it is the only fishery in the State to have completed the HEPA review process. The aquarium fishery should be recognized as an important example of how a sustainable fishery should be managed.

Thank you,
Zach Nyburg

Finance Committee Members,

As this fishery has been through the HEPA review process, I absolutely support reopening the aquarium fishery. The fishery has been well managed by the science that backs it.

Cathy Strong

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. The aquarium fishery has successfully completed the HEPA process and should be allowed to resume operation. I support reopening this fishery and managing it using science.

Mahalo,
Paula Whines

Finance Committee:

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery and I support continued management by DAR using a science based approach.

Thank you,
Kristen Duenez

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits. This is the only fishery in Hawaii to have gone through and completed the HEPA review.

Thank you,
Paul J. Abad

Finance Committee Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. Resources should be managed by the science that backs it and this will help make sure that proper strategies are in place to keep the ecosystem healthy into the future.

Ted Valcin

Finance Committee Members:

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. The environmental review it went through upholds that this is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Eddie Fernando

Finance Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. I support sustainable fisheries and wish all fisheries were as stringently managed as this one to ensure future sustainability. The aquarium fishery should serve as a model for other fisheries in the state.

Evelin French

Finance Committee Members:

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. I support science based management as it has always been. I'm behind this fishery completely.

Mahalo,
Ryan Carroll

Finance Committee-

I strongly support issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. The environmental review proved it's sustainable with no detrimental impacts to aquarium fish populations.

Thomas Akari

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support reopening the AQ, I believe the science supports the sustainability of responsible fishing for the aquaculture trade.

David Patronevelli

DAVID PATRONEVELLI

dtdp5@yahoo.com

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

REOPEN THIS FISHERY

CARLOS BRISENO 

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Support the Science - 
STEVEN CONRAD

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support Science based fishing
harvesting.

Elliot Achdam

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EA', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

~~Shah~~ Please reopen the hawaii fishery
-Shahaly

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I highly believe in the science and research that is completed by the sustainable fisheries in Hawaii. Please re-open these establishments.

- April Triplett

April Triplett

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Reopen the fisheries in Hawaii.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jodywan", written in a cursive style.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support the Save the Hawaiian Fishery

Andy Han

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Please support fishery!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ishai Thatcher', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Ishai Thatcher

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support Re Fishery
Inc ALVES

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the hawaii aquarim fishery 

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Reopen the fishery

Nathan

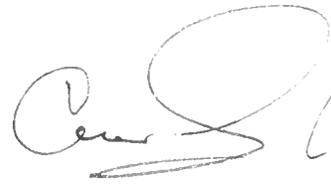
Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I, Support the Science re-open the AQ
Fishery. — Victoria Becerra

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I support the science of the fishery

 Carlos Selva

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support sustainable reefing and fish keeping.
I believe in the work that the West Hawaii
Aquarium Fishery is doing.



Ben Burgett

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Michael Fuentes - I support A9

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the fishery
Mike Alcaraz 

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

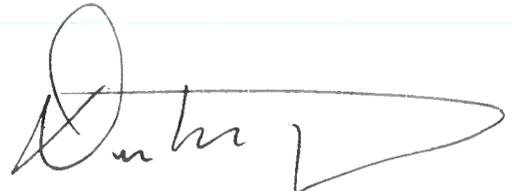
I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Industry *Jake*
Javier Gamboa

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support WHAF can we save the Hawaiian Fishery


David Truag

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Reopen the sustainable West
Hawaii fisheries!!!!

- Jim Sandefur

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

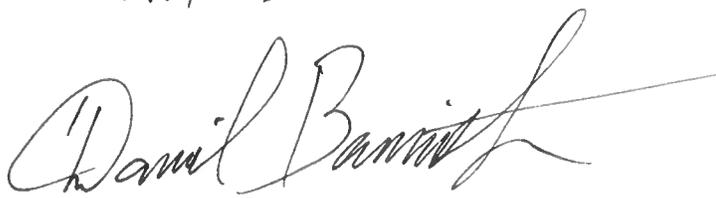
I support the ~~the~~ science!!

Jim Braumlee

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Please reopen the fishery/aquarium in Hawaii. It's sustainable. It's ethical. It's needed by hardworking families.


Daniel Bannister

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the aquaculture fishery.

x AS

Adam Sauer

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I fully support sustainable fishing

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned below the text.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Hawaiian Aquaculture
Fishing: 

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support the Hawaiian Ornamental Fishery
Michael Simonson

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support
Science
-Based
Fishing

Mike
Nelson

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. Todd", written in a cursive style.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support reopening this fishery

Daroy Pinon

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

reopen this fishery & listen to the science!

Paul

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Please reopen the fishery.



Edward Bilezikchian

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I believe in the science and environmental reports! Please reopen the fisheries in West Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Hollie Sandefur

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hollie Sandefur", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Manage the fishery by science
Montano dean

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

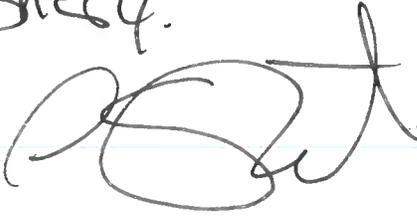
I Support the Senate and House


Rick Sanchez
Rick Sanchez

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Fishery.

McChell 

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Fishery

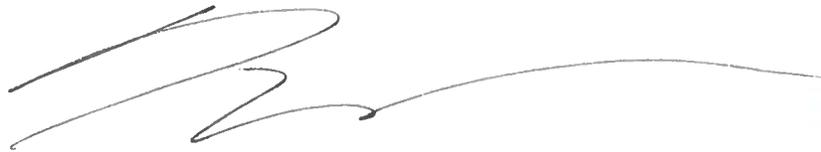
Steven Dick

SDICK1974@GMAIL.COM

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Hawaiian Overmortal Fisheries are sustainable and needed to maintain the health and balance of the NCEP system. Bring back the science



Tracy Scot Crosser
Zone 5F64@gmail.com

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the science.

Sam Pansa

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support science based fishery.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" at the beginning.

Robert Ross

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery.

Amanda Aguilar.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Michael Eme ~~A~~ - I support the fishery

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support responsible fisheries
and the West Aquaculture Fishery.
Keep all fisheries open for
business and use "Science"
only for policy decisions!

Don Kuhl

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support sustainable fisheries!
- Srimal Weerahanaddi ~~@Srimal~~

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Hello, please support reopening the Hawaii fisheries. Legislation should be in place to support local wildlife and businesses.

Sincerely,

Trevor Bellefueille

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Hello,

I absolutely support the West
Hawaii Aquaculture Fisheries, because they
employ a proven, science-based solution
for saving the fish reef.

Richard Sands

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support West Hawaii
agriculture industry

Rob Wanserson

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I SUPPORT THE SCIENCE BASED FISHERY

Keith Cox
KEITH COX

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I fully support responsible and ecologically
beneficial collection of species that keeps black
market collection and harvesting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Benjamin", written in a cursive style with a large, circular flourish at the end.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Please help the fisherys.
We miss the fish,
and famillys depend on the
fish!

Daniel

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I fully support science based
harvesting if done sustainably.



MASON
McElroy

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I SUPPORT THE WEST HAWAII AQUARIUM FISHERY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Todd", written in a cursive style.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Please reopen the sustainable Hawaii fisheries! These fisheries have been very well controlled and monitored, they should of never been shut down.

-Melissa Mendez

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the fishery and the science behind it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Wong', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Wong

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the fishery



Griffin Bentley

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Manage the fisheries with science

Seamus Linn

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the science; I support the fisheries

- Ben Smith

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the science and fishery

- Bruce Rayburn

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the science based fisheries allowed to collect live animals & fish in Hawaii. Protected areas or non fishing are important while it should be allowed sanctioned collection areas for fisheries. A

Balance between collection & protection is reasonable and fair while science based monitoring of these areas is employed. Please allow monitored collection in Hawaii again, thank you,

David G. Gaglianone.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support reopening the fishery

Ruth Hernandez

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Hernandez', written in a cursive style.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the fishery and
want to see it back open.

John Barnett

John Barnett

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

Reopen the fisheries - I support
West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery.
Keep the Fisheries OPEN !!

Jynn Hegast

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support Science based Research

& The sustainable fishery in Hawaii

- Samuel Bates

Samuel Bates

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

hasten to science reopen fishery - JB

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Science. (West Hawaii Aquarium
Fishery).
~~Stacy~~

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I fully support science based
Harvesting in Hawaii fishing -



John Thomas Graves

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

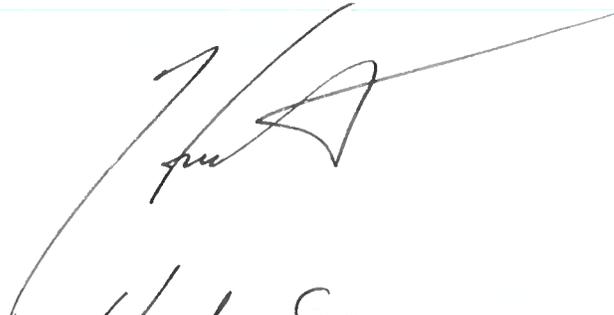
I support science based fisheries

John Hilbasch

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support Science based fishing



Hector Serrano

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support science based fisheries. Having these fish and others in my tank has been highly educational for me and many others.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. M. Smith".

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

James Oh Cu

I support the Hawaii Fisheries.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

ReOpen the West Hawaii Aquaculture Fisheries Act 

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Louis Briscoe — I support AQ Fishing

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Hawaii Aquaculture fishery - Jenny Clements

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

Randall Van Natta



randallvanatta@yahoo.com
I support the fishery &

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support science based
management

JON D.

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

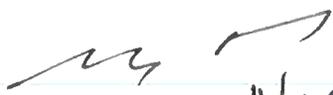
I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the science ~~x~~ ^{cancel}
Eid / Sauer

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support evidence opening of the Hawaiian
fishing on the Big Island of Hawaii.


Troy Nagao

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the Hawaiian fishery.
Sherry L Balsa
I support the Hawaii fishery
Elaine J. Higgins

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the marine collection industry
David D. Requin DAVID D. REQUIN

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support science and sustainability!
Reopen the Hawaii fisheries and
licenses!

Sincerely,
Cynthia DeLillo

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support responsible reef collecting. 
Nick DeKonghe

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

AA I support the science behind the Fishery. - Michael Munn - 3

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support AQUARIUM fishery



Bradford Smith

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I SUPPORT SCIENCE BASED RESEARCH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?

PLEASE OPEN UP THE AQUARIUM FISHERY IN WEST HAWAII

David Salinas
DAVID SALINAS

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support science based and well managed fisheries. Through proper monitoring and collaboration, an environmentally sound balance can be achieved. Both nature and economy can work together to support a long term and sustainable practice. ~~With~~ Hawaii has an opportunity to be a global leader in ~~an ecological~~ a science based fishery practice. Through collaboration, black market practice can be eliminated and ^{focus on} supporting a fishery management practice that benefits the environment and the economy.

Sincerely,


Dustyne Beavers

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the West Hawaii Aquarium fishery

Lisa Luth

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I Support science based Fishery management.

Wendy Bauer

Wendy Bauer

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the science which shows
the fish are still around and have not
reduced in numbers.

Kurt Hammel
khammel@bomeconstruction-co

Chair Todd and House Finance Committee

I oppose Hb2101 and DO NOT SUPPORT BANS

I support the West Hawaii Aquarium
Fishery!

Allyson

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:29:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bobby Camara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in STRONG SUPPORT for a permanent ban on the commercial collection of aquarium fish. This ban should apply to the entire State.

A kama'āina of Honoka'a, Hāmākua, I first visited the coastal lands of Kekaha Wai 'Ole, Kona 'Ākau (North Kona), in 1972. I became entranced with the 'āina and kai, and over decades developed deep aloha for those lands. Back then, one could choose what fish to have for dinner, or select which 'opihi to pick and eat. Lamentably, those days were long gone when TryWait, the 10-year kapu on fishing and gathering sea life was instituted.

The past nearly 10 years have seen a remarkable rebound in populations of sea life, including popular aquarium fish, though challenges remain.

More people forage for foods as economy worsens.

'Opihi are illegally gathered and sold to make money for family sustenance or to feed drug habits.

Increasing populations, road access, and access by boat add immense pressure to harvestable resources.

Social media encourages many to seek out formerly isolated places.

Me, me, me, seems to be a common mantra.

We have nearly lost the spirit and feel of Aloha 'Āina. We cannot let that happen. We must also practice Aloha Kai, aloha for the ocean and everything in it. Aquarum fish are integral parts of ocean ecosystems. Recovery and health of our reefs depend on them.

I pray for enlightened decision-making.

Me ke aloha,

Bobby Camara

Kea'au HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:39:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aspen Omapang (Russell)	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Aspen Omapang and I am a staff member at Ho‘āla Kealakekua Nui, inc. (HKN). I come from five-generations of kama‘āina of Moku o Keawe, Hawai‘i Island. **I am in FULL SUPPORT for HB2101**, which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000. Effective 7/1/3000 (HD1).

From our constitution (XI, Section 1 - the Public Trust Doctrine), regulatory agency obligations (DLNR Hierarchy of Use Policy), Hawaiian Civic Clubs (Resolution No. 2025-40), and community - the 50+ organizational testimonies, and numerous individuals in support - there is broad stakeholder support for HB2101 (HD1). Our reefs aren't contained to our shorelines. Our reefs are the foundation for life and affect all that sustains our lives on land. It affects the quality of our food, our air, and our livelihoods. While clearly legally, environmentally, and culturally an imperative, the stakes of aquarium collection are deeply economic.

Luckily there is a strong alternative to the current practice of fish extraction through aquaculture. Rather than re-investing in an unsustainable and economically declining industry, the state government of Hawai‘i has the opportunity to ban aquarium fish collection outright. Over half of fish collected using current methods die in transit to collectors, and even more within one-year in aquarium tanks. Aquarium collection not only goes against legislative precedent and regulatory obligations, but it is also an industry that actively deteriorates our reefs which negatively impacts other vital industries in Hawai‘i. Lastly, a ban full-stop provides a significant reduction and simplification of enforcement. By banning the aquarium fish extraction, our reefs and fish will receive the highest level of protection offered by the state thus creating a strong foundation for generations to come.

Mahalo for allowing my submission of this testimony and represent community voice. I strongly urge this committee to pass HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo nui,

Aspen Omapang (Russell)

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:18:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill HB2101.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:20:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of an amended HB2101, HD1. It is unimaginable that the HI state legislature would do anything but prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection in Hawai'i County.

Protecting our beautiful reef fish on Hawai'i Island from risking starvation and death when shipped out of state is a worthy goal and we still support this bill.

Moreover, Given the stress on marine life across the island chain, we will asking that its provisions apply statewide.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:21:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jared Ushiroda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this sustainable fishery. Please do not ban AQ fishing.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:24:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika cruz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2102

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:25:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caelly Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this sustainable fishery. Please do not ban AQ fishing.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:28:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
rhythm rivers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:42:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rufus Kimura	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Rufus Kimura. I was born on Molokai and moved to Waianae, Oahu at age 8. My father was a teacher at both Waianae and Nanakuli High Schools who supplemented his salary by diving for aquarium fish on weekends. From an early age he passed on the skills of diving, animal husbandry, and ocean safety to me.

The Westside of Oahu is a challenging environment—plagued by poverty, gun violence, drug use, and homelessness, as recent headlines continue to highlight. Diving became my escape and pathway through life. Every day after school, I would wade the tidepools and snorkel the shoreline, collecting specimens to sell locally. This simple hustle filled me with purpose and funded my education at Leeward Community College and the Albertson College of Idaho.

After college, I joined the Honolulu Fire Department as a Search and Rescue Specialist, leveraging the SCUBA and ocean awareness skills that aquarium fishing had taught me. Over the next 25+ years I remained in Waianae and built a successful tropical fish import/export business that directly employed 8-10 local divers and packers (the majority from Waianae and Nanakuli). We operated responsibly, contributing to the economy through suppliers, shipping, and exports, all while promoting stewardship of our reefs.

The previous ban on commercial aquarium collection shattered this. Without permits, I was forced to shut down my operations, lay off my team, sell my home and warehouse, resign from the Fire Department, and relocate to Alaska in pursuit of commercial fishing opportunities. The State’s unwillingness to validate collection permits took away 35 years of supplemental income that had sustained my family and my employees.

Although there is contention surrounding aquarium fish collection in Hawaii, there are clear pathways forward. From my time in Alaska’s fisheries, I have seen firsthand how science-based management allows equitable sharing of finite resources among diverse user groups such as commercial fishermen, sportfishermen, subsistence fishermen and First-Nation native peoples.

If Alaska can manage its natural fishery resources via a tax-funded state agency, then Hawaii can—and should—do the same for a limited-entry aquarium fishery.

I write in strong opposition to HB2101, which seeks to impose a blanket prohibition on the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. This bill not only ignores ongoing scientific and regulatory efforts but also threatens the equitable management of Hawaii's marine resources. It preempts the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)'s authority to regulate through established processes. The fishery has already proven its sustainability through court-mandated reviews, and DAR has verified it as the most managed fishery in Hawaii. Yet HB2101 halts the unanimously approved Chapter 91 rulemaking process, disregarding public input, hearings, and data-driven limits that balance conservation with responsible use.

This prohibition overlooks the fishery's full compliance with legal mandates—including the Supreme Court order, HEPA Chapter 343, and rule proposals to BLNR—risking further litigation and violating procedural due process for stakeholders. It harms local fishers and families, including Native Hawaiians who rely on these jobs in economically challenged areas like the Westside, exacerbating the displacement that is already pricing locals out of paradise. Moreover, enacting HB2101 sets a dangerous precedent that could lead to statutory bans on other commercial fisheries and introduce legal instability across resource management. An outright ban dismisses equitable, science-based solutions in favor of ideology.

I urge you to reject HB2101 and allow the science-based processes already underway to proceed. Hawaii deserves better than to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Sincerely, Rufus Kimura

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 6:42:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Noritake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Wendy Noritake, and I am a resident of North Kohala on the Big Island of Hawaii. I urge you to stop the aquarium collecting of our reef fish. I am a writer, photographer, freediver, scuba diver, and swimmer. I've been swimming almost daily in the waters of North Kohala for more than ten years and have witnessed the devastation and loss of our reef fish. I know this because I had special locations I could count on to photograph these precious fish, many whom are endemic to Hawaii, found nowhere else on earth.

These locations no longer exist because collectors destroyed the coral that these fish lived in, and in one instance, they took the entire coral head. Other favorite places no longer have the flame angelfish that I photographed, because people in zodiac boats stole them from the sites.

The reef fish are already under stress due to climate change, pollution, disease, their predators, and humans. They don't need to be taken from their mates and families to die within a year in an aquarium if they even make it to that destination. It's a cruel and inhumane hobby, taking these fish for aquariums. I urge you to please ban the practice of taking these creatures from our ocean. They should be cherished and protected for the keiki and generations to come.

Thank you for listening to me and acting on behalf of the reef fish.

Sincerely,

Wendy Noritake

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:29:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I FULLY SUPPORT THIS BILL.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 7:53:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai'i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide.

Healthy coral reefs support our environment, food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.**

RE: HB2101 – OPPOSE

- Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Darrel Smith, and I stand in strong opposition to HB2101.

Hawai'i's aquarium fishery has been shut down following the decision of the Hawaii Supreme Court requiring a full Environmental Impact Statement before the fishery could resume. The aquarium fishermen complied. They funded and completed an EIS as required by law.

Opponents then argued the EIS could not be trusted because the fishermen paid for it — despite the fact that state law required them to do so.

The fishermen persisted and produced a second EIS. Still, additional administrative obstacles followed.

Now, after years of process, delay, and expense, this small group of fishermen have committed to reduce collection from roughly 30 species to just five in order to address ongoing concerns and work in good faith with the community.

This is a small group of licensed fishermen who remove a minute fraction of reef biomass — far less than recreational and food fisheries. They are not industrial trawlers. They are small business owners, many born and raised here, who depend on this fishery to support their families.

HB2101 does not advance conservation. It overrides a science-based regulatory process that has already been exhaustively pursued. It tells small business owners that no matter how many studies they fund, how many compromises they make, or how closely they follow the law, the goalposts will simply move again.

If we are going to require an EIS, then we must respect the outcome of that process. Otherwise, we are not practicing environmental stewardship — we are practicing prohibition without due process.

Please defer or vote NO on HB2101 and allow the Department of Aquatic Resources to complete its rulemaking process based on science, transparency, and enforceable management.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Darrel Smith

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:07:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 2101. Hawaii reefs are precious ecosystems that must be protected. Our reefs are threatened by climate change, pollution, algae blooms, and other ecological problems. Balanced reef fish populations are critical for healthy reef ecosystems. We need to put an end to the destructive aquarium trade in Hawaii. Our reef systems are too important to be ravaged and damaged by this industry. We need to ban commercial aquarium collection in Hawaii.

Abundant reef life bolsters the resiliency of reefs and keeps them healthy. Traditional native Hawaiian cultural practices depend on healthy reefs and taking native reef fish is contrary to Hawaiian values of malama aina and kuleana for the environment and pono fishing, taking only what is needed for family or community subsistence.

Thank you for protecting an ecosystem we all cherish, one that gives visitors and locals a beautiful underwater world that is irreplaceable.

Beth Anderson

Kailua

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:10:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zett Elyss Amora	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha: Once again the public, citizens and friends of Hawaii, have spoken!!! To permanently BAN the collection of reef fish. I strongly urge you to support this bill which will permanently BAN the collection of reef fish from our waters. Nature belongs to EVERYONE, not just to a few priveleged persons with a desire to bring the wildness of nature into their homes and businesses for their own personal experience and profit. This is absurd and simply WRONG. Over the years it has become INCREASINGLY evident that humans tampering with nature is DISRUPTING natural rhythms and cycles. The health and well being of animals, plants, and waters of Earth contributes to overall imbalance of ALL ecosystems. Leading to extreme climate disruptions and more. This is already leading to a decline in the overall balance of our planet and is threatening existence on Earth for animals AND HUMANS!!! PLEASE!!!!!! Make a statement on behalf of ALL LIVING BEINGS and support the PERMANENT BAN of harvesting fish for profit.

Mahalo, nui loa, Zettelyss Amora. Resident of Kamuela and a daily ocean swimmer for over 22 years.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:17:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Ann K Poire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai'i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons.

Commercial aquarium fishing flies in the face of Hawai'i's constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good, rather than private gain. The aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly die during, or within a year after, collection.

At the same time, this commercial activity has diminished the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef systems, undermined the state's food security and climate resilience, and degraded a cornerstone of our tourism-based economy. Not surprisingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

While commercial aquarium collection has not been allowed for the better part of a decade, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai'i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. Moreover, on-reef tourism activities that are dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Given the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, such as climate change impacts, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Elizabeth Poire
Kailua Kona, Hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:23:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Lyerly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members, My name is Linda Lyerly and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade. Our coastal waters show marked improvement with the minini and yellow tang back where they belong!!**

Please support this bill!! Mahalo for your concern.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:36:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michael gilbert	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I grew up in

maui saw the reefs filled with fish in Makena Landing. I watched them stripped in front of my eyes. Can no not even take my kids to see the reef fish. It's hard to imagine that you would allow this on any of our islands. There are no more yellow tangs. Please Please stop this outrageous rape if our reefs. The people doing this are also dangerous and they physically threatened me.

please again stop it makes no sense and no way to even be able to have the people to check on their catches

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 8:48:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynda Wallach	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to urge you to support HB2101 and ban aquarium fishing on the west coast of Hawaii Island. Our reefs need the fish to survive They also bring economic benefits as tourists are drawn to our reefs to dive and snorkel because of the beautiful fish.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:04:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Koch	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hello my names Kai Koch

I live in Kau on the big island my family's been in and around the aquarium fishery my entire life. The aquarium fishery was a lifeline for my family and I hope it can continue to be so, the science has been shown to be sustainable and well managed I am in complete opposition to banning a fishery please make the right choice. To summarize I am in support of the aquarium fishery and against this bill thank you.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:27:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB2101 to ban the capture of reef fish for the purpose of collection for aquariums completely and without exceptions in the waters surrounding Hawai'i Island. Continuing this practice is not sustainable and will result in severe destruction to the coral and marine life ecosystem in our waters.

In addition, please consider extending this ban to the waters of all the islands of the Hawaiian chain.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Joy Fisher, Hawai'i Island resident, joyfisher374@gmail.com

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:01:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Massey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of House Finance Committee,

I am writing in favor of HB2101 Ban on extracting fish for Aquarium trade.

The reefs are stressed as they are and fish are a vital part of the ecological balance of the reefs. I have spent a lot of time in and in the ocean and have noticed over the years the decline in fish population. The beauty of the reefs with the colorful fish is a huge attraction for tourists. With the fish gone, snorkelers and divers will go elsewhere, along with their tourist dollars.

Do you know that most of these fish die before they even get to market? It is not right that so many fish die so the few that do survive are sold for purely people's entertainment.

I would prefer that the original bill without any exclusions based on island population (is it to be able to exclude one particular island in a statewide bill?) but this as it stands is better than no protection for the fish at all.

We must save the fish for our future generations to enjoy. Please pass the bill HB2101. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Rita Massey

Kihei

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:12:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Oppose

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:17:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
WILLIAM MIDDLETON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Commercial export of Hawai'i reef resources is unacceptable. The resources are needed locally and also critical to the health of the entire ecosystem of Hawai'i. I support a statewide ban on commercial aquarium harvest.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 11:59:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Enos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Kanani Enos. I am the Director of Cultural and Community Affairs at Ho‘āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN). I am a lineal descendant to the South Kona area, (also known as Kapalilua) spanning from Miloli‘i to Kealakekua. I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** for SB2101 which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Prohibiting commercial aquarium fishing will provide the highest form of protection to our reef biodiversity and health, promote long-term sustainability, and align with responsible stewardship of our ocean and marine environment. Our reefs are not commodities. They are living ecosystems, cultural resources, sources of life and abundance for our future generations, and in our cultural view, the foundation for all of life, deserving protection.

If we do not pass this bill, the costs to the State of Hawaii will be significant. These include administrative and operations costs, enforcement costs estimated between \$300k and \$500k, and the immeasurable impact on our reefs and public trust resources of the present and future generations.

Mahalo to the committee for hearing this measure and allowing me to voice my strong support for SB2101

With Aloha,

Kanani Enos

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2101

To: Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee

From: Edward Lui

Subject: Opposition to HB 2101 (Relating to Aquarium Fish)

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Edward Lui. I am an 86-year-old lifelong Hawaii resident and lifelong fisherman. I am writing to strongly **oppose HB 2101**. While I support reef conservation, this bill as written is discriminatory and misguided.

1. Discriminatory Impact on the Elderly and Disabled

Current law allows for the personal harvesting of aquarium fish. However, due to my age and physical disabilities, I am unable to catch fish myself. I rely on the commercial market to sustain my aquarium. By banning commercial collection, you effectively ban my ability to participate in this hobby. This creates a discriminatory barrier against the elderly and disabled who lack the physical means to harvest for themselves.

2. Inconsistent Logic in Conservation

Section 1 of this bill claims that prohibiting harvesting preserves the ecosystem. If the goal is total preservation, the state should prohibit *all* reef harvesting—an approach seen in the success of Hanauma Bay. Instead, this bill unfairly targets a small group of commercial collectors while ignoring larger impacts. Targeting one specific group of consumers while allowing others to continue is not sound policy.

3. A Better Solution: Ban Export, Not Collection

I believe in protecting our resources for the people of Hawaii. Rather than a total ban on commercial collection, I propose a **ban on the export of reef wildlife for commercial purposes**. This ensures that Hawaii's marine life remains in Hawaii for our local residents to enjoy, rather than being shipped away for profit.

Conclusion

Proper reef management should be equitable. Please do not take away a lifelong joy from those of us who are physically unable to "catch our own." Save Hawaii's resources for Hawaii's people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Finance Committee Members:

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits. Reopening the West Hawai'i aquarium fishery would restore a well managed, low-impact fishery grounded in decades of scientific study. Long term monitoring has shown that fish populations within the West Hawai'i Fishery Management Areas remain stable or have grown under regulated fishing. Aquarium fishing is selective and does not remove biomass, making it one of the most sustainable forms of marine resource use. The fishery also supports local families and fosters a culture of stewardship, as fishers have a vested interest in maintaining healthy reef ecosystems.

Drake Goeden

Finance Committee:

I support issuing permits for west Hawaii aquarium fishing. The fishery has been sustainable over the years and with continued good management by DAR based on science, the fishery will remain healthy and sustainable.

Mahalo,
Connor Sui

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. Decades of research show Hawaii's aquarium fishery is sustainable and carefully managed, supporting healthy reef ecosystems. Reopening it would restore livelihoods of locals and community businesses that have been impacted by the ongoing closure of the fishery.

Thank you,
Karlynn Vogt

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits. A well-regulated, science-based aquarium fishery can honor cultural traditions as well as sustain viable reef ecosystems through responsible, sustainable stewardship.

Brook Wagman

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing. I support reopening West Hawaii because there are very few permits to be issued and the fish populations will be protected and sustained by the limited catch allowed.

Thanks,
Lea Laudencia

Finance Committee,

I support reopening Hawaii's aquarium fishery because long-term scientific surveys demonstrate that well regulated fishing has minimal impact on reef fish abundance and can coexist with healthy, resilient ecosystems.

Mahalo,
Robyn Kohler

Aloha Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening Hawaii's aquarium fishery and believe that strict, science-based management can support local livelihoods while ensuring reef ecosystems remain healthy. Sustainable collection practices and strong oversight can balance environmental protection with cultural and economic benefits for local communities.

Thank you,
Lacey Livingstone

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in Hawaii because it is a well-managed, highly regulated fishery that has repeatedly demonstrated minimal environmental impact through decades of scientific monitoring. It also has a positive impact on the local economy as well as promotes responsible stewardship of Hawaii's reef resources.

Mahalo,
Matthew Nishioka

Finance Committee,

I support reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. I believe that doing so would restore one of the most sustainable, well studied and scientifically managed fisheries in the state. Decades of rigorous monitoring have shown that aquarium fish populations in the West Hawaii Fishery Management Areas remain healthy or have even increased under regulated collection. This fishery also provides valuable local livelihoods and encourages stewardship by connecting fishers directly to the health of the reefs they depend on.

Richard Wolfe

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawaii's aquarium fishery operates sustainably, with stable or increasing populations of targeted species. Reopening this well-regulated fishery would restore a model of science-based management that supports reef health and responsible stewardship of marine resources.

Mahalo,
Jessica Mitsuo

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. The fishery has been through the HEPA process and ample precautions are in place to keep fish stocks healthy on the reefs and ensure the fishery is sustainable.

Thank you,
Dennis Leonard

Finance Committee,

I support reopening Hawaii's aquarium fishery. The fishery has strong science-based management and reopening it would help support local livelihoods and reef stewardship. When properly regulated, the fishery has been shown to operate sustainably while providing economic opportunity for local families and incentives to protect healthy reef ecosystems.

Mahalo,
Deann Levine

Finance Committee Members,

I support re-opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery. It's the best managed near shore fishery in the State and has more scientific data backing it than any other. I believe the right thing to do is issue permits so fishing can resume.

**Mahalo,
Chet Narak**

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing and fully believe this is a sustainable fishery with little impact on Hawaii's reefs. It is well managed and with the new rules in place, the future populations of the targeted species will be greatly protected.

Mahalo,
Ford Antoni

Finance Committee Members,

I support reopening Hawaii's aquarium fishery because long-term scientific studies demonstrate that well-regulated fishing has minimal impact on reef fish abundance and can coexist with healthy, resilient ecosystems.

Thank you very much.

Adrian Saunders

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in Hawaii because it is a well-managed, highly regulated fishery that has repeatedly demonstrated minimal environmental impact through decades of scientific monitoring. It also has a positive impact on the local economy as well as promotes responsible stewardship of Hawaii's reef resources.

Thank you,
Leann Jamison

Finance Committee-

I believe the HEPA review that the aquarium fishery has successfully gone through supports the fact that it's a sustainable fishery and should be allowed to be reopened. I support the aquarium fishery and I urge you to issue permits for West Hawaii. Mahalo!

Jenny Dresser

Finance Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. The fishery has completed the required HEPA review and DAR studies have shown increasing fish populations. The fishery is sustainable.

Mahalo,
Ashley Vass

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits. A well-regulated, science-based aquarium fishery can honor cultural traditions as well as sustain viable reef ecosystems through responsible, sustainable stewardship.

Thank you,
Seth Cohan

Finance Committee,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. Decades of research show Hawaii's aquarium fishery is sustainable and carefully managed, supporting healthy reef ecosystems. Reopening it would restore livelihoods of locals and community businesses that have been impacted by the ongoing closure of the fishery.

Mahalo,
Brian Fitzpatrick

Finance Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery again. The new management plan creates a clear, science backed framework for well-regulated activity with defined rules, catch limits, monitoring and oversight. This ensures protection of reef resources as well as local livelihoods.

Thank you,
Andrew Melis

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:34:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill but recommend that legislators consider this bill to cover marine collection restriction for all the Hawaiian Islands, not just Hawaii County

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:38:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Todd, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Please support HB 2101 HD1 to preserve aquatic wildlife and protect them from capture and sale for commercial aquarium purposes. My understanding is that capture methods include cruel practices, and many fish die from starvation before reaching pet stores. This bill was amended to apply only to aquatic wildlife of Hawaii County. Please amend this bill so that it applies to aquatic wildlife of all counties of the State of Hawaii. Protection and preservation should apply to all counties, not just one.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:01:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Jacquin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Michele Jacquin and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

I am not a resident of the State of Hawai'i. However, I have been visiting, diving, surfing, hiking, and appreciating Hawai'i and its culture since 1973.

Hawai'i is two things:

An amazing Wa'a of life unique on land, in the air and the water that is found nowhere else. It is a Kuleana to protect, not just for the few but for the world.

Beloved by many who do not live there, but come to appreciate, enjoy and spend money supporting the local people and economy.

You lose both things if you destroy what is unique.

I walked into a neighbor's house in California and saw a salt water tank. In it was a lonely Achilles Tang. I was shocked. Something that should be on its native reef, part of the system of life there an appreciated by MANY Divers, Snorkelers both local and visitor. (Not just that one household).

I just went to the Caribbean for the first time last year. Boring and SAD. No Fish!!!

I have seen many Achilles Tang diving Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, Lana'i. Don't let money making fish kidnapping destroy what I and many others come to Hawai'i to see. We spend money, try to step lightly and leave. Don't drive us away.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:06:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
S.A. Marek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The Hawaii State Legislature passed a ban on chemical sunscreens to protect the reef. How about protecting the inhabitants: the reef fish.

Who thinks it would be appropriate to issue permits to collect Pueo owlets or any other winged wildlife on Hawaii Island to be shipped off and sold as “pets”?

Let’s protect wildlife in the ocean, Hawaii’s reef fish, where they can live for 20+ years. These fish are not “pets” to be kept in an aquarium tank next to a set of encyclopedias and a Farrah Fawcett poster.

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek (Big Island resident)

March 1, 2026

Committee on Finance
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beratania Street

Re: Testimony in support of HB2101

My name is Kaikea Nakachi and I **strongly support HB2101**.

Being born and raised on Hawai'i Island, I have personally witnessed the damage of the entitled, unnecessary, insensitive, and inappropriate aquarium trade. I watched the droves of Maui aquarium fishers move to Hawai'i Island after they were banned on Maui. I watched them illegally continue after the supreme court mandated them to stop when it was determined the state violated HEPA by issuing permits without cultural or environmental review.

I submitted testimony supporting this bill when it was heard on 2/18 by EEP and WLA, I submitted testimony supporting SB2078 on 2/18 and 2/26, and in support of SB2996 on 2/9. Last year I joined dozens of communities and over 1300 individuals from across the pae'āina to urge the BLNR to not move forward with a permit process for commercial aquarium collection. In 2024 I supported the resolution sent to BLNR for administrative rules to ban commercial aquarium collection.

I also participated in the CIS conducted by the industry as part of their EIS. My entire 'ohana, including my grandpa who has since passed away, were interviewed. Along with dozens of other West Hawaii families, we gave them pages and pages of 'ike directly explaining the kānaka 'ōiwi values and practices that are impacted by the aquarium industry. The CIS presented to the state for West Hawaii was copy and pasted from the earlier O'ahu CIS (which did not pass), and simply said "no impact to Hawaiian culture." All of our voices were ignored and placed outside of the report in an appendix.

As a kanaka maoli who holds a master's degree in tropical conservation biology and environmental science, I have both the mo'okū'auhau containing generational knowledge of pono and sustainable practices in Hawai'i, as well as the academic background of western research and management. It allows me clarity in seeing how wrong this industry is, and that it should never have been allowed to begin with. Now, as we face unprecedented global threats of climate change, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification, we cannot afford to overfish our local ocean. I will always support what our kūpuna taught us: reciprocal practices to steward healthy marine resources that allow sustainable subsistence fishing.

Unfortunately, we have lost our way. Most of the fishing done today is no longer reciprocal. There is so much take and take and so little given back. The aquarium industry is the absolute worst in this regard. Taking millions of fish over the years, majority being keiki, who will never contribute to Hawai'i. They will not get a chance to provide the ecosystem service as herbivores to help coral recover from bleaching. They will not be available as prey for other fish or animals to eat and become momona/prosperous. They will not get the chance to grow up and contribute to the next generation of their own species. And there is absolutely nothing given back, to the ocean, to the

Hawaiian people.

In the face of food insecurity, it is in the best interest of the people of Hawai'i to limit these inappropriate types of commercial fishing and focus on promoting abundance to support subsistence fishing and allow fish populations to be healthy and resilient enough to weather climate change and the myriads of other threats.

I am proud to be one of many voices that have shown up year after year to defend Hawaiian reef fish in legislative committee hearings, BLNR meetings, county council meetings, and even supreme court hearings. I was incredibly disheartened to hear the opinion of the BLNR feeling that HRS § 188-31 prevented them from banning commercial aquarium collection outright. I tried to urge them that the statute states that the board **may** issue an aquarium fish permit, not **shall**. The word **may** would give the board the decision-making power issue or not issue permits. I also attempted to argue that the statute would still be satisfied with a permit process that is limited to non-commercial applicants.

Please carefully listen to the multitude of native Hawaiian fishers and caretakers as they provide written testimony and oral testimony in this hearing. Please read and hear their passionate yet respectful call for pono rules. Then listen to the handful of aquarium fishermen. Listen to their arrogance, listen to them insult those of us who are trying to protect our traditional shores from their greed. They may even insult you as committee members. It is my hope that we can ban the destructive trade, but we also need to increase the penalties. As long as aquarium collectors stand to make billions, they will fish, and they will poach.

Native Hawaiian communities in West Hawai'i have been instrumental in upholding the mission of DAR and DLNR, often while having to actually oppose and go against the very efforts of those divisions. While Act 306 from 1998 created the West Hawai'i Regional Fisheries Management Area to instruct DAR to protect a percentage of the coast from this very fishery, the Fish Replenishment Areas were not designated until Native Hawaiian communities took charge and called for their ancestral shores to be protected. Act 306 also called on DAR to create areas of no take. For nearly 20 years DAR did not act. I am proud to say one of the communities I am a part of took action in 2016 and was able to pass the Ka'ūpūlehu Marine Reserve as a 10-year no take zone. That ends this year, and remains the only no take zone despite Act 306 approaching 30 years of being in effect. This pattern of DAR not adequately protecting Hawai'i and its public trust resources and Native Hawaiian legacy is troubling, particularly because it not only continues, but it has gotten worse.

The efforts of those Native Hawaiian communities to protect their ancestral shores represents decades of work. That work represents generations of reciprocity with the ocean, and subsistence to feed their families, NOT commercial take. The work is done because the positive impact to the ocean benefits all, even those who seek to only take. The AQ trade, and the most recent effort to start up commercial take in West Hawai'i is another slap in the face to us. These places we have protected and stewarded have higher resource fish biomass in them than open places with no protections, despite these FRA still allowing pono take for sustenance. However, DAR does not have enough data to extrapolate for population of these resource fish, so they were forced to also use NOAA data. Even with combining NOAA data that is only gathered every 3 years, and each

time goes to a different part of the coast, were they able to extrapolate a population estimate for species like lau'īpala/yellow tang. Not only does that leave huge gaps in spatial coverage that likely makes that extrapolation estimate not accurate, but it also means that in their attempt to show take in the hundreds of thousands as sustainable they are counting and extrapolating the fish in all the closed areas as well. The impact to the open areas will be devastating, and DAR even with the NOAA data does not have robust enough data to capture just how damaging it will be. Please pay close attention, when DAR says they do not detect a change in population, that is not because there is not a change happening, but that their current amount of surveying and analyses CANNOT detect a change. There is a massive difference, and their misuse of the data is leading to the declining health of these fish populations, and everything supported by them, which includes overall reef health. It is time to help DAR help the entirety of West Hawai'i, other than the 7 collectors seeking to make profits of the destruction of our reef, by ending the trade.

Communities have been instrumental in helping DOCARE enforce rules in the past and nearly all of the poaching incidents in the last 8 years were only caught because of communities watching out for resources. Even now, a collector that was caught has fled the state and has a warrant out for his arrest. He left two women stranded with their catch and they were forced to swim ashore and seek aid from a gas station, still in their wetsuits. <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/09/17/breaking-news/state-officers-arrest-big-isle-aquarium-collector-after-bizarre-kona-incident/>

The head of DAR, Brian Nielsen, was quoted in 2020 after that incident “Illegal collection of aquarium fish in West Hawaii is turning into a persistent problem... this is the third arrest that we've seen associated with illegal aquarium harvest in West Hawaii just this year which indicates this is a larger problem the department's going to need to deal with.” Well to me the best way to deal with this is banning this harmful industry and the increasing penalties and enforcement to ensure poaching does not occur. It is also easier to enforce a rule banning commercial aquarium trade than it would be to regulate an annual catch limit. There will be no way for the state to ensure they are only catching and shipping out the allowed amount, and if the past is any indication, they will not report accurate numbers so that they will be able to continue business.

The commercial aquarium fishers have shown us year after year their true colors. Whether by poaching, or by their actions in these hearings. They often use their one minute of testimony to belittle and insult legislators, BLNR members, or the native Hawaiians who are trying to protect their ancestral shores from the impacts of their industry. They also make it very apparent what their values are. They continue to ignore cultural concerns over their methods, and they focus entirely on numbers and prices. This is particularly apparent in their recent testimony for SB2996 using DAR's population estimate for yellow tang in West Hawaii to estimate the total amount of money they are worth (which was something like \$180 billion). I cannot stress enough how dangerous this mindset is, when public trust resources and being viewed only as dollar signs. When 2078 was heard in WLA on 2/18, it was added to amend HRS § 188-31 to clarify BLNR has the power to ban the industry. This removes the excuse given when the AG interceded in 2023 when BLNR unanimously voted to accept the resolution to initiate rulemaking to ban commercial aquarium collection. Immediately after WLA passed the bill with those amendments, the fisheries program manager from DAR notified us that the 7 aquarium collectors who are trying to fish again in West Hawaii saw the writing on the wall that they might get banned and wanted their permits to be bought out. We are trying to end the aquarium trade because it is bad for everyone else in Hawaii, and the aquarium fishers are willing to impact everyone else if it means they can make

money. Even as their trade is being banned they are seeking every dime they can get from our islands and our people.

I hope the committees do not fall for their outcry that a small handful of fishers will be out of jobs. When the impacts of those handful of fishers is felt by every other user group. Their take impacts subsistence fishers, other commercial fishers, recreational fishers, and all the tourism operators. The other fishers always claim we are going to come for them next, but that has never been the case. I advocate for sustainable subsistence fishing. And the AQ trade is not that. In west Hawaii those 7 fishers wouldn't have been here if DLNR had listened to these communities sooner.

SB2996 was deferred at the beginning of February after a handful of O'ahu fishermen testified that a bill to ban would put them out of a job, but failed to mention they cannot aquarium collect right now because they do not have a passed eis, so HB2101 would not put them out of business. They are not even cleared for business. West Hawaii is the first eis attempting to go through with a permit system being proposed by DAR. Of the 1300 folks who said no to blnr last year and the near 200 who supported SB2996, SB2078, and earlier hearings of HB2101, many of us are west Hawaii constituents who have directly seen the impact of aquarium fishing in west Hawaii and do not want it to return. 7 fishers finding new jobs is much easier than trying to mitigate their damages and have it felt by every other ocean user group. That is not fair, and I want all to know that every snorkel business, dive business, non aq commercial fisher, and most importantly to me, native Hawaiian subsistence fishermen will all be impacted by aquarium fishing returning. Is keeping 7 jobs worth degrading the resource itself and every other ocean user that depends on it for food, jobs, and recreation? I would welcome those 7 fishers to become divers for tourism, or even as permitted collectors to gather smaller amounts of brood stock for aquaculture. They are also welcome to join DAR itself or the many nonprofits as scientific divers to survey the fish, or better yet give back by planting coral to atone for the millions of fish they have removed over the years. West Hawai'i is currently ground zero with these 7 collectors wanting to start up again.

There are thousands of Native Hawaiian community members from West Hawai'i who vehemently oppose them starting up again. The Hawai'i County Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting legislation to end the aquarium trade. Every Hawaiian Civic Club passed a resolution supporting a ban on aquarium fishing. Please listen to us and help us.

I urge these committees to please pass HB2101, and help protect our ocean from the greed of this industry.

Mahalo nui,
Kaikea Nakachi

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:37:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Defazio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose any reef fish collection in Hawaii and the world.

1 March 2026

Re: HB2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha e Committee Chair Representative Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is U'ilani Naipo, and I am a marine advocate of place-based governance and nearshore and marine stewardship. I am writing in strong support of HB2101 HD1.

From both an economic and stewardship perspective, the continued degradation of Hawai'i's reefs represents a mounting financial liability for our state. Coral reefs function as natural infrastructure — protecting shorelines from erosion and storm surge, sustaining local fisheries, and underpinning Hawai'i's visitor industry. When reefs are damaged by extractive and exploitative practices, the costs do not disappear — they are transferred to our communities through reduced fisheries, declining tourism quality, increased coastal erosion, and higher public costs for shoreline protection and ecosystem restoration.

Our State and its communities ultimately bear the expense, not the industries responsible for the impacts. Short-term private extraction creates long-term public debt.

Beyond these measurable financial losses are costs that cannot be quantified. Our reefs are foundational to Native Hawaiian culture, subsistence practices, education, and community identity. They are living ancestors, sources of food, knowledge, and connection between generations. The loss of reef health represents not only environmental decline but cultural erosion — impacts that no economic model can fully capture.

HB2101 HD1 recognizes that the true cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of protection. This measure moves Hawai'i toward responsible stewardship that values long-term resilience over short-term extraction.

A Cultural Perspective I was raised grounded in the values of taking only what you will eat, mālama 'āina, and sustaining 'āina momona — an abundance that comes from responsible stewardship. Aquarium fishing was opened in 1953 under the premise that reef fish had no purpose beyond looking pretty, despite their ecological and cultural importance.

Traditional lawai'a practices emphasize fishing to feed family and community, and when fish are sold, it is to feed people — not for ornamental trade. Removing reef fish for aquarium purposes conflicts with these values and with the principle of taking only what is appropriate.

Community observations and lived experience reflect growing concern about reef health and the impacts of extraction, including effects on tourism and nearshore abundance. Many local fishermen and ocean users believe that management decisions must reflect what is seen and experienced in the water, not only what is defined as sustainable on paper.

At its core, this perspective calls for responsible stewardship: fish in ways that sustain food systems, protect reef health, and ensure abundance for future generations.

Hawai‘i’s Constitution Public Trust Doctrine Under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution, the State has a constitutional obligation to manage natural resources pursuant to Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. These resources are held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations and require the highest level of scrutiny when proposed for private commercial use.

Hawai‘i’s reef fish are among the most unique and fragile in the world. Many species exist nowhere else on Earth and play essential ecological roles that maintain reef health, biodiversity, and resilience. For decades, millions of fish have been removed from Hawai‘i’s reefs, disrupting the balance of already vulnerable marine ecosystems. The commercial aquarium trade further undermines these ecosystems at a time when reefs are under increasing stress from climate change, warming oceans, coral bleaching, invasive species, and land-based pollution.

- Hierarchy of Use

Under a reasonable hierarchy of use, the health and long-term sustainability of public trust resources must remain the foremost consideration. Subsistence use and fishing for the local food market appropriately follow in priority, consistent with sustainable management. All other uses must be evaluated to ensure they do not impair the resource or diminish its availability to the public. Commercial aquarium fishing is an extractive activity that serves external commercial markets rather than the people of Hawai‘i. It is inconsistent with the principles of mālama ‘āina and mālama kai and with the State’s public trust responsibilities, as it provides no meaningful public benefit while placing additional pressure on shared natural resources.

- An Alternative

The Ka Pa‘akai Analysis requires evaluation of alternatives. A very viable alternative to aquarium fishing already exists – aquaculture. The lau‘īpala (yellow tang) and Potter’s angelfish, two of the most sought-after species in the aquarium trade, have both been successfully cultured in captivity, with yellow tang aquaculture established since 2017.

Investments made by the University of Hawai‘i and Hawai‘i Pacific University that resulted in the successful captive breeding of species for the pet trade.

Rather than removing 100,000 lau‘īpala from Hawai‘i’s reefs, along with over a thousand of the endemic species Potter’s Angelfish from Hawai‘i’s reefs each year, aquaculture provides a sustainable alternative that avoids further depletion of public trust resources. In pursuing any for-profit activity, the State must prioritize its fiduciary and cultural responsibility to Hawai‘i’s ‘āina and shared natural resources over privatized economic benefit.

Cost of Fishery – The full public cost of managing this fishery has not been disclosed by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) or DOCARE. A 2021 study estimated annual

administrative, operational, compliance, and enforcement costs between \$300,000 and \$500,000 when the fishery was last active in 2017. Adjusted for current conditions, a realistic estimate today would likely exceed \$500,000 annually. This public expense would occur while collecting only approximately \$100 per permit, limited to seven permittees and a small number of safety divers, while commercial collectors and associated businesses may generate millions of dollars in gross revenue.

Public Opposition Call for a Ban & BLNR Decision Making – Public opposition to commercial aquarium collection has been clear and consistent.

In October 2025, over 1,400 written testimonies were submitted, opposing the reopening of commercial aquarium fishing in a BLNR meeting.

In November 2025, the Hawaiian Civic Club of Hilo introduced a resolution calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, which was unanimously adopted by delegates at the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs Convention, representing more than 4,000 members.

Following this unified position, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs drafted similar legislation, and its Board of Trustees unanimously voted to include the measure in its 2026 Legislative Package.

In January 2026, the Hawai'i County Council unanimously voted to adopt Resolution 422-25, Urging the legislature to prohibit the take of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes.

Aha Moku has also consistently testified in support of a ban at Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) hearings, representing 147 moku throughout the pae'āina.

Decision Making. In December 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources was petitioned by marine advocates to direct the DAR to initiate rulemaking to prohibit commercial aquarium fishing. The Board unanimously voted in support of the petitioners' request for a ban, contrary to DAR's recommendation. However, the Office of the Attorney General advised that a ban could not be implemented through administrative rule-making alone, and requires legislation.

In December 2025, the Division of Aquatic Resources was required to proceed with rule-making related to commercial aquarium fishing under existing legal and administrative requirements. The Chair of the DLNR also noted that establishing a prohibition on commercial aquarium collection would require legislative action, and encouraged petitioners to pursue that pathway.

Since 1976, more than 8.6 million fish have been removed from Hawai'i's reefs for the commercial aquarium trade. Permitting the continued take of aquatic life effectively legalizes the privatization and exploitation of public trust reef fish resources for the benefit of a small number

of operators, placing short-term commercial interests above the long-term sustainability of shared natural resources.

So how long, and what will it take — another paid-for EIS or one more collector — before we decide our reefs have taken enough? How can we justify allowing an extractive practice like this while we are investing so heavily in recovery and restoration? At a time when climate change, sea level rise, and failing wastewater systems already threaten our reefs, all hands on deck — and all fish on reefs!

Policy decisions ultimately rest with the Legislature, and passage of HB2101 HD1 provides the appropriate path to establish clear policy on this issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2101 HD1.

Sincerely,



U'ilani Naipo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:38:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Fujikawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Opposition to Reopening the Tropical Fish Industry

Good Morning,

My name is Bryan Fujikawa, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to the reopening of the tropical fish industry in Kona. Having been born and raised in this beautiful community, I have witnessed firsthand the gradual degradation of our reefs over the years. Despite the closure of the industry in the mid-2000s, the reefs have yet to show significant signs of recovery, a stark reminder of the damage inflicted during the peak of fish collection.

During my time working for the airlines in the 1990s to early 2000s, I was alarmed by the sheer volume of fish being shipped out daily. The numbers were staggering, and it was a sobering realization to consider what our reefs would look like for future generations if this practice continued unchecked. Today, it pains me to see the state of our reefs; they resemble a desert rather than the vibrant ecosystems I once knew. The thought that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren may never experience the beauty of these underwater landscapes is heartbreaking.

The rationale behind the tropical fish collection often centers on economic gain, but I believe this perspective is fundamentally flawed. The fish collected for the aquarium trade serve primarily as decorative items, destined to sit in homes and offices, while local families rely on these same fish as a vital source of sustenance. It seems unjust that the priorities of a few should overshadow the needs of families who depend on access to these resources for their daily survival.

Moreover, it is concerning that the state is considering reopening an industry that has already shown signs of suffering. The lack of adequate resources for enforcement raises significant red flags. The permitting process is riddled with loopholes, making it likely that more divers will be at work than are authorized. This lack of oversight would inevitably lead to further depletion of our marine resources, pushing our reefs closer to irreversible damage.

In closing, I urge decision-makers to keep the tropical fish collection industry closed. The scars left by past practices have not healed, and reopening this industry would only exacerbate the damage done. Our reefs deserve the chance to recover, and future generations deserve the opportunity to experience the richness of our marine life as I once did.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,
Bryan Fujikawa

Chair and Members,

I am a former small business owner in West Hawai'i and I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 2101. Our islands already struggle with limited economic diversity. The aquarium fishery provides skilled, ocean-based jobs that cannot simply be replaced.

The Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources has stated that the fishery can operate sustainably under science-based management. Fishers funded a full Environmental Impact Statement out of pocket and are engaged in Chapter 91 rulemaking. Please allow the lawful process to continue.

Scott Brien

Forbidden Bounty

Kailua-Kona

Oppose

Aloha Chair and Committee,

Appreciate your time considering this HB2101, I care deeply about responsible ocean stewardship. Sustainable use is not the same as overuse. The data show strong reef fish populations in managed areas. I think if there is a dispute between two groups over a resource, we need to see what the facts are. In this case, the facts are very well understood by way of long term monitoring by DAR/DLNR. The science is very clear.

The Yellow Tang (Lau'ipala) has never been a traditional food fish in our ohana or community practice. This is not a subsistence issue. Please let the regulatory process play out instead of imposing a ban.

J. Akiu Jr.

OPPOSE

Howzit Chair,

I grew up on the Big Island. Good jobs are hard to find, especially ones tied to the ocean that pay decent. Aquarium fishing one legit job that guys train hard for and follow rules.

They did the EIS, they waiting on rules. If experts say sustainable, why shut it down now?
Please let them work.

Mahalo

Kaikea Smith

Kona 2/9/26

OPPOSE

2.27.26

House Finance Committee,

As a student studying environmental policy, I believe in following established law. HEPA review was completed, and the Environmental Impact Statement was funded by industry participants.

Legislative interference before completion of rulemaking undermines procedural integrity. Please allow science-based regulation to guide outcomes. Rash decisions challenge the legitimacy of our institutions and erode public confidence. Please oppose this measure, allow the DLNR to continue managing this fishery through their enhanced rule proposal.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaleo Tuivasa

Pearl City HI

OPPOSE HB2101

Chair and Finance committee,

I have worked on the ocean for decades as a boat captain and commercial fisheries. Sustainable management is possible and necessary. The aquarium fishery operated under strict regional restrictions before closure. The West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area went into effect in 1999 setting up a first of its kind giant region with unique rules and management. Community input was extensive and the aftermath was years and years of relative peace. The tour operators and trop divers well got along. I didn't really hear much about the problem with this until years later maybe around 2016. Some Snorkel Bob gear rental guy out of Maui and a lady started making this an issue again...even coming over here to Kona! I would read about it in West Hawaii today or other local newspapers but really, I never believed any of it. I know these trop guys. They are some of the best watermen and divers out there. Ive watched some of these guys pull into Honokohau harbor year after year and its always the same story. They catch their fish, they don't bother anyone, and everything stays the same. I'm not sure what the fuss is all about. Banning a fishery after these guys have been through so much hardship seems like a very terrible thing to do and I do not support such an extreme outcome

If the data support continued management, we should refine rules—not eliminate the industry entirely.

Mahalo

Bill Randell

Kona Hawaii

House Bill 2101

Do NOT support!

In my lifetime, I have never seen Yellow Tail treated as a cultural food fish. It is not part of traditional meals in our community. We will eat fish like Kole, Weke, Moi, and Manini. The yellow fish isn't one we wanted. Sorry! Haven't heard of this before.

Maybe set rules for the fishermen and find middle ground.
Compromise.

Sharon Fujihara

2/28/2026

Regarding House Bill 2101, Ban Aquarium Fishing

Oppose

Chair Todd and representatives of this committee,

I'm writing to you today as an out of business marine dealer. For decades I owned and operated Waynes Ocean World in Aiea. I would buy and sell fish from divers around Oahu and have yellow tang, kole and Achilles shipped over from Kona. I also imported fish from Christmas Island and the Marshalls. My wife and I did very well and raised a family who are now grown. When the court order /was issued at the request of these giant environmental groups, it hurt many businesses throughout Hawaii including mine. I hung in there paying overhead thinking this review process would wrap up but the activists kept suing and disrupting to slow it down.

Eventually I had to close my doors and close this chapter in my life. I'm old now and approaching retirement. This impacted on my savings and caused tremendous hardship with my family and the fishery. The divers here in Oahu all have gone through their own sort of struggles and the same is true on the Big Island. My recommendation is to oppose this measure. Allow for the process to continue as set by the BLNR. Additional rules have been proposed to further regulate the fishery, and this shows there's a plan in place. This issue doesn't need the legislature to step in and overreact with a ban. Why would a ban be necessary? There's been years and years of process and compliance with HEPA law that THIS legislature created. Many of the younger men and woman in this fishery have spent a lot of time and money complying with the court order and the law. To ban them at this stage would be

insane to me. Allow due process to carry on and do not disrupt this issue any further.

Thank You

Wayne Sugiyama

Waynes Ocean World

Aloha Finance Committee,

I'm in opposition to HB2101. I was a co-owner of Waynes Ocean World. Our business was impacted greatly by all that's gone on to the point where we had to close with no chance of return. I support all the fishers and packers out there. Great group of people who deserve to be treated fairly...NOT BANNED. Frankly, I'm tired of dealing with these crybaby activists every year because they will not accept reality... they are wrong and always have been. The facts do NOT support their allegations, it never has. If they are so right, why must they lie so much? Why do they pretend to understand the data better than the scientists? It's all so tiresome. My husband and I have been here through this entire movement of activists, and it's gone from snorkel operators in Maui, to diving operators all around making waves over nothing really. Now these same people have shifted the discussion into a cultural discussion. When did this become cultural? Just recently. It never was before but the activists are always changing their arguments to get what they want. This whole thing has made me bitter. They took away our way to earn a living in our final working years, and they did it under false pretense. They will tell you all sorts of sad stories about this or that but will never tell you the saddest stories of them all... the real ones. The ones where people had their lives flipped upside down. The ones where locals lost it all and turned to drugs and alcohol. The ones where older people like me, who have worked in this industry for forty years, lose it all at the end and ruin a lifetime of effort. The ones where people lost their health insurance because they couldn't afford it and then got brain cancer and are dying right now. The people pushing this should feel shame, but they are shameless. All they care about is being the next big environmental superstar activist!

Do what is right, vote this bill down and never allow this topic to be considered again.

Corrina S.

Formerly of Waynes Ocean World

OPPOSED

Aloha Chair,

The aquarium guys waited years already. They followed the court order, did the studies, and now waiting for rules. If we just ban 'em anyway, what was the point of all this? Ridiculous

Jobs already hard for find and you want to ban? Leave AQ guys alone. Enuf already

Caleb Jelly boy Jellings

Finance com:

Tourism fluctuates. We need economic diversity. Ocean-based industries are part of Hawai'i's working landscape. Ban Non profits and so called environmental groups from participating in the civic process!

Please do not eliminate this fishery or the businesses that take care of the fish

Vote NO

K thanks

Melissa Ortiz

Big Island

To whom it may concern:

I believe in rule of law. The aquarium fishery participants complied with HEPA, funded an EIS, and are engaged in Chapter 91 rulemaking.

The Legislature should allow that lawful pathway to proceed.

Please OPPOSE this measure/bill 2101

Bill Davis

Keau HI

Against, vote NO

My brother works in this industry as a fish packer and supports two children. This shutdown has already caused hardship on him and his family. Hes a single father and its tough raising his keiki when he is scrambling to pay his bills. The aquarium trade is a good job and I don't understand why some people are so mad. Get over it... its fish. You are hurting people.

Please consider the families affected and allow regulated fishing to resume.

Sara Cordoba

VOTE NO and OPPOSE!!

Aloha everyone,

My name is Kayson, im 19 years old. I was born and raised on Big Island. My father managed a warehouse for aquarium fish in Kona. I grew up around all these fish and it was a really good time. I enjoyed seeing the fish every day and my family did too. All this talk about all the fish dying, or yellow tang is a food fish, its not correct. The fish hardly ever died. How could a business for live fish run on dead fish? And further, how could a hobby for living aquariums carry on if everything was dying? These fish are expensive by the time they get to hobbyist mostly because we have to bag them up with plenty water and expensive Styrofoam coolers so the airlines can ship them. Everyone here knows how much it cost to ship overnight packages. Imagine shipping water. The fish are not dying, they do great in a tank. My dad has heard back from people through the years and they would say "hey remember that one fish you sent me...I still have him" With the cultural stuff, yeah Im gonna have to disagree on this. I don't mean any offense but its not correct. I poke fish, I walk the shoreline and gather. I do this with my friends on the weekends at Pine Trees. We talk story with choke guys that's camping and fishing whateva. No one has yellow tang. NO ONE. Not one person, ever. This isn't because they not there... you can see the schools of them in the shallows. Theres millions of them. This fish is considered to be a rubbish fish. That's basically all I can think of I wanted for share with you guys. Oh ya, this process shut down so many businesses and I want my dad to get back to this work again. He loves it, its good for him and good for my family. Maybe ill follow him. Right now I stay stocking shelves and may go Military.

Thank you

Kayson Pagan

Kona

Vote NO/OPPOSE

Aloha Finance Committee

My name is Aaron Pagan. I was born in Waianae on Oahu. When I was a young man I wanted more from life, to raise a family. I packed up and moved to Kona. There I was the manager of large wholesaler-dealer. Every day I would be there taking care of all the fish. We had many other workers who would pack the fish and help me keep everything in good working order. The fishes health is our priority. We look at every fish, every day. The fish didn't die. Whoever is saying that is not even close to being truthful. The fishermen would either bring me the fish or I would take our transport truck and meet them at the harbor. We knew everyone at Honokohau Harbor and Keauhou. Never had issues with people. In fact, mostly when we would be picking fish up, families would stop by so the kids could see the pretty fish. Now we have been closed down while the fishermen work their way through the HEPA thing. How much more science and rules, and ban bills do we need before these enviros from Maui get told straight? This is who is really behind this. Snorkel Bob. He just has more goons doing his dirty work. I know most of you guys don't know this but we do because its been going on for so long. If you guys are voting on a BAN, I hope you take this with a level of seriousness it deserves. This will hurt plenty of families...local people. Look into the science and all the process that has been done. Its still going. Don't ban the fishery

Mahalo

Aaron Pagan

Kona Hawaii

Oppose HB2101

2/28/2026

To: Chair Chris Todd and FIN comm

Aloha,

For decades I ran an aquarium shop in the heart of Kona town. We sold tropical fish to our local community. All sorts of people would come and look at fish and buy them for their tanks, especially very old people and kids. Aquariums are window into the underwater world. The fish are very relaxing and good to have around in your day to day life. It's a great way to unwind and destress. Many of the critics don't understand much about the hobby or the trade surrounding it. They make claims that are baseless knowing that decision makers wont be able to verify whats true or not. They play on emotional arguments, not factual ones. My store is now closed. I was winding down in my years and with the closure by the court order, I didn't see any reason to keep my shop up and running. I support all the people still fighting for the trade. Do not ban, allow the management, allow the process, and allow DAR to MANAGE.

Sincerely,

William Stockley

Stockleys Aquarium

OPPOSED

Hello committee members

Do not ban this fishery. Its important for my daughter and son in law.Its important to my grandsons. This fishery is very important to our family. I have been following along with this issue for years. My daughter is very active in all this and theres been a lot of work that's gone on with this issue. Let the Rules package play out. Now is not the time to Ban.

Thank You,

Tim & Kathy Cobb

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:44:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Strongly oppose this ban, and any ban

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 2101 HD1
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

HOUSE COMMITTEE on FINANCE
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 2nd, 2026

10:00 a.m.

Room 308

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of House Committee on Finance,

My name is Keanu Binney-Medeiros, and I am a Lineal descendant of Kealakekua Bay and a proud Hoa'āina of Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui inc.

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1**, which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, in counties with a population greater than 200,000 and less than 300,000. Effective 7/1/3000 (HD1).

In West Hawai'i, there are only seven permittees, each paying \$100 annually. Yet the cost to the State far exceeds that revenue.

Administrative oversight and operations require ongoing staff time and agency resources. Enforcement alone is estimated to cost no less than \$300,000–\$500,000, placing strain on already limited budgets. Even while aquarium collection is currently prohibited, poaching continues and it is never insignificant.

There are also additional costs to our reef ecosystems. The commercial aquarium industry removes native reef species, many of which are herbivores critical to controlling algae and maintaining the health of Hawai'i's reefs, which are already under stress from climate change, warming seas, and pollution.

Every fish extracted is not just a commodity. It is part of a living system that protects our shorelines, sustains local food systems, and supports Hawai'i's tourism economy.

Our natural resources are held in public trust for present and future generations. Allowing continued commercial extraction for ornamental purposes prioritizes short-term profit over long-term stability.

Will we continue to allocate public funds to regulate extraction for private gain, or will we invest in protecting the living systems that sustain our economy, culture, and communities?

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2101 HD1 and choose protection over exploitation for the sake of our reefs and our future generations.

Me ka ha'aha'a

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Binney-Medeiros". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Keanu Binney-Medeiros

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:03:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Todd and Committee Members,

I, Diane Ware, and a large majority of the residents of this island Moku 'O Keawe have supported a ban on the destructive extraction of our aquatic life from the fragile reef ecosystem for decades. I have been testifying on this issue since 2008 before our County Council, most recently January 2026 with overwhelming success and support from council members and communities around the island. One of the most compelling in person testimonies in strong support of a ban on 1/23/26 (1hr 22 minutes) was from Tim Stewart a former collector and wholesaler of reef fishes for the commercial trade. He testified about coral bashing in anchoring and in order to access and net the fishes. He also spoke about the injuries and deaths of fishes during capture and shipping off island. None of these practices are pono.

A recent **independent expert scientific analysis** of DAR's own data confirms that following the 2017 court-ordered shutdown of the aquarium collectiong, **yellow tang populations failed to recover as biologically and historically expected.**

The trade's fundamental conflict with **local culture and Native Hawaiian values as described in the state constitution Article XII Section 7** including pono fishing practices that limit take to what is truly needed. Many Hawaiians and groups like Aha Moku, Miloli'i Community, Kiholo and Ka'upulehu, Ho'okena and Kealia, and Kona Paradise oppose AQ fish collection permits benefiting the Pet Trade rather than local communities.

The inconsistency with **mālama 'āina** and the State's **constitutional public-trust obligation** to protect natural resources for present and future generations is evidenced by the HAWAIIAN community testimony which as been ignored or dismissed in the EIS process (CIA), and the more recent petition in 2023 (BLNR and DAR).

Furthermore published cost-benefit analyses showing residents receive **no public benefit** from the aquarium trade while bearing **all environmental and enforcement costs.**

I urge you to support local communities, traditional customs and our reef ecosystems by passing bill HB 2101.

Mahalo for "listening " once again to the pleas of the people for the fishes and now acting for all the people especially Hawaiians to ban the colonial based practice of allowing extraction of our reef fishes for the \$\$\$ benefit of the Pet Trade.

Diane Ware Keauhou -Volcano 96785

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:12:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Neuman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha...I moved to the big island 30 years ago. I heard about how it use to be called the gold coast because of the abundance of yellow tang. That is no longer true. Originally I wanted to have an aquarium of salt water fish. When I discovered that the yellow tang die within 1 to 5 years in a aquarium vs in the wild live 30 years, I changed my mind. They begin to reproduce at 5 years. From then on I've been fighting against any aquarium fish collection. The yellow tang is an important draw to visitors that snorkel. They also provide to our endangered turtles when they clean their shells of algae. Most islands in the world have banned aquarium collections because they realize how important it is to the environment and the eco system that they live in. We must permanently ban the aquarium collection on all the islands. It's too much of a loss to our future generations if we do not. Please vote to ban permanently the collection of aquarium fish for all the Hawaiian islands. Mahalo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:27:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I very strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons:

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas. Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang). Practitioners have observed a decline in abundance of these species over the years.

Ensuring Reef Health

Meanwhile, healthy and vibrant coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security. A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection protects this economic engine and foundation of resilience, and preserves Hawai‘i’s marine resources for future generations by ensuring species that support reef health stay on the reef.

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost of this industry to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources created a quota-based permit system which essentially closes the industry to all but the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our DOCARE officers. This means that resources that could be directed elsewhere will be used to supervise a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted. Let's evolve forwards not backwards. Let us protect not harm.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Tanya Morgan

Big Island, Hawaii

Affiliated with Oceanlifeline.org

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:28:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arnold Kotler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help preserve Hawaii's natural environment and limit or stop capture of tropical reef fish for aquarium sales. Thank you!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:28:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Eagle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT HB2101 and pass this bill to ban aquarium collection and make amendments to remove the human population stipulation and reinstate the statewide ban from the original bill.

Thank you,

Hannah Eagle

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:38:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Moennich	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

My name is Eric Moennich and I strongly oppose this bill.

Please do not pass HB 2101.

This bill is extremely biased and in fact discriminatory towards one user group.

This bill is being introduced out of an emotional argument from one user group not liking what another user group is doing.

I truly believe that the ocean is to be enjoyed by all user groups and not just one group or the other.

Commercial aquarium fishing can coexist sustainably with all other ocean user groups. Striking the balance of how to do that is what we should be discussing rather than an all out ban of the practice.

Banning the Aquarium fishery is a drastic action that will be nearly impossible to undo and does not strike the balance of two opposing views. Instead it favors one group over the other instead of finding compromise.

The bill itself is flawed in many aspects, which I will try to point out in the following paragraphs.

The bill says that aquarium collecting is unsustainable. This is flat out not true.

All fisheries are sustainable as long as the level of take is correct to support the fishery. Let me explain further.

If you have let's say 100,000 of one species of fish and only take one fish a year from that population then you have 99,999 fish left. That species then has an entire year to breed and reproduce to repopulate the species and or increase the population of the species. I think any reasonable person that is a scientist or not can agree that if you only took 1 fish out of a population of 100,000 than the population would be able to support itself and be sustainable.

The real question is not whether fishing is sustainable or not, but at what level of take is fishing sustainable. In my example above clearly taking one fish would be sustainable. Would taking 10,000 fish be sustainable? How about 20,000? That is the real question here. A question that should be answered by scientists and government organizations that we entrust to protect and regulate the resource.

Good news, we have already established a government Agency with doing this. DLNR and DAR have been continuously monitoring the fishery and making sure that the levels of take are sustainable and will continue to do so. They can at any time reduce the levels of take or impose bag limits on species that need time to repopulate and recover if needed.

So clearly this bill is not necessary for the argument of sustainability because the fishery can be and in fact is sustainable with the proper levels of take.

Also, if protecting the resource is the goal than let me warn you that even if you ban aquarium collecting, commercial food fishing of the same resource would still be allowed and at much higher take. I can take one fish and keep it alive for an aquarium and sell it at 10 times the amount that I could get if I speared it and sold it for food at the market. So would you rather me take 1 of a fish or 10 of the same fish? How is taking 10 of the fish better for the resource than taking 1 fish?

Next, the bill says that it is contrary to Hawaiian values to allow aquarium fishing. I find this argument hard to justify because while it may be contrary to some Hawaiians it is clearly not contrary to other Hawaiians. I have heard testimony from Hawaiians on both sides of this argument. Some Hawaiians feel it's wrong and others feel it's right. So how do we side with one group of Hawaiians over the other group of Hawaiians? I don't think we should pass bills that could divide Hawaiians against each other.

The bill also talks about how Hawaii's tourism based economy is threatened by aquarium fishing. All the aquarium collectors I know do not fish where tourists go. That would put aquarium fishers in direct conflict with the dive shops that fill their tanks.

If in fact conflict did exist between aquarium fishers and Hawaii's tourism based economy, then a simple solution is available. Instead of banning the practice of collecting aquarium fishers, why not just make it illegal for aquarium collecting on the tourist spots? You see there is a balance that can be found here as with all aspects of the bill. Tourism can take place on some areas and aquarium collecting can take place in other areas where tourists don't go.

In the last joint hearing of this bill on February 18, 2026, in front of the Committee on Water & Land, and the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, I was present in person and was very disappointed in what I saw. I witnessed an extremely biased chair named Nicole Lowen, that stated and I quote, "As everyone I think who knows me knows I've supported a statewide ban for a long time but I'm happy to be able to move this forward in any form".

In any form? Any form means regardless of whether the merits of the bill are true or not. In any form means regardless of whether the science supports this bill or not. Any form means

regardless of whether this bill is discriminatory or not. In any form means whether this bill is the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do.

We can do better. Please do not just pass this bill in "any form". Please actually decide whether the merits of this bill are justified or not.

Furthermore, in the same hearing on February 18, 2026, I witnessed how the chair and other members of the committee, called up for additional questions after the public testimony phase, two members of the audience that were supportive of the bill and against aquarium fishing. However, nobody from the audience, myself included, that was opposed to the bill and in support of aquarium fishing, was called back up for further discussion and or questioning. Why was nobody that supports aquarium collecting called up for additional questions after? The hearing was clearly biased to one side.

Enforcement was also brought up as an issue at the hearing. DLNR explained that enforcement is an issue with all fisheries in Hawaii not just the aquarium fishery. So are we going to shut down a fishery just because there might be a few bad actors out there? Aren't there bad actors in any industry? Please do not punish those, like myself, who follow the law.

Another argument that was brought up at the hearing by Amy Perrusso was and I quote, "It just doesn't pencil out even economically for the State". The argument that we should ban aquarium fishing because it's not profitable for the State of Hawaii is drastically flawed. We do not make things illegal just because they are not profitable. We decide to make something illegal because it's the wrong thing to do. If we decided whether or not we do something based solely on profits then we would not have a rail here, we would not have public schools, we would not have Police, Fire, or EMS. Many things we do in the state are not profitable but we do them because they are the right thing to do.

Allowing aquarium collecting in some form is the right thing to do. If we need to raise the cost of permits or add fees to the landed catch of fishers to support the fishery than by all means do that, but don't shut down a fishery just because it might not be profitable for the State of Hawaii.

Another argument that keeps coming up is that the aquarium fishery is too small to be worth saving. This again is a flawed argument. Just because a group is small does not mean that they are not worth saving. The main reason we are so small right now is because the aquarium fishery has been now required to do an Environmental Impact Statement. This had to be funded by the fishers and any groups we could find to support the fishery. Because of this many fishers were forced to drop out because they did not have the money needed to continue. So first we are reduced as a fishery by regulations and then the fact that the regulation caused us to be a smaller group is the basis to ban us all together? The aquarium fishers worked long and hard to finish an EIS and if all that hard work was for nothing only to be banned after completion, that would be very sad and feel extremely unfair.

Please I urge you do not pass this bill.

Passing this bill would also set a dangerous precedent that any fishery in the state could be shut down just because some people don't like it, rather than on the merits of whether the fishery is justified.

Please strike a balance between two opposing user groups and find a compromise. Please do not side with one group over the other. An all out ban of the aquarium fishery, as this bill proposes in its current form, does not strike that balance.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Eric Moennich

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:43:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Michele Nihipali and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:44:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please do not allow the aquarium trade to harvest any tropical fish from Hawai'i waters. They are needed here.

Mahalo,

Barbara Barry

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:09:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donelle Sawyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Donelle Sawyer and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Donelle Sawyer

Ban aquarium collecting in Hawai'i

I support HB2101. I support a complete ban on aquarium fishing in Hawai'i. We are stewards of the lands and seas of Hawai'i and we need to protect ALL the flora and fauna of our 'aina and kai. Banning aquarium fishing will allow our reefs to flourish and thrive, not to just be sustainable. The flora and fauna of this 'aina belongs to everyone, not just a handful of greedy fisherman who will plunder our reefs just for a temporary gain. The cost to our 'aina is too high for just a few individuals. The price to monitor and enforce aquarium collecting is too high for the minimal reward. Please ban all aquarium collecting in Hawai'i waters. Mahalo.

Buffy Nakachi

Kailua Kona, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:17:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill which protects our ocean environment by prohibiting the for profit aquarium fisheries from decimating our precious sea life and disrupting the ocean reef environment!

The potential of lost income is in no way justified by

disreption of our natural ocean environment!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:18:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Mcknight	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

In January 2026, the Hawai‘i Island County Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 422-25, urging the Hawai‘i State Legislature to prohibit the commercial collection of aquarium fish from Hawai‘i’s marine waters. That unanimous vote reflects a clear and growing message from our island communities: protecting reef ecosystems is a priority for the people we represent.

HB2101 allows the Legislature to act in alignment with science, community values, and responsible stewardship of Hawai‘i’s marine resources.

Healthy reefs depend on abundant fish populations—especially herbivorous species such as surgeonfish and tangs. These fish play a critical ecological role by grazing algae that would otherwise smother coral. Scientific research consistently shows that reefs with strong herbivore populations recover more quickly from bleaching events, resist invasive algae, and remain significantly more resilient in the face of warming oceans.

When these fish are removed for the aquarium trade, reefs lose one of their most important natural defense systems. The result is predictable: more algae, weaker coral, declining biodiversity, and ecosystems that struggle to recover from climate stress.

This issue also touches on deeply held Hawai‘i values of **pono and kuleana**. Reef fish are part of an interconnected living system that supports food security, cultural practices, and community well-being. Removing these fish for ornamental display permanently extracts life from that system while providing little benefit to the broader public.

From an economic perspective, living reefs generate far greater long-term value. Hawai‘i’s reefs support snorkeling, diving, shoreline protection, tourism, and subsistence fishing—activities that depend on healthy fish populations. Protecting reef ecosystems protects these sustainable economic benefits that communities rely upon.

The Legislature also carries a responsibility under Hawai‘i’s **public trust doctrine** to manage marine resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Taking prudent steps to protect reef ecosystems is consistent with that responsibility.

At a time when coral reefs worldwide are already under pressure from climate change, Hawai‘i has the opportunity to lead by protecting the ecological balance that reefs need to survive.

HB2101 helps ensure:

- Greater resilience of Hawai‘i’s reefs in a warming ocean
- Protection of cultural and subsistence relationships with the sea
- Stewardship of public trust marine resources
- Healthy reefs for future generations of Hawai‘i residents

Ultimately, this decision is about what kind of legacy we leave. Future generations will depend on the choices made today about how we care for Hawai‘i’s ocean resources.

For the health of our reefs, our communities, and the generations that will follow us, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:25:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
bobbie becker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose ALL aquarium fish collection in Hawaii. The reason is that ALL fish species are needed in the ecosystem. The systematic catching and removal of reef fish will lead to a decline in the health of the entire ecosystem. This is well documented.

The people who say that this is their livelihood are not serious. We have all had to change with the times and the needs of society and our world. We now know how critical the ocean ecosystem is to our planet's health.

Please stop this unsustainable exploitation of our reefs.

Testimony Re: Agenda Item F.3 December 5, 2023

The Honorable Dawn Chang, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources

We are writing to reaffirm our support for the West Hawai'i Aquarium fishery. In 2020 we joined our colleagues in a letter published in West Hawai'i Today outlining why we accept the data demonstrating that this fishery is clearly sustainable. Since that time, nothing has changed to alter that conclusion.

In this era of social media, it has become easy to affect public opinion with campaigns of disinformation, hyperbole, and untested hypotheses presented as facts. The public is often confused or unwilling to critically evaluate such statements, and too often accept false evidence on face value. The West Hawai'i Aquarium fishery has been under assault by such a campaign for many years, even though the populations of key aquarium species, such as the Yellow Tang and Kole, have increased over the past twenty years. The fishery has not been without fault during its 50 years in existence, but these incidents have been the exception and do not, in our experience, represent the high ethical standards that these fishermen exercise during the collection, care and handling of live fishes.

The BLNR has a rare opportunity to turn this controversy into a teachable moment for the public. You have access to decades of data methodically collected by DLNR biologists, as well as detailed reports presented every five years to the Legislature. Compare these data, analyses and conclusions to the statements made by opponents to the fishery. They have no comparable, long-term data sets and therefore resort to using anecdotes, fear, and untested hypotheses to support their agenda. At this pivotal moment, you can act in the public interest to separate facts based on data, from arguments that are data-free and therefore baseless.

Science can provide conclusive evidence supporting this fishery as sustainable. There is also ample evidence that the fishermen act ethically in their treatment of the animals from the moment they are collected until they are shipped to their destination. Philosophical, moral, and cultural arguments are mostly beyond what science can resolve. However, we feel that the fishermen and their advocates have provided an excellent review of these topics in their EIS. In addition, we find it difficult to justify shutting down a fishery that strives to keep fishes alive and in good health, while continuing to permit many of the same species to be killed and eaten. We do not contest the argument that killing fish for food is acceptable (provided it is done sustainably), but aquariums also have significant value, as evidenced by the number of aquatic biologists who were inspired by their home aquariums to pursue careers in science. It is hypocritical to claim killing fishes is moral but keeping them in aquariums is not.

Please take the time to study the data reports prepared by your staff biologists based on thousands of transects that required many, many hundreds of man-hours to collect and to analyze. They did not set out to demonstrate that the fishery is sustainable but that is clearly the conclusion after 20+ years of effort. Campaigns of disinformation should be recognized and rejected. Use your authority to establish a process whereby data and science become the basis for decisions. Permanently closing what many consider the best monitored and regulated inshore coral-reef fishery in the world, would be a precedent with significant implications for all other Hawai'i fisheries.

Bruce A. Carlson, Ph.D.
Richard Pyle, Ph.D.
William J. Walsh, Ph.D

The 1998 law which established the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) required the DLNR/DAR to present a report to the Legislature every five years on the effectiveness of the WHRFMA. To do so it was necessary to study how the new regulations were working. To accomplish this, DAR in association with the University of Hawai'i Hilo, established a rigorous, scientific monitoring program in 1999 to track changes in reef fish populations and coral reef benthic communities. Over the past 20 years, 82 survey divers have conducted over 2,100 underwater surveys for this monitoring project. Additionally, a number of other scientists have conducted research in West Hawai'i relating to aquarium issues and/or targeted species.

The monitoring data show that the regulations put in place have been very effective in managing aquarium collecting in West Hawai'i. The West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area is among the best studied and most effective fishery management efforts to date, and scientific data clearly show that management is working with population increases of the primary targets. For example, as noted in the 2019 DLNR/DAR legislative report, the populations of the two most heavily collected species of West Hawai'i aquarium fish, Yellow Tang and Kole, which collectively made up 92% of total aquarium catch in (FY17/18), more than doubled over the past two decades. Their populations even increased in the areas open to collecting likely due to spillover from protected areas.

Concern expressed about the threat of climate changes such as coral bleaching on reefs warrants extreme caution in reviewing activities such as aquarium collecting. This concern over coral bleaching is certainly warranted but somewhat surprising given that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) leadership has not implemented the 2017 Coral Bleaching Recovery Plan which was developed by DAR and the University of Hawai'i based on the input of over 100 scientists and resource managers from around the world. The goal of the Recovery Plan was to implement management actions to promote coral recovery after bleaching in Hawai'i and the scope of the Plan was much more comprehensive than just focusing on aquarium collecting.

As experienced Hawai'i marine science researchers with a direct/intimate understanding of this issue, we want to re-emphasize that the strong support we are expressing for the fishery is due entirely to the survey efforts and results of the DAR research team. There is a huge amount of data and other information showing that the aquarium fishery is sustainably managed and that the system works. This type of science-based management should be a model for other fisheries in Hawaii.

William Walsh Ph.D.	Cynthia Hunter Ph.D.
Ivor Williams Ph.D.	Brian Bowen Ph.D.
Brian Tissot Ph.D.	Brian Zgliczynski Ph.D.
Leon Hallacher Ph.D.	Jeff Ebel Ph.D.
Bruce Carlson Ph.D.	Alan Friedlander Ph.D.
Charles Birkeland Ph.D.	Kosta Stamoulis Ph.D.
Jeremy Claisse Ph.D.	Delisse Ortiz Ph.D.
Mark Christie Ph.D.	Jan Dierking Ph.D.
Richard Pyle Ph.D.	Rob Toonen Ph.D.
Leighton Taylor Ph.D.	Jim Beets Ph.D.
Randy Kosaki Ph.D.	.

My Turn: **We expect better from DLNR leadership**

William Walsh Ph.D., Ivor Williams Ph.D., Brian Tissot Ph.D.; Leon Hallacher Ph.D.; Bruce Carlson Ph.D.; Charles Birkeland Ph.D.; Jeremy Claisse Ph.D.; Mark Christie Ph.D.; Richard Pyle Ph.D.; Leighton Taylor Ph.D.; Randy Kosaki Ph.D.; Cynthia Hunter Ph.D.; Brian Bowen Ph.D.; Brian Zgliczynski Ph.D.; Jeff Ebel Ph.D.; Alan Friedlander Ph.D.; Kosta Stamoulis Ph.D.; Delisse Ortiz Ph.D.; Jan Dierking Ph.D.; Rob Toonen Ph.D.; and Jim Beets Ph.D.
My Turn | Thursday, June 25, 2020.

Last month, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) unanimously rejected the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on aquarium collecting in West Hawaii. What is particularly distressing and demoralizing about the BLNR decision was that it clearly was not based on the best available science and relevant monitoring data. Other than a single preliminary question, neither the chairperson nor board members asked any questions or solicited any input from the four Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) staff members, including three aquatic biologists, who attended the meeting. The DAR staff certainly could have provided science-based information and background on the issues being discussed and used as rationale for the FEIS denial.

For example, Chairwoman Suzanne Case stated that a lack of data regarding the number of fish that would be collected was of particular concern and there really are no limits on the numbers that can be taken. DAR has over 40 years of West Hawaii aquarium catch and permit data and it is clear that the amount of catch has tightly tracked the number of collectors. Catch and the number of permits have been significantly correlated so there is little justification to assume that there are no limits on the number of fish that would be taken given that the FEIS suggests limiting the number of permit holders

to 10. Based on the clear evidence from the existing dataset, the projected total yearly take by these 10 aquarium permit holders would be substantially less than the take by the yearly average of 49 permit holders working in the period since the no-aquarium collecting Fish Replenishment Areas (FRA) were established in 1999.

Similarly, concern was expressed about the threat of climate changes such as coral bleaching on reefs, which thus warrants extreme caution in reviewing activities such as aquarium collecting. This concern over coral bleaching is certainly warranted but somewhat surprising given that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) leadership has not implemented the 2017 Coral Bleaching Recovery Plan which was developed by DAR and the University of Hawaii based on the input of over 100 scientists and resource managers from around the world. The goal of the plan was to implement management actions to promote coral recovery after bleaching in Hawaii and the scope of the plan was much more comprehensive than just focusing on aquarium collecting.

The chairperson and the board also had issues with the aquarium take of Achilles tang referring to it as highly depleted. Aquarium fishers in West Hawaii are the only ones in Hawaii who have a bag limit for this species (10 fish/person/day). This limit was based on an earlier effort to implement islandwide size and bag limits for a wide range of fish species for which there were management and community concerns. A total of 15 public meetings involving over 380 people were conducted from January to June 2009 and a consensus was achieved on the management rules. All this effort was thrown asunder when the DLNR chairperson at the time refused to allow implementation of the rules.

The 1998 law, which established the West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA), required the DLNR/DAR to present a report to the legislature every five years on the effectiveness of the WHRFMA. To do so, it was necessary to study how the new regulations were working. To

accomplish this, DAR in association with the University of Hawaii at Hilo, established a rigorous, scientific monitoring program in 1999 to track changes in reef fish populations and coral reef benthic communities. Over the past 20 years, 82 survey divers have conducted over 2,100 underwater surveys for this monitoring project. Additionally, a number of other scientists have conducted research in West Hawaii relating to aquarium issues and/or targeted species.

The monitoring data show that the regulations put in place have been very effective in managing aquarium collecting in West Hawaii. The West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area is among the best studied and most effective fishery management efforts to date, and scientific data clearly show that management is working with population increases of the primary targets. For example, as noted in the 2019 DLNR/DAR legislative report, the populations of the two most heavily collected species of West Hawaii aquarium fish, yellow tang and kole, which collectively made up 92% of total aquarium catch in (fiscal year 2017-18), more than doubled over the past two decades. Their populations even increased in the areas open to collecting likely due to spillover from protected areas.

As experienced Hawaii marine science researchers with a direct/intimate understanding of this issue, we find the disregard for the science-based management initiatives of DAR and island communities demoralizing and counterproductive. We expect better from DLNR leadership. We want to re-emphasize that the strong support we are expressing for this fishery is due entirely to the survey efforts and results of the DAR research team. There is a huge amount of data and other information showing that the aquarium fishery is sustainably managed and that the system works. This type of science-based management should be a model for other fisheries in Hawaii. The truth is out there, it needs to be embraced.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:35:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Desmond Twigg-Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi – this is Desmond Twigg-Smith. I am a lifelong Hawaii island resident. I have been swimming, surfing, fishing on the island my whole life. I have personally witnessed the decline of our reef fish and can honestly say that the population decrease in my lifetime is extremely sad. Please support the band on aquarium fishing, so that future generations have a chance to enjoy the reefs and fish.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:36:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:37:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cates	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I oppose HB 2101, a ban on Aquarium collection has and will negatively affect not only Aquarium collection even though it is a sustainable fishery, but it aslos has affected Aquaculture and Public Aquariums in Hawawii. Aquaculture has a bright future yet the anti Aquaruim legislation has hampered potential investment already in the millions due to the uncertanty of broodstock collection. The very same opponants of Aquarium collection while highlight aquaculture, have in the past protested its ability to collect species from the wild. Monterey Bay Aquarium was denied permitts for this very reason. Please support DLNR-DAR in managing this fishery, support Aqauculture and fishers to fish sustainably .

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:40:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James T Lovell	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am opposed to this bill:

The very premise of this bill is based on a lie.

“The legislature finds that the capture and sale of Hawaii's native reef wildlife for ornamental display and commercial profit is unsustainable.”

The state's own scientists have clearly shown that this is not true. There is no evidence to substantiate this statement. It is simply a lie by our opponents. The number of yellow tangs actually went up by over 3 million fish during the last twenty years this industry was active. That is the truth.

People say they are worried about the reef due to global warming, then why are we allowing over 1,000 snorkelers a day destroy Kahaluu Beach park from severe overuse? Why are we allowing Pine Trees to be destroyed from hundreds of scuba divers? No one cares about something that is actually a major problem but, they say one diver, per day, in over 150 miles of coast line can wipe out everything and needs to be banned.

People say on Subsistence fishing is pono. You should only take what you can consume. They why is it no one is proposing to shut down every other fishery in Hawaii?

I am told it is ok to kill hundreds of pounds of Ahi a day to serve to the tourists in the restaurants but it is no ok to save 10 pounds of yellow tangs!

I am told that we should leave them on the reef to suffer the same fate as the millions of other yellow tangs that perish every year by being eaten by other fish. The facts are that 83% of juvenile yellow tangs die in the first year on the reef. 99% die before the end of their 2 year.

This industry is the most regulated fishery in the state. It is Sustainable, renewable and non-polluting and brings in millions of dollars into the state.

How many of you campaigned on destroying jobs and livelihoods for no valid reason so that people in Hawaii have to move away. That is what this bill is.

Please do not pass a bill based on lies in order to discriminate against a user group. Laws should apply to everyone not a few.

Please vote no on this bill.

Jim Lovell

Support for HB2101 —my wife and I are full time residents in North Kohala on the Big Island. We write to express our strong support for HB2101 which enact a permanent statewide ban on the commercial harvesting of reef fishes.

The reasons and need for such legislation are beyond any reasonable dispute.

Simply put the aquarium trade:

- Kills, injures and maims reef fish.
- Dooms those that survive capture to a short, unhealthy and miserable life.
- Harms corals and other species with whom reef fish have a beneficial relationship.
- Degrades the marine environment and is wholly contrary to Hawaii's environmental stewardship and care of the 'aina.
- Is a trade with no future that benefits only a very select few and costs far more to regulate than tax or fee revenue it would generate.

Legislation banning the aquarium trade is the solution. Vote yes on HB2101

James Hopkins

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:50:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Kealii Pang, Ph.D. I am a resident of Kaimukī, O‘ahu, and President of a nonprofit that holds a long-term lease on State land dedicated to the cultural education of Native Hawaiian ‘ōpio in Wai‘anae. I am also a retired federal biologist with 35 years of conservation work in Hawai‘i. I write today in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1.

As a biologist, I have spent my career documenting the critical ecological roles played by the very fish targeted by the aquarium collection industry. Herbivorous reef fish — particularly lauipala (yellow tang) and kole (goldring surgeonfish) — are the engine of a functioning reef. They graze the algae that would otherwise smother coral polyps, especially following the heat-driven bleaching events we are now experiencing with increasing frequency. Removing them by the hundreds of thousands per year for the ornamental pet trade does not just deplete a population — it dismantles the ecological processes that protect our shorelines, support our subsistence fisheries, and sustain the nature-based tourism economy that our islands depend on.

The legislature has correctly recognized what the 1953 territorial legislature deliberately ignored: these fish have always had cultural, subsistence, and ecological value. In my work with ‘ōpio in Wai‘anae, we teach that the reef is not a commodity — it is a living expression of our kuleana to care for the ‘āina and kai. The aquarium collection industry violated that kuleana on an industrial scale.

The industry was shut down by court order in 2017 and has remained shut down for nearly a decade. That status quo has allowed West Hawai‘i's reefs to begin recovering. The Division of Aquatic Resources should be focused on that recovery — on climate adaptation, habitat restoration, and addressing the myriad other pressing management challenges facing our nearshore waters — not on expending its limited resources to revive a defunct industry that serves the profit of a few at the expense of all.

I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Kealii Pang, Ph.D. Kaimukī, O‘ahu

Malia L Kipapa

March 2, 2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT BILL HB2101 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

Aloha e House Committee on Finance ,

My name is Malia Kipapa, and I am from the Island of Hawai'i in the moku of Kona, representing my Kipapa 'Ohana. I write in strong support of the proposed bill "Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection," to **permanently ban the commercial extraction of Hawai'i's reef fish and marine life** for the aquarium trade.

I have advocated against this extractive and unsustainable practice since 2009, when I first learned of its devastating impacts on reef fish populations and marine ecosystems. Across Hawai'i, communities have repeatedly spoken up to protect our reef life, not just as a resource, but as a vital part of who we are, sustaining our way of life and maintaining our spiritual connection to the ocean.

This proposed ban represents both ecological justice and reaffirms our constitutional rights of the Hawai'i State Constitution to protect Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights. The aquarium trade has contributed to the decline of targeted species such as kole, umaumalei, and Lauipala (yellow tang) which all have equally deep cultural and ecological importance. Healthy reefs have far greater long-term value than short-term private profits.

After years of litigation, testimony, and sustained community outcry, the message remains clear: our reefs are not for sale and Hawai'i cannot afford to subsidize their extraction.

Today, there is no dedicated budget to support or manage the extractive practice of aquarium fishing. In West Hawai'i, there are only seven permittees, each paying just \$100 annually. Yet the costs to the State are significant and ongoing. Administrative and operational expenses continue to accrue, and enforcement alone is estimated to cost no less than \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually. These public expenditures far exceed the minimal revenue generated by the permits.

Beyond these direct costs are impacts that cannot be easily quantified. The immeasurable damage to our reef ecosystems carries no formal price tag, yet the loss of biodiversity and reef resilience affects fisheries, shoreline protection, and long-term ecosystem health. The tourism businesses of West Hawai'i, which rely on vibrant reefs and abundant marine life, bear economic risks when reef health declines. There are also profound cultural impacts. Our reefs are public trust resources, central to Native Hawaiian practices, food security, and intergenerational stewardship responsibilities.

The rules being proposed place additional procedural steps on aquarium collectors, yet they provide no guaranteed compliance mechanisms or dedicated enforcement funding. Compliance and enforcement remain discretionary and inconsistent. Even with aquarium collection currently prohibited, poaching still occurs, and it is never insignificant. Without a funded, structured enforcement framework, expanding or formalizing this practice only deepens the State's fiscal and management burden.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Finance Committee to take a comprehensive and transparent look at the true fiscal impact of this activity. Hawai'i should not be allocating scarce public resources to administer and police a practice that generates negligible revenue while placing substantial strain on our natural, cultural, and economic systems.

I strongly support advancing HB2101 to protect Hawai'i's native marine life, uphold Native Hawaiian rights, safeguard public trust resources, and ensure pono stewardship of our reefs for future generations.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify and for your continued commitment to our shared kuleana.

Ke Aloha 'Aina Ke Aloha Kai mau a mau!

Malia Kipapa
on behalf of Ka 'Ohana Kipapa

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:03:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice d. kopff	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to this bill.

It is full of lies and misinformation and needs to be thrown out.

If the truth and facts do not support our opponent's platform, it is not this body's job to support the lies that are being made up.

Please consult your own Biologists at DAR for the facts. They can easily verify that this industry is sustainable.

Please vote no on this bill.

Jan Kopff

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:15:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Cates	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the FIN Committee,

This testimony is in opposition to HB2101 HD1 to permanently ban aquarium fishing in Hawaii. The measure does not address or respect processes and requirements set forth by this Legislature, administrative rules, and precedent setting judicial decisions, and should be **deferred** for the following reasons:

A permanent statutory ban overrides the regulatory tools the Legislature has already empowered DLNR to use.

HB2101 is a policy choice—not a scientific necessity. Scientists, DAR fisheries management, and scientific data collected by the State, NOAA, and educational institutions do not support a permanent closure. DAR has repeatedly provided testimony and scientifically-backed evidence that re-opening the aquarium fishery presents a low risk to reef habitats and ecological resources under their management.

In addition, Environmental and Hawai‘i Supreme Court rulings require compliance with the Hawai‘i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) before the issuance of aquarium permits could be considered by DLNR. HEPA is a procedural statute requiring environmental disclosure and analysis prior to decision-making.

The environmental review process for Hawai‘i island was accepted and upheld in the Supreme Court. The O‘ahu environmental review process is ongoing. Since 2017, the closure has caused significant hardship for small, family-run businesses—many of whom are Native Hawaiian and born and raised in Hawai‘i - local fishers with generational ties to the fishery and deep knowledge of reef stewardship and cultural values. Many of these fishermen have participated in a fishery that has been a historical practice for nearly 80 years.

The Legislature should allow the HEPA process for O‘ahu to conclude before enacting any kind of permanent statutory ban.

While the Legislature has authority to enact policy changes, adopting a permanent ban risks rendering the environmental analysis process moot, substituting legislative presumption over scientific findings and the authority appointed to DLNR by this very legislative body.

Consider the ramifications to all projects subject to HEPA if a ban is implemented prior to completion of a judiciary directed environmental review, and the financial hardship and years long investment of those following that directive that will never receive compensation for that sacrifice.

Consider those opposed to the aquarium fishery and their political reasons and unlimited, out-of-state financial backing received to close down a sustainable fishery. Locals cannot afford to compete with those types of interest groups. All Hawaiians, fishermen, and consumers will be impacted by the initial closure, because inevitably, passage of this measure will initiate the next action to limit or prohibit all fisheries that are against a political agenda.

Please consider the purpose of the environmental review framework, previous legislative actions, existing administrative powers appointed by this Legislature before enacting a permanent statutory prohibition anywhere in the State.

I respectfully urge you to defer or reject this bill and allow science-based adaptive management to guide fisheries regulation in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Lisa Cates

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

My name is Rick Warshauer, from Volcano on the Big Island. I write to ask you to pass HB2101 to ban commercial aquarium collection statewide. This ban reflects majority public sentiment on the issue. Passing this bill also will eliminate provisions that have caused regulatory confusion, inaction and conflict at the affected agencies.

Please do it today—no more studies, no more mitigation measures, no more ignoring this addressable issue, one of several major threats to the health and abundance of our declining reef life. You cannot act to reduce ocean water warming, you cannot act to eliminate pollutants to reefs that are regulated by other agencies, you cannot act to readily eliminate harmful invasive reef species, but you can, as many here request, act to end the mining of our reefs and near shore water of its wildlife for the pet aquarium trade. Please begin the process today.

Since the mid to late 1970's I have watched the diversity and quality of reef life diminish sharply due to the growing impacts of the aquarium collecting trade. This exploitation expanded to leave O'ahu's reefs a shadow of what they once were; then it spread to the once-bountiful resources of the neighbor islands, with similar consequences. The various species of angel fish, butterfly fish and tangs that I used to enjoy seeing are gone from view and are at risk of regional extirpation. Temporary closures and prohibited take zones have demonstrated the rapid positive effects of excluding the aquarium trade, but these require careful monitoring by overworked staff to reduce continued take by the brazen scofflaws.

A complete prohibition coupled with public reporting is what is required and expected. The public is engaged and widespread on Hawaii reefs and willing to report violations. Thus, DOCARE should be able to act directly from the public-provided reports and videos, saving time for other DOCARE duties. Currently there is no authorized commercial collecting, only outlaw activities, indicating that any commercial reef life collecting and/or sales are illegal. To allow any exceptions to the law, by allowing any commercial collecting permits as desired by DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources, would necessitate far more time for investigations, complicating enforcement and incurring more cost.

Mahalo.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:53:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I stand in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban the commercial collection of aquatic life for the aquarium trade. This bill is a critical, necessary, and long-overdue legislative action to end a destructive and extractive industry that has operated against the will of our communities, the health of our reefs, and our values for far too long. The path to this hearing has been paved by decades of community advocacy, sound science, and now, a unified call from across the Pae ‘Āina for a permanent, statewide ban.

However, I must **strongly and respectfully question the amendment inserted by the previous committee** that limits the prohibition to counties with a population greater than 200,000 but less than 300,000. As drafted, this provision would mean the ban applies **only to Hawai‘i County**. This amendment represents an unacceptable narrowing of the bill and a fundamental undermining of its purpose.

If the aquarium trade is destructive enough to be banned in Hawai‘i County—where the science is clear, where the community has fought for decades, and where the reefs have demonstrably failed to recover—then it is destructive enough to be banned everywhere. The harm does not stop at a county line drawn on a map. The cultural degradation, the ecological damage, and the exploitation of public trust resources are not unique to West Hawai‘i. They occur wherever this industry operates.

This amendment appears designed to kill the bill by making it so narrow as to be virtually meaningless, or to create the illusion of action while leaving the industry untouched everywhere else. It is a disservice to the communities on every island who have advocated for a permanent, statewide ban. It ignores the unanimous call of the Hawai‘i County Council, who asked for a statewide solution, not a county-specific carveout. And it betrays the fundamental principle that our public trust resources belong to all the people of Hawai‘i, not just those in a specific population band.

The previous committee's amendment should be removed in its entirety. We need a clean, **statewide ban**—nothing less.

The State's Agencies Have Failed in Their Trust Duty

The recent history surrounding this issue is a story of profound institutional failure and betrayal of public trust. In 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) unanimously supported a community-led proposal for a permanent ban via administrative rule—only to abruptly reverse itself and claim it lacked authority, pushing the responsibility to you, the Legislature.

In a stunning act of bad faith, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) then took that same proposal and transformed it into a framework to restart large-scale commercial extraction. This is a direct subversion of the community's clear demand and the BLNR's own initial, correct instinct. The legislature is now the last line of defense.

Science Confirms the Damage and the Failed Recovery

The scientific case for a ban is unequivocal. A recent independent expert analysis of DAR's own data reveals a shocking truth: despite the 2017 court-ordered shutdown of the aquarium trade, yellow tang populations in West Hawai'i failed to recover as biologically and historically expected.

Decades of extraction have done deep, lasting harm. Instead of ramping up science to understand this crisis, DAR has chosen willful blindness, slashing robust, 20-year monitoring programs from 4-6 survey rounds per year down to just one. The state is now managing in the dark, a dereliction of its constitutional public trust duty to protect these resources.

The Industry is Fundamentally at Odds with Our Values and Law

This trade is a model of exploitation, not conservation:

- **It is Culturally Destructive:** It conflicts fundamentally with Native Hawaiian values and pono fishing practices, which limit take to what is truly needed for sustenance and ceremony—not for the decorative pet trade. It is a violation of mālama 'āina.
- **It is Criminally Compromised:** Despite four major criminal convictions in the past five years involving at least 10 industry members, illegal poaching for this trade continues. A legal framework only provides cover for ongoing black-market activity.
- **It is a Net Loss for Hawai'i:** Published cost-benefit analyses confirm that the people of Hawai'i receive no public benefit from this trade. Our residents bear all the environmental loss, enforcement costs, and cultural degradation, while a handful of private interests profit.

The Legislature Must Uphold the Public Trust

The BLNR and DAR have demonstrated they cannot or will not solve this problem. The Hawai'i County Council has spoken unanimously. The scientific data, even in its now-limited state, shows a reef in crisis and a fishery that cannot sustain this plunder. The community's opposition spans decades.

HB2101 represents a decisive choice. Will we continue to allow a damaging industry to deplete our public trust resources for private gain, or will we finally fulfill our obligation to protect these vibrant reefs for the enjoyment, sustenance, and cultural practices of current and future generations of Hawai'i's people?

The answer is clear. But that answer must apply to **all of Hawai'i**, not just one county. I urge this committee to **remove the population-based restriction** and pass a clean, permanent, **statewide ban** on the commercial aquarium trade. It is the only pono path forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:15:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
linda willaby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Linda Willaby. I strongly support HB 2101. I live on the island of Hawaii and I am an ocean advocate who has seen firsthand the destruction of the ocean reefs due to declining fish populations. I support HB 2101 because commercial aquarium collection contributes to the destruction of our reef ecosystems. Thousands of fish and invetebrates are shipped off island instead of staying here on our reefs to support a healthy reef and support Native Hawaiian subsistance fishing. Stop handing out passes to continue reef destruction. Our reef fish are not an infinite resource. They will run out and there will be nothing left for anyone else to just enjoy. Does every natural resource have to be a source of revenue for people? The ban on aquarium fishing should be for all the Hawaiian islands.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:21:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Keala Fung and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O'ahu and West Hawai'i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai'i's waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai'i Island's waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Keala Fung

honolulu hawaii

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:36:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Dinner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let's back away as much as humanly possible from disrupting the balance of our oceans and reefs. our lives depend on a healthy ocean and we have placed it in grave danger. Please pass this bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:44:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Heyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of this bill to permanently ban commercial aquarium fishing.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:03:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Earl Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Earl Kim and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O'ahu and West Hawai'i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai'i's waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai'i Island's waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Earl Kim

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:11:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alohi Nakachi	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and house members of this conference committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB2101 HD1 to ban commercial aquarium collection statewide.

My name is ‘Alohi Nakachi, I was born and raised on moku o Keawe but I now reside on the island of O‘ahu as I moved here to pursue a PhD. I have obtained a PhD from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the department of Natural Resources and Environmental management. In my PhD research I focused on cultural ecosystem services looking at how humans interact with and relate to our surrounding environments (Nakachi, 2024). My research focused on contemporary research fields such as environmental science, ecological economics, environmental psychology, and Indigenous research.

The aquarium trade has been a major driver in my pursuit of contemporary higher education. I have been in hearings on this issue since I was 5 years old and I have long felt that Native Hawaiian voices have not been well heard or included in contemporary management and ‘ike Hawai‘i is not well understood or acknowledged. As an Indigenous environmental scientist, the aquarium trade shows ecological, socio-economic, and cultural harms. The aquarium is a clear example that Native Hawaiian values and ‘ike Hawai‘i continue to be disregarded.

Contemporary ecological monitoring of the aquarium trade began in the 70s. Researchers showed that aquarium collection had significant negative ecological impacts with fish populations declining (Tissot and Hallacher, 2002; Walsh et al. 2004). The state has, and some researchers claim this is the most managed and researched fishery in Hawai‘i and claim it is a sustainable fishery. The most recent DLNR report (DLNR, 2024) shows fish

populations as variable by site and species with many species and sites still in decline or declining. Those species that may be increasing are only marginal from 1999 initial surveys. Sustainable is a subjective word in fisheries that can often be defined as allowing a minimum baseline to not further decline and often include measures of yield and take as part of the definition. Looking at contemporary ecological science is equivocal as species populations are variable both declining and increasing. Increasing areas are often those that are closed, have further protection or co-management efforts. Even from a contemporary ecological science definition, it is reaching to say this would be a sustainable fishery.

Contemporary ecological science only looks at the aquarium from as early as the 70s and mainly uses the 90s as a baseline. From an Indigenous science perspective, this is using a baseline of decline. The 70s and 90s have already had major ecological degradation from overfishing, land use change, and socio-political regime shifts. Even if we use the 70s and the 90s as a baseline this is from a state of decline that even those species and places that show increasing trends are still nowhere near a baseline of 'āina momona, or abundance from traditional management systems. Additionally, sustainable from an Indigenous science view often means ensuring 'āina momona or in some definitions ensuring that resources can be used and sustained for 7 generations. Looking at the ecological impacts from an Indigenous science perspective this fishery has shown ecological harms and is far from sustainable.

It is true however, that the aquarium trade is not the only stressor on the environment that could be impacting fish populations and causing decline. This gets into the socio-economic harms of the aquarium trade. The reefs of Hawai'i face numerous and compounding threats from both local and global stressors including increasing storms and storm intensity, flooding, pollution, wastewater, sea level rise, and resource users. Coral reef ecosystems and fish populations continuously face compounding threats and stressors, as such wasteful and unnecessary practices such as the aquarium trade should be banned. The aquarium trade is wasteful as it has shown to have mortality at each stage of collection. The aquarium trade only economically benefits those engaging in collecting and shipping fish, with the main economic benefits existing outside of the state as an estimated 95% of fish collected are sent out of state (Dierking, 2002; Schaar and Cox, 2021). The economic benefits of this trade would only be held by a small number of people. NOAA fisheries reports have shown up to 90 permitted participants before the temporary moratorium, with largely 30-40 active participants in the fishery, and proposed participant lists for just West Hawai'i are 7 active participants. The economic benefits of the aquarium trade would be the monetary gain to those participants and in comparison the cost would be the ecological harms and socio-cultural harms of removing the hundreds of thousands of fish those participants would take annually. The aquarium trade mainly exists outside of pae 'āina of Hawai'i where these fish, if they survive collection, would serve a hobbyist industry for fish to be bought to serve as decoration. Some advocates of the aquarium trade claim

the educational benefits of the aquarium trade however there are separate exemptions and permits for public aquariums and educational purposes. The permitted aquarium trade just supports a hobbyist industry. This is a completely unnecessary practice and an added ecological stressor and burden contributing to compounding ecological threats and uncertainty. From a contemporary social science socio-ecological science perspective, the aquarium trade in Hawai'i shows significant harms and marginal benefits but only to the small number of participants in the trade in Hawai'i.

From an Indigenous science and contemporary social science perspective, the aquarium trade is completely unacceptable culturally. For my masters degree I interviewed participants to understand the contention and conflicts of the aquarium trade (Nakachi, 2016). Reasons why there is so much contention around the trade has been continued and ongoing mismanagement and lack of trust in management and enforcement agencies, but also just a general lack of understanding and acknowledgement of 'ike Hawai'i. Places have been forever changed from perceived aquarium impacts with not only fish populations not returning to previous rates but fish behavior changes and ocean relationships forever altered from these fish populations and behavior changes. In my PhD research I got a bit more into what relationships and connections people have with their surrounding environments and why these are so important. We miss out and we exclude and undervalue so much of environmental impacts and environmental values when we only look at ecological and monetary values. To Native Hawaiians 'āina or the land, waters, and all native inhabitants are part of a reciprocal 'āina system to feed and be fed. In this 'āina system all are related with Native Hawaiians being the youngest in this familial system with land, water, elemental forces, and more than human inhabitants coming before us. This reciprocal 'āina system has been disrupted with land use changes and socio-political regime shifts. But many kia'i or Native Hawaiian stewards are striving to maintain reciprocity so that 'āina systems can feed and be fed. A practice that removes an inhabitant such as fish to not nourish 'āina and be taken out and removed entirely from the pae 'āina is not ok. Perhaps in a time of 'āina momona would some consider the trade as acceptable but we are far from 'āina momona. What I have learned as an Indigenous researcher from many practitioners and in mo'olelo, Hawaiians are often heeded to respect and maintain reciprocity with 'āina. From an 'ike Hawai'i perspective I believe the trade would symbolize human greed and arrogance we are often warned about in mo'olelo. As we face compounding and increasing ecological threats in Hawai'i, struggle to maintain 'āina systems and 'āina integrity, struggle to feed Hawai'i, and face increasing diaspora, removing fish from 'āina to support a hobbyist industry outside of the pae 'āina is completely unacceptable and disrespectful.

As a Native Hawaiian kānaka scientist with a PhD in Natural Resources and environmental management I do not support the aquarium industry. The aquarium trade has shown ecological, socio-economic, and cultural harms from a contemporary ecological and social

science perspective and especially from an Indigenous Science perspective. I support SB2078 and HB2101 and would urge you to consider banning aquarium trade.

Mahalo nui,

‘Alohi Nakachi, PhD

References:

DLNR (2024). Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA). Report to the Thirty-Third Legislature 2025 Regular Session. 130p.

Dierking, J. (2002). Socio-economic study of the aquarium fishery in West Hawai‘i. Cesar Environmental Consulting.

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Nakachi, A. (2024). Recognizing Indigenous Knowledge and Values Through the Discipline of Cultural Ecosystem Services: Insights for Research, Management, and Academia. University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Schaar, S. I., & Cox, L. J. (2021). The future for Hawai‘i’s marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact assessment. Marine Policy, 127, 104429.

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HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:11:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
irene kloepfer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Irene and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:22:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Fukushima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in SUPPORT of House Bill 2101.

In 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously supported a community-led proposal to ban commercial aquarium collection — then stated it lacked authority and directed advocates to pursue legislation.

That legislation is HB2101.

Meanwhile:

- DAR reversed course and proposed reopening large-scale commercial extraction
- Reef fish monitoring has been drastically reduced — from multiple survey rounds annually to just one
- An independent analysis of DAR's own data shows yellow tang populations did **not** recover as biologically and historically expected after the 2017 shutdown
- Poaching cases and weak enforcement remain documented concerns
- At the same time, Hawai'i's reefs face warming seas, bleaching events, sedimentation, and declining resilience.
- Removing thousands of herbivorous reef fish each year works **against** reef recovery — not for it.

Mahalo,

Elaine Fukushima, Kailua-Kona

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:24:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am testifying in support of HB2101 HD1. I am also requesting an amendment that would prohibit collection of fish for aquariums in the entire state, not just in Hawaii County.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 12:37:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Coe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB2101 HD1 and respectfully urge its passage.

- Hawai‘i’s reef wildlife is a public trust resource. The State has a constitutional duty to safeguard these resources for current and future generations. Allowing commercial aquarium collection shifts the risk and damage onto the public, while the burden should rest on the industry to demonstrate that its activities cause no harm.
- Independent cost-benefit findings make clear that residents receive no meaningful public benefit from the aquarium trade, yet we shoulder the environmental degradation, enforcement expenses, and long-term ecological consequences.
- The removal of reef fish for private profit conflicts with local culture and Native Hawaiian values, including pono fishing practices that emphasize restraint, necessity, and balance. Taking wildlife for ornamental export does not reflect those principles.
- This practice undermines mālama ‘āina by treating living reef ecosystems as inventory to be extracted, despite their essential ecological role in maintaining reef health and resilience.
- The methods used in the aquarium trade, along with the high mortality rates tolerated throughout capture and transport, would be unacceptable in virtually any other animal industry. Reef species should not be treated as disposable simply because they live underwater.

Our marine ecosystems are finite and already under pressure. It is neither prudent nor responsible to permit the commercial exploitation of these limited resources—especially when their ecological importance is undeniable and the claimed public benefit is minimal at best.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB2101 HD1 and respectfully ask you to pass this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:01:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Kaleiwahea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha - I support this bill. Thank you.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:02:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in strong support of HB2101 HD1 and respectfully ask the Finance Committee to pass this measure.

It is simply wrong that a commercial aquarium permit costs only \$100.00 while operators can make hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars exporting our public reef fish. The people of Hawai‘i bear the real costs: reef degradation, cultural loss, and the expense of oversight and enforcement. That is not a fair return on a shared public resource.

Our reefs are part of the State’s public trust, and there is a constitutional duty to protect them for present and future generations. The burden should not fall on the public to prove harm after damage is done. If an industry seeks to extract wildlife for private gain, it should be required to clearly demonstrate that its activities do not harm these ecosystems.

Commercial aquarium collection is also inconsistent with Native Hawaiian values, including pono fishing and mālama ‘āina, which emphasize restraint, balance, and stewardship. Removing reef wildlife for ornamental export does not reflect those principles.

While we support HB2101 HD1 as amended to apply to Hawai‘i Island, limiting the protections to one island leaves the reefs of other islands vulnerable. Our marine ecosystems are interconnected and finite. Ultimately, these protections should extend statewide to ensure consistent stewardship across all islands.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB2101 HD1 and urge its passage, with the hope that comprehensive, statewide protections will follow.

Mahalo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:02:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laila Moire-Selvage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Laila Moire-Selvage and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Laila Moire-Selvage, 96771

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:20:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DIANE CHOY FUJIMURA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

/Cmd+VAloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Diane Choy Fujimura and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

Aquariums are pretty much like zoos. Capturing sea life to imprison the creature for human viewing.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more

pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Diane Choy Fujimura

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:46:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
riley koch	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

support the science..

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:47:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Takayama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting the bill that stops the ecologically and culturally harmful commercial aquarium industry on Hawai'i Island. Nature should not be exploited for the profits of human beings.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:53:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susie Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Susie Davis and I live in Kohala on Big Island. As an ardent supporter of Hawaii having healthy oceans, coral, and fisheries, I strongly encourage you to support HB2101 and end the aquarium trade in Hawaii.

Our oceans and fisheries are already in peril due to warming, acidification, overfishing and pollution. All these dangers pose a grave threat to our coral reefs and the biodiversity in our marine ecosystem. As protectors of Hawaii's unique and limited natural resources, we need to stop the extraction of Hawaii's reef fish by the exploitive pet trade industry.

Populations of Hawai'i's most important fish species have declined by 90% since the early 1900s. A 2012 report revealed that over the last several decades, some places in Hawai'i have lost up to 60% of their coral cover, which is essential for creating habitat for healthy fish populations. Adding further stress to these resources, the 2015 mass coral bleaching event caused a loss of 30% of coral cover statewide.

Tropical fish are stewards of the reef. They help keep coral reef ecosystems healthy and in balance. By removing these fish, coral reefs get out of balance and become more susceptible to stress from warming oceans, bleaching, and ocean acidification. Keeping fish on the reef is essential for healthy and resilient coral reef ecosystems.

In Kohala where I reside, subsistence fishing is an integral part of Native Hawaiian culture. The Aquarium industry serves markets outside of Hawai'i where huge profits are being made from Hawai'i's precious natural resources with no reciprocation to the many residents, in particular Native Hawaiians, who are being denied access to the millions of fish taken from their waters.

Extracting reef fish for the pet trade industry is not consistent with Native Hawaiian subsistence, cultural, or religious practices, nor is it consistent with being protectors of our precious marine environment.

At this pivotal turning point in the history of coral reefs we must all learn to live sustainably and support strategic management to secure our future and protect our resources. I strongly object to any further compromise or negotiation that enables a trade that is a direct threat to our marine environment and our indigenous culture.

Sincerely,

Susie Davis

Kapaau, HI 96755

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:03:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TODD SHIRAKI	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am emailing you today because my livelihood is in jeopardy and will be on the chopping block this coming Monday at your finance committee meeting. HB2101 calls for a complete ban on the Aquarium fish fishery. It is the most heavily studied fishery in the state with an Environmental Impact Statement that was approved by the Hawaii Supreme Court! It is the most sustainable fishery there is in Hawaii. We are up against big environmental groups that will say and do anything to shut us down. All i ask is for you to keep an open mind as you cast your vote on Monday and to know as a born and raised local my future here is in jeopardy.

DLNR already has been working on this fishery for a few years and has a plan for its future. Please let them plan it out.

Mahalo for you time

Todd Shiraki

March 1, 2026

My name is Ming Peng, and I reside in Hilo. I wholeheartedly support HB2101, a bill that seeks to prohibit commercial tropical fish collecting in Hawaiian waters. Hawaii should be seen as responsible stewards of our natural resources. It is unacceptable to remove Hawaiian reef fish from their natural habitat for profit and entertainment. This bill serves as a powerful message that such exploitation is unacceptable and contrary to Hawaiian values. In my opinion, the bill should be amended to include a statewide ban on commercial tropical fish collecting. I strongly urge the legislature to pass HB2101 preferable with this amendment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ming Peng". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:11:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cara Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please oppose Hb2101. Local families livelihoods are at stake if this bill passes. I support this sustainable fishery and hope that you will oppose this bill. It is tough to stay here in the islands when good jobs like this are done away with. Again please oppose this bill.
thank you Cara Shiraki

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:17:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cade Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha please do not pass this bill. My family are steak holders in this industry. We have had to struggle to make ends meet ever since the moratorium on AQ fishing. This is a sustainable fishery and i do not understand why you would want to essentially ban it. DLNR has a plan for this fishery. Lets see it through.

Mahalo Cade S.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:29:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith Graham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Judy Graham from Kamuela on Hawaii Island, a resident for over 50 years. I came to feel both affection and wonder towards Hawaii's reef life when I was younger. Please end this unethical practice which treats Hawaii's wildlife as a commercial commodity for the random entertainment or wallpaper of out of state purchasers.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:33:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB2101.

This bill prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Protecting our beautiful reef fish on Hawai‘i Island from risking starvation and death when shipped out of state is crucial.

Please pass this important bill!

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

My name is Dave Ramos, born & raised on Oahu & a 33 year veteran of Aquarium Fishing. I oppose HB 2101. There is maybe 10 veteran AQ fisherman on Oahu all of who know how to rotate qera's for sustainability. The science supports this.

As for culturally acceptable for Hawaiians, lets not forget before the overthrow of 1893 the Alii Nui appointed the Konohiki to look after the qhu puaa from the mountains to the sea. After the overthrow the Hawaii Territorial Government abolished the Konohiki system.

With that gone we needed people who knew the ocean & mountains to balance the qina. That's when the Lawaia for the ocean & reef & the Kanaka Hahaione for the mountains came in. This is Kanaka Maoli history. The Alii were wise & knew what they were doing. Fishing sustainably is Hawaiian.

Maka'ala, towards those who would divide & conquer the Kanaka. They are still here to pit Hawaiians against Hawaiians. I have many family & friends who are Kanaka & none of them agree with those who want to ban this small fishery.

So sad that our powerful great Hawaiian people & their culture will soon be gone. Sadder still it will also be at the hands of some of their own people

Mahalo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 2:56:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard xie	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly Opposed To HB 2101

Dear Esteemed House Representatives, Please do not pass HB 2101; it would be the wrong decision.

HB2101 ignores the latest Supreme Court decision supporting the EIS-approved fishery opening and contravenes EIS laws and the EIS approval process.

Both Big island and Oahu fishermen spent big money to follow the court decision to prepare EIS process. None of the other ocean related industries has done as aquarium fish industry did to finish EIS report. If this bill passes, no industry shall follow DLNR procedure for industry development.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:00:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
benjamin garfinkle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have watched the affects of aquarium trade for over 50 years

it is not sustainable or financially sound bussiness

this ban must be made permanent

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:05:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jerry Isham	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Aloha, My Name is Jerry Isham and I am apposed to banning the Aquarium industry this will only hurt our own local fisherman who depend on this income. Dlnr already manages the fishery. Please vote no!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:12:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce Griggs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Bruce Griggs. I live with my wife, Lori, at 681788 Niu Hao Hao Place in Waikoloa Village. We have owned our home here since February, 2022.

Hawaii is a beautiful and vibrant place to live. I have been fortunate to travel all over the world. Yet, no place holds the special place for me as Hawaii does.

Vibrant, health fish-feeled reefs are part of what makes Hawaii so special. The Isands' reefs are under severe stress. Reopening commercail extraction of reef fish is not responsible management.

We strongly support HB2101 and urge all responsible members to do the same.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:16:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharde Freitas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Sharde Freitas and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sharde Freitas

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:29:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity

to testify.

Mahalo.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 3:45:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for the past 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons.

Commercial aquarium fishing flies in the face of Hawai‘i’s constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good, rather than private gain. The aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly die during, or within a year after, collection.

At the same time, this commercial activity has diminished the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef systems, undermined the state’s food security and climate resilience, and degraded a cornerstone of our tourism-based economy. Not surprisingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

While commercial aquarium collection has not been allowed for the better part of a decade, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection. Moreover, on-reef tourism activities that are dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Given the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, such as climate change impacts, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101 H1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Alexander McNicoll
Honolulu, O'ahu

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:00:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:18:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yuhgene Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my full and enthusiastic support for HB2101. I hold a PhD in Materials Science and Engineering and currently serve as a Senior Engineer specializing in energy storage systems.

As an engineer and a scientist, I am trained to value the health and efficiency of complex, interconnected systems. I believe that protecting Hawai‘i’s reef fish is a vital investment in the stability and longevity of our natural environment.

A Positive Vision for Hawai‘i’s Reefs:

- **Optimizing System Health:** In my professional work, I focus on the integrity of high-performance systems. Our coral reefs operate with a similar level of precision. By keeping fish on the reef, we ensure the "maintenance crew" is fully staffed to keep the ecosystem clean, vibrant, and productive.
- **Strength Through Biodiversity:** A fish-filled reef is a resilient reef. Protecting these populations enhances Hawai‘i’s natural beauty and bolsters the long-term prosperity of the local community and the tourism economy.
- **Scientific Stewardship:** My background in R&D teaches me that the best path forward is one based on conservation and proactive management. Passing this bill is a forward-thinking step that prioritizes the health of the entire state.

Request for a Comprehensive Amendment:

I encourage the committee to further strengthen this measure by amending it to apply the ban statewide. A unified, statewide approach ensures the highest level of protection for all of Hawai‘i’s waters and creates a clear, consistent standard for conservation excellence.

I urge you to pass HB2101 to secure a thriving, fish-filled future for our reefs. Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully,

Yuhgene Liu, PhD

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:22:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marty Kossoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, as a resident of Hawaii, I am reaching out to voice my strong support for HB2101. Our reefs are the lifeblood of our islands, yet they are already currently struggling under massive pressure. We need permanent protections—not a return to commercial extraction. Please support this bill and help us leave a healthy ocean for our keiki!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:26:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pauline Fiene	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha ~

As a diver and Maui resident for 40 years I have seen the decline of reef fish populations and reef health due to soil runoff, due to chemicals and fertilizers from land that have found their way into the ocean, and from coral bleaching episodes. The last thing that we need is for fish to be removed from their important and necessary roles on the reef for the pure enjoyment of out-of-state aquarium keepers. Please support this bill and also please ammend to apply statewide.

Mahalo,

~ Pauline Fiene

HB-2101-HD-1

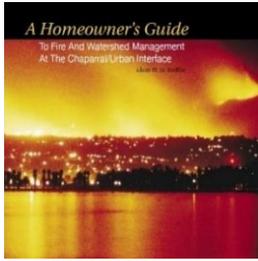
Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:35:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

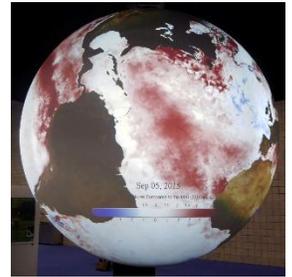
Comments:

In support of. Thank you.



From the Desk of Klaus Radtke, Ph.D. (U.C. Berkeley)
Wildland Resource Sciences
Fire-, Vegetation-, Watershed Management
Disaster Mitigation

klaus.wh.radtke@gmail.com (808) 230-1374



March 2, 2026

Aloha Chair Todd, Members of the House Finance Committee:

Re.: HB2101 HD1

I strongly support this bill.

Because of documented concern about commercial aquarium collections that harmed the aquatic ecological balance, the aquarium collection industry was finally largely shut down by court order in 2017. Is this not correct? However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now trying to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming it is mandated by State Law to do so. Is this not also correct?

Let us put the brakes on DAR's perhaps finance-driven present proposals and let it come back next year to show us how a more limited proposal could be accomplished based on science that everyone can understand and evaluate.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Christopher Stankis, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now-standing status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O'ahu and West Hawai'i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Additionally, only a small percentage of these fish will live for more than a year in the aquarium environment. This artificially short lifespan adds to the demand for more of these ornamental fish at a rate that negatively impacts the overall species population in nature.

Accordingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents, as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai'i's waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai'i Island's waters to commercial aquarium collection, and

that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Christopher Stankis

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 4:56:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Salter Jacobson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Kimberly Salter Jacobson from Waikoloa Village on Hawaii Island. I've lived here on the Big Island for 17 years.

I'm writing to express and share my deep, sincerest support of the urgently needed bill, HB201, to permanently ban commercial aquarium collecting statewide, forever.

I'm an avid swimmer and swim weekly with a group in Makaiwa Bay. We swim our regular route, recognize the fish "neighborhoods" and adore the ocean and all of its inhabitants.

We see, feel and appreciate the extremely special place that exists here. Sadly, I've been swimming in this bay for over 20 years. I've seen the damage to the coral and remember how vibrant it was when I first saw it many years ago and note that the healthy coral line is now much further out. It's still one of the best snorkeling and diving spots on the island. Education and care is key.

We need to protect our precious fish, reefs and the oceans in which they live. Our oceans are not for the few, they are for everyone to enjoy. For all people, now and into the future. To even consider a few benefitting for business at the cost of the ocean and earth itself and all it has to offer, is beyond comprehension.

I've been told that the Gold Coast was originally named for the yellow tang you could see from the air and from shore. I would like to imagine that being the case again. If we allow them to be taken from the ocean, we can't expect them to thrive and multiply. Tropical fish can be grown/farmed. This should be the only way to fill an aquarium. Create more. Do not deplete the resource.

Thank you for showing care and respect for the aina, the ocean, and doing the right thing. Mahalo!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Salter Jacobson

(808) 313-0562

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:03:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelina Kossoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I am writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. As our reefs are already vulnerable and facing severe stress, reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:16:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia Kossoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in strong support of HB2101. I support the permanent ban on commercial aquarium collecting because I know that our reefs are under an incredibly high level of stress already and we need to do what we can to mitigate. Commercial aquarium collection would be counter to everything that needs to be done to preserve Hawaii's ecosystems

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:42:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matt jacobson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Matt Jacobson and I have been a captain and diver on the Big Island since 2001. Over the last 25 years I have personally witnessed the depletion of reef fish while trop collecting was legal and also the rise in population after it was banned, along with areas along the coast that also banned spearfishing. The reef in my opinion is much healthier now that it was 25 years ago and if we were to allow trop collection again I expect it would decline. Stay the course and let's not backtrack on the health of our reefs. The state profits much more from the tourist trade that snorkels and dives with this precious resource.

Thank you,

Matt Jacobson

Waikoloa, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 5:50:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sanjay Velappan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 6:07:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james ward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing to voice my support for HB. 2101 "permanent ban on Commercial aquarium collecting" As a resident and diver in south Kona I have seen the effects of aquarium collection in the local waters first hand. Aside from the negative impact on the ecosystem , the negative impact on tourism should also be considered. The result of aquarium collection is profit for the few to the detriment of many.

Mahalo,

James Ward 808-895-9656

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 6:35:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sydney Chung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Sydney Chung and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai'i Island's waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sydney Chung

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 6:57:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hugh Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. Aquarium fishing is:

- **a taking of a public resource without adequate compensation**
- **destructive to the environment**
- **unsporting and cruel**

THIS SHOULD BE AN EASY DECISION ON YOUR PART. Do the right thing and vote this bill into law.

H. Baker

Kailua Kona, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:01:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daren Katayama	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The aquarium fish collectors should be allowed to collect fish in a reasonable and responsible way. There are always "bad apples" in any group of people, and those who violate the laws and Reg's should be punished accordingly. But allow the responsible collectors to continue their livelihood.

For decades, State leaders have urged Hawaii businesses to diversify from tourism; the fish collection industry would offer a venue of diversity that would help in this goal.

I live on Hawai'i Island and have been an avid shoreline fisherman for over 60 years. I have seen much of our old fishing spots disappear due to development of our coastline. As a realist, i understand that development is inevitable... so I am "pro" development, as long as they are "good" choices, and "responsible" choices. Here is an analogy to the fish collection issue, about also having "bad apples" in the development industry. Just because there are bad apples in the development industry, you should not ban all developers. You regulate the industry, punish the abusers, and allow the good, responsible developers to continue their livelihood! Same for the fish collectors!

We should allow businesses in Hawaii, especially our "small business" owners, to continue working responsibly, and to be successful. And this group includes the fish collectors. This is the reason I oppose HB2101.

Aloha

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:05:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri Zacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Keri Zacher and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O'ahu and West Hawai'i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai'i's waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai'i Island's waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely, Keri Zacher

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:08:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Bambara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB2101 HD1. Please pass this bill to prohibit aquarium collection with amendments to remove the human population stipulation and reinstate the statewide bind from the original bill.

Thank you for supporting protection of the sea and aina as well as hearing my plea.

HB 2101 Testimony

Hello Chair and Board Members,

Manuel Guerrero, COO of the Biota Group strongly supports HB 2101 to prohibit commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

Aquaculture provides a sustainable and responsible alternative to wild collection, and our company has demonstrated that this model is both viable and capable of meeting global demand. Over the past seven years, we have invested millions of dollars in research, development, and infrastructure in Hawai'i to culture popular ornamental marine species locally. This investment supports consistent, well-paid jobs and long-term career pathways that are resilient to climate change, shifting regulations, and evolving global environmental standards.

Passing a commercial aquarium collection ban would further strengthen investor confidence and encourage continued expansion of Hawai'i's ornamental aquaculture sector. The potential economic loss to Hawai'i's established and growing aquaculture industry far outweighs any short-term gains from commercial aquarium fishing—both in overall economic value and in sustainable job creation.

Aquaculture allows Hawai'i's reefs to remain vibrant and naturally stocked, while still sharing iconic species with the world as ambassadors for marine education, conservation, and stewardship.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 2101 and reinforce Hawai'i's leadership in sustainable marine practices, future-focused economic development, and reef protection.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:50:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nina Monasevitch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101.

Alarminglly, a recent **independent expert scientific analysis** of DAR’s own data confirms that following the 2017 court-ordered shutdown of the aquarium collecting, **yellow tang populations failed to recover as biologically and historically expected.**

Ongoing **illegal poaching** for the aquarium trade, despite **four criminal convictions in the past five years involving at least ten industry members.**

The trade’s fundamental conflict with **local culture and Native Hawaiian values**, including pono fishing practices that limit take to what is truly needed.

The extraction of ocean wildlife for aquariums is inhumane, unsustainable and not pono! To help Hawaii’s coral reefs recover from bleaching, we need to protect and maintain a healthy population of the herbivorous fish that are essential to reef ecosystems.

The aquarium trade industry is inconsistent with **mālama ‘āina** and the State’s **constitutional public-trust obligation** to protect natural resources for present and future generations.

Published cost-benefit analyses showing residents receive **no public benefit** from the aquarium trade while bearing **all environmental and enforcement costs.**

Permanently ban commercial aquarium collection statewide! Pass HB2101. The ocean is our life support system.

Malama Pono,

Nina Monasevitch

Lihue, Kauai

March 1, 2025

2101 HB RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

I strongly oppose this bill. The Aquarium fishers on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii have been unfairly targeted over and over again. Despite this, they have proven the sustainability of their industry and are complying with the States ever changing legal demands and always moving goal posts. Please stop this bill immediately and let these fisherman have the fair opportunity to let the process play out. I strongly oppose this bill.

Paul Kimsel

Fisherman

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:16:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my mana‘o on this topic. I am a strong supporter of this effort to stop and ban the take of our i‘a for aquarium collections. This horrible practice is archaic and not sustainable. We must take a stand to ensure that our ecology is kept in the best possible balance. WE MUST STOP THIS BEHAVIOR. Please pass this item and help preserve our Hawai‘i.

Mahalo nui,

Kimeona Kane

Waimānalo

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 10:34:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth McDermott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keep the aquarium trade closed!

See my prior testimony on this

My name is Lynn Ryan, Hawaii Island, Kailua Kona. My visitors, friends and i snorkel often and see the decline of reef fish. Please support HB2101 and b an commercial reef fish collection.

In 2023, the BLandNR unanimously supported a community-led proposal to ban commercial aquarium collection — then stated it lacked authority and directed advocates to pursue legislation. That legislation is HB2101.

Removing thousands of herbivorous reef fish each year works reef recovery — not for it.

Reef fish monitoring has been drastically reduced. Data shows yellow tang populations did recover as biologically and historically expected after the 2017 shutdown. Poaching cases and weak enforcement remain a documented concern. Hawai‘i’s reefs face continued warming seas, bleaching events, sedimentation, and declining resilience. We must protect our ocean wildlife.

Mahalo, Lynn Ryan

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:12:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Hunt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG Support.

Please pass HB2101 !

I have been actively advocating and testifying FOR our aquatic species and against destructive aquarium collection (and the documented consequential mass death of our reef fishes) for over a decade now.

Enough is enough, Pass HB 2101..!!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:02:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:28:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Bryant	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I am in strong support of HB 2101 HD 1 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. I am a lifelong resident born and raised in Ko'olaupoko. I come from a long line of commercial and subsistence food fishers. Our livelihood depends on the health of our reef ecosystems and on a healthy and thriving fish population.

While the bill in its current form bans collection in some communities, I strongly urge your committee to amend HB2101 HD 1 to include a ban on commercial aquarium collection in Kāneʻohe Bay. Ever since collection rates in Kāneʻohe Bay skyrocketed in 2019 and 2020, numerous organizations in our community have had robust discussions about this destructive trade and have decided that commercial aquarium collection is not consistent with our community values and priorities. Some of the Ko'olaupoko organizations that have passed resolutions seeking a legislative ban on commercial aquarium collection include the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council, Kāneʻohe Neighborhood Board, Koʻolaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, Koʻolau Foundation, Kahaluʻu Neighborhood Board, Kailua Neighborhood Board, Waimānalo Neighborhood Board, as well as the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, which represent the voices of nearly 4,000 members.

I strongly urge this committee to stand with the thousands of residents in our community seeking a legislative ban on commercial aquarium collection and pass HB 2101 HD 1 with amendments to include a ban on commercial aquarium collection in Kāneʻohe Bay.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Elena Bryant

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:51:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Anil Mehta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Preserving our aquatic life is important and a kuliena. having a commercial aquarium is a fine thing, but not at the cost of the aquatic life. There must be significantly larger shells for the aquatic forms to operate and survive. The other day I was visiting UIUC and in their student union there is a aquarium, its about 2' by 5' and there are about 50 fishes in there. I brought it up with the administration and the people feeding the fish. Giving them a natural or close to natural habitat is our kanaka duty.

Please do the right thing and provide the best way to satisfy our aquatic friends.

Trust the committee agrees to this and believes in presrvation of our habitat.

Aloha nui kokua!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:56:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Zalewski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support** of HB2101 HD1. Hawai'i's coral reefs are the backbone of the marine ecosystem, essential for coastal protection, biodiversity, and local food security.

The commercial aquarium trade can negatively impact the long-term health of the reefs. We cannot ignore that Hawai'i's reefs are already battling severe degradation. Reintroducing commercial harvesting into an already compromised environment seems a terrible gamble.

I respectfully urge the committee to **pass HB2101 HD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:52:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Christy Shaver and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai'i's waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O'ahu and West Hawai'i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai'i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai'i's waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai'i Island's waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Christy Shaver

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:48:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass to help protect Hawaii fish. Mahalo!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:42:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to share testimony.
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:42:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Small	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 2026

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2101

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Pamela Small, and I am a resident of Kawaihae on Hawaii Island. I am writing today to express my heartfelt support for HB2101 which proposes to BAN aquarium collection activities within the state of Hawaii. While increased penalties are good, a complete ban on commercial aquarium collection is better. We have been in a yo-yo situation concerning commercial aquarium collection for over a decade and it is time to put a stop to the exploitation of our precious coral reefs and aquatic life for good.

As a scuba diver and boater, I have been watching the quality of Hawaii's coral reefs deteriorate since I was young. The number of reef fish has been horribly depleted by, and for, the profit of a few local collectors and aquarium keepers on the mainland. There are entire dive sites and portions of the coast that riddled with algae that the herbivore fish would have eaten if they were still in the ocean in large numbers. Yellow Tang, once a prolific herbivore in Hawaii waters, are so depleted that I sometimes only see two or three on a dive when I used to swim among a beautiful sea of yellow.

With ongoing climate change causing stronger storms, algae blooms, and rising ocean temperatures, the health of the sea has never been more important. A healthy ocean equals a healthier planet. All species in the sea work symbiotically. Remove or deplete one key species and the entire ecosystem suffers or collapses.

The ocean is Hawaii's most precious resource. Surfing, canoeing, paddle boarding, diving, snorkeling, boating, and fishing are cornerstones of Hawaiian life and culture. The state has a public trust obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations. This is your opportunity to honor that obligation by supporting and passing HB2101.

Additionally, I would like to suggest that Hawaii not only ban commercial aquarium collection, but it is of the utmost importance to implement rigorous enforcement, monthly reef fish monitoring, and severe penalties for poachers (including significant fines, jail time for repeat offenders, and boat seizure).

You have the power to have an influence on the health and survival of Hawaii's reef fish and the overall health of the ocean. I beg you to please do the right thing and pass HB2101. As previously mentioned, a complete ban of collection is the best option for Hawaii's reefs and ocean health, but there need to be swift and severe penalties for those who break the aquarium collection laws.

Mahalo,

Pamela Small

Kawaihae, HI

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:07:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Soo Sun Choe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please do not pass this bill, keep the fish in the ocean!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:22:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura K. Legge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong SUPPORT of this bill. It is time to end, once and for all, the pet trade from taking our important reef fish. Our reefs need these fish for their health way more than some Dr. in Peoria needs them in his waiting room fish tank.

PLEASE END THIS PRACTICE NOW ONCE AND FOR ALL!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:36:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laa Poepoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Finance Committee, this is La'a Poepoe testifying in support of HB2101, as originally applied statewide.

Aside from the disproportionate value of permitting to enforcement costs as a fiscal irresponsibility mentioned in other testimonies, I direct the attention of the committee to note the use of a volume strategy as provided in 'bot' testimonies submitted by a commercial aquarium advocate as an attempt to artificially inflate numbers of opposed testifiers rather than speak to the substance of the bill.

Thank you

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:36:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laa Poepoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Finance Committee, this is La'a Poepoe testifying in support of HB2101, as originally applied statewide.

Aside from the disproportionate value of permitting to enforcement costs as a fiscal irresponsibility mentioned in other testimonies, I direct the attention of the committee to note the use of a volume strategy as provided in 'bot' testimonies submitted by a commercial aquarium advocate as an attempt to artificially inflate numbers of opposed testifiers rather than speak to the substance of the bill.

Thank you

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:42:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin OFriel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance, I write in support of HB2101, which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are public trust resources that generate far greater long-term ecological, cultural, and economic value than short-term commercial extraction for private aquariums.

Anyone who has spent time enjoying the reefs in Hawai‘i over past decades can attest that areas once characterized by dense coral cover and abundant schools of reef fish now exhibit unmistakable signs of stress and decline.

Passing HB2101 would represent a meaningful step toward protecting reef biodiversity, resilience, and prioritizing public trust interest.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2101.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kristin OFriel
Resident of West Hawai‘i

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:42:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin OFriel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance, I write in support of HB2101, which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale.

Hawai'i's reefs are public trust resources that generate far greater long-term ecological, cultural, and economic value than short-term commercial extraction for private aquariums.

Anyone who has spent time enjoying the reefs in Hawai'i over past decades can attest that areas once characterized by dense coral cover and abundant schools of reef fish now exhibit unmistakable signs of stress and decline.

Passing HB2101 would represent a meaningful step toward protecting reef biodiversity, resilience, and prioritizing public trust interest.

I respectfully urge your support of HB2101.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kristin OFriel
Resident of West Hawai'i

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:53:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is [your name], and I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1, which would uphold the longstanding protections that have kept Hawai‘i’s reef fish populations from further commercial exploitation.

1. The Aquarium Collection Industry Has Been Effectively Shut Down Since 2017 — Because Courts Required Environmental Review

The commercial aquarium collection industry was halted in 2017 following a Hawai‘i Supreme Court ruling that required full environmental review for aquarium collection permits, invalidating all existing permits and stopping commercial collection statewide.

[\[hawaiiipubl...cradio.org\]](#)

This de facto shutdown lasted until 2024–2025, when subsequent court rulings determined that the industry’s revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) met HEPA requirements, allowing the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to consider reopening West Hawai‘i’s waters. Nevertheless, commercial collection has remained largely closed for nearly a decade.

[\[mauinow.com\]](#), [\[thegardenisland.com\]](#)

2. The Environmental and Cultural Importance of Reef Fish Is Indisputable

For decades, West Hawai‘i reefs have been targeted for aquarium collection, historically resulting in the removal of hundreds of thousands of native fish each year, including key herbivorous species essential to reef health. [\[earthjustice.org\]](#), [\[thegardenisland.com\]](#)

Environmental advocates, including Earthjustice, emphasize that removing reef fish—especially herbivores like yellow tang—damages coral ecosystems already stressed by pollution and climate change. They warn that reopening aquarium harvesting could “open the floodgates” to destructive extraction levels. [\[mauinow.com\]](https://mauinow.com)

These species also hold deep cultural and subsistence significance for Native Hawaiian communities, who have long relied on them as part of traditional food systems and ecological stewardship practices.

3. Hawai‘i Communities Overwhelmingly Support a Permanent Ban

A recent poll shows 84% of O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island residents support permanently banning commercial aquarium collection. [\[earthjustice.org\]](https://earthjustice.org)

Public testimony in 2023 and 2025 reflected strong community opposition to reopening the industry. Many emphasized that Hawai‘i’s reef wildlife should not be extracted for luxury ornamental use in mainland aquariums. [\[earthjustice.org\]](https://earthjustice.org)

Even the BLNR previously voted to prohibit commercial collection statewide based on a community-driven proposal. [\[earthjustice.org\]](https://earthjustice.org)

4. The Environmental Review Process Does Not Eliminate the Harm — It Only Allowed Rulemaking to Proceed

Although the Supreme Court ruled that the EIS technically complied with HEPA, environmental experts maintain that the EIS failed to disclose or mitigate the known environmental consequences of aquarium harvesting. [\[mauinow.com\]](https://mauinow.com), [\[thegardenisland.com\]](https://thegardenisland.com)

Environmental groups warn that the ruling merely allows permit consideration to resume—it does not prove the industry is ecologically sustainable. On the contrary, decades of data show that aquarium collection depletes reef biodiversity and degrades nearshore ecosystems. [\[thegardenisland.com\]](https://thegardenisland.com)

5. DAR Is Now Advancing Rules to Reopen West Hawai‘i Waters — Despite Public Opposition and Board Precedent

In 2025, the Board of Land and Natural Resources voted to advance new rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to aquarium collectors, allowing collection of multiple reef species and permitting extraction of up to 100,000 yellow tang per year. [\[earthjustice.org\]](https://earthjustice.org), [\[hawaiipublicradio.org\]](https://hawaiipublicradio.org)

DAR asserts it must do so because it is “statutorily required” to promulgate rules; however:

- The BLNR previously voted to prohibit commercial collection,
- Public testimony overwhelmingly supported a ban, and
- There is no compelling public benefit to reopening a largely defunct industry.

This effort diverts DAR’s limited resources away from urgent marine management needs such as overfishing, coral bleaching, invasive species, and climate resilience.

6. Reopening the Aquarium Trade Would Repeat the Harmful Past

Before the industry shutdown, commercial collectors removed approximately 250,000 fish annually from West Hawai‘i reefs for export—often with practices that damage coral habitat and injure fish. [\[thegardenisland.com\]](https://thegardenisland.com)

Collectors historically used fine-mesh nets to herd juvenile reef fish through coral structures, sometimes breaking coral or disturbing habitat, and employed methods like piercing fish swim bladders to facilitate rapid ascent. [\[thegardenisland.com\]](https://thegardenisland.com)

Reopening this trade would directly undermine ecosystem health, cultural practices, and Hawai‘i’s public trust obligations.

Conclusion

The evidence is clear:

- Hawai‘i’s aquarium trade was shut down for valid environmental reasons.
- Reef ecosystems and Native Hawaiian cultural practices depend on protecting herbivorous reef fish.
- The public strongly supports a permanent ban.
- Recent legal rulings allow—but do not require—reopening the industry.
- DAR’s limited resources should not be spent reviving a destructive, outdated trade.

HB2101 HD1 is necessary to protect West Hawai‘i’s reefs, uphold community values, and prevent renewed ecological harm.

I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha 'āina,

J. Kēhau Lucas

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:04:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marshall Hung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Marshall Hung and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to PASS HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Marshall Hung

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:06:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I'm writing to SUPPORT this ban.

End the taking and sale of our Hawaiian reef fish once and for all! Our keiki will thank you for protecting our ocean!

Mahalo for doing the right thing!

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:07:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suyin Freiberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the protection of our beautiful reef fish on Hawai‘i Island from risking starvation and death when shipped out of state. Given the stress on marine life across the island chain, I also support that these provisions apply statewide.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:08:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander Min	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly opposed to HB2101. The aquarium fishery has done everything required of them by courts and the state is only going to allow 7 permits.

If we cannot allow a small, highly managed subset of fishermen to collect and make a livelihood, we stand to lose everything.

I urge you to allow families to make livelihoods and end this bill that is duplicative and disregards common sense.

Sincerely,

Alex Min

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:16:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am Jennifer Mitchell, from Hawaii island. We need healthy fish filled reefs, so we can feed our families in this time of overpriced groceries and inflated prices on everything. In the circle of life, everything has a purpose. Fish belong in the ocean, not in aquariums. I strongly support Bill HB2101.

Thank you,

Jennifer Mitchell

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:33:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Gregg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Makani Gregg. I am a resident and Native Hawaiian aloha ‘āina practitioner, and marine ecologist of Puna, Hawai‘i Island, and the Program Coordinator of Pōhaku Pelemaka, a Native Hawaiian nonprofit working along the coast of Puna, Hawai‘i. I submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2101, which would permanently ban commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i, and I urge the Committee to advance this bill. I ask that it be amended to apply statewide.

Our Reefs Are Not Ornaments

The nearshore reefs and fisheries of Puna and Hawai‘i pae ‘āina are not abstract resources — they are the foundation of our community's food sovereignty, cultural practices, and spiritual wellbeing. In Puna, the 2018 Kīlauea eruption reshaped our coastline, our community has been working hard to understand and protect our nearshore environment and fisheries. Through our marine monitoring program, Ho‘omakua i Ke Kai a Pele, we collect various marine baseline data including human use along Puna's coast. What we observe every day reinforces what the science confirms: our nearshore reefs have extraction hot spots and protections need to be developed and implemented.

Against this backdrop, the prospect of reopening large-scale commercial aquarium extraction is deeply alarming. Removing thousands of herbivorous reef fish — particularly yellow tang and other critical species — works directly against reef recovery. Herbivorous fish control algae growth and keep reefs healthy enough to withstand bleaching, sedimentation, and warming seas. Every fish removed for the aquarium trade is one less fish doing that work.

The Science and the Community Are Clear

The Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously supported a community-led proposal to ban commercial aquarium collection in 2023 — a powerful signal that this is the right direction. Independent analysis of DAR's own data shows that yellow tang populations did not recover as biologically and historically expected following the 2017 shutdown. Reef fish monitoring has been dramatically reduced. Poaching and weak

enforcement remain documented concerns. These are not conditions under which it is responsible to reopen commercial extraction.

My community — Native Hawaiian families, fishers, ocean users, and ‘āina-based stewards — depends on healthy reefs. We are not opposed to a thriving visitor economy, but that economy ultimately rests on the health of the very reefs commercial aquarium collection degrades. A living, fish-filled reef is worth far more in place than in a tank someplace.

Closing

I urge this Committee to pass HB 2101 and advance it to the full House. Our reefs, our fisheries, our communities, and our future generations are counting on this decision. Please do not let this moment pass.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Makani Gregg

Resident, Native Hawaiian, aloha ‘āina practitioner Puna, Hawai‘i

13-470 Pohoiki Rd, Pahoia HI 96778

hinahele@gmail.com

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:15:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Moore Andresen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT HB2101 BANNING FISH COLLECTION. I respectfully request amendments to remove the Human population stipulations and reinstate the original **statewide ban**.

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:43:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Bo Breda and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious and unique resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the industry was still active, commercial aquarium collection - driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef species for purely ornamental purposes - had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i Island. The removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromised our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promoted the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation. Accordingly, the majority of Hawai‘i residents as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent ban of commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai‘i’s waters.

Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Bo Breda

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:50:34 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Peter Wilson and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101 HD1.

After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 - and has remained shut down for the better part of the last decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now poised to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters to commercial aquarium collection via rules that it claims it is statutorily forced to promulgate. **Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.**

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Nonetheless, DAR is now moving forward with rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, and that lay the groundwork to do the same throughout all of Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to restart an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2101 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter Wilson

HB-2101-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:08:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith Soltz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live at Hokuli'a. Healthy fush-filled reefs are important to me. They preserve the beautiful shores of Hawaii.