

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committees on  
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
and  
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Tuesday, March 24, 2026  
1:01 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

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.

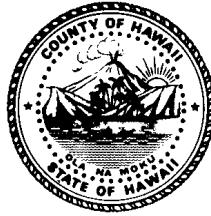
In 2024, the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources conducted an independent review and analysis of available data for West Hawai'i and concluded that existing and proposed aquarium fish management measures provide significant safeguards against threats to populations of target species as well as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



## 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

March 23, 2026

### COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair  
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

### COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, 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 24, 2026 at 1:01 pm**

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

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 .

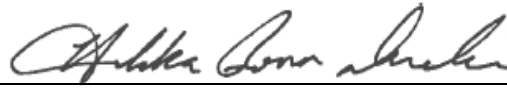
Healthy reef systems are essential to Hawai'i Island. They protect our shorelines from erosion and storm surge, support subsistence fishing and traditional practices, and sustain a visitor

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,



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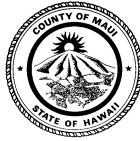
HOLEKA GORO INABA, Ed.D.,  
Council Chair, District 8, North Kona

HGI.wpb

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers  
Kauanoë Batangan  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins




Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

March 23, 2026

TO: The Honorable Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair  
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
  
The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 24, 2026; TESTIMONY COMMENTING ON  
HB 2101, HD1, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION**

I submit comments on this measure to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes.

The Maui County Council supports legislation to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from State marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes. Therefore, I offer this testimony on behalf of the Council.

The Maui County Council provides these comments:

1. The Council adopted Resolution 26-53, "Urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to Prohibit the Harvest of Aquatic Life from State Marine Waters for Commercial Aquarium Purposes" on March 6, 2026. A copy of the resolution is attached.
2. For the reasons stated in the resolution, the Council urges the Legislature to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from State marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment

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# Resolution

No. 26-53

## URGING THE HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE TO PROHIBIT THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM STATE MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES

WHEREAS, under the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i, Article XI, Section 1, "For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions must conserve and protect Hawai'i's natural resources," which are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people;"

WHEREAS, the State has "the power to manage and control the marine, seabed and other resources located within the boundaries of the State" under the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i, Article XI, Section 6; and

WHEREAS, as part of the County of Maui General Plan, the Countywide Policy Plan includes the following policies:

- "Protect and restore nearshore reef environments and water quality."
- "Protect marine resources and valued wildlife."

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems are of vital importance to the State's people, culture, and economy; and

WHEREAS, the reef systems are being pushed to their limits by rising ocean temperatures, acidification, repeated bleaching events, and human pressures; and

WHEREAS, healthy reefs allow for the exercise of subsistence fishing and other traditional and cultural Native Hawaiian practices; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's reef ecosystem is sometimes referred to as the "rainforest" of the sea, supporting biodiversity including more than 7,000 known species of marine plants and animals, many of which are endemic to Hawai'i; and

**Resolution No. 26-53**

WHEREAS, the reef ecosystem feeds, shelters, and provides essential habitat for fish as it simultaneously protects the shoreline from waves, storms, floods, and beach erosion; and

WHEREAS, the herbivorous reef fish targeted for commercial aquarium collection—including yellow tang and orangespine unicornfish,—are critical for controlling the algal growth that can smother coral; and

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that most fish captured for home aquariums die within the first year of captivity, and some species, such as yellow tang, can live for more than 40 years in the ocean; and

WHEREAS, allowing commercial aquarium aquatic life extraction allows private enterprise to profit from natural resources that should be held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, many residents and organizations believe fish and other aquatic life in Hawai'i marine waters should be protected from commercial aquarium collecting; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs has included in its 2026 Legislative Package legislation to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from State marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes; and

WHEREAS, the OHA legislation and related bills have been supported this year by the Hawai'i County Council, the Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition, the Kihei Community Association, and many Maui County residents; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it urges the Hawai'i State Legislature is to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from State marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes;
2. That it authorizes the Council Chair to testify on the Council's behalf in support of legislation consistent with this Resolution's purpose; and
3. That copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Maui County's delegation to the Hawai'i State Legislature; the Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Speaker of the House, State of Hawai'i;

**Resolution No. 26-53**

the Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, Senate President, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D., Mayor, County of Hawai'i; the Honorable Rick Blangiardi, Mayor, City and County of Honolulu; the Honorable Derek Kawakami, Mayor, County of Kaua'i; the Honorable Dr. Holeka Goro Inaba, Council Chair, County of Hawai'i; the Honorable Mel Rapozo, Council Chair, County of Kaua'i; the Honorable Tommy Waters, Council Chair, City and County of Honolulu; Ryan K.P. Kanaka'ole, Acting Chairperson, Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i; Summer Sylva, Ka Pouhana Kūikawā, and Leina'ala Ley, Ka Pou Kihi Kū, Office of Hawaiian Affairs; and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui.

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INTRODUCED BY:



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SHANE M. SINENCI

**COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI**

**WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793**

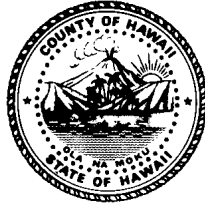
**CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION**

**It is HEREBY CERTIFIED that RESOLUTION NO. 26-53 was adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, State of Hawaii, on the 6th day of March, 2026, by the following vote:**

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>Alice L LEE Chair</b>	<b>Yuki Lei K. SUGIMURA Vice-Chair</b>	<b>K. Kauanoë BATANGAN</b>	<b>Tom COOK</b>	<b>Gabriel L. JOHNSON</b>	<b>Tamara A. M. PALTIN</b>	<b>Keani N. W. RAWLINS- FERNANDEZ</b>	<b>Shane M. SINENCI</b>	<b>Nohelani U'U- HODGINS</b>
<b>ROLL CALL</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Aye 'Ae</b>	<b>Excused Ho'oku'u 'ia</b>

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY CLERK

**Jennifer Kagiwada**  
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272  
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: March 23, 2026

TO: Senate Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2

SUBJECT: HB2101 HD2

Aloha Chairs Richards and Lee, Vice Chair Lamosao and Inouye, and esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support of HB2101 HD2**. Please make amendments to reinstate the language making this a statewide ban, as that was the original intention of this legislation. 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 County of Hawai'i recently adopted Resolution No. 422-25 urging the State Legislature to prohibit commercial aquarium collection, reflecting concern about the long-term stewardship of our marine resources. This measure aligns with Hawai'i's constitutional responsibilities to safeguard natural resources, uphold the right to a healthy environment, and protect traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices.

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada

**REBECCA VILLEGAS**

*Council Member  
District 7, Central Kona*



*Phone: (808) 323-4267*

*Fax: (808) 329-4786*

*Email: Rebecca.villegas@hawaiiicounty.gov*

## 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*

**LATE**

March 23, 2026

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS COUNCIL MEMBER,

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

ON HB 2101 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND THE ARTS AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committee:

I was born and raised on Hawai'i and have spent much of my life connected to our ocean, which is why I strongly support H.B. 2101, H.D.1. I have seen firsthand how important healthy reefs are to our communities. Whether through fishing, swimming, or simply observing marine life, these experiences have deepened my respect for the delicate balance that sustains our near-shore ecosystems.

Our reefs are not just resources, they are living systems that support food security, protect our shorelines, and carry cultural meaning. Species like lau'ipala (yellow tang) and kole are a familiar and essential part of that system. Seeing them thrive in the wild is part of what makes Hawai'i unique. Removing them for commercial aquarium trade takes away from the health of the reef and from future generations who deserve to experience the same abundance.

The values of mālama 'āina and kuleana resonate strongly with me. We have a responsibility to care for these ecosystems in a way that ensures their resilience, especially as climate change continues to place additional stress on coral reefs. Protecting herbivorous fish that helps control algae and support coral health is a practical and necessary step.

I also appreciate that this bill respects traditional and customary practices, subsistence fishing, and responsible aquaculture. It strikes a thoughtful balance between conservation and cultural rights.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass H.B. 2101, H.D.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Villegas', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rebecca Villegas  
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

Moana Ohana  
PO Box 4454, Kailua Kona, HI 96745

[mike@moanaohana.com](mailto:mike@moanaohana.com)

March 22, 2026



Aloha mai Kakou, Chair Richards & Vice Chair Lamosao of Hawaiian Affairs and Chair Lee and Vice Chair Inouye of Water, Land, Culture and the Arts committees and other Honorable Senators.

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. 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

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:38:41 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra Koonohiokala Norenberg	Testifying for Kauwamakaainanakahunaalii	Comments	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

This issue hits very close to home for me. I can't write about it impartially. So, I will instead tell a story. I knew a person who used to work in the early 1990's collecting and selling aquarium fish from Hawai'i in Hawai'i. It was a very profitable business at the time. But, they noted that their supplies were dwindling and they had to venture further and further to find the fish worth hundreds and some worth over a thousand. I asked what they had planned to do about the dwindling numbers of 'their wild fish stock' and he said they would just go to other places to find fish instead. And they did.

A decade later I made routine visits to a pond in a remote part of the island where I observed the fish and crustaceans regularly for many years. In that time frame, the black wana 'disappeared' into the bags of a father and son who showed up to harvest them over and over again until there are few in that area left, if any at all. I also noted dwindling colorful little fish that used to frequent the ponds and tidal pools in the surrounding area. The little red ones had all disappeared.

Years later, I was in Las Vegas Nevada at a car dealership where I saw a brilliant saltwater aquarium made from an old VW van with a cute surfboard on top and a very 'Hawai'i gone surfing' theme. When I peered into the aquarium, there I found my little red fish friends and said, There you are! I've been wondering where you've gone to! How did you get here? What brings you here?

Sounds crazy, I know but, our aquatic resources are much loved as dear friends and sorely missed. It pains me to think about the state of their ponds where they come from without them there. The algae, the filth, the lack of vibrant color and diversity that is the hallmark of every great ecosystem is gone with them along with the ecosystem services they once provided. Sad.

No I do not support the abuse of our communal aquatic "resources" to benefit any for profit business at the expense of the entire population of Hawai'i with no comparable rate of return to us in the form of taxes or ecosystem service providers.

This last part is probably going to sound the most crazy but, I also want my friends to be returned to their homes and compensation paid to them for their kidnapping.

All that said, please allow me to explain the importance of our tidal aquatic resources to STEM fields in education:

A scientific hypothesis by itself is not easily understood outside of context. A scientific hypothesis is one step of many in the Scientific method or inquiry that begins first with an observation, then a question, followed by a possible answer that may/may not be testable, a test or experiment, a prediction(s), and a conclusion based on the results that may lead one back to a previous step in the inquiry. The scientific hypothesis is a possible answer to a question about an observation made previously and a scientific prediction predicts the outcome of an experiment designed to test the hypothesis. For example, a small fish in a cliff side tide pool is observed behaving strangely. When the observer knelt down to peer closely at the cowry shell, the little fish appeared in view to cover the cowry shell with its' own body. The little fish then tilted its' head slightly to peer at the observer and in that moment made eye contact, the little fish from beneath a foot of water and the observer from a foot above the surface of the water peering from above. What strange behavior the observer noted. The crevice in which the cowry shell and little fish now occupied was small and confined enough that either one could easily be snatched up by the observer. Is the little fish attempting to use its' body to hide and protect the cowry shell from the observer? Is the little fish attempting to communicate with the observer and if so, why and what is it saying? Have all the cowry shells been harvested except for this one? Is the little fish reliant on the cowry shell for some ecosystem service to flourish? The observer hypothesized that the area had been over harvested of cowry shells and that the little fish species and cowry shell relied on one another to perform well within their ecosystem. If this was the case, then the observer predicted there would be more cowry shells and more little fish in areas less populated and less accessible by people in comparable tidal pools along the coastline. The observer also predicted that the only cowry shells, if any, to be found in the tidal pools easily accessible by people would be those cowry shells that cling dangerously close to the edge of the cliff where most casual harvesters would not dare to go without experience and where the observer did indeed find the only cowry shell left on the entire tidal shelf and concluded that the urban-wildland interface area had negatively impacted the area.

So, that is the difference between a scientific hypothesis and a scientific prediction and experiment which need not always involve a petri dish. Scientific experimentation in the natural world is a little different I think than developing an experiment in a laboratory. But the crux of the matter is the same, especially the predictions.

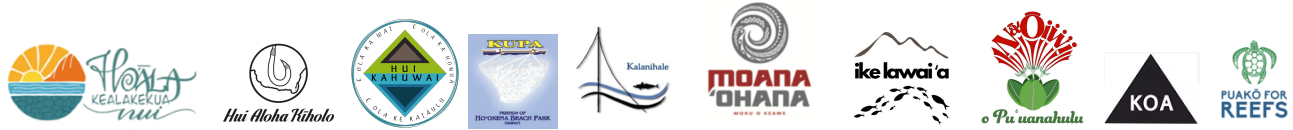
That said, no cowry shells or little fish were injured in the above observations by the observer. And certainly, more noteworthy observations could be shared over the course of many months, years, and areas, and I could share more about the research regarding the two species etc. but, I'll keep this brief. Can you imagine if the observer showed up at a neighborhood board meeting advocating for the life of the tidal ecosystems because 'a little fish told him/her about the troubles there?' Food for thought.

Aloha,

Deb



# KAI KULEANA



Re: Strong Support for HB2101 HD1, for March 24, 2026

Date: March 24, 2026

Aloha e Chair Lee, Chair Richards and Members of the committees on Water, Land, Culture and Arts and on Hawaiian Affairs,

Kai Kuleana submits this testimony **STRONGLY IN SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1** and urges that this bill be passed for the **ban on aquarium fish collection in Hawai'i and recommend a ban on statewide aquarium fish collection.**

We are a network of hoā'āina (stewards) from across Hawai'i Island, North Kohala to South Kona who rely on our nearshore resources to feed our 'ohana, sustain our livelihoods, and fulfill our kuleana as stewards. Our communities are directly connected to the health of our reefs and fisheries, and our ability to maintain these relationships depends on their long-term abundance. Kai Kuleana is committed to solution-oriented, community-driven actions that promote healthy, vibrant places sustained by engaged and responsible communities.

Aquarium fish collection adds pressure to already vulnerable ecosystems. As a collective, we believe our responsibility is to ensure these resources are protected so they can continue to sustain our communities for generations to come.

Again, we urge your joint committees to PASS this bill, we are in strong support. This measure affirms our right and responsibility to mālama kai and perpetuates 'āina momona through active advocacy and community-based stewardship.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our mana'o.

Respectfully,

Signed on behalf of Kai Kuleana by lineal descendants and community representatives,



Mike Nakachi, Moana 'Ohana



Chuckie Leslie, 'Ike Lawai'a



Ku'ulei Keakealani, Hui Aloha Kiholo



Kawika Ruddle, Ruddle 'Ohana



Charlie Young, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park



Shane Akoni Nelson, Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc



MiuLan Pa'alua, Ho'ola



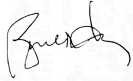
Malia Kipapa, Ka 'Ohana Kipapa



Jeana Kelekolio, Hui 'Ohana o Hōnaunau



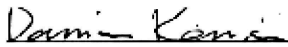
Kaikea Nakachi, Hui Kahuwai



Reggie Lee, Lee 'Ohana of Kohanaiki



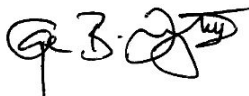
Ka'imi Kaupiko, Kalanihale



Damien Kenison, Kauhakō Ohana Association



Shenell Caldeira, Nā 'Ōiwi o Pu'uanahulu



George Fry, Puakō for Reefs

**In Strong Support:**

- Pi'i La'eha, La'eha 'Ohana of Kalahuipua'a, Kohala
- Pualani Maielua, Ka 'Ohana Maielua of Kailapa, Kohala
- Jeff Coakley, Hui Mamalahoa of Kohala



SENATOR CHRIS LEE, CHAIR  
SENATOR LORRAINE R. INOUE, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS

SENATOR HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III, CHAIR  
SENATOR RACHELE LAMOSAO, VICE CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY IN **STRONG SUPPORT** OF HOUSE BILL 2101 HD1,  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 1:01 p.m.  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Committee Members:

Earthjustice submits this testimony in **strong support** of HB 2101 HD1, **with amendments**. HB 2101 HD1 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 support amending the bill to 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.*<sup>1</sup> 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. Indeed, the Department recently scheduled public hearings for the end of this month to reopen West Hawai'i. 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."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> See Board of Land and Natural Resources Oct. 24, 2025 Meeting, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=PLDh6ZXzdUvQkHtqVoauOkfa26NfNLh2pK&index=4> at 8:10:27; see also *id.* at 7:22:09 and 7:55:33 (Board Members Denise Iseri-

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 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;
- Maui County Council;
- Kaula 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*

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Matsubara's and Riley Smith's statements on the Board's purported lack of authority to ban commercial aquarium collection).

*alone*.<sup>3</sup> 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.

### 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’īpala (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.

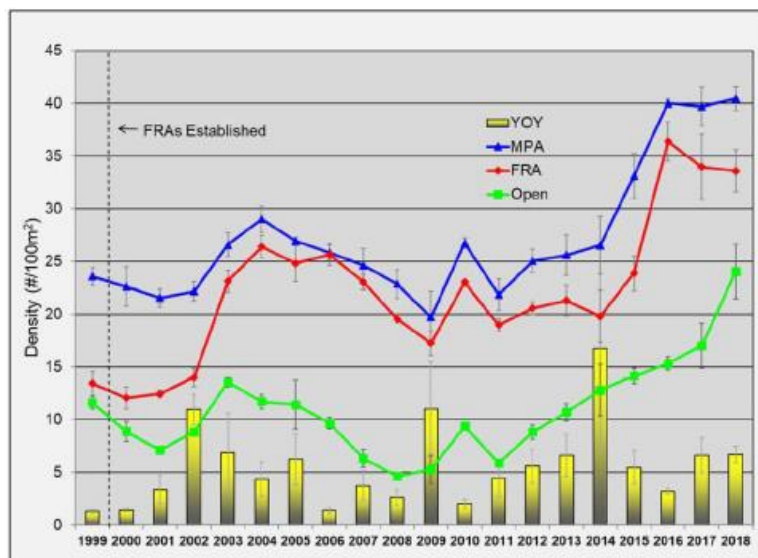


Figure 5. Overall changes in Yellow Tang density (Mean ± SE) in FRAs, MPAs, and Open Areas, 1999-2018. Yellow vertical bars indicate mean density (MAY-NOV) of Yellow Tang YOY. YOY are not included in trend line data (DAR 2019a).

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<sup>3</sup> 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).

**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.

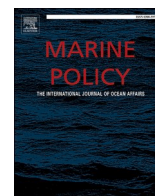
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or for further information.

Respectfully submitted,



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

Attachment



# The future for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact assessment

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## ABSTRACT

Conflict has surrounded Hawai'i's commercial marine aquarium fishery since its inception in the late 1940s. In 2019, the Hawai'i Supreme Court requested that an environmental impact statement (EIS) analysing the ecological and cultural impacts of Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery be completed for Hawai'i Island (Big Island) and O'ahu. The costs and benefits associated with the fishery and their distribution across stakeholder groups was however not addressed in the EIS. This paper presents a cost-benefit based analysis of four policy scenarios using existing secondary data for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery. From the analysis, a state-wide collection ban was the option that yielded positive annual net benefits and negatively impacted the fewest stakeholders. In contrast, the EIS recommends ten permits for fishing off the coast of Big Island be issued.

## 1. Introduction

Some view the marine aquarium fish trade as a path to expanding the conservation of reef environments based on the assumption that owning aquarium fishes cultivates awareness and interest in the conservation of their source habitats [46,6,31,47]. While conservation groups have promoted the aquarium trade as a means of enhancing livelihoods in developing countries, others are concerned that the profit motive of commercial fishers serves as an incentive to overharvest species commonly found in marine aquariums [37,39,59]. If marine aquarium fisheries are not properly regulated and the regulations are not promulgated, a common-pool resource dilemma will result in economic profitability prevailing over long-term sustainability – a tragedy of the commons scenario [43].

Hawai'i's commercial marine aquarium fishery has been a source of debate among various stakeholder groups including aquarium fishers and hobbyists, marine scientists, Native Hawaiians (Kānaka Maoli), resource managers, policy makers and community members [2,36,46]. The fishery's costs and benefits are distributed differently among these stakeholders, resulting in years of conflict. As has been observed in many fisheries around the world, fishers in Hawai'i under report their catches and mortality rates [23,48,52,56], which further exacerbates conflicts. The fishery is comprised of two geographically distinct zones. The first is the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that extends the length of the west coast of Hawai'i Island (Big Island) from

Ka Lae, Ka'u<sup>–</sup> (South Point) to 'Upolu Point. The second encompasses North Kohala, and the main Hawaiian Islands excluding all zones that are designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) [57].

Residents and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners have pushed to ban aquarium fishing in Hawai'i citing the lack of sustainable and humane harvesting methods, inadequate enforcement, inaccurate catch reporting and poor alignment with Kānaka Maoli ideals of resource management [23]. In 2017, the Hawai'i Supreme Court placed a moratorium on aquarium fishery permits, citing a need for a Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) review [15–17]. The court concluded that the permitted use of fine mesh nets involves the public's use of state land and therefore requires discretionary approval from the state [15–17]. The court's request in 2019 for an environmental impact statement (EIS) analysing the ecological and cultural impacts of the marine aquarium fishery came after Environmental Assessments (EA) for Big Island and O'ahu were submitted by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) and deemed insufficient by the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Chair Suzanne D. Case [15–17]. The final environmental impact statement (EIS) funded by PIJAC and conducted by a consulting firm, which concluded that DLNR should issue permits to ten commercial aquarium fishers in the WHRFMA, was unanimously rejected by the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) after concluding that the EIS did not adequately disclose the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action [14]. PIJAC appealed BLNR's decision to the Environmental Council who affirmed BLNR's rejection of

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**Table 1**  
Description of policy scenarios analysed in CBA.

Scenario	Characteristics
A. Status quo (2019)	AQ Permits void and fishery continues without use of fine mesh nets on O'ahu, Big Island and no collecting in WHRFMA Voluntary catch report data Majority of catch is exported Unknown impacts to other fisheries, the environment, cultural resources and on-reef tourism State funds monitoring and management of fishery Potential for non-compliance Provides industry income Provides tax and fee revenue to state
B. Permitting system (2016)	Administrative rules and bag limits apply across the State Voluntary catch report data Majority of catch is exported Unknown impacts to other fisheries, the environment, cultural resources and on-reef tourism State funds monitoring and management of fishery Potential for non-compliance Provides industry income Provides tax and fee revenue to state
C. State-wide collecting ban	No aquarium species from Hawai'i state waters can be collected Collection exemptions possible for research, educational institutions and managers Wild-captured aquarium exports banned No impacts on other fisheries, the environment, cultural resources or on-reef tourism State avoids costs associated with managing the fishery Potential for non-compliance Loss of industry income Loss of tax and fees revenues to state
D. Captive breeding collection	Permits issued to fishers with facilities for captive breeding Opportunity to export from Hawai'i Unknown impacts on other fisheries, cultural resources, the environment and on-reef tourism State funds monitoring and management of fishery Potential for non-compliance Provides income opportunity for industry Provides tax and fee revenue to state

the EIS [27].

The 2019 state-wide moratorium allows commercial aquarium fishing to continue without commercial aquarium permits, as long as fine-mesh net equipment is not used and fishers possess a commercial marine license (CML), whereas, all collection has been outlawed regardless of gear-type for the WHRFMA [20]. A November 2020 order from Hawai'i's First Circuit Court requires environmental review for issuance of new or renewed annual CMLs to be used for aquarium fishing purposes, allowing aquarium collecting by CML holders to continue until their CML expire one year after issuance [18,21]. A January 2021 order from the same court further strengthened the November 2020 order by issuing an injunction to halt aquarium collection under existing CMLs, completely banning commercial aquarium fishing in the State of Hawai'i pending environmental review by the industry [13].

Many U. S. government agencies use cost benefit analysis (CBA) in addition to or in place of environmental impact assessment to assist in management decision-making. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [54] concluded that cost benefit analyses used to determine environmental regulations increased net benefits to society and "provide the balance required in complex regulatory decisions." International non-profit organizations also rely on CBAs in managing natural resources. Verdone [55] used CBA to analyse landscape forest restoration in Rwanda for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

This paper presents a cost benefit (CBA) based analysis using published information and existing data to provide evidence to assist decision makers considering the future of this fishery. Four policy scenarios were developed, the relevant costs and benefits for each scenario are described and/or estimated and their distribution across stakeholder groups are assessed. The CBA results are compared to the EIS recommendations and conclusions in order to determine how the two differ and which one provides a more accurate appraisal of maintaining the aquarium fishery.

## 2. Methods

Four past, current or proposed scenarios for managing this fishery are described (Table 1) in order to identify the associated costs and benefits, along with stakeholders impacted. Scenarios A and B assume that the aquarium fishery continues, though the number of fishers in the industry is not mandated in either one. Scenario A involves maintaining the 2019 status quo that restricts the use of fine mesh nets and no collecting in the WHRFMA. Scenario B assumes that the 2016 bag limits would be applied across the State. These were considered here because they both attempt to limit the catch. Scenario C involves a state-wide ban, which has been suggested by many stakeholders who do not benefit from the fishery. Scenario D allows the fishery to continue only to facilitate the establishment of captive breeding operations. This option is considered as one that protects wild fish in the long run, while also encouraging an industry that cultivates awareness and interest in the conservation of their source habitats by producing aquarium fish. The environmental impact statement (EIS) funded by PIJAC recommends limiting the number of permits, rather than limiting the catch.

The stakeholder groups who were identified in each scenario are described (Table 2) and the acronym used for the group throughout the

**Table 2**  
Codes and descriptions for stakeholder groups.

Code	Stakeholder Group Description
S1	Native Hawaiians
S2	Residents of Hawai'i
S3	Tourists
S4	Collectors and wholesalers from O'ahu
S5	Collectors and wholesalers from Hawai'i Island excluding the WHRFMA
S6	Collectors and wholesalers from the WHRFMA
S7	All collectors and wholesaler in the State
S8	State government agencies

paper is identified. Previous research [2,23,36,46], various media reports, hearings and litigation surrounding the ongoing conflict in this fishery provided details about the stakeholder groups. A description of the methods used to estimate or describe each cost/benefit and their expected sign follow. While CBA normally involves discounting to ensure that net present value of costs and benefits are calculated, annual point estimates are used in this CBA. Since the estimates do not vary over time, discounting adds nothing to the analysis.

## 2.1. Cost and benefit estimates and descriptions

### 2.1.1. State management costs

Since both Scenarios A and B involve limiting the industry's catch and require voluntary reporting, the State will have to enforce these regulations. Therefore, to estimate this cost, DAR personnel in DLNR were contacted and asked to estimate DAR's 2019 management cost for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery including salaries of employees who work directly with the fishery, aquarium fish surveys and any other costs associated with the fishery that DAR funds. DAR officials provided a low estimate of USD 300,000 annually covering the time spent by 20 or more individuals in the aquarium fishery along with their supplies and equipment. Their high estimate of USD 500,000 annually includes costs, such as fringe benefits that are not included DAR's annual 2019 budget, but are found in DLNR's overall budget. For Scenario C, these management costs should be eliminated overtime. Scenario D would likely involve management costs, which could be reduced as the policies and regulations that support this scenario are refined.

### 2.1.2. Tourism value

According to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority [29], the State's economy relied on tourism for its largest source of private capital. Spalding et al. [50], estimated the "on-reef" tourism value for the entire state of Hawai'i at USD 550.8 million per year. Spalding was contacted and estimated, using the existing data base the annual "on-reef" values for O'ahu and Hawai'i Island to be approximately USD 442,496,000 and USD 16,921,000 respectively, for an annual upper bound of USD 459,417,000. This was inflated to 2019 USD for a total annual value of USD 478,891,356.77. Cesar and Beukering [7] estimated the value of tourism to be USD 304 million and inflating this value to 2019 USD yields a low estimate of approximately USD 442.1 million.

This estimated tourism value between USD 478,891,356.77 and 442,100,000 USD represents the direct and indirect market value of on-reef tourism to the State in 2019. Maintaining this value over time is partially contingent on maintaining the health and beauty of Hawai'i's reefs. The aquarium fishery may reduce this over time as fish are removed from the reefs in Scenarios A and B because the limits are not calculated based on the productivity of the fishery and are difficult to enforce. Evidence also suggests that catches are underreported. Therefore, if the fishery continues, overharvesting of this public resource will likely occur and as a result, the value of tourism will decrease. Uncertainty exists as to how quickly this decline will occur. Researchers predict that unmitigated bleaching events could lead to the loss of shallow coral cover in Hawai'i by the year 2050 [35], which indicates that a 30 year time frame could be considered in making marine resource management decisions and would result in an extremely large total cost of continuing this aquarium fishery by 2050.

### 2.1.3. Industry income

In order to determine the market value of the aquarium fishery in Hawai'i, the methods used by Dierking [22] were updated with recent data to conservatively estimate 2019 gross revenue for the industry. Unpublished 2019 catch report summary information, unpublished 2019 dealer purchase information, unpublished 2019 individual catch reports, and unpublished permit lists from 2015 to 2018 were obtained from DAR. The 2019 price and cost information from dealer websites, retail price lists on websites, and industry structure information

provided the data used for the estimation. The lower bound for total revenue accruing to fishers was calculated by multiplying the "diver price" for each species by the number sold to estimate annual revenue of USD 1,676,982 in 2019.

Wholesale revenue could not be estimated due to the lack of price information among local fishers who are also wholesalers. In order to estimate the upper bounds, the 2016 catch report data for "number sold" was used with retail prices on the website of a Hawai'i based fisher retailing fish. The "number sold" on the 2016 catch report for each of 12 species was multiplied by the 2019 retail price listed by the primary collector/retailer. The total revenue across all the species represents the upper bounds of USD 8,343,896, which includes the value of the fish after they were exported.

### 2.1.4. License fees

The State does collect license fees for the aquarium fishery. Commercial aquarium permits are USD 50 and recreational aquarium permits have no cost [20]. Commercial aquarium collectors must also purchase USD 100 commercial marine fishing licenses annually from DAR. Scenario A, which represents the status quo in 2019 only accounts for the cost of the commercial marine fishing license since all commercial aquarium permits are void. Scenario D assumes that a permit is required to collect for captive breeding. This scenario explores an option that would raise the permit cost to USD 500 and cap the number of permits issued at 100 state-wide.

### 2.1.5. Export values

The industry values also include the value of fish exported, which were investigated to determine how much of this value accrues to the State. Catch reports for 2016 are the most recent, complete annual data set and thus are used to estimate exports. Twelve species commonly targeted in Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery (Table a1, appendix) were included. The data for six out of the twelve species discussed in this study (*Naso lituratus*, *Forcipiger flavissimus*, *Chaetodon multicinctus*, *Zanclus cornutus*, *Centropyge potteri*, *Coris gaimard*) indicated that the fish sales on initial catch reports by licensed fishers was lower than numbers of fish reportedly purchased by licensed dealers from licensed fishers on dealer sales and export reports. This suggests that a percentage of the catch was not reported on catch reports or was sold to dealers by fishers who do not report their catch to the state.

Dierking [22], reported that roughly 95% of the aquarium fish caught from the West Hawai'i fishery were exported. Two criteria were used to identify retailers from which price information was obtained. The first criteria requires that the species' primary and sole collection origin had to be Hawai'i, and the second requires the species be one of the 12 species described in this study, not including captive bred fish. Retail prices for 2019 were collected from 11 online aquaria retailers with 10 on mainland U.S.A. and one from Hawai'i. Species name, price, retailer name, city of operation and website information were used to generate an average out-of-state retail price for each of the 12 species and were compared to online retail prices offered by the local aquarium fishers/retailer. Retail price differences were 1.5–5.1 times higher in mainland markets compared to the local market.

The profits made on the mainland and the taxes on the value added accrues to the area in which the fish is retailed. Since these profits and taxes occur from the sale of a Hawai'i public resource, a negative impact occurs in comparison to keeping the fish in the reef to ensure that the State's tourism sector and/or residents continue to benefit from these fish. This is consistent with a 2019 decision by the Hawai'i Supreme Court that "all public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the common benefit of Hawai'i's people and the generations to come" ([8], p. 1150).

### 2.1.6. Environmental costs

Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery almost exclusively targets herbivores and corallivores. The development of a State Coral Bleaching

**Table 3**  
Cost and benefits associated with each scenario.

Scenario	Impacted Stakeholder Groups	Annual Estimates (USD)	
		Low	High
<b>A. Status Quo (2019)</b>			
- State management costs	S8	-300,000.00	-500,000.00
- Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	-442,105,806.46	-478,891,356.77
+ Industry income	S4, S5	1,784,936.43	8,343,896.00
+ License fees	S8	17,400.00	17,400.00
Total valued net benefit		-440,603,470.03	-471,030,060.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
- Losses from exports	S2, S8		
- Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
- Social costs	S1, S2, S8		
- Other fisheries' indirect costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
- Captive breeding costs	S4, S5		
<b>B. Permitting System (2016)</b>			
- State management costs	S8	-300,000.00	-500,000.00
- Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	-442,105,806.46	-478,891,356.77
+ Industry income	S7	1,784,936.43	8,343,896.00
+ License fees	S8	26,100.00	26,100.00
Total valued net benefit		-440,594,770.03	-471,021,360.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
- Losses from exports	S2, S8		
- Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
- Social costs	S1, S2, S8		
- Other fisheries' indirect costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
- Captive breeding costs	S7		
<b>C. Statewide AQ Collection Ban</b>			
+ Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	442,105,806.46	478,891,356.77
- Industry income	S7	-1,784,936.43	-8,343,896.00
- License fees	S8	-26,100.00	-26,100.00
Total valued net benefit		440,294,770.03	470,521,360.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
+ Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
+ Social costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
+ Other fisheries' Indirect costs	S1, S2, S8		
<b>D. Captive Breeding Collection</b>			
- State management costs	S8	-300,000.00	-500,000.00
- Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	-442,105,806.45	-478,891,356.77
+ Industry income	S7	1,784,936.43	8,343,896.00
+ License fees	S8	50,000.00	50,000.00
Total valued net benefit		-440,570,870.03	-470,997,460.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
- Losses from exports	S2, S8		
- Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
- Social costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
- Other fisheries' indirect costs	S1, S2, S8		
- Captive breeding costs	S7		

Recovery Plan, in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), DLNR, and DAR concluded that the establishment of a combination of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Herbivore Fishery Management Areas (HFMA) across the main Hawaiian Islands ranked among the most preferred actions to address the State's coral reef recovery from climate change induced bleaching events [19]. The State's decision to employ spatial herbivore management, highlights the importance of herbivores as a critical tool for reef recovery and resiliency, thus increasing their value and importance in Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems.

Past studies have indicated that climate change impacts coupled with local, human-induced stressors can retard coral reef resilience, resulting in regime shifts from coral to algal turf dominated systems if left unchecked [1,8,9,26,30]. Herbivores have been found to play critical roles in resisting these regime shifts [26]. While the long-term impact of the aquarium fishery on herbivore management is uncertain, the potential exists for the fishery to prevent the State from realizing its reef recovery goals.

### 2.1.7. Social costs

A 2017 survey of Hawai'i residents concluded that 90% of respondents support further regulation of Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery, and that 83% of respondents support ending the trade altogether [4]. From the fishers' perspective, Stevenson et al. [51] found that 20.7% of all fishers disliked the bureaucracy and 17.2% disliked the poor reputation of the West Hawai'i aquarium fishery.

No secondary information about the overall social impacts is available. However, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council [44] did summarize several interviews in a Cultural Impact Statement found in Appendix A that describes the contentious nature of the fishery and its lack of alignment with Native Hawaiian values and fishing/management views/traditions [44].

While the impact of the fishery on the long-term social well-being of State's residents is uncertain, the majority appears to conclude that continuing to operate this fishery reduces their social well-being.

### 2.1.8. Indirect costs for other fisheries

While some studies have indicated that fish populations have increased in open areas and Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs) where no aquarium collecting occurs, other studies have argued that many marine aquarium fish stocks in Hawai'i are still relatively data poor [41]. The Hawai'i Supreme Court has adopted a precautionary principle associated with the public trust with a ruling concluding that "where (scientific) uncertainty exists, a trustee's duty to protect the resource mitigates in favour of choosing presumptions that also protect the resource" ([32], p. 466)).

Overfishing is the primary driver of reef fish declines across the main Hawaiian Islands and the populations of food-fish species that overlap with some commonly collected aquarium species are particularly affected [24]. Specific concern regarding the sustained abundance of some commonly targeted food-fish species in the West Hawai'i aquarium fishery exists due to some species exhibiting declining populations [57]. Concern regarding the aquarium fishery's impact on the commercial and recreational nearshore reef fisheries has arisen due to overlap in target species [46,57]. This concern supports the conclusion that the aquarium fishery is likely to have negative impacts on other fisheries in the long-run.

### 2.1.9. Captive breeding costs

Scenario D involves allowing the aquarium fishery to continue in order to support captive breeding efforts. In order for this scenario not to have negative impacts on Hawai'i reefs, a detailed policy and supporting regulations would be required. Descriptions of the costs paid by wholesalers and collectors by Dierking [22] can be used to infer the cost categories associated with local collection and wholesale business operations. Captive breeding and husbandry would result in similar costs

**Table 4**

A comparison of procedures and recommendations for the CBA to those for the 2020 Hawai'i Island EIS.

Cost Benefit Analysis	Big Island 2020 EIS <sup>a</sup>
Explores four policy alternatives, including a ban. Provided evidence-based recommendations based on impact estimates, descriptions, and the distribution of them among stakeholder groups. Recommends a statewide ban on the collection and export of marine aquaria. Suggests that captive breeding collection might hold potential if properly managed. Completed as a student project using existing secondary data and not funded by any industry, government agency or non-profit organization.	Rejected considering a ban since it did not meet PIJAC's purpose. Considered three scenarios that involved no permit limits and one with a permit limit. Provided a recommendation based on direct market benefits of the industry. Recommends reducing the number of permits to ten across the State.  Funded by the PIJAC.

<sup>a</sup> [44]

as wild collection, along with some additional costs to accommodate more technologically advanced equipment required to stimulate spawning [40,58].

Marine ornamental species can be categorized as demersal spawners or pelagic spawners. Most demersal spawners produce clutches of eggs in nests or on substrates and tend to form strong breeding pairs, often displaying parental care which makes them the preferred choice for captive breeding aquarists [40]. The specialized knowledge and equipment required for rearing marine aquarium fish that are pelagic spawners will make them more expensive to produce compared to wild collection [49]. This increase in costs would primarily impact those that purchase these captive bred fish. Currently, nearly all of these people live outside of the State and therefore likely have no particular interest in protecting the public resources of residents. Rhyné [49] also argues that promoting access to breeding information could result in more successful ornamental rearing and help conserve populations of wild aquarium fish.

### 3. Results and discussion

The results indicate that Scenario C, a state-wide ban on aquarium collecting, is the only scenario that produced positive net benefits (Table 3). Because point estimates in 2019 USD were the only quantitative data presented here, this conclusion is based on one annual estimate of costs and benefits. The stakeholder groups negatively impacted by a state-wide ban include a small group of local fishers, wholesalers, and dealers that comprise Hawai'i industry while benefits accrue to larger populations of stakeholders.

The status quo policy in Scenario A would allow collection to continue with methods other than fine-mesh nets. In the WHRFMA, where all permits are now void, poaching has been observed, resulting in vessel, aquarium gear and fish take seizures [5]. Thus, monitoring costs may increase if this scenario occurs. Scenario B, which represents what took place in 2016 does not put a cap on the issuance of permits, though it does provide for the collection of fees by the State. Overall, market benefits would still accrue only to aquarium collectors and wholesalers, though the distribution of net benefits between these industry members varies between Scenarios A and B because Scenario A excludes fishers in the WHRFMA.

Scenario D allows collection for captive breeding with a permit similar to DAR's Special Activity Permit system which allows research, education or management institutions to collect marine organisms with specific gear restriction exemptions [18,21]. However, all existing permit holders can claim to be engaged in breeding. Further research may be needed to identify potential regulatory and enforcement solutions for Scenario D. Fishers could be required to prove their capacity to captive breed species and stricter live-fish export regulations could be developed. While this would increase costs, the potential indirect and non-market benefits associated with not removing fish from the reefs in the long-run would also increase and provide the positive benefits associated with consumers having access to aquarium fish. Miltz et al. [38] found that 90.5% of consumer respondents were willing to pay more for fishes that were certified as harvested in an environmentally

sustainable way. This type of certification could be considered for captive bred fish to create a mechanism that convinces the customers to absorb some of the costs associated with switching to a sustainable practice [38]. In addition, captive breeding facilities could become attractions for residents and visitors. If captive breeding attractions included educational content designed to inform people about protecting fish and the surrounding reefs, the carrying capacity of Hawai'i's near shore ecosystems may increase.

A comparison of this CBA with the PIJAC funded EIS found that the procedures and overall recommendations were significantly different (Table 4). Both the CBA and the EIS relied on existing data to complete the analysis and the market benefits of the industry estimated by the CBA and the EIS are similar. The EIS did not consider a ban because it did not meet PIJAC's purpose to continue fishers' livelihoods [44]. The EIS considered three scenarios that involved unlimited permits and one that limited permits on the Big Island to ten. The costs for Native Hawaiians and other stakeholder groups of continuing to operate the fishery were considered negligible and no justification is provided as to why this decision was made [44]. No recommendations on compliance enforcement relative to the proposed bag limits or oversight to prevent poaching were included. No caveat was included that oversight and enforcement expenses might increase if permits were limited [44]. One individual who was allegedly named as one of the proposed permit holders [45] was also cited in a February 2020 poaching incident (R. Umberger, personal communication; [5]) which indicates the need for such a caveat. Overall the EIS puts forth a recommendation that supports the industry.

Because Hawai'i's Supreme Court reaffirmed that all public resource are to benefit Hawai'i's people [32] and that private or commercial use should receive a "high" level of scrutiny, the size of the stakeholder groups is also of interest. The resident population, including Native Hawaiians, was 1,415,872 in 2019 [53] and Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council [44] indicates that their preferred plan would directly benefit ten resident fishers with permits and their employees. Visitors, which numbered 10,424,995 in 2019 [28], will also likely pay a cost if marine aquarium fish are removed from the State's reefs. Tourists can also decide to travel elsewhere should the reefs become degraded, which will result in significant market costs for Hawai'i in the long-term.

### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis presented here determined that a state-wide ban on collection is likely to produce impacts of positive annual net benefits. The EIS funded by PIJAC recommended that collection permits be limited to ensure that the fishery remains in existence. Relying on EIS recommendations that aim to support one group of stakeholders at the expense of others to determine policy could be considered biased. CBA is used globally for evidence-based decision-making.

When considering the "sustainability" of any system, distributional and equity issues over a long-time frame must be considered [10]. The CBA presented in this paper explores these distributional issues that this fishery poses to a variety of stakeholder groups and the environment using the available evidence. While modern economic systems often

focus on gross domestic product to track economic progress and guide policy, tracking environmental and social indicators has been identified as important to ensure sustainability in certain economic sectors specific to Hawai'i [42].

Other fisheries, which pose similar environmental problems [3,11,12,25,33,34], should consider employing CBA in order to inform decision-making. Relying on an EIS funded by an industry stakeholder group is likely to produce a document aimed at justifying the position of the funder. Stakeholders that receive cultural ecosystem services from resources that are also being harvested for market benefits often include relatively large populations of disadvantaged minorities and indigenous populations. Businesses interested in protecting their market benefits likely have an advantage if an EIS is the only source of management recommendations. Sustainable management requires that the costs and benefits accruing to all stakeholder groups be investigated to ensure that policies are equitable.

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### CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Siena Schaar:** Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft. **Linda J. Cox:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review & editing.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

none.

### Data availability

The majority of data used for this research came from secondary sources. Relevant pricing data was collected from public websites and catch data was retrieved by UIPA from the Hawai'i Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR).

### Appendix

See Tables A.1–A.3.

**Table A.1**

The 12 common marine aquarium species included in this report.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Hawaiian Name
Yellow Tang <sup>b</sup>	<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>	Lau'ipala, Lau'i pala, or Lā'i pala)
Goldring Surgeonfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>	Kole
Achilles Tang <sup>b</sup>	<i>Acanthurus achilles</i>	Paku'iku'i
Orangespine Unicornfish <sup>b</sup>	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	Umaumalei, Kala, Ume, Mahaha, Pakala, Pakalakala or 'Ohua
Chevron Tang <sup>b</sup>	<i>Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis</i>	n/a
Longnose Butterflyfish, (Forcefish) <sup>b</sup>	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	Lau wiliwili nukunuku 'oi'oi
Multiband (Pebbled) Butterflyfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Chaetodon multicinctus</i>	Kikākapu, Kapuhili
Fourspot Butterflyfish <sup>b</sup>	<i>Chaetodon quadrimaculatus</i>	Lauhau
Tinker's Butterflyfish <sup>b</sup>	<i>Chaetodon tinkeri</i>	n/a
Moorish Idol <sup>b</sup>	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	Kihikihi
Potter's Angelfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Centropyge potteri</i>	n/a
Yellowtail Coris Wrasse <sup>b</sup>	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	Hinalea 'akilolo

<sup>a</sup> Indicates endemic species

<sup>b</sup> Indicates native species

**Table A.2**

Average retail prices (U.S Mainland) compared to average retail price (local collector/seller) of 12 common aquarium species, and price difference (%).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Avg. Retail Price (U.S Mainland) n = 10	Avg. Retail Price (Local collector/seller) n = 1	Mark-up (%)
Yellow Tang	<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>	\$74.41	\$16.00	465.1
Goldring Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>	\$71.88	\$14.00	513.4
Achilles Tang	<i>Acanthurus achilles</i>	\$392.32	\$150.00	261.5
Orangespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	\$152.71	\$37.50	407.2
Chevron Tang	<i>Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis</i>	\$233.11	\$150.00	155.4
Longnose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	\$46.00	\$15.00	306.6
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon multicinctus</i>	\$35.37	\$10.00	353.7
Fourspot Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon quadrimaculatus</i>	\$78.99	\$40.00	197.5
Tinker's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon tinkeri</i>	\$699.99	\$350.00	200.0
Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	\$49.98	\$10.00	499.8
Potter's Angelfish	<i>Centropyge potteri</i>	\$108.06	\$30.00	360.2
Yellowtail Coris	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	n/a	\$30.00	n/a

**Table A.3**

Comparison of specimens reported sold on licensed aquarium collectors' detailed catch reports (2016) versus specimens reported bought from licensed fishers by licensed dealers, on licensed aquarium dealers' personal sales and export reports (2016).

Common Name	Scientific Name	No. Sold (AQ detailed catch report)	No. Bought (AQ dealer pers. Sale/export report)	% (no. bought/ no. sold)
Yellow Tang	<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>	322,651	284,784	88.26
Goldring Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>	45,765	44,106	96.37
Achilles Tang	<i>Acanthurus achilles</i>	6787	5758	84.84
Orangespine Unicornfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	9966	10,338	103.73
Chevron Tang	<i>Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis</i>	5126 (B.I only)	4135	80.67
Longnose Butterflyfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	1329	1507	113.39
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Chaetodon multicinctus</i>	314	666	212.10
Fourspot Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon quadrimaculatus</i>	480	448	93.33
Tinker's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon tinkeri</i>	293 (B.I only)	218	74.40
Moorish Idol <sup>a</sup>	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	805 (B.I only)	970	120.50
Potter's Angelfish <sup>a</sup>	<i>Centropyge potteri</i>	6708	8726	130.08
Yellowtail Coris Wrasse <sup>a</sup>	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	866	993	114.67

(B.I only) indicates collection and reporting on detailed catch report only from Hawai'i island

<sup>a</sup> Indicates sales or export reporting over 100% of what was reported on initial detailed catch report.

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- [56] W.J. Walsh, Aquarium Collecting in West Hawai'i: A Historical Overview, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, Island of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI, 2000. <http://www.coralreefnetwork.com/kona/Walsh%20Aquarium%20Overview%202000.pdf>.
- [57] W.J. Walsh Report to the thirtieth legislature 2015 regular session: report on the findings and recommendations of effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (Report) , 2015. <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2015/01/archrs188c2015.pdf>.
- [58] C.A. Watson, J.E. Hill, Design criteria for recirculating, marine ornamental production systems, *Aquat. Eng.* 34 (2006) 157–162.
- [59] E.M. Wood, Collection of coral reef fish for aquaria: global trade, conservation issues and management strategies, Marine Conservation Society, Herefordshire, United Kingdom, 2001.



TESTIMONY  
IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 2101 HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

SENATE COMMITTEE on WATER, LAND, CULTURE, & the ARTS and HAWAIIAN  
AFFAIRS  
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 24, 2026

1:01 P.M.

Room 224

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Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao and members of their respective committees,

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. .

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 of Hawai'i's largest economic engines, 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.

Provisions for gathering are already codified in a myriad of ways and case laws that describe and justify Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights. This measure, like many others, does not go beyond its referenced intent toward the Commercial Aquarium Pet Trade Industry, but supports the current declaratory and constitutional obligations to be relevant and aligned with those laws that are already in place. The difference between commercial aquarium pet trade and commercial sustenance fishing is, when the resource is abused for personal recreational and entertainment purposes it is purely extractive, while the latter is clearly for sustenance.



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 commercialization<sup>1</sup>.

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 and urge the next committee to hear this measure.

Mahalo Nui,

puakalo!

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen  
Executive Director

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

- 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)

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 3:12:33 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Troy Tunngley	Testifying for Tunngley Marine	Support	In Person

Comments:

I Support the Permanent Ban on Aquarium Collecting in Hawai'i

Aloha,

I respectfully urge you to uphold the permanent ban on aquarium collecting in Hawai'i by passing bill HB2101.

I am a Hawai'i-based marine surveyor and boat captain, and through my work on the water I regularly observe reef conditions and the importance of maintaining healthy marine ecosystems. From a professional and practical standpoint, reef health is directly tied to environmental stability, safety, and the long-term sustainability of our ocean resources.

The data is clear. Approximately 25 to 27 million reef animals are collected globally each year, and a significant percentage of wild-caught marine fish do not survive long-term in captivity. Mortality occurs not only after sale, but also during capture, handling, and transport.

In contrast, these same fish can live decades in the wild. Yellow tang, for example, are documented to live over 30 years on Hawai'i reefs and play an important ecological role as herbivores, helping to control algae and maintain coral health.

The removal of key reef species, particularly herbivorous fish such as tangs, has been shown to contribute to increased algal overgrowth. This can inhibit coral recruitment and recovery,

reducing overall reef resilience—especially as reefs already face stress from warming ocean temperatures and bleaching events.

Collection practices may also result in localized habitat disturbance, including damage to coral structures and increased stress on reef communities.

Aquarium collection in Hawai‘i has already been halted since 2021 due to environmental and legal concerns, and 2026 presents a critical opportunity to make these protections permanent.

Additionally, Hawai‘i’s reefs generate substantial economic value through tourism, recreation, and ecosystem services, estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually. This long-term, sustainable benefit significantly outweighs the limited and extractive gains of aquarium fish collection.

Protecting reef fish supports reef health, coastal protection, local livelihoods, and future generations.

Based on both professional observation and available data, maintaining the ban represents a precautionary and resource-protective approach consistent with long-term stewardship of Hawai‘i’s marine environment.

I respectfully ask you to keep the ban in place.

With aloha,

Troy Tunngley

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:27:48 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leialoha "Rocky" Kaluhiwa	Testifying for Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club	Support	In Person

Comments:

The Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club is in support of the measure with two changes - include Kaneohe Bay and delete reference to counties with less than 200,000 population.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:13:38 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Godfrey Akaka	Testifying for The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

We oppose this bill. Aquarium fishing is the most sustainable and highly regulated fishery in the State. If you allow this bill to pass, you will be opening the door to shutting down every fishery in the State. Mahalo.

## HB 2101 Strongly Opposed To HB 2101

Dear Esteemed Senators,

Compiled by Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM, please do not pass HB 2101; it would be the wrong decision. Untrue testimony opposed to the fishery would run counter to a long-standing fishery review, Oahu EIS submission, West Hawaii EIS passage, Supreme Court rulings, and BLNR vote 7-0 in favor of the current rules package. lengthy legal process, sound ecology, and decades of science. Rewarding those who use misinformation to shut down sustainable fisheries solely on the basis of opinion is unfair and a travesty of justice at the most basic moral level. Thanks for reviewing the science:

**West Hawaii Today** My Turn:

“We expect better “.My Turn | Thursday, June 25, 2020 .

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. :

**“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 large body of data and other evidence 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”.**

***“There were no significant differences in damaged coral between control and collected sites to indicate the presence of destructive fishing practices. In addition, there were no increases in the abundance of macroalgae where the abundance of herbivores was reduced by aquarium collecting”.***

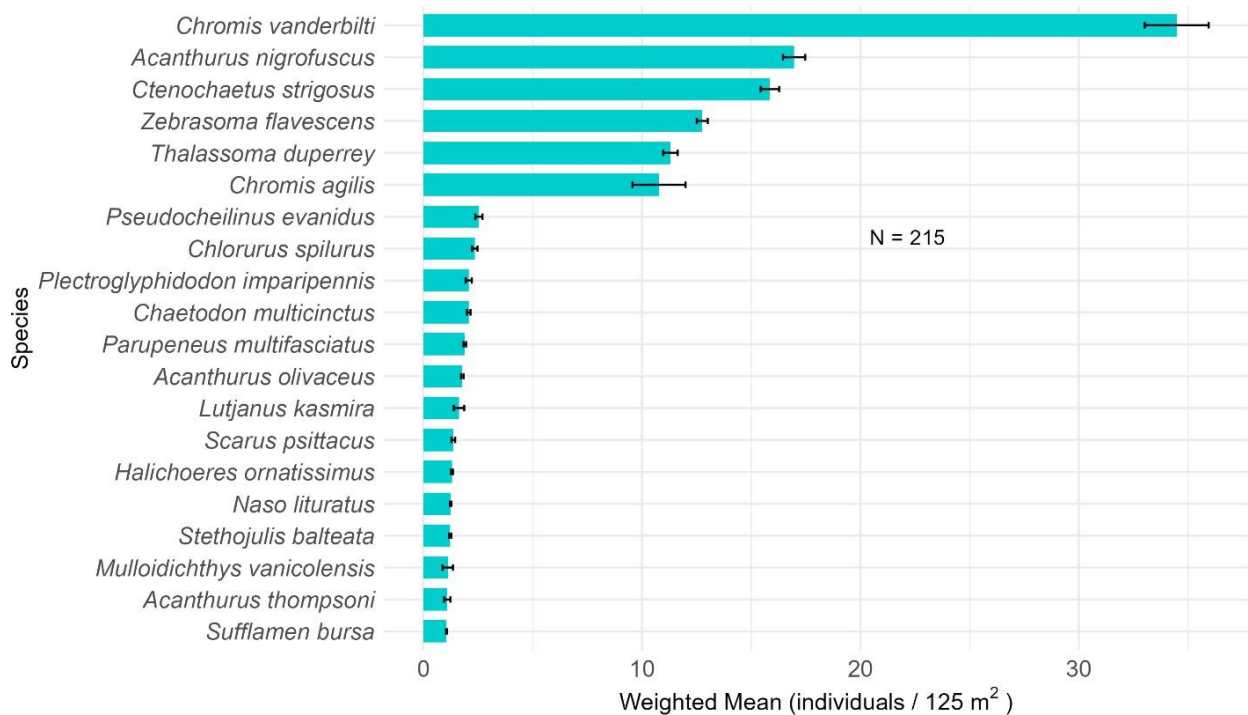
“The dataset collected by the Hawai'i Department of Aquatic Resources (DLNR) is remarkable for the time-span that it covers (1999 - 2020), and the resources required to

conduct over 6,700 underwater surveys. **These data clearly show the populations of yellow tang and kole (the two most heavily collected species) are not declining, and in recent years have increased. This is a clear indication that collecting is sustainable at the current level of fishing and in the present environmental conditions (2017 report -fishery has been closed after 2017 due to a court ruling)”.**

“These data also show **no significant differences in the adult population of yellow tang in fished areas versus closed areas.** This is important because these large individuals represent the broodstock. Adult fish are not valued in the aquarium trade and are not collected. As of 2015, the **total population of yellow tang on the Kona coast increased by 64.5% and is estimated to number 3.6 million fish, while the adult population is estimated to be greater than 2.5 million fish. Each female yellow tang can produce up to 20,000+ eggs per spawning event, and spawning occurs multiple times throughout the year.** The large population of adults, coupled with their prodigious reproductive output is one important biological factor that makes this fishery possible”. **Top 21 Ph.D. marine researchers in Hawaii opposed fishery closure!**

Report to the Thirty-Third Legislature 2025 Regular Session Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) [https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2024/12/ar\\_hrs188-2025.pdf](https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2024/12/ar_hrs188-2025.pdf)

**Kole Tangs, Ctenochaetus Strigosis and Yellow tangs Zebrasoma Flavescens are currently the third and fourth most populous fish in West Hawaii**

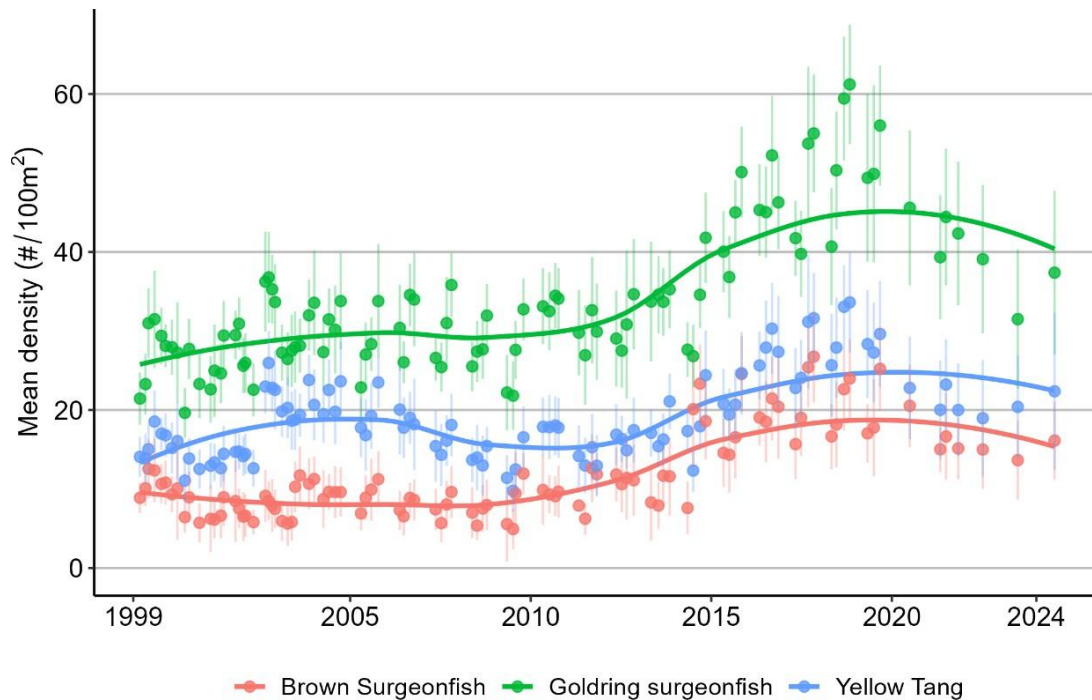


**Figure 20.** The 20 most abundant reef fish species recorded during 2022-2023 FAHU surveys. Mean density per transect (125 m<sup>2</sup>) weighted by stratum weights with error bars to show weighted standard error for the sample size of 215 surveys across nine strata. Scientific names were used to distinguish species with overlapping Hawaiian names. Translations can be found in Appendix table A-1.



**All Species in both the West Hawaii and Oahu EIS are of least concern.** This status is one evaluated and categorized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as not a focus of wildlife conservation because it is still plentiful in the wild. They do not qualify as threatened, near-threatened, or conservation-dependent (prior to 2001).

**Kole Green, Yellow Tang Blue, Lavender Tang Red (control species) population density in West Hawaii by year. No significant fishery impact sustainability.**

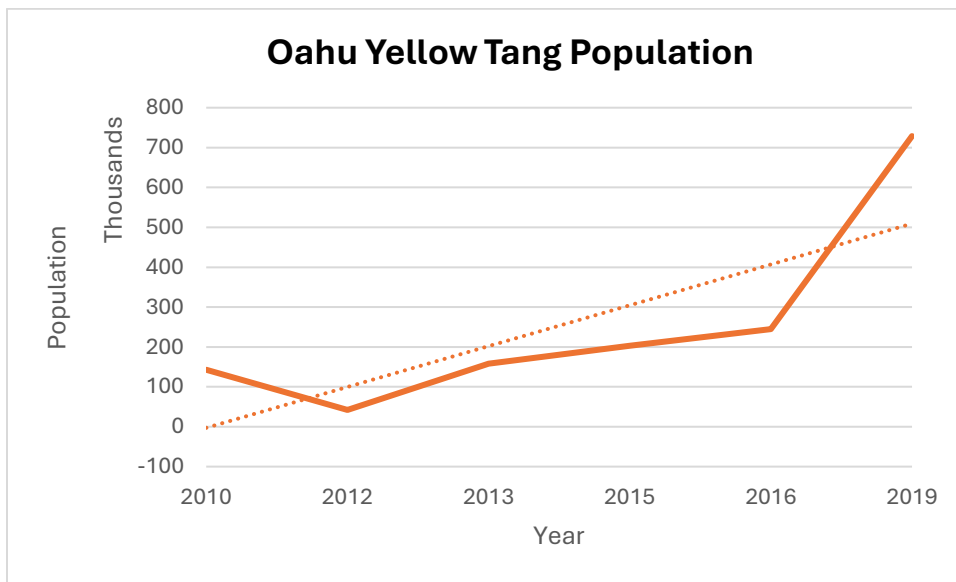


**Figure 23.** Mean density of select small surgeonfishes in WHAP surveys. Points represent mean density across 25 WHAP sites for each survey round per species. Error bars represent standard deviation to depict the level of variability between sites. Recruit sized individuals are removed from these data 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 in West Hawaii. Until 2017, the aquarium fishery was open, indicating no significant long-term impacts on overall fish populations.**

**For Oahu the PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC).** One would expect to see an inverse relationship in these charts if the fishery were not sustainable. The Oahu Aquarium Fishery's most targeted species was yellow tangs.

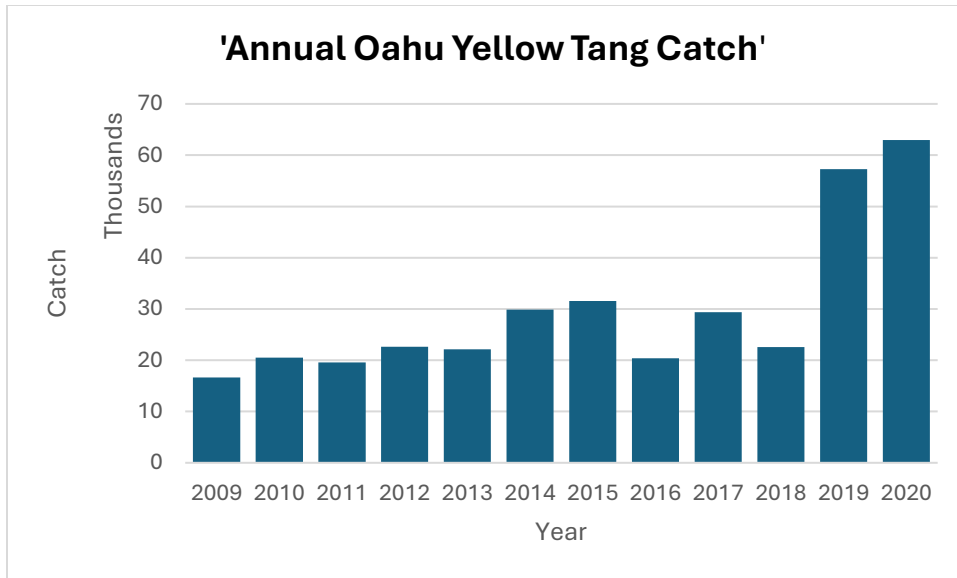
**Yellow Tangs, data from 2009 to 2020, clearly show the Oahu fishery is sustainable when compared to catch.**



2010 to 2019 done by PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC)

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom

0-98 ft only. Currently done only every three years



#### DAR Catch Report Stats Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2009-2020

Due to the West Hawaii closure in 2017, the yellow tang catches for Oahu increased, but the fish populations also increased (2017-2019 above). It is important to note that the Oahu Aquarium fishery operated between 2010, and 2020. **The above fish population data show an increase in fish populations during fisheries activities from 2010 to 2020. Proof of sustainability.**

#### Global Warming

**Since the introduction of the first men to Hawaii in 400 A.D., land-based species** have resulted in over 100 endemic plant species, 30 bird species, 74 insect species, and 41 tree snails [becoming endangered or extinct](#). Insects, Birds, snails, and many others are listed as Hawaii IUCN red species of concern. In 2023 8 more birds were removed from the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants due to their confirmed extinction.

**Marine Fish are more resistant to the impacts of global warming, and no Pacific marine fish species have become extinct over the current historical period. No Hawaiian marine fish are on the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species. Moreover, almost all of Hawaii's marine fishes used for seafood and the aquarium trade are listed as species of IUCN "Least Concern." The lowest conservation level is there for exactly these reasons.**

Examining the marine species extinctions of the past five global extinction-level events, marine fish have been more resilient to global impacts and are likely to out-survive land-based species.

It should be noted, however, that some marine mammals, with their low and long reproductive cycles, are more vulnerable than broadcast-spawning, highly reproductive marine fish species.

**Marine fish's vast geographical distribution**, due to broadcast breeding and larval distribution over as much as five thousand miles and even other oceans like the Atlantic and Indian Ocean from and to Hawaii, makes them much less vulnerable to fishing and environmental impacts. Marine fish studied in aquariums show that they are more resistant to global warming temperature changes, pH changes, salinity changes, and other ecological changes than land-based species. For example, Tuna and many other species are found in all oceans of the world. Ocean Depth habitat range, the latitude of the Hawaiian Islands chain from 19 degrees to 28 degrees latitude, and 1500 miles of 132 atolls, reefs, and shoals create a vast, unique habitat range protecting Hawaii's ocean biodiversity. Seventy percent of the earth is ocean, making marine fish in Hawaii less vulnerable to point-source pollution and global warming.

**Marine Fish are Hawaii's and the World's most renewable resource.**

**Yellow tangs daily produce 24,000 to 44,000 fry per spawn per female, many times a month. Male fish sperm spawn numbers far outweigh female egg counts, so females with lower numbers are referred to in fecundity reproductive science. Recent research indicates that they can spawn daily, and that means they probably greatly exceed the 1.14 million to 1.055 million per female yearly estimates that were based on full-moon breeding days alone!**

**Multiply that by the 3.6 million West Hawaii Yellow Tang 2026 population in the 30-to-60-foot range alone, at a 1% survival rate to full adult breeding stage, has a potential of 22 billion new adult breeder fish on the reefs every few months! Yellow tangs are found up to 265 feet deep so the 3.6 million is only a small population estimate!**

**Other surgeon fishes have also been shown to breed daily year-round.**

Yellow tangs after the fry spend around 4 months at sea developing, they return to the reefs, where they reach breeding size in 3 months. Yellow tangs as small as 2.6 inches 65mm have reproductive organs and oocytes in their ovaries. Large 8-inch breeders are restricted in take for the Hawaii aquarium fishery, leaving active breeders on every Hawaiian reef ocean location to repopulate.

**The aquarium fishery is truly a “Model Fishery,” Leaving breeders and fishing only smaller fish that replenish quickly!**

**The complete yellow tang population doubling time is only 15 months. (Source Fish Base, Yellow tangs *Zebrasoma Flavescens*)**



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**. In early March of 2026, **Maui County unanimously passed Resolution No. 26-53, 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 and Maui has been clearly expressed, in addition to 1,000's of testimonies across each island over the past decade, calling for a ban on this commercial practice Statewide.

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 22, 2026

RE: **Support** for HB 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Dear Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, and Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

Since 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce has advanced the quality of life on the west side of Hawai'i Island by supporting a strong, sustainable regional economy. 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 promoting coral reef health and ocean conservation.**

West Hawai'i's culture, quality of life, and economy are closely tied to the health of our ocean and coral reef ecosystems. Healthy reefs maintain marine biodiversity, sustain traditional practices, support local livelihoods, and contribute to the region's visitor industry. Protecting these resources is essential to maintaining the balance between environmental stewardship and responsible economic activity that has guided our region for decades.

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **strongly supports** HB 2101 HD1: Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection, 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.

We respectfully urge the State of Hawai'i Legislature to pass this important measure that will have a significant impact on our community and future generations.

Sincerely,



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



March 23, 2026

### **COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair  
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

### **COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 1:01pm

Conference Room 224  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2101 HD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION**

Aloha Chair Richards, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and  
Members of the Joint Committees on Water and Land and Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Maxx Phillips. I am from Hawai'i Island and serve as the Hawai'i and Pacific Islands Director and Senior Attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. The Center for Biological Diversity ("Center") is a national nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and supporters, many of which are from Hawai'i, dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places through science, law, and policy. **The Center submits this testimony in strong support of HB2101 HD1.**

#### **The Science Is Unambiguous**

Herbivorous reef fish are not merely components of coral reef ecosystems; they are functional keystones upon which reef persistence depends. Species such as lau'ipala (yellow tang) and kole (goldring surgeonfish) are among the most ecologically significant grazers in Hawaiian reef systems. Their primary function, consuming macroalgae, is what prevents algal overgrowth from smothering corals, suppressing coral recruitment, and triggering the kind of phase shift from coral-dominated to algae-dominated reef that, once established, is extraordinarily difficult to reverse. This is not a contested scientific proposition. It is among the most thoroughly documented dynamics

in coral reef ecology, supported by decades of peer-reviewed research across Hawai'i and the broader Indo-Pacific.

The mechanism is well understood. When herbivore biomass declines, whether through overfishing, targeted extraction, or habitat loss, macroalgae gain a competitive advantage over corals for space and light. Following bleaching events or other disturbances, reefs with depleted herbivore populations fail to recover at the rates observed in protected systems. Long-term monitoring in Hawai'i has consistently demonstrated that marine protected areas with higher herbivore biomass exhibit measurably improved reef condition, coral cover, and recovery potential compared to areas subject to extraction. The data are clear: keeping fish on the reef works. Removing them does not.

The industry's own evidence confirms the harm. The aquarium industry-sponsored West Hawai'i Environmental Impact Statement documented significantly lower lau'īpala density in areas open to commercial collection relative to areas closed to collection. This finding did not emerge from advocacy; it came from the industry's own data, submitted in support of its own permitting process. When a regulated industry's environmental review documents population-level suppression of the target species, the precautionary and scientifically appropriate response is not to reopen the fishery. It is to close it.

### **Climate Change Has Raised the Stakes**

The ecological importance of herbivorous reef fish has always been significant. Under accelerating climate stress, it has become critical. Ocean warming, marine heatwaves, and acidification are driving coral bleaching events of increasing frequency, geographic extent, and severity across the Hawaiian Archipelago and the broader Pacific. The 2023 mass bleaching event, the most severe on record in Hawai'i, underscored the fragility of these systems and the speed at which conditions can deteriorate.

In this context, herbivorous fish like lau'īpala and kole are not a renewable resource to be allocated between competing commercial interests. They are an active ecological defense mechanism. Following bleaching-induced coral mortality, the presence of sufficient grazer biomass is one of the most significant determinants of whether a reef recovers or undergoes permanent phase shift to algal dominance. Removing these species from the wild to supply an ornamental pet trade, when aquacultured alternatives already exist and are commercially available, is scientifically indefensible.

Biota Aquariums operates a Waimānalo-based facility that has successfully aquacultured and sold lau'īpala for years. The reef-safe alternative is not theoretical. It exists, it is operational, and it demonstrates that the aquarium trade's demand for this species can be met without further depleting wild populations. What has been lacking is the legislative will to prioritize reef resilience over a narrow extractive interest.

## **The Precautionary Principle Is Not Optional Here**

Responsible fisheries management rests on three pillars: robust monitoring, reliable enforcement, and adaptive management grounded in the best available science. None of those conditions are currently met for commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

The Division of Aquatic Resources is collecting significantly less fish population data along West Hawai'i than in prior years. This data gap is not a minor administrative shortcoming; it is a fundamental failure of the evidentiary foundation required to make any credible sustainability determination. The Division's assertion that resumed collection would be "sustainable" cannot be validated under a scaled-back monitoring regime. It is an assumption, not a scientific finding, and assumptions are not an adequate basis for authorizing the extraction of ecologically critical species from reef systems already under severe climate stress.

Enforcement presents an equally serious problem. The Board's proposed quota system would require counting live fish at sea and onshore, a resource-intensive undertaking that would strain the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement's already limited capacity. Whether meaningful compliance can be achieved under real-world conditions remains undemonstrated. A quota system that cannot be enforced is not a management tool. It is a permission slip.

The precautionary principle is a cornerstone of both sound conservation science and responsible environmental governance. It holds that where scientific uncertainty exists, where monitoring is inadequate, and where the species at issue perform irreplaceable ecological functions, the burden of proof falls on those who would extract, not on those who seek to protect. That burden has not been met here. It cannot be met here, given the current state of monitoring, enforcement capacity, and ecological stress on Hawai'i's reef systems. The scientifically and legally appropriate response is to prohibit collection.

Hawai'i's constitutional public trust doctrine requires that public resources be managed for the benefit of present and future generations, with commercial uses that negatively impact those resources disfavored under law. Where a commercial use has repeatedly demonstrated measurable harm to public trust resources, including the native species and nearshore ecosystems upon which Native Hawaiian cultural practices depend, the State's obligation is to act.

## **Correcting a Historical Scientific Mischaracterization**

This bill also corrects a foundational error in the scientific record underlying current law. HRS § 188-31 was enacted in 1953 on the stated premise that fish taken for aquarium display have "little or no value as food fish" and are "not edible." This characterization was scientifically incorrect at the time of enactment and has been thoroughly refuted by subsequent research and by the lived experience of Native Hawaiian communities who have harvested, managed, and depended upon these species for generations. Lau'ipala and kole are not ecologically marginal species with no cultural or nutritional significance.

They are food fish, cultural resources, and ecological keystones. Legislation premised on their irrelevance to human communities has no place in a legal framework that takes seriously its obligations to both science and to Native Hawaiian rights under article XII, section 7 of the Hawai'i Constitution.

### **Economic Reality**

The economic case for this industry does not withstand scrutiny. By the industry's own estimates, the aquarium trade in West Hawai'i generates between approximately \$500,000 and \$2 million annually, a figure that represents a fraction of the more than \$1.2 billion that healthy coral reefs generate each year in tourism revenue alone, before accounting for their broader ecosystem services including shoreline protection and food security. The Division of Aquatic Resources has estimated that administering the permitting program would cost the state \$300,000 to \$500,000 per year for Hawai'i Island alone, with collectors paying just \$100 per permit annually. The public subsidy required to sustain this industry vastly outweighs any benefit it provides. The legislature should direct state resources toward pono food fishing, reef resilience, and reef-safe aquaculture, activities that benefit all of Hawai'i's people, rather than subsidizing extraction that benefits only a handful of commercial collectors.

### **Community and Governmental Support**

The scientific case for this bill is reinforced by broad and sustained community demand. Three public opinion polls conducted since 2012 have shown overwhelming support for ending commercial aquarium collection. The most recent found that 84% of O'ahu and Hawai'i Island residents support a ban, with only 10% supporting continued collection. The Hawai'i County Council, the Kaua'i County Council, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, neighborhood boards across the pae 'āina, and OHA's Board of Trustees, responding directly to calls from West Hawai'i beneficiaries whose communities have borne the impacts of this industry for decades, have all called upon this legislature to act. At the October 24, 2025 Board of Land and Natural Resources hearing, the Board received over five hours of community testimony overwhelmingly opposing the resumption of commercial collection, before voting to advance rulemaking anyway. Board members themselves directed community members to seek relief from this legislature. This committee is that relief.

### **A Note on Geographic Scope**

The Center supports HB2101 HD1 and urge its passage. The Center also note my preference for the original version of the bill, which applied statewide. The ecological dynamics described above, including herbivore depletion, algal overgrowth, phase shift risk, and climate vulnerability, are not confined to any single county or island. Reef ecosystems function as interconnected systems across moku and pae 'āina, and the constitutional obligations to protect them apply with equal force statewide. Expanding these protections across all of Hawai'i would more fully honor the State's scientific and constitutional kuleana to future generations.

## **Conclusion**

The science is clear. The precautionary principle is unambiguous. The ecological stakes, measured in the survival of reef systems that took millennia to develop and that climate change is now threatening within decades, could not be higher. HB2101 HD1 is the scientifically grounded, constitutionally supported, and community-endorsed response to a narrowly beneficial extractive industry that Hawai'i's reefs can no longer afford to sustain.

**Hawai'i's reefs have had a reprieve from commercial collection for nearly a decade. This legislature has a rare and time-sensitive opportunity to make that protection permanent. I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

/s/ Maxx Phillips

Maxx Phillips, Esq.

Hawai'i and Pacific Islands Director,  
Senior Attorney Center for Biological Diversity



March 24, 2026

TO: Senate Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, and Hawaiian Affairs

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

Aloha Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees,

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 Committees 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 Committees 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

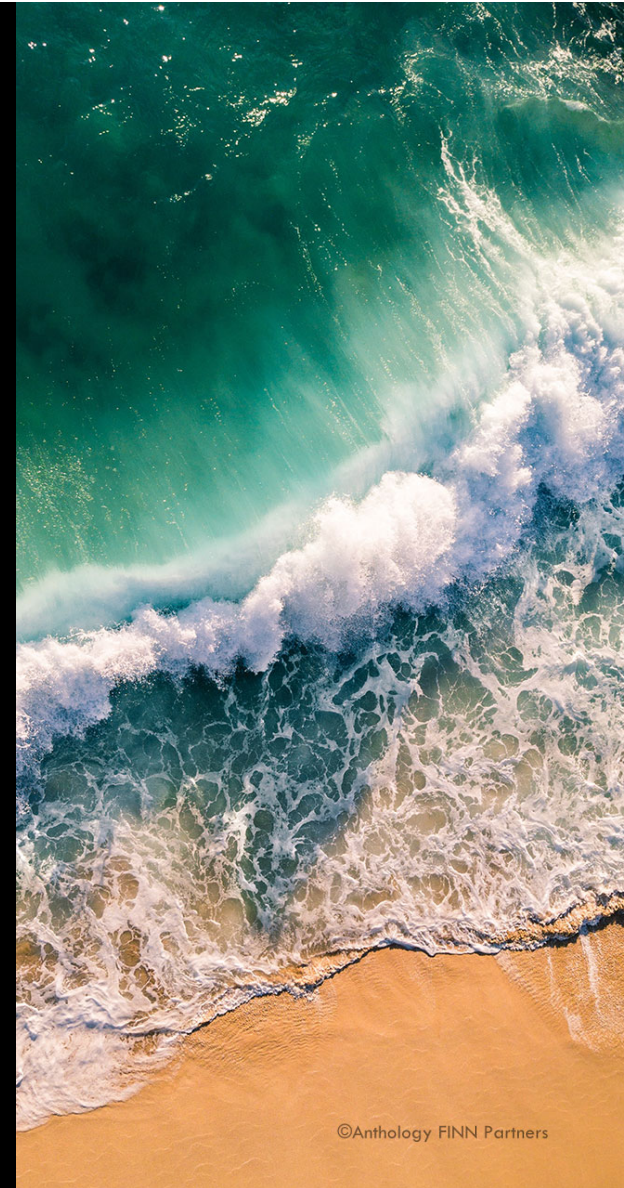
# METHODOLOGY

- 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.*

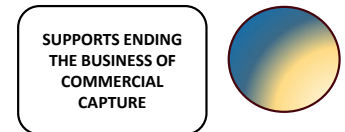
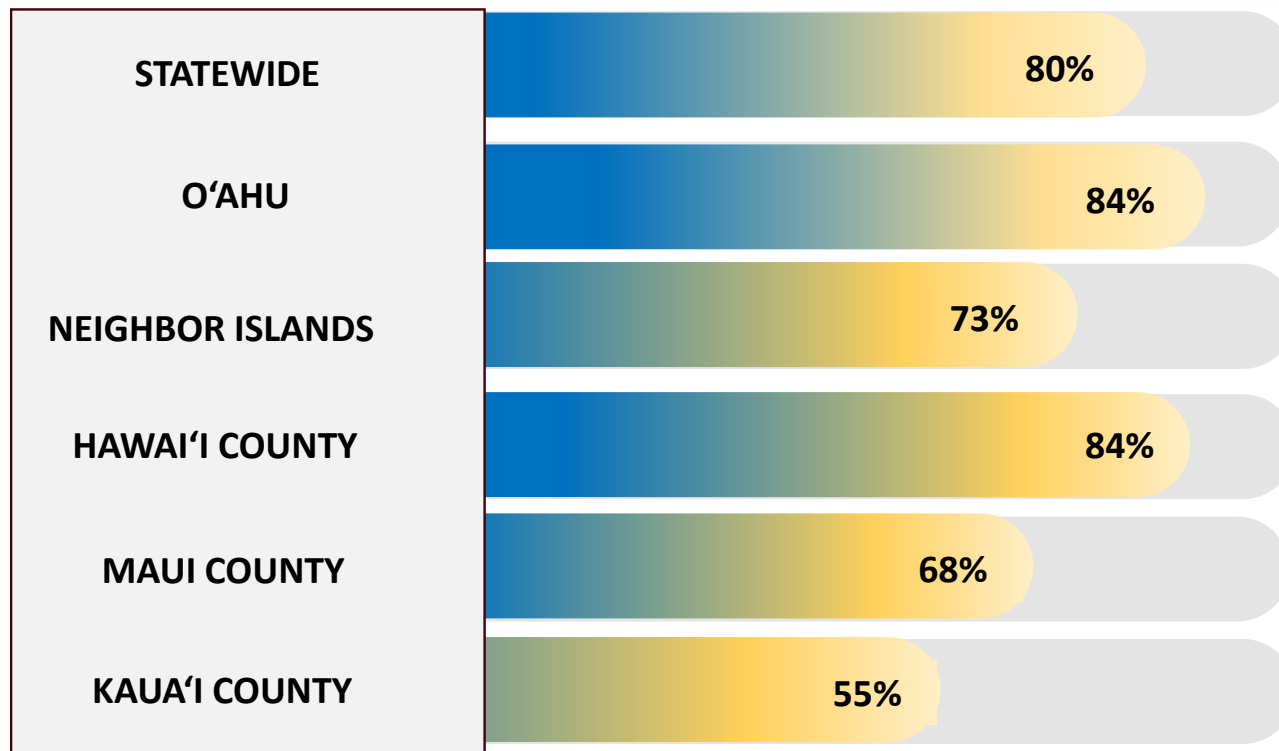
*Some people support the commercial capture of Hawaii's marine life for the mainland aquarium pet trade because it provides a few dozen part-time jobs in Hawaii. Those people believe there are plenty of fish on Hawaii's reefs. They also believe that limits on the aquarium trade are not necessary because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



# 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*

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To: Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Senator Tim Richards, III, Chair

Re: **Strong Support for HB2101 HD1** - Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

March 24, 2026

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, and members of the Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, and Hawaiian Affairs:

This bill received over 650 pieces of written testimony in the last hearing alone, the vast majority in strong support. So thank you for hearing those voices and scheduling the bill for a hearing in your joint committee today.

In many cases, the testimony represents more than the heartfelt words from one person or ohana:

HB2101 is part of OHA's legislative priorities this year on behalf of its hundreds of thousand Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

The Sierra Club of Hawaii strongly supports the bill on behalf of its 20,000 members.

The Democratic Caucus of the Hawaii Democratic Party speaks in strong support on behalf of 6,680 members.

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce strongly supports the bill on behalf of its 580 members.

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs supports HB2101 on behalf of its 3,500 members.

The Hawaii Ocean Legislative Task Force supports the bill on behalf of more than 150 members across over 20 organizations.

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce supports HB2101 on behalf of its 460 businesses and members.

The Activities and Attractions Association of Hawai'i (A3H) strongly supports the bill on behalf of its members.

And most of the testimonies request the ban to be extended statewide. Which we support.

There are more I could list, but I hope this makes the point: Hawaii is ready to close down the unnecessary, extractive, and cruel commercial aquarium fish collection industry for good.

Mahalo for your time, and for the opportunity to join so many others testifying in strong support of HB2101.

Lisa Bishop, MS  
Friends of Hanauma Bay I President



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

March 24, 2026

1:01 PM

Conference Room 224

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

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Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, 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



# SIERRA CLUB

OF HAWAI'I

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.

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:34:33 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Inga Gibson	Testifying for Pono Advocacy	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chairs Lee and Richards and Members of the Committee's on Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our strong support for HB2101, to finally prohibit the destructive practice of commercial aquarium collection for the US mainland pet trade, where 99 percent of Hawaii reef fish are shipped, should they even survive transport.

While there are countless reasons to end this long opposed out of state, profit-driven practice, recent severe storms and their potentially catastrophic impacts on our reefs, requires swift action to keep the extractive trade closed statewide. Scientists predict that storm severity and frequency, and related climate change impacts such as coral bleaching, will only increase in the coming decades.

There is no economical nor environmental benefit to reopening the trade that extracts hundreds of thousands of important herbivores annually, that are needed now, more than ever, on their native reefs.

If the Committee's desire allowing out of state interests to take Hawaii fish, then that take should be limited to non-native invasive and introduced species only.

We respectfully urge the committees passage of HB2101, to apply statewide (Oahu and Hawaii Island).

Inga Gibson, Director

Pono Advocacy LLC. Honolulu, HI



*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**

March 23, 2026

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  
[kkaupiko@gmail.com](mailto:kkaupiko@gmail.com)

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Captain Cook, HI 96704

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[www.kalanihale.com](http://www.kalanihale.com)



# SIERRA CLUB

HAWAI'I ISLAND GROUP



**LATE**

March 23, 2026

Senator Tim Richards , Chair, Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
Senator Chris Lee , Chair, Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: Strong Support for House Bill 2101, Draft 1**

Aloha Senate Committees' Chairs Richards and Lee and Committees' Members,

It is with immense hope that the Hawai'i Island Group of the Sierra Club of Hawai'i (HIG) strongly supports HB2101 HB1.

After this past two weeks of historic rains, floods, and massive runoffs of soil onto the state's coral reefs, there is no longer any valid argument against the fact that climate change is not only real and a great threat to us all.

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

Just this past January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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.

The Department of Aquatic Resources ("DAR") acknowledged in a joint Senate committee hearing on February 10<sup>th</sup> that Hawai'i's coral reefs would likely be destroyed 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".

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, and overwhelming public support to pass SB2996.

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.

### **Do No Harm**

Scientists are now 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. Twenty years!

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 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 Hawai'i Supreme Court rejected the requirement of scientific certainty before acting to protect public trust purposes, noting that to do so will often allow for only reactive, not preventive regulation. 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.

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 statement that there is no scientific certainty in its decision-making process. The word “mitigate”, in and of itself, means to lessen the severity or impact of a problem, without necessarily solving the root cause. It implies a more temporary or partial solution, rather than a complete fix.

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. Once again, the Precautionary Principle empowers this Committee to support a ban on the issuance of commercial aquarium fish harvesting permits.

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 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. As previously stated in this testimony, 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.

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

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

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 4:39:39 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are pleased to stand in strong support of SB2101SD1. Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:45:26 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,

R A Culbertson,

member,

Big Island Reef Keepers hui

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:41:15 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Moran	Testifying for Kihei Community Assoc. (KCA)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members

Mike Moran for the Kihei Community Assoc, [www.gokihei.org](http://www.gokihei.org) , Maui, again asking you to support this measure to place Hawaii's natural resources above financil profits of some entities.

Mahalo

Mike Moran for KCA

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:35:01 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators, it is time to create a permanent ban.

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.

However this does exclude our smaller islands, who deserve to have a healthy reef and opportunities to fish for community food. Why limit this? Everyone should have this ban.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:08:54 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sam Guckenheimer	Testifying for Kona Indivisible	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The counties cannot do this alone. The state needs to step up and ban aquarium fish capture AND PROVIDE ENFORCEMENT. Please pass this bill.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:04:40 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald Robinson	Testifying for Big Island Aviation, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

22 March 2026

Opposition to Aquarium Fish Collecting  
Ronald Robinson, MD, MPH, MBA, FACHE

I am writing in support of HB2101 and in strong opposition to commercial aquarium collecting.

I am a small business owner living near Kailua Kona in Hawaii county (Big Island Aviation, LLC), and my business brings over \$100,000 of annual impact to the county's economy. My business is tied directly to the health and biodiversity of Hawaii's reef environment. I also serve as a volunteer for three marine non-profits (Malama Kai, Reef Check, Ocean Defenders Alliance) and am an avid recreational SCUBA diver, so I see the reef personally several times each week. In addition, I am the squadron commander for Hawaii's Kona Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, so I see the reef and its fish populations from the air on a frequent basis. Finally, I am a physician trained in science and the scientific method of observation. My ability to observe this situation from the perspectives of science, business, and community service places me in a position to provide an educated opinion on this vital issue.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming that commercial aquarium collection damages the fragile reef ecosystem. (1,2) Fish like the yellow tang play a crucial role in maintaining the health of coral reefs by grazing on algae. Their decline can lead to algal overgrowth, which harms coral and disrupts the entire marine ecosystem. They are also a food source for larger predatory fish and their decline can affect the population dynamics of these predators. The fact that the yellow tang population did not recover as predicted during the recent hiatus in aquarium fish collection is an indicator that the models being used by DAR are inaccurate, and the coral reef ecosystem is much more fragile than they predicted.

From a community perspective, each fish that remains on the reef delights hundreds of people. Each fish collected, if it survives, benefits a privileged few. In the 25 years I have been diving this reef I have seen fish populations decline due to environmental stress and the ongoing poaching of aquarium fish despite the recent ban on aquarium fish collection. Keeping our fish on the reef is vital to our tourist industry, and to businesses such as my own. In addition, since the fish are now available by commercial aquaculture, there is no reason other than the financial

self-interest of commercial aquarium fish collectors to continue the practice of removing wild fish from our reef.

If commercial aquarium collectors seek to refute the established scientific literature and the obvious fish population declines noted by community members like myself, then they (not the community through DAR) should bear the burden of proving that there is no negative impact of commercial aquarium collection on our shared reef. If commercial aquarium collection is approved, then the cost for monitoring and policing any approved commercial collection should be borne by the commercial aquarium collectors, not by the community.

I strongly oppose allowing a small group of selfish commercial aquarium collectors to negatively impact our shared coral reef resource.

Blast fishing is wrong – it was banned in 1940.  
Cyanide fishing is wrong – it was banned in in the 1960’s.  
Commercial whaling is wrong – it was banned in 1986.  
Commercial aquarium collecting is wrong – ban it now.  
Do your kuleana – just say “NO!” to aquarium fish collecting.

- (1) <https://earth.org/the-destructive-truth-behind-aquariums/>
- (2) Tissot and Hallacher, 2003 (attached)

22 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: 3/22/2026 11:14:36 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nakoolani Warrington	Testifying for 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 state Division of Aquatic Resources.

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.

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

**SUPPORT and PASS HB 2101 HD1.** Mahalo.



COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Sen. Chris Herbert Tim Richards III, Chair

Sen. Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Sen. Chris Lee, Chair

Sen. Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair

March 24, 2026 1:00 PM

Conference Room 224

Testimony in support of HB2101 HD1.

Aloha Chair Richards, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Lamosao, Vice Chair Inouye, 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. We need to stop the aquarium fish-collection trade for commercial sales with 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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Mendy Dant  
President  
Fair Wind Cruises



Testimony Before The  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts (WLA)  
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs (HWN)  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB2101 HD1**  
March 24, 2026, 1:01 p.m., Room 224 & 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 other fisheries besides Hawai'i County.**

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, as well as other island fisheries not in Hawai'i County.**

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 all Hawai'i fisheries, not just Hawai'i County.**

**Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:00:38 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John & Rita Shockley	Testifying for Free Access Coaliton	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports HB2101. We have testified before in favor of protecting reef fish in Hawaiian waters. We still support this bill to stop commercial harvesting of our reef fish.

**HB2101 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 state Division of Aquatic Resources.

Mahalo for your time.



PO Box 1095  
Kurtistown, Hawaii  
808-938-2840  
Jim.wyban@gmail.com

March 22 2026

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT HB 2101

Committee on Water and Land + Hawaiian Affairs  
**HB2101** – Ban Commercial Aquarium Collection

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

My name is Dr. Jim Wyban. I am a UH Manoa trained PhD in Marine Biology. I am an aquaculture scientist and entrepreneur and a pioneer of Hawai'i's Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) shrimp broodstock industry. Over the past three decades, my work has helped position Hawai'i as a global leader in biosecure shrimp genetics and high-value aquaculture exports.

I strongly support **HB 2101 to Ban Commercial Aquarium Collection**. I reside in Hilo and am an avid snorkeler in both Hilo and Kona. Over the last few years, since reef collections were banned, I've seen a nice recovery of reef fishes in many of my favorite dive spots in Kona. Where I used to see single Yellow Tangs swimming, I've recently seen small schools of Yellow Tangs. In the old days, Kona was known as the "Gold Coast" because of the huge schools of Yellow Tang visible from the shoreline.

When I had my shrimp breeding company based at NELHA, we would pack our farm raised shrimp broodstock during the night to deliver to air cargo by 6 am. We would drop off 60-100 boxes of broodstock. At air cargo, our pile of boxes (60-100) would be dwarfed by the number of boxes of reef fish being exported. I was convinced that the collectors were grossly underreporting their harvests. This happened every time I went to Kona air cargo (Aloha) 2-3 times per week over 20 years.

My professional position is that Hawaii reef fish collection is an undesirable, unsustainable extraction from our precious coral reefs. A few people are making money as our public reefs are greatly depleted. Hawaii's reef fish are far more valuable on the reef than in private aquaria in Nebraska. A second problem is that collection of reef fish off the reef grossly undervalues the replacement costs of those fish. Aquaculture can now produce those beautiful reef fish but if the reef collectors are around, aquaculture companies cannot compete.

I therefore **strongly support HB 2101** and the permanent ban of commercial reef fish collection for the aquarium trade.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jim Wyban  
CEO  
Marine Genetics LLC



March 24, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS  
To the Senate Committees on Hawaiian Affairs  
and  
Water, Land, Culture and The Arts  
In Support of

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**HB 2101 HD1 - RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION**

Aloha Chair Richards, Chair Lee, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees:

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 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Keauhou, Hawai‘i, in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Mōhalu, this 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> day of November 2025, at the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in Keauhou, Hawai‘i.

*DreanaLee Kalili*

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DreanaLee Kalili, President



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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**TESTIMONY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CAUCUS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I IN STONG SUPPORT OF HB 2101 to ban wild fish collection for aquarium trade**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS (HWN)**

**Sen. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair**

**Sen. Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND (WLA)**

**Sen. Chris Lee, Chair**

**Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (CPN)**

**Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair**

**Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY (JDC)**

**Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair**

**Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair**

HEARING: Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 1:01 p.m., Conference Room 224 & Video

Aloha, Chairs Richards, Lee, Keohokalole, and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Lamosao, Inouye, Fukunaga, and Gabbard, and Members of the four Committees!

The 6,680 members of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, who live in all four of Hawai'i's counties, strongly support HB 2101, which if passed, will finally shut down the capture of wild reef fish for the aquarium trade. There are multiple reasons to support this bill and to **amend it to ensure that it applies STATEWIDE**.

The situation is precarious because the Division on Aquatic Resources (DAR) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has taken an approach that the Caucus respectfully believes is NOT in the best interests of the environment or the long-term economic interests of the People of the State: We understand that DAR is currently advancing a rule to reopen aquarium collection in West Hawai'i – meaning large-scale extraction could resume as soon as this summer.



Environmental Caucus of  
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Testimony on HB 2101 to ban commercial aquarium fish collection  
Hearing: Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 101 p.m. Conf Room 224 & video  
Page 2

Moreover, at the same time, DAR gutted the monitoring program that was comparing reefs that are protected versus reefs where commercial collection was being permitted. This action eliminated important scientific evidence needed to evaluate the fishery. Why was this done? Removing herbivorous reef fish, such as the yellow tang, undermines reef resilience and allows reefs to be overgrown by algae — it does not support resilience.

Furthermore, independent analysis shows that yellow tang did **not** recover as expected after the 2017 shutdown, and poaching cases and weak enforcement remain ongoing concerns.

As all this is happening, Hawai'i's reefs face compounding stress from sedimentation events, warming seas, bleaching, and pollution from Hawai'i's more than 60,000 cesspools, especially, but by no means exclusively on Hawai'i Island.

So, what has been happening to this bill? In the House, the Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection (EEP) and Water and Land (WAL), issued a report that stated, in part:

Your Committees find that the capture and sale of Hawaii's aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes is contrary to Hawaiian values that emphasize land and ocean stewardship. Your Committees further find that maintaining the populations of aquatic life present in Hawaii's ocean ecosystems serves an essential environmental purpose, as abundant populations of reef wildlife can bolster reef resiliency against the effects of climate change and offset ocean heat waves and changes in ocean acidity. This measure seeks to promote environmental resiliency and ocean stewardship by prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes.

**The Environmental Caucus strongly agrees with this part of the House committee report.** However, for reasons that are not explained at all, these House committees amended HB 2101, so that it would apply only to the County of Hawai'i, without stating any reason for such limitation. The Caucus respectfully disagrees with that limitation and sees no basis for it.

For these reasons, the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committees to pass HB 2101 HD 1, but to amend it so that it applies STATEWIDE. This is a truly important bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this valuable bill.

Alan B. Burdick, Co-chair [burdick808@gmail.com](mailto:burdick808@gmail.com)

Mike Ewall, Co-chair [mike@energyjustice.net](mailto:mike@energyjustice.net)

Melodie Aduja, Co-chair *emerita* [legislativepriorities@gmail.com](mailto:legislativepriorities@gmail.com)

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:38:01 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Kaaumoana	Testifying for Hui Hoomalu i ka Aina	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Hui Hoomalu i ka Aina is a cultural group of fishermen, hunters, growers and weavers organized in 1983 to protect, restore and respect places and practices in Hawaii nei that provide for the perpetuation of our people and the traditions that make us who we are.

The removal of any species for entertainment or display is abhorrent to our past, present and future.

We strongly support HB2101 HD1 WITH AMENDMENTS TO PROVIDE FOR THESE PROTECTIONS STATEWIDE..

Our fish don't share geopolitical boundaries devised by men and all our reefs are in jeopardy. **No aquarium take anywhere in Hawaii.**

Me ka pono,

Makaala Kaaumoana

Vice Chair



**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](http://www.Puako4reefs.org) \* [Puako for Reefs Facebook](#)

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

## **HEARING FOR STATE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS AND WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS Tuesday, March 24, 2026 1:01 p.m. Conference Room 224, State Capitol**

**TO: Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs Chair Tim Richards, and Vice-Chair Rachele Lamosao, and all members  
Senate Committee of Water, Land, Culture and the Arts Chair Chris Lee, and Vice-Chair Lorraine Inouye, 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



**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](http://www.Puako4reefs.org) \* [Puako for Reefs Facebook](#)

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

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.

#### 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: 3/22/2026 9:13:07 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mel Malinowski	Testifying for South Kohala Reef Alliance	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. South Kohala supports a permanent ban on commercial aquarium collection. So do most Hawai'ians. Supporting and passing this bill is pono. Stripping our reefs of wild reef fish in order to ship them to the mainland should never have started, as it harms our reefs, which are already under other pressures, while benefiting only a small number of collectors. It is time to stop this harmful mining of our marine resources.

Keep our wild reef fish here for the benefit of Hawai'ians.

We hope you agree, and advance HB2101 HD1.



To: The Honorable Chairs Herbert M. "Tim" Richards. III, and Chris Lee, the Honorable Vice Chairs Rachele Lamasao and Lorraine Inouye, and Members of the Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

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

**Re: Hearing HB2101 HD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION**

**Hearing: Tuesday March 24, 2026 1:01 p.m. CR224**

Aloha Chair Richards and Lee, Vice Chairs Lamasao and Inouye, and Members of the Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Water, Land, Culture and the Arts!

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 but urges an amendment to apply statewide rather than just in Hawai'i County!**

**An amendment is appropriate because statewide prohibition of harvesting aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes would better address underlying resource-management concerns. Strike page 3 lines 17-18**

This measure to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection, is urgently **needed statewide** because:

- It is **culturally appropriate** to ban the taking of herbivorous reef fish such as **yellow tang**. It is **not pono!** OHA testified that 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.”

- The Hawai‘i Constitution’s **public trust doctrine** (Art, XI, Sec. 1) requires that public trust resources be managed for the benefit of present and future generations and that the precautionary principle must apply.
- The State’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**.
- 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.
- **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).
- **Aquarium fish are mostly exported from Hawaii. The trade overwhelmingly benefits non-Hawaiians, while the adverse impacts to our delicate marine ecosystems and tourism economy are felt here.**
- Food fishers and subsistence communities are paying the price for decades of aquarium collecting. DLNR reported in 2020 that the aquarium trade exported 1.8 times more fish from West Hawai‘i than all food fishers combined.

**Additional benefits of HB2101 HD1 include:**

- **Clear economic benefits** to State 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 with amendments to help protect the State's reefs and reef wildlife!**

Mahalo!

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



February 22, 2026

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

As the founder of FreediveSafe! Hawai'i and someone who works closely with young spearfishers, I see firsthand how vital our nearshore reefs are to families, youth, and culture—both now and for generations to come. I write in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101**, with the **area amended to statewide**, to protect our natural resources for subsistence fishing and to preserve the cultural traditions of Hawai'i's rural communities across all islands.

Native reef fish—like lau'īpala (yellow tang) and kole (goldring surgeonfish)—are far more than part of the ecosystem; they are part of our 'ohana. Kole, in particular, are gathered for important family celebrations, connecting generations through shared meals and traditions. These fish provide sustenance, reinforce community ties, and carry deep cultural meaning throughout Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Island's rural communities rely on these fish most directly for food, culture, and connection. Removing them for commercial aquarium export immediately impacts local families and also undermines subsistence fishing practices across all islands by reducing the abundance of native species. How can we justify taking these fish from Hawai'i's reefs—where they feed and sustain our people—just to display them elsewhere?

Herbivorous species play a critical role in maintaining healthy reefs by controlling algae and supporting coral resilience. Populations of Hawai'i's most important native fish have declined by 90% since the early 1900s (The Nature Conservancy). Protecting these species is essential not only for reef health, but also to ensure that future generations of divers, fishers, and families across all islands can continue Hawai'i's longstanding subsistence and cultural traditions.

I respectfully urge this Committee to **PASS HB2101**, with the **area amended to statewide**, keeping Hawai'i's native fish in Hawai'i, where they belong—supporting local families, sustaining culture, and preserving the health of our nearshore reefs for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Niki Roderick  
Founder and CEO, FreediveSafe! Hawai'i  
West Hawai'i



75-5737 Kuakini Hwy, Suite 202  
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740  
808-900-3331 / [FreediveSafe.org](http://FreediveSafe.org)

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:16:14 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janice K T Shiira	Testifying for Shimanchu Mamuyaa	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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## HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

*The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in Hā'ena, Kaua'i.*

TO: Senator Chris Lee, Chair and Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair and Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair  
Members of the **SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND CULTURAL AND THE ARTS & SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

DATE & TIME: Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 1:00 pm  
PLACE: Conference Room 224 & via Videoconference

From: Billy Kinney, Assistant Director  
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2101 HD1 - RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION**

I am Billy Kinney, testifying on behalf of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (the Hui), a nonprofit established in 1998 by the hoā'āina of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). The Hui is dedicated to perpetuating the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna while restoring, caring for, and protecting the lands and waters of Hā'ena. For decades, the Hui has collaborated closely with State Parks to steward HSP through a model of curatorship that reflects true collaborative care and co-management. Since the late 1990s, this work has helped shape what collaborative care and co-management can look like statewide. As mentioned, that care extended into the storied fisheries of Hā'ena. The Hui worked with the DLNR, Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and DOCARE in establishing the first Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) with an adopted management plan and rules package in 2015. More importantly, the Hā'ena community and the Hui have always worked closely with other fishing communities across Hawai'i sourcing rural solutions to systemic problems plaguing the health of practices, places, and people everywhere – especially those with the kuleana to observe and maintain that health.

#### **The Hui is in strong support of HB 2101 HD2.**

Comparatively, the ornamental aquarium trade industry is about as far away from lawai'a pono as you can get. Lawai'a Pono has been a catchphrase and a defining principle of the community-based fisheries management movement in Hawai'i for decades. It speaks to fishing with balance, fairness, and the conditions of resources and other Hawaiians considered.

The commercial aquarium collection industry was 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 through administrative rules that it claims it is statutorily required to promulgate. We urge the Legislature to enact this longstanding aquarium collection shutdown into law and make clear that Hawai'i Island's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade.

In total, our reef ecosystems, including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors, are essential components of a healthy near-shore ecosystem. These species support resilience, which in turn protects our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion and creates the ability for a place to rebound from climate uncertainty. Reef fish are also critical components of traditional and customary fishing practices, hold cultural and spiritual significance, and represent a



## HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

*The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in Hā'ena, Kaua'i.*

precious and unique public trust resource for residents and visitors alike. In relation to the Hā'ena CBSFA, which recognises the significance of key food species—primarily reef fish—our management plan was developed with explicit objectives to co-manage in a way that would help meet the consumptive needs of our community.

When active, the commercial aquarium collection had a disproportionate and significant impact on our nearshore waters, particularly on O'ahu and West Hawai'i Island. If overfishing is sufficient to concern some communities, the extraction of hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of reef fish annually should be a matter of serious concern for all stakeholders. It is this promotion of the belief that the Public Trust is soft, exposed, and easily used for commercial use at the expense of community and ecosystem well-being which should impel us to see why this measure aligns with a broader and proven vision for stewardship in Hawai'i.

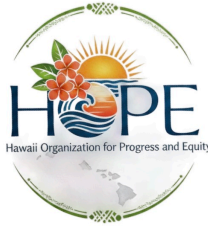
The breaking down of biodiversity and ecological function, the compromised cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices, unfortunately, calls many of us into action. The majority of Hawai'i residents, as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself, has voiced support for a permanent ban on 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 lay the groundwork to do the same statewide. DAR's justification for this costly and time-consuming endeavor is its assertion that state law mandates such action. It is therefore incumbent upon the Legislature to make clear that DAR should not expend limited public resources attempting to revive an already defunct industry.

Please, we urge you to have DAR work on more pressing issues instead—like creating co-management agreements and action plans with stewardship communities—and we respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS HB 2101 HD2**.

Aloha 'āina,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Kinney', written in a cursive style.

William "Billy" Kinney  
Assistant Director, Hui Maka'ainana O Makana  
P.O. Box 1225 Hanalei, HI 96714



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF H.B. 2101 H.D. 1  
Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Submitted to the Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawaii State Senate  
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committees:

I submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. 2101, H.D. 1, which would prohibit the commercial harvest of aquatic life for aquarium purposes in qualifying counties. This measure is long overdue and reflects Hawaii's constitutional obligations, Native Hawaiian values, environmental justice principles, and our collective kuleana to protect reef wildlife for present and future generations.

**I. CONSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATIONS DEMAND ACTION**

The Hawaii State Constitution is unambiguous in its mandate to protect our natural environment. Article XI, Section 1 declares:

"For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions shall conserve and protect Hawaii's natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the State."

Commercial aquarium collection, which strips native reef ecosystems of critical herbivorous fish like lauipala (yellow tang) and kole (goldring surgeonfish) purely for ornamental profit, is fundamentally incompatible with this constitutional duty. These fish are living ecological actors essential to reef health and resilience, not decorations

Article XI, Section 9, further affirms that each person has the right to a clean and healthful environment, and that the State has an affirmative duty to protect that right. Allowing commercial collectors to deplete reef wildlife for private profit at the expense of public ecological health directly undermines this constitutional guarantee.

Importantly, Article XII, Section 7 protects the exercise of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights. Many reef species targeted by commercial aquarium collectors, including those falsely characterized in 1953 territorial legislation as having "little or no value as food fish," have sustained Native Hawaiian communities for generations through subsistence, cultural practice, and spiritual connection to the 'āina. Permitting commercial depletion of these species for the pet trade is an ongoing affront to constitutionally protected Native Hawaiian rights.



## **II. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

The commercial aquarium trade represents a profound environmental justice issue. The burden of ecological degradation falls disproportionately on Native Hawaiian and local communities, who depend on healthy reefs for subsistence fishing, cultural practices, and community well-being. Meanwhile, the profits flow primarily to outside commercial interests and global pet trade markets.

The 1953 territorial legislature's dismissal of reef fish as having "little or no value as food fish" was not merely scientifically inaccurate; it was a colonial erasure of Native Hawaiian subsistence and cultural practices. H.B. 2101 begins to correct that historical wrong by restoring legal recognition of the true value these species hold for Hawaii's communities.

Furthermore, reef ecosystems provide irreplaceable ecosystem services to coastal communities, including moderating erosion, protecting infrastructure from high surf, and supporting nature-based tourism that sustains local livelihoods. The degradation of reefs through commercial extraction disproportionately harms the working families and communities most dependent on these natural systems.

## **III. ANIMAL WILDLIFE PROTECTIONS AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY**

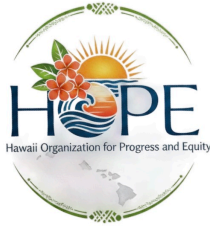
Beyond their ecological roles, the fish targeted by commercial aquarium collection are sentient wildlife deserving of protection in their own right. Capture methods used in the aquarium trade, including the use of fine-meshed nets, cause significant stress, injury, and mortality to individual animals, both those collected and those incidentally harmed during collection. Many fish do not survive the trauma of capture, transport, and captivity.

Hawaii has already recognized the importance of protecting its marine environment by prohibiting the taking of sand, dead coral, coral rubble, rocks, and soil since 1988. It is both logical and morally consistent to extend these protections to living reef wildlife. Native reef fish are not commodities to be extracted for ornamental display. They are wild animals with ecological roles, behavioral complexity, and intrinsic value.

Climate change makes these protections even more urgent. Herbivorous reef fish like laupala and kole are natural reef custodians, consuming the algae that blooms following ocean heat events and threatens to smother coral. Removing these animals from the reef for private profit at a time of accelerating climate stress is ecologically reckless and morally indefensible.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

H.B. 2101, H.D. 1 honors Hawaii's constitutional commitments, corrects a historical injustice rooted in colonial dismissal of Native Hawaiian values, advances environmental justice for communities most dependent on healthy reefs, and affirms that Hawaii's native wildlife has value far beyond what any aquarium price tag can reflect.



I urge the Committee to pass this measure with a strong recommendation for adoption.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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 23, 2026

Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2101 HD1, Relating to Commercial Aquarium  
Collection  
Hearing: Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 1:01 PM CR 224 & Via Videoconference

To: The Honorable Chair Richards, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Lamosao, Vice Chair Inouye and  
Members of the Committee,

**The Surfrider Foundation, Hawai'i Region, is in strong support of HB 2101 HD1**, which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes in specified counties. Surfrider Foundation prefers the original version of this bill which applied statewide, rather than the county- based population limitation in the HD1 version.

The Surfrider Foundation is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves, and beaches for all people through a powerful activist network. From this lens, protecting Hawai'i's coral reefs is essential to safeguarding clean water, coastal ecosystems, and the communities that depend on them.

Healthy reefs function as critical natural infrastructure - improving water quality, supporting biodiversity, sustaining cultural and subsistence practices, and reducing coastal erosion and storm impacts. Herbivorous reef fish play a key role in maintaining reef health and resilience.

The commercial aquarium trade directly undermines these ecosystem functions by removing essential reef species for ornamental use. Decades of extraction have reduced reef fish populations and degraded reef ecosystem health that Hawai'i communities rely on.

This is a public trust issue - Hawai'i's reef ecosystems must be managed for the benefit of present and future generations, not depleted for private commercial gain. This is especially critical as reef ecosystems face increasing stress from climate change and land-based pollution.

HB2101 represents an important step toward protecting reef health, water quality, and long-term coastal resilience. We support this measure and urge the Legislature to consider expanding these protections statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support on behalf of Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i's three chapters and members statewide.

Sincerely,

Hanna Lilley  
Hawai'i Regional Manager  
Surfrider Foundation

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:47:18 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnny Isham	Testifying for HAWAII TROPICAL FISH	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Hello My Name is Johnny and I Strongly oppose HB 2101;**

**Every other fishery in the United States can be managed and regulated but these Anti Aquarium groups say the Aquarium industry can't be Managed or regulated properly. Aquarium fisheries have no by catch like other fisheries Aquarium fishers are hand caught with hand nets and can be managed**

**Those groups in support of HB2101 who want the closure of the aquarium fishery have been misled by misinformation or are biased and lack knowledge of fisheries, and we should depend on science, not tourist-group propaganda, when managing and regulating fisheries. Please do not pass HB2101.**

# HAWAI'I OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



March 24, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

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

Aloha Chairs Richards and Lee, Vice Chairs Lamosao and Inouye, and esteemed members of the committees,

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.

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 with a favorable recommendation.

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.*

## [Hawaii Island Association of Aquarium Fishermen](#)

Measure: **HB2101 OPPOSITION** testimony

3/22/2026

This testimony is on behalf of active stakeholders located on Hawaii Island, specifically on the West side of the Big Island. Our group is more than just the fishermen themselves, but the associated business that operates on land. The dealers, the packers, the husbandry personnel. All of us are invested in these ongoing administrative rules and the HEPA process. We oppose this measure for many reasons, primarily since it doesn't even consider the scientific record from State and Federal agency, ignores the findings of the multiyear environmental review process that was accepted by the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and upheld by the Supreme Court of Hawaii. The HEPA 343 process was enacted by the legislature of the State of Hawaii, so it should clearly be considered as a matter of record with a measure such as HB2101. We believe this bill is driven by the same activists behind all the various legislation of the past, all the process that we had to pay for, all the lawsuits, and the never-ending campaign of disinformation that flies in the face of the record and reality. The fishery is sustainable. In fact, it's the most studied, most scientifically supported<sup>1</sup> commercial fishery in ALL of Hawaii. No fishery has ever had the amount of regulation or oversight and understanding than the fishery in West Hawaii and the rest of the State. Please ask Division of Aquatic Resources yourself. Some argue that we are a financial burden upon the State. No more than any other fishery should be. All the extra studies, and management, and process, are driven by a group of people who will not accept the facts. They then turn around and blame us for the costs associated with it. Since 2017, The fishermen, the dealers, the local industry have had to invest all our money and time to pay for EIS's, Lawyers, consulting firms and more to satisfy the critics. We wonder if this is how the system is supposed to operate. Some have said that this fishery is extractive, and the fish leave Hawaii. They try to make it seem like our businesses are not from Hawaii and serve outside forces. This isn't accurate. We are local fishermen and businesses. The fish that are captured are extracted, as is in ANY fishery. You can't go fishing without extracting. These fish are caught and circulated to multiple businesses throughout Hawaii. Some of the fish are intended for local hobbyists and pet shops here where we have quite a few aquarists. There's many Pet shops in the islands. The balance of fish is exported to the mainland or overseas. Critics argue this isn't right. What about all the longliners and commercial fisheries including reef fish that get exported by the TON every day at the Auction Block? Is that okay?

Below is an overview of the timeline between all parties involved since the original Supreme Court ruling that triggered HEPA and the current and ongoing administrative process:

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<sup>1</sup> See Full Letter of Support Marine Scientists (last page)

In 2017, anti-aquarium activists from Maui (dive/snorkel industry reps), the Kaupikos from Miloli'i Hawaii, Earth Justice, and other environmental groups obtained a favorable ruling from the Hawai'i Supreme Court. *Umberger vs the State of Hawaii*<sup>2</sup>. The decision halted the State from issuing any aquarium collection permits under HRS §188-31 until a review under the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA, Chapter 343, HRS) was completed. The activists argued that the fishery was unsustainable at current harvest rates, that permit issuance constituted a discretionary action requiring environmental review due to the absence of limits on commercial landings, and that the review was needed—not to ban fishery, but to disclose impacts and implement appropriate management measures.

Following the ruling, the State determined that the fishermen themselves—as the “applicants”—would bear responsibility for conducting the HEPA review, even though the fishery had been a program, like all commercial fisheries in Hawai'i, administered by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) for decades. In its official statement on September 7, 2017, DLNR announced it had “*discontinued issuance of new aquarium fish permits and renewal of existing aquarium fish permits*” pending further guidance from the circuit court. In subsequent statements in October 2017 (responding to the petition for writ of mandamus and Circuit Court developments), DLNR reiterated: “*The Department of Land and Natural Resources has consistently stated its belief that **existing aquarium fishing practices are sustainable and environmentally sound.** And the department appreciates that dozens of local businesses and families depend on the industry for their livelihoods.*”<sup>3</sup> Chair Suzanne Case and other officials publicly expressed disagreement with aspects of the ruling’s practical impacts and a commitment to work with the fishermen to resolve the matter while fully complying with the court’s order.

The fishermen first sought a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). DLNR refused and later required a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) when an Environmental

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<sup>2</sup> *Umberger Vs State of Hawaii* [see link](#)

<sup>3</sup> DLNR public notice [see link](#)

Assessment (EA) was submitted. These same activists were pressuring the department to push for the most costly, time-consuming variation of environmental review. Due to the complexity and cost of preparing an EIS, the fishermen obtained guidance and organizational assistance from the non-profit Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), now known as the Pet Advocacy Network (PAN). DAR/DLNR instructed that the impact statements must rely on the “best available science,” the standard and requirement for any HEPA project.

The fishery operates statewide but primarily on O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island (Big Island). While there are similarities, differences in species abundance, logistics, science, and management between islands created challenges for a single review. All parties agreed that each island should conduct its own localized review. This proved very expensive. The fishermen pooled resources and began the process with PAN support.

After years of preparation, the first EIS for West Hawai‘i was submitted in 2020. On May 22, 2020, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) unanimously rejected it (7-0 vote)<sup>4</sup> and issued findings citing 14 specific deficiencies. These included the need for “hard upper limits” on harvested species and greater depth in the cultural impact statement. West Hawai‘i revised the EIS and resubmitted the Revised Final EIS (RFEIS) six months later. It addressed every point in the denial findings by reducing the existing “Whitelist” from 40 species to 8 species that showed long-term upward population trends over 20 years of data (the other 32 were stable but not consistently increasing and were removed out of an abundance of caution). The cultural impact statement was substantially expanded with additional interviews and hundreds of pages of scoping and analysis; the deadline was extended to include Mauna Kea participants at the fishers’ discretion. Kaupiko and Miloli‘i community members participated at every step. Concessions were made which shaped the final product, such as the Pakui‘ikui (Achilles tang) being removed entirely for cultural reasons, as expressed in the detailed Cultural Impact Statement.

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<sup>4</sup> DLNR public notice [see link](#)

The BLNR accepted the RFEIS (via operation of law after a 3-3 tie vote), with positive remarks from some board members on the good-faith effort<sup>5</sup>. The 3 no votes did not provide substantive reasons or act in accordance with their own denial letter they had previously issued; they essentially wanted to change the denial letter and impose new requirements so that a third EIS would have to be done. Earth Justice and the activists immediately challenged the RFEIS in circuit court, triggering a series of cases that escalated to the same Supreme Court that had issued the original 2017 order. All legal costs were borne by the fishermen, with limited assistance from PAN. While litigation proceeded, the same activists lobbied the legislature for two years, repeatedly asserting they would prevail at the Supreme Court and urging a ban. They ultimately lost.

O'ahu submitted its EIS to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR), which rejected it in October 2021 and issued a denial letter citing multiple deficiencies, including insufficient information about anticipated impacts and failure to adequately disclose environmental and other harms<sup>6</sup>. That island group went back to the drawing board and is now preparing (or has been revising) its second submission. As of late 2025, the O'ahu EIS was still being revised following the 2021 rejection. New HEPA laws took effect right as O'ahu was trying to publish their second EIS. DAR informed them of these changes, which caused another delay in altering what was paid for to be compliant with additional scoping and rule changes. Currently they are ready to publish and have sent notices to Brian Nielson and David Sakoda from DAR.

In West Hawai'i, the Supreme Court ruled overwhelmingly (4-1) in favor of the fishermen, upholding the RFEIS<sup>7</sup>. Once the environmental review was officially accepted and defended through the courts, the activists shifted focus to administrative and other procedural challenges.

Although the RFEIS was accepted in 2021 and the court-ordered environmental review completed, DLNR refused to issue permits. Chair Case and the Attorney General

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<sup>5</sup> Chair Case reason for vote timestamp 6:17:00 [See link](#)

<sup>6</sup> Oahu EIS rejected [see link](#)

<sup>7</sup> Supreme Court Ruling on WH RFEIS [see link](#)

informed the fishermen that they would need to return to court to lift the existing injunction against the State, before permits could be issued. The fishermen filed the motion, and on January 30, 2023, the court sided with them and lifted the injunction as to West Hawai'i. During the hearing, Circuit Court Judge Jeffrey P. Crabtree expressed strong frustration with the State. He questioned why the fishermen—and not the State itself—were forced to shoulder the burden of lifting the injunction the State had originally defended, and he indicated that this was the State's responsibility. The judge was particularly displeased with the State's limited effort in defending the BLNR's acceptance of the RFEIS and did not accept the State's argument that the BLNR had not made a formal decision on the EIS. (all available in court transcriptions if requested)

The West Hawai'i fishermen then requested permit applications as "qualified applicants" to DAR, none were made available. DAR along with the AG indicated the matter required Board action based on their interpretation of the statute, but everything was delayed due to an election and the seating of a new incoming BLNR Chair (Dawn Chang). A proposal was drafted for the Chair to issue permits with conditions drawn from the RFEIS findings. The meeting scheduled for February 2024 was repeatedly postponed until October. At this meeting, the proposing agency, DAR, also had a prepared 92 page brief that analyzed the fishery.<sup>8</sup> The paper concluded the fishery was a low impact, low-risk activity and had more management in place than any other fishery. Brian Nielson, director of DAR said "this fishery is sustainable and if ANY other fishery was subjected to the same level of scrutiny, they would not survive the process like this fishery did"

Miloli'i activists (who maintain their own 25-year closed Marine Protected Area/Kapu),<sup>9</sup> Earth Justice, and other NGOs appeared, arguing the process was flawed, the fishery is unsustainable, and other various reasons. The Board was preparing to vote when the same group of activists, led by their Earth Justice legal counsel, and the Sierra Club, requested a contested case hearing. Chair Chang granted it. Months later, the State withdrew the proposal, mooting the contested case.

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<sup>8</sup> DAR Data Review & Management Brief [see link](#)

<sup>9</sup> Miloli'i FRA CB closed to AQ fishing [see link](#)

The BLNR did not revisit the issue until late 2025. DAR then presented a comprehensive rules package that included new license requirements, at-sea reporting with in-person enforcement verification, dealer licensing, and annual catch limits (ACLs) on all Whitelist species. The Board unanimously voted to advance the proposal to Chapter 91 public hearings (scheduled for March 31 and April 1, 2026). To address cultural concerns, three fish—including Kole—were removed from the Whitelist in discussions. To protect aquaculture interests, the yellow tang quota was cut in half (from 200,000 to 100,000) during board deliberations<sup>10</sup> This was the second time the BLNR voted for a huge reduction of the main fish in the fishery. These changes were not driven by agency science or recommendations but were made arbitrarily to seek middle ground. The yellow tang reduction was very harsh seeing as there was already a massive 27% cut made during the HEPA process. The fishery had proposed a reduction from the historical average of 275k down to 200k, which was approved by the BLNR, as a safety buffer for unforeseen circumstances. It's worth mentioning that even at the 275k number, the State had always maintained that was sustainable due to the comprehensive management plan in place, as well as the ongoing scientific oversight and the sheer abundance of the yellow tang in West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area. Activists continue to claim the fishery takes "cultural fish" (despite removals, see footnote 10) and is unsustainable, despite data and scientific support for sustainability. They also assert it violates Hawaiian values, even though the fishery was established by the territorial legislature in the early 1950's precisely because many of these species (e.g., yellow tang/Lau'ipala) were not valued as a food fish—a fact confirmed by historical records, Literature, shoreline gatherers and DAR data. The fishery dates even earlier times, when the Waikiki public aquarium was established. The second oldest aquarium in all of the Americas is right here in Hawaii! It was founded in 1904!<sup>11</sup> No one is arguing that Kole isn't considered a "cultural fish"—that's why it was removed—even though there are millions of them on the West Coast of Hawai'i Island, and it's known by scientists as the "Kole capital of the world." All other user groups are allowed to harvest Kole except for us, even though it's one of the most abundant reef fish we have. There's many millions of them just on Kona side. In one of the Board meetings, this issue of does this fishery affect culture or cultural practitioners, was discussed in testimony by William Aila, former Director of Department of Hawaiian Homelands, former Chair of DLNR, basically saying

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<sup>10</sup> Cultural fish removed from rules package/aquaculture Oceanic Institute protected/ timestamp 7:55:55 [see link](#)

<sup>11</sup> Waikiki Aquarium bio [see link](#)

this fishery was not impacting “cultural” practices or issue of “culture” watch detailed quote <sup>12</sup>

The fishery has always been operated by local fishermen and watermen, including many Kanaka Maoli. Other commercial fisheries operating under Commercial Marine Licenses (CMLs) may take the same species without the same restrictions or sustainability scrutiny for sale and export.

Currently, there is an ongoing chapter 91 rules making process that brings in Statewide rules, as well as regional rules for any respective islands or areas that have completed environmental review and want to participate in the fishery.<sup>13</sup>

Would it be prejudicial for the legislature or Board to restrict only one user group—based on arbitrary reasoning—from accessing a managed resource, while allowing others unfettered access, especially when the restricted stakeholder group has fully satisfied the court-ordered HEPA requirements and no other groups have done so?

If the State’s official position on record is that it’s a sustainable activity that has been intensively managed, why are the fishers not allowed to access the resources while others can? If there is a legitimate sustainability issue, shouldn’t that be applied across the board?

If the aquarium fishermen have disclosed the facts using best available science, the HEPA 343 law set forth by the State legislature, shouldn’t that be taken into consideration in this measure? If not, then is all that HEPA process an illegitimate function that is an unnecessary burden that was placed upon us?

The fishermen have spent a million dollars statewide on being compliant with the court order and the law. Not just the EIS themselves, but all the legal effort defending the documents. We were led to believe that by engaging in this process, it was a simple matter of disclosure, and the facts would prevail. We trusted that this was fair and worthy of our time and money. We have invested years of our lives in trying to make this right and its not something you just walk away from. The activists make light of all this

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<sup>12</sup> Bill Aila testimony on culture and AQ impact/ timestamp is 3:06:00 [see link](#)

<sup>13</sup> Current propose Draft Rules Ch. 91 [see link](#)

asking why we haven't just moved on, after they demanded a process that cost us everything! Who could so easily abandon that?

This fishery has proved sustainable, creates great livelihoods that are very important to so many families. Please do not support a ban on this well managed fishery!

Mahalo for your time and consideration

Phd Letter of Support for Aquarium Fishery and Management

Testimony

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.

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.

Jim Beets Ph.D.



Your Sailing and Snorkeling Adventure  
Begins Here!

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of HB2101**, with requested amendments to (1) remove the human population stipulation and (2) reinstate the **statewide ban** as originally proposed.

This bill represents a critical opportunity to protect Hawai'i's fragile reef ecosystem at a time when they are under increasing stress.

In 2023, the **BLNR** unanimously supported a **community-led proposal** to ban commercial aquarium collection. However, the Board stated it lacked the authority to act and directed advocates to pursue legislation. **HB2101 is the result of that directive.**, reflecting years of community engagement and public trust in this process.

Since then, the **DAR** has reversed course and proposed reopening large-scale commercial extraction. At the same time, reef fish monitoring has been significantly reduced-from multiple survey rounds annually to just one. This reduction limits our ability to accurately assess reef health and fish populations.

Even more concerning, an independent analysis of DAR's own data shows that **yellow tang populations have not recovered** as biologically and historically expected following the 2017 shutdown of aquarium collection. Ongoing poaching and weak enforcement further any claims that current management is sufficient.

Meanwhile, Hawai'i's reefs face mounting threats: waring ocean temperatures, coral reefs bleaching events, land-based pollution, and declining ecosystem resilience. Herbivorous reef fish-like yellow tangs-play a vital role in maintaining reef health by controlling algae growth. Removing thousands of these fish each year directly **undermines reef recovery efforts.**

The public mandate for protection is clear. In January 2026, the **Hawaii County Council** unanimously passed Resolution #422-25. In March 2026, the **Maui County Council** followed with unanimous passage of Resolution #26-53. These actions send a strong, unified message: our communities support a permanent prohibition on the commercial harvesting of aquarium fish from state waters. HB2101 aligns with this community consensus and with the precautionary principle needed to safeguard Hawai'i's marine ecosystems for future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to:

- **PASS HB2101**
- **REMOVE the human population Stipulation**
- **RESTORE the full statewide ban as originally proposed.**

Mahalo for your consideration and your commitment to protecting Hawai'i's natural resources.

Richard & Holly Kersten  
President & VP



808.895.0003



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[www.seaparadise.com](http://www.seaparadise.com)



PO Box 390159  
Keauhou, HI 96739



**Ko'olauloa  
HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB**

**P.O. Box 532  
Hau'ula, Hawaii 96717**

March 23, 2026

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

**WE 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 nearly 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. But 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 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.
- This critical ecosystem supports food security, cultural and subsistence practices, shoreline protection provided by healthy coral reefs, and on-reef tourism activities dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems that generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. In light of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect a major economic engine and a cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, WE respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

*Raynae "Tessie" Fonoimoana*

Raynae "Tessie" Fonoimoana, Pelekikena  
& the Membership of the Ko'olauloa Hawaiian Civic Club



**Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair**  
**Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair**  
Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

**Senator Chris Lee, Chair**  
**Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair**  
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and The Arts

Tuesday, March 24, 2026  
1:01PM Conference Room 224

RE: HB2101 HD1 Commercial Aquarium Ban - Support

Aloha Chairs Richards and Lee, Vice Chairs Lamosao and Inouye, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Chamber of Sustainable Commerce, we strongly support HB2101 HD1 to prohibit commercial aquarium collection. We encourage members to amend this bill to apply statewide, as originally drafted by OHA, by removing language at page 3 line 17-18 limiting the applicability of the ban to counties with populations of 200,000-300,000.

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.

In January 2026, the Hawai'i County Council passed a resolution urging the State to enact a **statewide ban on commercial aquarium fish collection**. The resolution was approved unanimously, reflecting the clear will of the island communities most directly connected to these waters. 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."

Article XI of our Constitution requires that our natural resources be

## Hawaii Legislative Council Members

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Hanalei

Russell Ruderman  
Island Naturals  
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson  
Niko Niko Family Dentistry  
Honolulu

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Abundant Life Natural Foods  
Hilo

Chamber of  
Sustainable Commerce  
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conserved and protected for present and future generations. Article XII safeguards Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. In a time of climate stress and coral reef decline, reopening commercial extraction of reef fish moves us 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.

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.

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.

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Supporting HB2101 HD1, Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection  
Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts  
March 24, 2026 at 1:01 pm  
Conference Room 224 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chairs Richards and Lee, Vice Chair Lamosao and Inouye, 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

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The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i and Palmyra

March 24, 2026

Page 2

to aquarium harvest and trade in West Hawai'i is longstanding, spanning over 50 years. This 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.

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*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.*

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## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 23, 2026

To: Chairs Sens. Tim Richards and Chris Lee  
Vice Chairs Sens. Lorraine Inouye and Rachele Lamosao  
and Members of the Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and  
Water, Land, Culture & the Arts

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  
Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 1:01 p.m., Room 224 & Videoconference

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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.



March 23, 2026

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

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

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 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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. **The practice of fish harvesting, withholding food, and transporting result in very few fish that survive the ordeal. This is not pono!** 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,



Jonnetta Peters  
Executive Director

**Telephone/Fax: 224.338-6511 | email: [info@conservehi.org](mailto:info@conservehi.org)  
web: [www.conservehawaii.org](http://www.conservehawaii.org) | P.O. Box 2923, Honolulu, HI 96802**

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**National Wildlife Federation Region 12 Director: Rachel Sprague**

**National Wildlife Federation Pacific Region Associate Director: Emily Martin**

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



March 23, 2026

To: Members of the WAL/HWN, CPN/JDC 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 waters off any island, 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. **We urge you to support a complete state-wide ban of aquarium fish collecting.**

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**

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Hilo, HI. 96720



COMMITTEE ON WLA/HWN  
Chairs: Senator Lee & Senator Richards  
Vice Chairs: Senator Inouye & Senator Lamosao

**March 24, 2026**

**LATE**

**Testimony in Support for HB2101HD1**

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs 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

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kawika Ruddle, and I am a lifelong resident of Hawai‘i Island with deep family ties to the waters of Puako and the Kohala coast. My father Francis Ruddle and I are writing in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1**.

For my family and many others, these nearshore waters are not just resources, they are part of our subsistence, our culture, and our responsibility to care for future generations.

Since the commercial aquarium fishery was shut down, our reefs have had an opportunity to recover. This measure is not creating something new—it is making permanent protections that have already proven necessary.

Reef fish, particularly herbivorous species like yellow tang and kole, are critical to reef health. They maintain the balance of our ecosystems by controlling algae and supporting coral resilience. Their role extends beyond ecology—they are also essential to subsistence practices, cultural traditions, and the overall health of our nearshore fisheries.

When aquarium collection was active, hundreds of thousands of fish were removed annually from West Hawai‘i alone. That level of extraction prioritized short-term commercial gain over long-term stewardship of a public trust resource.

Today, we also face ongoing challenges with enforcement and illegal take. Reopening the aquarium fishery would place additional strain on already limited enforcement resources and create further pressure on our reefs.

Importantly, this issue is not simply about stopping one industry, it is about choosing a better path forward.

Hawai‘i already has a proven model in companies like BIOTA, which focus on captive breeding and aquaculture of aquarium species. This approach:

- Creates local jobs and skilled employment opportunities
- Generates economic activity within the state
- Reduces pressure on wild fish populations
- Positions Hawai‘i as a global leader in sustainable marine practices

Rather than reopening an extractive industry that removes resources from our reefs for export, we should be supporting and expanding sustainable aquaculture and innovation-based industries that align with our values and long-term interests.

The Division of Aquatic Resources has indicated that it may be required to proceed with rulemaking to reopen aquarium collection. This underscores the need for clear legislative direction. **HB2101 HD1 provides that clarity**, ensuring that state resources are focused on

protection, restoration, and sustainable management—not on reviving a controversial and harmful practice.

At its core, this measure reaffirms that Hawai‘i’s marine resources are held in public trust and must be managed for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i—now and into the future.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **PASS HB2101 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,  
Francis Ruddle & Kawika Ruddle

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:36:38 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander Min	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

In **Opposition** to H.B. 2101, H.D. 1  
Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

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

My name is Alex Min, and I am a fisheries professional based in Hawai‘i, working closely with fishing communities across the Pacific Islands on issues related to sustainability, food security, and fisheries management. I respectfully submit testimony in **strong opposition to H.B. 2101, H.D. 1.**

I want to begin by acknowledging that I strongly support the core values outlined in this bill including mālama ‘āina, the protection of reef ecosystems, and the long-term sustainability of Hawai‘i’s marine resources. These are values that I live and work by. However, I believe this bill reaches the wrong conclusion and risks unintended consequences that could undermine both our communities and our ability to effectively manage our ocean resources.

**I respectfully ask that this bill be rejected, and that the Legislature instead pursue a path that restores a responsibly managed aquarium fishery, one that, in the years ahead, we can look back on as a model for how Hawai‘i balanced sustainability, science, and community. A system that supports hundreds of local jobs, advances science-based management, and reinforces Hawai‘i’s role as a leader in sustainable reef stewardship.**

Hawai‘i’s commercial aquarium fishery has historically been one of the most studied and managed small-scale fisheries in the world. In West Hawai‘i, it operated under a framework that included reporting requirements, area closures, and Fish Replenishment Areas specifically designed to ensure sustainability. If a fishery with this level of oversight is deemed unsustainable without clear, quantitative evidence or defined biological thresholds, it raises an important question: what fishery in Hawai‘i would meet the standard being applied here?

The bill advances strong claims regarding ecological harm and sustainability; however, these claims are not supported by the State’s own stock assessments and extensively vetted scientific data. If we are to conclude that science-based management and the principles of mālama ‘āina, aloha ‘āina, and kuleana are incompatible, then it becomes difficult to justify the continued operation of any ocean-dependent industry including tourism and commercial enterprises under a consistent and equitable standard.

This raises broader concerns regarding the application of public trust responsibilities, equal protection, and the consistent use of science-based decision-making across sectors. Policies that selectively restrict one user group, absent clear and demonstrable harm, may expose the State to challenges regarding arbitrary or uneven application of regulatory authority.

Additionally, this bill is narrowly focused and does not consider Hawai‘i’s role within a global system. When Hawai‘i’s regulated, monitored supply of aquarium fish is removed, demand does not disappear—it shifts. That demand is increasingly met by international fisheries, many of which operate with far less oversight and, in some cases, employ destructive collection practices. In effect, this policy risks exporting environmental harm to regions with fewer resources and protections, while reducing our ability to lead by example in sustainable, science-based management. science-based and culturally sound leader. We inadvertently increase global ecological impacts rather than reduce them.

This bill reflects a broader and concerning trend. Year by year, access to fishing in Hawai‘i is being reduced incrementally through legislative action. The individuals who are most connected to reef ecosystems, those who spend time on the water, observe changes firsthand, and develop deep knowledge of these environments are being pushed out of the system. This has long-term implications not only for livelihoods, but also for local ecological knowledge, stewardship, and our collective capacity to manage resources effectively.

While aquarium species may not be a primary food source, the fishers themselves are part of a broader fishing community that contributes to Hawai‘i’s food security. At a time when the State imports the vast majority of its food, we should be cautious about policies that reduce viable livelihoods and further disconnect our communities from local resource production.

If sustainability is the concern, then the solution should be to strengthen management, not eliminate a fishery that has demonstrated the ability to operate within a regulated system. There are viable alternatives, including adaptive management, increased or continued independent-fishery monitoring, and co-management approaches that actively involve fishers and non-biased scientists in stewardship and data collection.

More broadly, if we are concerned about cumulative impacts to reef ecosystems, we must evaluate all sources of pressure consistently and transparently. Addressing one small, highly regulated fishery in isolation does not reflect the full picture of impacts affecting our nearshore environments including consumptive and non-consumptive activities such as commercial dive operations, tourism, and more.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject this measure and instead support the return of a responsibly managed aquarium fishery in Hawai‘i, one that upholds mālama ‘āina, advances science-based management, and affirms Hawai‘i’s role as a leader in sustainable reef stewardship, rather than stepping back from that responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,  
**Alex Min**  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:31:11 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Conall K. Ravenscraft	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Ano ai ke aloha Senators, Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts

Please allow this letter to affirm testimony for myself Conall Kahaka'ioikamālie Ravenscraft, lineal descendant of Napoopoo, Kealakekua, HI and Director of Field Operations and Interpretation for Hoala Kealakekua Nui Inc., voicing STRONG SUPPORT for HB 2101 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*'.

In prior testimony submitted within the House committees, and as recently noted in FIN committee by House Representative District 5 Jeanne Kapela, I addressed concerns for commercial Aquatic life collection and reasons to support a bill prohibiting collection of Aquatic life on three fronts, including:

1. Align with the DLNR's Hierarchy of Use policy:
  - a. Natural and cultural resources: The highest priority is the conservation and protection of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. Commercial or public activities cannot be allowed if they would cause undue damage to these resources.
  - b. Public access and activity: Second in the hierarchy is access for the general public, provided that it does not damage natural and cultural resources. If restrictions on access become necessary, they will be applied to commercial users before the general public.

c. Commercial activity: The lowest priority is commercial activity. It is only permitted if it does not damage resources or compromise general public use.

1. Align with the State of Hawaii's Public Trust Doctrine ; the Hawai'i Supreme

Court described the public trust doctrine as “the right of the people to have the waters protected for their use [which] demands adequate provision for traditional and customary Hawaiian rights, wildlife, maintenance of ecological balance and scenic beauty, and the preservation and enhancement of the waters...” “For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions shall conserve and protect Hawaii's natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the State. All public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people.

1. Align with the mission statement of the State of Hawaii Department of Aquatic Resources to ‘work with the people of Hawai‘i to manage, conserve and restore the state’s unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations’.

The practice of *lawai‘a* – traditional fisheries management – by our native Hawaiian ancestors is a practice rooted in generations of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, a keystone in which is the practice of cultivation. Our ancestor’s practice was not simply ‘*take only what you need*’, it was a practice of ‘*take only what you can cultivate*’. That is to say, resources could only be extracted if and in a manner by which they could be replenished. Ours was not a civilization of hunter-gatherers but a civilization of cultivators.

An industry which only serves to extract resources, especially those as crucial and fundamental to the ecological health and balance of our waters, without clear evidence of effort to replenish said resources - especially when clear methods to do so already exist and are currently in practice - must not be allowed to violate the public trust doctrine, the responsibilities of the State of Hawaii, DLNR, and DAR, and the traditional and customary rights of the native Hawaiian people.

I appreciate your time and attention to this most important of matters.

Me ke aloha haahaa.

Nou no ka pono,

C. Kahaka'io Ravenscraft

Napoopoo, ka hema o Kona, Hawaii o Keawe

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:50:02 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kawaiohawaiki Anakalea-Kila	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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. But 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 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.

This critical ecosystem supports food security, cultural and subsistence practices, shoreline protection provided by healthy coral reefs, and on-reef tourism activities dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems that generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. In light of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect a major economic engine and a cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kawaiohawaiki Anakalea-Kila

Senate Committees: WLA/HWN, CPN/JDC  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

24 March 2026

**Subject:** Support for HB2101

**Dear Honorable Senators:**

As an active diver, fisher, and father, based on my scientific diving and coral reef ecosystem research experience in west Hawai'i since 2001, **I strongly support HB2101.**

Beginning in 2001, I worked with the Kona Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) as scientific fish counter for the West Hawai'i Aquarium Project (WHAP) and was involved in SCUBA-based surveys at all twenty-four of the long-term monitoring sites in the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA).

The data I collected with the DAR team were proven accurate and adequate for scientific analysis<sup>1</sup>. While conducting scientific dives over many years, I observed pronounced differences in coral habitat integrity across a range of land-based, environmental, and tourism impacts, as well as aquarium fishing impacts.

In 2008, I began volunteering as an alternate with the West Hawai'i Fishery Council established through Act 306 (HRS 188f) to advise DAR on nearshore fishery policy and continue to serve on this voluntary advisory council currently. In 2008, I accepted a full-time position with The Nature Conservancy Hawai'i focused on coral reef ecology and Hawaiian community-driven management efforts that allowed me to continue conducting scientific dives in west Hawai'i as well as other Hawaiian and Pacific Islands through May 2023. I coordinated and participated in learning exchanges focused on coral reef ecology, place-based governance, enforcement, and conservation planning in west Hawai'i, and in Palau, Palmyra Atoll, Nihoa, O'ahu, Maui, Lāna'i, and Kaho'olawe.

My experience, relationships with scientists, and ability to read and understand research articles inform this testimony.

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, et al. 2006

I support SB2535 for the following reasons:

- **A coral reef aquarium fishery cannot be managed, as proposed, by Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits instituted by DAR because:**
  - The number of fish that recruit and survive from a given species in a given year is highly variable.<sup>2</sup>
  - TAC is not feasible for a complex coral reef fishery<sup>3</sup>.
  - The only proven successful method of managing complex coral reef fisheries is a decentralized local scale governance system where practitioners and knowledge holders collaborate with local authorities to establish regulations<sup>4</sup>.
  - TAC must be set annually based on an accurate stock assessment for each species in the fishery. There is no current, nor is it financially feasible to obtain, an accurate annual stock assessment for the species proposed for collection. The best data available intentionally constrained the sampling to only a portion of the habitats required for their full life cycle<sup>5</sup>, or the species are too uncommon to assess, or both
- **Known live coral habitat damage associated with aquarium collection methods impacts habitat for all coral reef fish, including species upon which sustenance and subsistence practices depend.**
  - Former collectors confirm that methods of catching cryptic species such as Potter's Angelfish (*Centropyge potteri*) require breaking live coral<sup>6</sup>.
  - Breaking live coral contributes to turning healthy diverse reefs into depauperate coral rubble habitat that cannot support fish that live or feed in or under coral structures<sup>7</sup>.
  - DAR surveys are not designed to evaluate coral habitat damage from commercial aquarium collection<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Johannes, 1978; Walsh 1987

<sup>3</sup> Williams, et al, 2008

<sup>4</sup> Johannes, 1977

<sup>5</sup> Tissot, et al, 2004

<sup>6</sup> Per testimony to BLNR, 2024; pers communication with former collectors

<sup>7</sup> Kenyon, et al, 2023; Wiener et al, 2008; Lamb et al, 2014

<sup>8</sup> Tissot, et al, 2004

- **The island of Hawai'i is a vital source of prized fish that cannot be replenished from other islands.**
  - Even very large protected areas to the north do not contribute fish to southern reefs in Hawai'i<sup>9</sup>.
  - Yellow tang evolved in Hawai'i<sup>9</sup> and replenish Hawaiian reefs from south to north<sup>10</sup>.
  - Yellow tang mature between 4.6 and 11.6 years and can live at least 41 years in west Hawai'i<sup>11</sup>.
  - Adult yellow tang live for decades in relatively small shallow water habitat areas<sup>12</sup>.

The peer-reviewed science demonstrates that commercial harvest of aquarium fish is a bad idea in Hawai'i. DLNR cannot set sustainable catch limits for such complex species that utilize different complex habitats throughout their lifetime. DLNR cannot prevent habitat damage that harms all fishers and associated ocean livelihoods. DLNR cannot determine where a fish was caught, so opening this fishery anywhere facilitates poaching. The additional burden of enforcing regulations for this unmanageable fishery taxes limited public resources unnecessarily and irrationally. It perpetuates a system of unsuccessful fishery management that has led to demonstrated declines in Hawai'i and the Pacific for generations.

Rigorous, reputable, peer-reviewed science dispels the myth that Hawai'i's commercial aquarium fishery is, or can be, sustainable from an ecological and fishery perspective. This bill will set the record straight and generate a positive result for everyone who loves fish and loves to fish and does not profit from damaging coral and fish populations. **Please support HB2101 for everyone who loves and relies on the ocean that feeds us all.**

Respectfully,



Chad Wiggins  
 Waimea, Lalamilo, Kohala Hema, Hawai'i

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<sup>9</sup> Eble, et al, 2009

<sup>10</sup> Christie, et al, 2010

<sup>11</sup> Claisse, et al, 2009

<sup>12</sup> Claisse, et al, 2011

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Honorable Senators,

As a retired Hawaii educator, and data specialist I am **OPPOSED HB2101**:

1. This bill is not about being Hawaiian or not. **This bill is unjust to the aquarium fishers who want nothing more than to doing what is right, now and for future generations.** That is why Hawaii's aquarium fishers agree to **the new aquarium Rules Package which greatly reduces allowable species, and catch to only 5% or less of populations, even though previous catch levels were sustainable-** as verified by 20 years of research and over 2100 underwater surveys. A 2020 opinion letter from (21) **PhD oceanographers expressed "strong support" for West Hawaii's aquarium fishery, based on their immense data and DAR's "highly effective" management of the West Hawaii fishery.**
2. **The Aquarium Fishery is a sustainable resource which diversifies Hawaii's economy, brings in many tax dollars, and supports employment (pet supply shops, packing supplies, snorkel shops, boat and engine repair men, cargo workers, trans-shippers, and the fishers) which have been lost since the aquarium fishery closed. Why eliminate a sustainable resource that brings in taxes?**
3. **The premise that the aquarium fishery did irreparable harm to yellow tang, years after closure – is false propaganda.** Case in point is **the *Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology's*** finding published in *Ocean Sustainability* Aug.,2025. When Hanauma Bay was shut down to its' 1 million visitors/year for 7 months during Covid (2020). The bay, which has always been off-limits to aquarium fishers, had an astounding revitalization. in this short time without, 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 make scientific concepts understandable** (ex. biodiversity, salinity, acidification). 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 and complied at great expense personally. This bill makes a farce of the EIS process.**

Please **VOTE NO on HB2101.**

Sincerely,

Mary Tubbs, M.Ed., N.E.A., Retired

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 3:32:37 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keynin	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I believe all sustainable fisheries deserve to operate. This debate on the aquarium has gone on for a decade and I see that there is substantial evidence that it is sustainable. And no evidence to the contrary.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 4:45:01 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Koch	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and committee members,

I am writing today to testify, once again, in strong **opposition** to HB2101.

This bill claims that the aquarium fishery is unsustainable and creates issues based on cultural grounds. It specifically mentions fish such as the Kole tang and makes several other assertions. Respectfully, none of these claims are accurate. It is difficult to understand how the legislature could accept these statements as fact when the official record clearly shows otherwise. The sustainability of this fishery has already been thoroughly examined. Extensive studies by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DAR), NOAA, coral reef ecologists, and a multi-year environmental review process under HEPA Chapter 343 have all confirmed that the fishery is sustainable and low-impact. The activists behind this bill made these same claims to the Hawaii Supreme Court years ago, which triggered the HEPA process. As a result, fishermen like myself lost our livelihoods. We were told by the State that if we participated in good faith and completed the required environmental and cultural impact studies, we would be allowed to resume our operations. We trusted that process. After years of work, at tremendous financial and personal cost, we completed two Environmental Impact Statements for West Hawaii, one for Oahu (with a second currently pending), a Cultural Impact Statement, and are now engaged in Chapter 91 rulemaking. All of these processes have validated what fishermen have known all along: the fishery is sustainable and the resource is highly renewable. That is why this bill makes no sense. Why did the State and activists, require us to spend five years of our lives and significant resources to establish the facts, only for the same activists to now ask the legislature to ignore those findings? The legislature created HEPA Chapter 343 specifically for the purpose of informed, fact-based decision-making. How can this bill simply disregard the entire process and the resulting science? Of particular concern is the bill's current focus on only Hawai'i Island. West Hawai'i has the most studied, best-managed, and most science-backed commercial aquarium fishery in the entire state. If there were genuine sustainability concerns, why are other commercial fisheries allowed to take these same species — and in many cases, far more species — with far fewer regulations? Why is it considered unsustainable only when the fish are kept alive for the aquarium fishery? Taking fish to sell is 'take' no matter how you frame it. If it's sustainable, fine, if it's not then that warrants a discussion. I hear some talk about sustenance but this about commercial fisheries. These fisheries create jobs and livelihoods. We all take fish to sustain ourselves and our ohana. These issues surrounding commercial fisheries should be based on facts alone. Is it sustainable? That should be the question. Because if it is, all the other issues being raised, have been addressed! Just months ago, the Board of Land and Natural

Resources (BLNR) voted to advance DAR's proposed rules to formal rulemaking. As part of that vote, the Board removed three species from the "White List" — including Kole — at the specific request of these same activists, citing "cultural" reasons rather than resource concerns. The science clearly shows these species are abundant and their populations have been stable or increasing for decades. These fish are not threatened. The data is in the reports. I strongly urge decision-makers to review the Environmental Impact Statements, speak directly with DAR, and examine the facts for themselves. We are not large NGOs with massive funding. We are local fishermen who followed the rules, trusted the process, and sacrificed greatly to reach this point. After everything we have been through, it is unfair and unjust to now have the legislature override the science and strip away our ability to earn a living. Oahu is still completing its environmental review process. If their EIS is approved, these same activists will return next session asking for a ban there as well. This is not about conservation — it is a targeted effort to eliminate a fishery, regardless of the evidence. Please do not allow this bill to move forward. We have done everything asked of us. Our cause is just.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration

Eric Koch

Ka'ū Hawai'i

23 March 2026

Re: HB2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha e Committee Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

‘Ano‘ai e Committee Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is U‘ilani Naipo, and I am in strong support of HB2101 HD1 and request an amendment to have this take effect statewide.

I come from a long line of lawai‘a and konohiki of Kapalilua and now serve as a co-manager with the State for a Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area. Alongside many others in West Hawai‘i stewarding our nearshore and marine ecosystems, I serve as a marine advocate for place-based governance.

I oppose the practice of Commercial Aquarium Collection in our state waters.

**Impacts to Hawai‘i** 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 & Public Trust Duty**

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 local food markets follow as a priority, consistent with sustainable management practices. 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. It also works against the efforts of the Green Fee projects that are to monitor, evaluate, and restore our 'āina - to include our reefs. Commercial aquarium collection fails the State's obligations.

- **An Alternative to Harvest in the Wild**

The Ka Pa'akai Analysis requires evaluation of alternatives. A very viable alternative to aquarium fishing already exists – aquaculture. The lau'ipala (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'ipala 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 the 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** to Commercial Aquarium Collection 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 with an amendment for this to be statewide because all of Hawai'i Nei deserves this.

Sincerely,  
U'ilani Naipo

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "U'ilani Naipo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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

SENATE COMMITTEES on WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND ARTS, and HAWAIIAN  
AFFAIRS

Hawai'i State Capitol

March 24th, 2026

1:01 p.m.

CR 224

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Aloha Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chair Inouye and Lamosao, and members of Senate Committees,

My name is Keanu Binney-Medeiros, and I am a Lineal descendant of Kealakekua Bay and a proud Hoa'aina of Ho'ala 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).

As a lineal descendant of Kealakekua Bay, I have spent most of my life on its shores and in its waters, relying on its resources to sustain me and my 'ohana, just as many generations before me have done. Today, as a Hoa'aina of Ho'ala Kealakekua Nui, my passion and focus is on restoring, preserving, and protecting the natural resources of Kealakekua Bay and Hawai'i's reefs across the state.

My work as a young scientific diver and digital media specialist, focuses on documenting reef health through species presence, human-use impacts, and environmental stressors such as climate change, warming oceans, and water quality.

Through both observation and lived experience, I have seen first hand just how fragile and delicate reef resilience truly is. From what I see in the water, reef recovery does not happen by accident. It requires intentional decisions that reduce pressure and support recovery, not decisions that try to manage continued commercial extraction.

Hawai'i's reef ecosystems already face immense stress and are in need of our support if we are serious about the health of our environment. Our reefs are living systems, when they are in balance, they feed us, protect our shores, and support communities overall health. When that balance is disrupted, everything connected to it begins to feel that impact.

The fish targeted by the aquarium trade, especially herbivores, are not just fish. They are caretakers of the reef. They control algae and create the conditions that allow coral to survive and thrive. When they are removed, we are not just taking from the reef, we are weakening the system itself. Even now, with current prohibitions in place, poaching

still occurs. This shows us that regulation alone is not enough to protect these living ecosystems.

We cannot continue to stretch limited resources trying to manage an activity that increases pressure on an already fragile ecosystem. Choosing to stop that pressure is not extreme, it is choosing to be socially and ecologically responsible. The aquarium trade benefits a small number of individuals, however, healthy reefs benefit all of Hawai'i.

Healthy reef ecosystems support our food security, our cultural practices, and our local businesses. They protect the places where our communities gather, learn, and pass down knowledge. Protecting the marine life that sustains our reefs is not just environmental work, it is cultural preservation, community protection, and long-term planning for future generations.

passing HB2101 HD1 is a commitment to protecting our reefs as living systems, honoring our public trust obligations, and ensuring that future generations inherit a Hawai'i that is still abundant, still functioning, and still alive.

I respectfully urge you to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka ha'aha'a

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Keanu Binney-Medeiros". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keanu Binney-Medeiros

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:00:30 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alohi Nakachi	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

**Aloha e Chairs and members of the 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**

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**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:02:21 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
riley koch	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

my name is riley, i am 17 years old and i live in kau and im an avid spearfisherman and fisherman. to me, this bill and current closure of the aquarium fishery is ridiculous, throughout my life, ever since i could walk i've been in the ocean, going back on the memories i haven't noticed a change in fish populations, and now as i'm getting older i have the opportunity to go diving more and every time i go out i just see all these fish that are as the activist say gonna disappear. but don't take my word for, you can look at all the scientific studies that have gone on thru this process and see populations have actually increased while aquarium diving was going on. support the science, for the future

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.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:40:16 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jai Cox	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha my name is Jai Cox, I'm a spear fisherman from kau, and I strongly oppose this bill. The West Hawaii fishery has proved to be sustainable, and what I see when diving supports that. Let Hawaii's fishers fish and turn down this bill.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:53:45 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Attn: WLA/HWN Committees

Aloha Committee Members,

**Plse vote NO on HB 2101**

In 2022, I had to close my tropical fish business (**Coral Fish Hawaii**) in Aiea due to the shutdown of the fishery. Losing my business, which I had put blood, sweat and tears into for over 50 years, was hard on me and especially hard on my wife, my 12 employees and the many local customers who enjoyed marine aquariums in the state. Over the years, we had educated thousands of elementary school students on marinelife management and conservation in our education program. Because we shut down, this program was also, unfortunately, shut down and now many of our youth's exposure to Hawaii's marinelife has ceased. The exposure to Hawaii's marinelife, we felt, was invaluable to a local 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 open up the fishery. At considerable expense, Oahu's required EIS is now being submitted thru the appropriate channels with hopes that our permits will be reinstated.

Likewise, the Big Island aquarium fishery 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 thwarted by the lobbyists of well funded animal rights organizations. Discrimination is the only word that describes this reckless maneuvering of the law.

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 to HEPA.

**Again, "Discrimination" is the only word to describe this travesty of injustice.**

**Plse vote NO on HB 2101 !!!**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:17:47 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
brody hammer	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

hi my name is brody hammer. i am a senior at whea highschool in kona. this aquarium fishing closure has made it virtually impossible for my school to collect animals to study, not only has it affected my learning, but has shown me that being a scientist or pursuing a marine biologist career is worthless in the eyes of the world as the work that gets done with DLNR gets slid under the rug and ridiculous bills trying to ban the most scientifically understood and managed fishery in the world come out and get this far. listen to the science, for kids like me, that beleive in science.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:00:56 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**Aloha All, I am in VERY STRONG SUPPORT OF THIS BILL. SAVE Aquarium Reef Fish from Extraction and Extinction.**

I have testified numerous time over years, trying to save Hawai'i's fish, please make it happen this year.

Thank goodness the County of Hawaii County Council joined in sending a STRONG MESSAGE to the State, that we want our Island's natural resources protected from deadly commercial operations. "They ruined Paradise by putting up a parking lot." If you would not do it on land for all to see, you should not be doing to the Ocean. We must preserve Hawai'i Natural Resources. Yes, that means ending harmful activities. Just stop the removal of Hawaiian Reef fish for the Aquarium Trade.

Far more money is made by keeping the fish here and charging to see them alive and well here in their natural habitat. Please stop the blinking \$\$ dollar signs in some people's eyes...

Over and over, I have testified, Why does this persistently keep coming up? **What kind of force, money, evil is behind this?** Reef life is sold and shipped in plastic bags to the continent and around the world to supply the global pet market for ornamental reef fish, most end up dieing on route, instead of staying on the reefs to support ecosystem health and the economy.

Also, a December 2025 article: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-hi/pr/honolulu-man-who-trafficked-illegally-caught-hawaiiantropical-fish-sentenced-probation>.

I doubt those claiming economic need to do this are honestly depending on the taking of these little fish to live. I ask you.....Why are they not using their talents to share what they see with those who do not enter the water? Filming, tours, sharing info, writing articles to promote HAWAII'S NATURAL RESOURCES are such better ways.

Please protect Hawaii.

Most Sincerely, **Hawai'i Island Resident** Vivian S. Toellner



**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:58:19 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caelly Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Thank you for allowing written testimony regarding the closure of aquarium fishing. I am submitting this testimony as the spouse of someone whose livelihood depends on this fishery, to share how this decision has affected our family and many others like ours.

The closure of aquarium fishing has had an immediate and overwhelming impact on our household. This industry is not a hobby or a side business—it is how our family pays rent, buys groceries, and plans for the future. When the fishery was shut down, our income was abruptly cut off, leaving us with little warning and no clear alternatives.

Like many families involved in this industry, we are part of a small, local business ecosystem. Aquarium fishing supports spouses, children, and extended families, as well as other small businesses that rely on this work. The closure has created ongoing stress, financial uncertainty, and fear about whether we can continue living and working in Hawai‘i.

What makes this situation especially difficult is knowing that aquarium fishing has been conducted responsibly and sustainably for decades. Fishers operate under strict regulations, reporting requirements, and collection limits designed to protect marine resources. Our family has always supported responsible fishing practices and environmental stewardship, and it is painful to see those efforts disregarded.

The emotional toll of this closure cannot be ignored. Families are being forced to make impossible decisions—draining savings, postponing medical care, or leaving the industry entirely. These impacts go far beyond business losses; they affect mental health, family stability, and long-term security.

I respectfully ask the Small Business Review Board to fully consider the real-world impacts this closure has had on families and small businesses, and to support rules that create a fair and balanced path forward. Protecting the environment and protecting local families should not be mutually exclusive.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of those directly affected.

Respectfully,

Caelly Shiraki

Spouse of an Aquarium Fisher / Industry Hawaii Tropical Fish Company \

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

Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Darrel Smith, and I stand in strong opposition to HB2101 as a community member who supports Hawai'i's aquarium fishermen and the integrity of our State's decision-making process.

This bill asserts that Hawai'i's aquarium fishery is unsustainable and raises cultural concerns about specific species such as Kole. Respectfully, these claims are not supported by the official record. The sustainability of this fishery has already been thoroughly examined through years of study and legal process.

Following the decision of the Hawaii Supreme Court, the fishery was shut down pending completion of a full Environmental Impact Statement under HEPA Chapter 343. The fishermen complied in good faith, funding and completing not one, but two Environmental Impact Statements for West Hawai'i, along with additional work for O'ahu, a Cultural Impact Statement, and ongoing Chapter 91 rulemaking.

These efforts involved extensive review by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, the Division of Aquatic Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and independent coral reef scientists. The consistent conclusion has been that the aquarium fishery is sustainable, highly regulated, and low impact, with target species populations stable or increasing over decades.

Despite this, opponents have argued the EIS cannot be trusted because fishermen paid for it — even though they were required by law to do so. Additional analysis was completed, yet further administrative obstacles followed.

Now, after years of delay, cost, and compliance, the fishery is prepared to move forward with even greater restrictions, reducing collection from approximately 30 species to just five in order to address ongoing concerns.

This is a small group of licensed, local fishermen — not industrial operators — who remove a minute fraction of reef biomass, far less than recreational and food fisheries, while operating under strict regulations.

HB2101 does not advance conservation. It overrides a science-based, legally mandated process that has already been exhaustively carried out. It sends the message that even when people follow the law, invest in science, and make meaningful compromises, the outcome can still be disregarded.

If we are going to require an Environmental Impact Statement process, then its findings must be respected. Otherwise, we are not practicing environmental stewardship — we are practicing prohibition without due process.

It is also important to recognize that West Hawai'i is the most studied and best-managed aquarium fishery in the state. If sustainability were truly the issue, similar

scrutiny would apply across all fisheries. The fundamental question should remain: is it sustainable? The data indicates that it is.

Cultural concerns have already been addressed within the existing regulatory framework. The Board of Land and Natural Resources has demonstrated its ability to respond to community input while still relying on scientific data.

I am not a fisherman, but I support a fair process, evidence-based policy, and the local families who have spent years complying with every requirement placed before them. It is difficult to see that process now set aside.

I respectfully urge you to defer or vote NO on HB2101 and allow the Department of Aquatic Resources to complete its rulemaking based on science, transparency, and enforceable management.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

Darrel Smith

TESTIMONY  
IN OPPOSITION TO HB 2101 HD1

March 24, 2026

Bruce Carlson, Ph.D.

Aloha Chair Richards and Chair Lee and members of the committees.

It has been exactly 50 years since I first visited the Hawai‘i legislature to testify in support of the Hawai‘i aquarium fishery. Fifty years ago, opponents argued that the collection rate would drive some species to extinction. While those concerns were understandable, they were hypothetical, and history has shown they were incorrect.

In the committee report for draft one of this bill, one reason cited for banning aquarium fish collecting is that abundant fish populations strengthen reef resilience against the effects of climate change. In other words, the arguments from 50 years ago have changed, and concerns about species extinction are no longer relevant. Instead, the current claim is that the entire reef could collapse.

The challenge you face as legislators is distinguishing between alarming anecdotal comments and hypothetical disaster predictions from actual data. Fortunately, you have a dedicated team of professional biologists who have already done this work for you. DLNR biologists have carefully collected data over the past 20 years on the aquarium fish populations in West Hawai‘i reefs. You receive their reports every five years. DLNR has concluded that the West Hawai‘i aquarium fishery is sustainable; moreover, it should remain sustainable, especially if the fishery is reopened with the proposed, more restrictive rules.

Why is the West Hawai‘i aquarium fishery sustainable? It is a consequence of the actions taken by DLNR to establish protected reef areas, coupled with the remarkable reproductive capacity of species like the yellow tang. Published research indicates that one adult female yellow tang can produce on average one million eggs each year. DLNR estimates that the brood stock of yellow tangs in West Hawai‘i is around 6 million fish, with half being females. Three million female fish, each producing one million eggs, yields three trillion eggs annually. Even if DLNR's adult population estimate is off by 50%, the total still exceeds one trillion eggs per year. Opponents often overlook the fact that natural mortality among larvae and juvenile yellow tangs is very high. Most young fish become food and never join the breeding population. The aquarium fishery targets these young fishes, which are highly desired for aquariums but are also the most likely to die on the reef. The brood stock is left untouched.

I recommend referring this matter back to DLNR and letting them decide, based on factual information and solid data, the best way to proceed. The University of Hawai‘i and Bishop Museum reef biologists should also be consulted. Additionally, it is important to evaluate valid cultural concerns, which are mostly outside the scope of science.

I believe that if the fishery reopens under the new, stricter rules, it will remain sustainable without harming the reef. DLNR can keep monitoring the reefs and fish populations and take action as needed—either by extending the fishery or adding more restrictions based on their findings. The key point: this fishery should not be managed by the Legislature.



**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 2:13:32 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cates	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please defer HB2101 that would permanently ban aquarium collection on Hawai'i island. Prohibition of an entire industry that is not reliant on tourism dollars, provides a livable wage for experienced local fishers, and is scientifically supported by data should never be considered by this Legislative body. DLNR is able to effectively manage marine resources and has the authority to implement a moratorium on a fish species or fishery through adaptive management, if necessary. This measure undermines that authority and removes statutory responsibilities of the state.

Thank you,

Randy Cates

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:59:55 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Travis Liggett	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

Please pass this.

Mahalo

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:05:09 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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: 3/23/2026 12:23:17 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kekoa Alip	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am in very strong support of this bill.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:04:50 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James T Lovell	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

This bill states: The legislature finds that the capture and sale of Hawaii's reef fish are unsustainable.

The is a lie. This industry has been proven over and over to be sustainable. This is a use conflict. If you want to discriminate against a user group, then you you need to state that. Passing bill that is a lie should not be done.

Please vote no on this bill

Jim Lovell

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:54:12 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Oppose

Klayton Kubo

Waimea, Kaua'i

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:52:31 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kai	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I'm Kai from the big island and I oppose HB 2101 I've grown up having aquariums and fishing, aquariums with responsibly sourced local fish teaches responsibility, patience, and reef conservation—not harm. Regulated collection has low impact; a ban hurts livelihoods without justification. Please vote no

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:47:49 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
TODD SHIRAKI	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong opposition to Hawaii House Bill 2101 as a tropical fish collector in Hawaii.

For many of us, tropical fish collecting is not only a livelihood but also a long-standing practice rooted in knowledge of the ocean, reef ecosystems, and responsible harvesting methods. Over the years, collectors have adapted to increasing regulations, improved handling practices, and greater accountability to ensure sustainability and the health of our marine resources.

As written, HB2101 raises serious concerns about further restricting or potentially eliminating access to this practice without clear evidence that such broad measures are necessary. Responsible collectors already operate under strict rules designed to protect reef ecosystems. Additional sweeping restrictions risk putting small, local operators out of work while failing to address other, more significant stressors on reef health such as pollution, runoff, and climate-related impacts.

This bill could also have unintended consequences, including pushing the aquarium trade toward imported fish, which may come from regions with fewer protections and less sustainable practices. Supporting local, regulated collection in Hawaii helps ensure higher standards of care, lower mortality rates, and better environmental oversight.

As someone directly involved in this field, I take pride in collecting responsibly, minimizing environmental impact, and contributing to the local economy. I believe any policy changes

should be based on sound science, stakeholder input, and a balanced approach that protects both our natural resources and the people who depend on them.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on HB2101 or to defer the measure for further study and meaningful community engagement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Thank you

Todd Shiraki

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:29:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 opposing this bill and 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, 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. Licensed fishermen operating within a legal framework have every incentive to protect the resource they depend on. They become stewards of the reef — additional eyes on the water who report illegal activity, monitor fish populations, and have a vested interest in the long-term health of the fishery.

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 oppose these blanket “Ban Bills” and restore a regulated, science-based fishery that reflects Hawaii's commitment to both environmental stewardship and promote economic wellbeing of our local communities.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:26:27 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Richard xie	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Esteemed Senators,

Compiled by Richard Xie, Please do not pass HB 2101. West Hawaii fishermen had been following the State requirement to spend over half millions dollors to finish EIS report since 2017. Oahu fishermen also spend over half millions to work on their EIS report based on the court requirement. All the reports show the industry is sustainable. If a industry spent \$1 million dollar to follow the guide line to solve conflict legally, and the industry can be shut down by emotional environmentalists, conflict interest groups. Why will anyone follow rules anymore? Lots of tourist ocean activities do not have EIS reports, commerical fishermen do not have EIS reports. Shall the state shut down all ocean relative industries?

Dear Senators,

I am writing to ask you to oppose HB 2101 and address comments made by activists about mortality rates of marine aquarium fish. The Hawaii aquarium fishery is renowned for its high standards of fish handling and welfare. The comments made by activists regarding high mortality rates are false. Any industry in which its customers have a 99% failure rate will not succeed in the long run.

The aquarium industry is reliant on live, thriving fish to maintain its profitability. Dead fish do not eat fish food, require salt mixes for water changes, or promote sales of any other product that aquarium retailers rely on to run their businesses. While the activists paint a picture of an industry incentivized to undermine its consumers by selling them fish that will meet an early demise, the exact opposite is true. New hobbyists who have high mortality rates quit the hobby and do not spend money on aquarium products or fish. Hobbyists who receive well-collected and handled fish are successful in the long term and therefore continue to purchase products that unsuccessful hobbyists do not. Therefore, not only is the industry incentivized by ethics to take proper care of fish, but also by economics.

This is not merely theory. These high survival rates are documented in the scientific literature. In addition to this letter, I have provided a study on collection and husbandry practices for yellow tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) in Hawaii. The study by Munday et al. states:

“Our finding that mortality rates in *Z. flavescens* are low is consistent with prior observations of the fishery by Stevenson et al. (2011).”

While the attached study followed the fish for 21 days, the research continued longer. In verbal testimony at the Capitol regarding SB1240 for the Judicial Committee on March 2, 2017, the author of the study stated:

“The fish... were shipped from Kona, Hawaii to Portland, Oregon... and resided [there] for 6 months.”

Then, discussing the long-term monitoring of survivorship, the author stated:

“I have received no reports of mortality after 2.5 years.”

This is a far cry from the mortality rates touted by anti-aquarium activists. Collection and handling practices in the Hawaii aquarium fishery ensure survival rights are incredibly high. Low mortality rates are in the best interest of the fish, the consumer, and the industry.

Please allow the Division of Aquatic Resources to continue to utilize science and data to manage Hawaii’s ethical and sustainable aquarium fishery for the benefit of Hawaii residents. Please recognize the claims by activists about unsustainability and mortality for what they are: falsehoods not based in science or fact. I urge you to oppose HB 2101.

Sincerely,

Art Parola

The Effects of Venting and Decompression on Yellow Tangs  
(*Zebrasoma flavescens*) in the Ornamental Aquarium Fish Trade

Prepared By

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Abstract

Ornamental aquarium fish catch volume may be affected by collection methods that cause mortality. To evaluate the effects of collection methods on fish stress and mortality, we examined three decompression treatments (fast(F), intermediate(I), slow(S)) coupled with(+V) or without venting(-V) (puncturing the swim bladder to release gas that has expanded during ascent from the reef to the surface) in a fully crossed orthogonal design on yellow tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) mortality and sublethal effects, as elucidated through histology and serum cortisol. In *Z. flavescens* subjected to F-V, post-collection mortality of 6% occurred within 24h of capture. Popular collection methods in the fishery (F+V and I+V) resulted in no mortality. Histopathology of heart, liver, head kidney, and swim bladder tissues in fish 0d and 21d post-collection revealed no significant inflammation or other lesions in any treatment group. F resulted in significantly higher serum cortisol than S, and venting alone did not affect cortisol. Future work should examine links in the supply chain following collection to determine if further handling and transport stressors affect survivorship and sublethal effects.

## Introduction

Each year, over 45 countries remove and export up to 30 million fish from coral reefs as part of the ornamental marine aquarium trade (Bruckner 2005; Wood 2001). Although ~90% of freshwater aquarium fish are successfully cultivated in aquaculture facilities, most tropical marine aquarium fish are wild-caught (Wood 2001) and their removal can have negative effects on coral reefs (Tissot et al. 2010). Mortality that occurs after live fish are removed from depth as part of the collection process is one issue that affects the impact of this fishery on aquarium fish populations. Although prior studies have examined the response of deep-water (20-152 m) fish to forced removal from depth, no studies have investigated the effects on shallow (15-18 m) tropical reef fish collected for the live ornamental aquarium trade. This is an important issue because mortality is one driver of the demand for aquarium fish, in which more fish are removed from the reef to replace losses (Stevenson et al. 2011). Live fish collection for the aquarium trade involves removal of reef fish from depth to the surface while transport encompasses the movement of collected fish to an export facility, where they are held prior to being shipped to an importer, and finally to an aquarium retail store where a consumer can purchase the fish for their home aquarium.

An important yet understudied component of live fish collection is the removal of fish from depth, subsequent transport to the surface, and the methods that must be implemented for fish to survive the pressure transition. As fish are brought to the surface, decreasing external pressure can result in barotrauma. Barotrauma signs in fish manifest both externally and internally and may include positive buoyancy (bloating caused by overexpansion of the swim bladder), bulging of the eyes (exophthalmia) and protrusion of the intestines from the cloaca. In deep water fish, protrusion of the esophagus from the mouth is common (Parker et al. 2006; Pribyl 2010; Wilde 2009). In addition, internal signs have been observed in deep water temperate fish which include swim bladder rupture, internal bleeding, compression damage to and displacement of organs surrounding the swim bladder, stretching of optic nerves, emphysema of the heart ventricle, and gas emboli in the rete mirabile and kidney caused by gas leaking from the swim bladder (Gotshall 1964; Bruesewitz et al. 1993; Parker et al. 2006; Rogers et al. 2008; Pribyl 2010).

Pribyl (2010) found that sublethal effects from barotrauma-related injuries such as rupture of the outer layer of the swim bladder (tunica externa) persisted for at least one month after collection in rockfish (genus *Sebastes*) without causing mortality. In addition, Hannah and Matteson (2007) determined that barotrauma could reduce post-release survival of fish through behavioral impairment. These findings indicate that sublethal signs may persist long after barotrauma occurs, and suggest that fish intended for the live ornamental trade may suffer sublethal effects that remain undetected.

Venting and decompression are two common methods that mitigate or prevent barotrauma, respectively, in both deep water food fishes and aquarium fishes. Though the use of these procedures in aquarium fisheries has been documented (Randall 1987; Pyle 1993; LeGore et al. 2005), the efficacy of each of these procedures in preventing aquarium fish mortality and sublethal effects has not been evaluated. Decompression at a rate that is natural to fish is determined by the fish's ability to remain neutrally buoyant in the water column while being decompressed. In deep-water temperate fish, natural decompression can take days (Parker et al.

2006; Pribyl 2010). Performing one or several decompression stops (pause in the water column at an intermediate depth before removal to the surface) is a technique implemented in aquarium fisheries such as those in Puerto Rico and West Hawaii (LeGore et al. 2005; Stevenson et al. 2011), though its effectiveness at preventing mortality has not been tested. Decompression can be a more time-consuming process that allows fish adequate time to naturally remove the greater volume of air in its swim bladder, thus preventing barotrauma. In contrast, venting allows for fish to be brought rapidly to the surface by puncturing the swim bladder with a hypodermic needle to release excess air in the swim bladder, thus mitigating barotrauma, but potentially causing organ and tissue damage.

Studies on deep-water food fisheries show conflicting results on venting as an effective practice to mitigate barotrauma and increase fish survival (Gotshall 1964; Keniry et al. 1996; Collins et al. 1999; Kerr 2001; Nguyen et al. 2009; Wilde 2009). Different depth ranges appear to present different survival rates among fish treated with venting (Gotshall 1964; Collins et al. 1999; Wilde 2009), though it is difficult to determine a strong depth pattern associated with venting mortality because few studies have closely examined this interaction, which may also be species-specific. The outcomes of these studies also appear to be based on whether short- or long-term fish survival is examined (Keniry et al. 1996), which is a product of the experimental design: either short-term holding, or long-term mark and recapture. We expect that long-term captive observation of fish post-collection will resolve this issue.

Recently proposed legislation in Hawaii reflects the attempts of a local animal rights group to ban the harvest of marine species for the aquarium trade based on animal cruelty claims and concerns about post-collection mortality (Lauer 2011; Talbot 2012a; Wintner 2010, 2011). Venting is popular among aquarium fishers, but is a disputed collection method in West Hawaii. Opponents claim venting inflicts suffering and mortality on fish, while collectors maintain that venting benefits fish brought up from depth and is necessary for fish survival. Those opposing venting have suggested that slow decompression be used in its stead. This controversy highlights the paucity of data surrounding collection practices in the aquarium industry, not only in Hawaii, but globally. Thus, research on mortality as it relates to collection is warranted. Legislation should be based on sound science, which should also lay the groundwork for best management practices that are both ecologically sustainable and economically practical.

Although aquarium fisheries where destructive fishing practices like cyanide are used may have high rates ( $\geq 90\%$ ) of fish mortality (Rubec and Cruz 2005), Stevenson et al. (2011) estimated the short-term mortality rate of fish collected in West Hawaii as  $< 1\%$  (from collection to harbor). Although short-term mortality is low, it is possible that delayed mortality occurs as a result of sublethal effects and remains undetected in the long-term. Because of the rapid movement of fish through the supply chain, fishers and exporters in West Hawaii may be unaware of specific connections between collection or handling methods and mortality further down the supply chain. Moreover, delayed mortality could shift the burden of fish death and economic loss from the collector to an exporter, or to the importer, retailer, or hobbyist. Importantly, improvements in the collection and transport methods for fish could potentially

reduce overall mortality of aquarium fish, thus reducing the numbers of fish that must be removed from the reef to compensate for losses in various stages of the supply chain.

Given the conflict surrounding collection practices in Hawaii and the paucity of data regarding barotrauma mitigation practices in the aquarium trade, it is clear that a scientific study is needed to investigate the practices used by fishers, while providing recommendations for best management practices. To meet these goals, we address the following objectives:

1. *Determine short- and long-term mortality of reef fish caught for the aquarium trade subjected to barotrauma prevention and/or mitigation practices: decompression and venting, respectively.*
2. *Examine sublethal effects of collection that could result in delayed mortality: gross and histologic lesions, and stress.*

## Materials and Methods

### Experimental Design

To examine short- and long-term mortality of ornamental aquarium fish as it relates to collection practices, fish were subjected to different collection methods and subsequently held for 21 days (d) for observation. Fish suffering mortality were examined by histopathology to identify specific causes of death. A subset of surviving fish were also examined to determine if sublethal injuries at the tissue level were present. Serum cortisol concentration was also measured as a proxy for stress in fish (Donaldson 1981).

*Z. flavescens* was selected as the study animal because it is the most common species targeted by aquarium fishing in West Hawaii, making up between 65-80% of the total catch of aquarium fish (Cesar et al. 2002; Tissot and Hallacher 2003; Walsh et al. 2004; Williams et al. 2009). Understanding how collection practices affect yellow tang survivorship and health is especially relevant to the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

A fully crossed factorial experiment was conducted, with three levels of decompression treatment (fast, intermediate, slow), and two levels of venting (no, yes) in all possible combinations ( $k=6$  treatments). Each treatment was replicated three times, with  $n=20$  fish in each treatment combination for a total of 360 individuals. Fish were subsampled ( $n=5$ ) immediately following collection in each treatment replicate to establish a baseline for histopathology and assess post-collection cortisol level. Fish were collected between 15-18 m depth, reflecting the range typically utilized by West Hawaii collectors (Stevenson et al. 2011). In order to accurately reflect the methods actually used in the fishery, fish collection was performed by a licensed aquarium fisher on SCUBA with a barrier net as described by Stevenson et al. (2011). When the desired quantity of fish ( $n=40$ ) was caught, fish were transferred to containers assigned to each decompression treatment. Following the decompression treatment, half ( $n=20$ ) of the fish were subjected to the venting treatment and half were not.

The fast decompression treatment involved bringing the fish directly to the surface from 15-18 m at a rate of  $0.25 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  (recommended SCUBA ascent rate) resulting in  $\sim 1$  min total decompression time. In the intermediate decompression treatment, the collection container was hung off the fishing vessel and brought up at a rate of  $0.25 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  to half the maximum depth. Fish

were allowed to decompress for 45 min before being brought to the surface at a rate of  $0.25 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . In the slow decompression treatment, fish were brought up 3 m every 15 min until the collection container was at 10 m (2 atm), then 1.5 m every 15 min from 10 m to the surface. Fast decompression followed by venting is a method applied most frequently by fishers on yellow tangs in West Hawaii and 100% of fishers interviewed reported using venting, ranging from occasionally to always, depending on depth and target species.

Venting was performed by the fisher on the surface vessel using a 20 G hypodermic needle, replaced after ~50 fish. Each fish was held out of water for ~3-5 s by the fisher while the needle was inserted through the body wall toward the swim bladder, caudal to the pectoral fin and ventral of the lateral line.

Fish were collected over a period of 2 d. For each collection day, the duration of transport from the collection site to port (<1 h) and from port to the holding facility was similar (<1 h) to reduce uncertainty associated with differences in fish transport time. During transport, each replicate treatment group was held separately in the collector's live well. During collection and while in transit from the collection site to port, the water in the live well was continuously exchanged with fresh seawater.

### **Holding Period**

Post-collection, fish were observed for 21 d at an aquaculture facility located at the Natural Energy Laboratory Hawaii Authority in West Hawaii provided with surface seawater. The experiment duration was chosen because it represents a reasonable time period for a fish to be transferred from the reef to a retailer or hobbyist in the aquarium supply chain. In addition, swim bladder healing in rockfish has been observed after 21 d (Parker et al. 2006) and is sufficient time to allow skin and muscle regeneration in fish (Roberts 2010). Therefore, fish exhibiting lesions after 21 d may not have fully recovered in a supply chain environment and could be categorized as having sublethal effects from collection.

Fish were held in 1 m diameter mesh floating cages within three ~10 000 l pools, which served as replicate blocks, each containing all six treatments. Incoming seawater was filtered to  $5\mu\text{m}$ , and set to flow through each pool at a rate of  $1 \text{ volume}\cdot\text{d}^{-1}$ . Regular skin scrapes were collected and if parasites were detected, a hyposalinity treatment was implemented (30-14‰) for the entire pool. Pools were exposed to natural sunlight, and minimum and maximum daily temperatures were monitored.

All fish were fed a natural algae diet (*Ulva fasciata*) rich in nutrients (primarily nitrogen) absorbed from food fish outflow in the aquaculture facility. Aquaculture facilities use algae such as *Ulva spp.* for biofiltration (Vandermeulen and Gordin 1990; Jiménez del Río et al. 1996) and the algae accumulates nutrients and can serve as a nutrient rich food source for herbivorous fish.

Fish health was observed, and any mortality was recorded. Standard length (SL) (from snout to start of caudal fin) of each fish was measured. Following mortality, fish were placed in 10% neutral buffered formalin for histopathology; the operculum was removed and body cavity

opened to facilitate flow of formalin fixative over tissues. Moribund fish were humanely euthanized using an overdose solution ( $> 250 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}$ ) of tricaine methanesulfonate (MS-222).

### **Histopathology**

To determine the sublethal effects of decompression and venting treatments, fish ( $n=5$ ) were chosen randomly from each replicate treatment group immediately upon arrival to the holding facility (0 d) and at the end of the holding period (21 d) for histopathology. Fish used for histopathology were euthanized using an overdose solution of MS-222, placed on ice, and shipped within 48 h to Oregon State University's (OSU) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) for analysis. Fish that perished during the experiment were fixed in 10% neutral buffer formalin and sent to the VDL for histopathology.

Formalin-fixed fish were immersed for 24 h in Cal-Ex II (Fisher Scientific) to decalcify bone, after which serial cross sections of the fish were placed in plastic cassettes and processed using standard histologic techniques. Paraffin embedded specimens were sectioned at  $5 \mu\text{m}$  and stained with hematoxylin and eosin. Brown-Hopps Gram stain was used to assess bacterial growth. Using a Nikon Eclipse 50i microscope, gill, heart, kidney, liver, swim bladder, and intestine tissues were examined for evidence of histologic lesions.

### **Cortisol**

Because of the potential for cortisol concentrations to decrease when a stressor subsides, blood samples were collected from fish immediately upon arrival to the holding facility (0 d). Fish ( $n=2$ ) were anesthetized from each treatment replicate group using MS-222 prior to drawing 0.3-1.0 ml blood from the heart using a 25G 2.54 cm needle and 3 ml syringe. To determine *Z. flavescens* ocean baseline cortisol concentration, blood was collected from fish ( $n=4$ ) underwater on SCUBA at capture depth within 3 min of capture. Blood was injected into 3 ml vacutainer tubes with no additive (Becton-Dickinson), placed on ice, and centrifuged at 3,000 rpm for 10 min  $<1$  h later. Serum supernatant was transferred to a clean vacutainer tube with no additive, placed on ice, and frozen  $<1$  h later for  $\leq 40$  d in a non-frostless freezer, and transported overnight on dry ice to the OSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for analysis.

Serum cortisol concentrations were determined using radioimmunoassay (RIA) as described by Redding et al. (1984). Total binding, the ratio of the radiolabeled cortisol bound to the antibody to the total amount of radiolabeled cortisol in the sample, was 40-50%. Samples showed adequate parallelism, and 3.9-500.0 ng/ml cortisol standards were used.

### **Statistical Methods**

Statistical analyses were performed using Minitab 15 Statistical Software program. To meet assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, data were transformed to square root (fish SL) or log (cortisol). A two-way ANOVA was used to compare mean cortisol concentrations, with decompression treatment and venting as fixed factors and replicate block as a random factor. Tukey's multiple comparisons test was used to determine significant differences between levels within each factor.

### **Results**

#### **Mortality**

Sizes of *Z. flavescens* in this study ranged from 5.0-10.0 cm SL with a mean value of 7.2 cm ( $SE=0.05$  cm), similar to sizes previously reported in the fishery (Stevenson et al. 2011). Mortality occurred <24 h post-collection in fish subjected to fast decompression with no venting, with a mean mortality of 6.2% ( $SE=0.6\%$ ). No mortality occurred in the other experimental treatments, negating need for statistical tests.

The incidence of mortality was consistent with observations of the frequency and severity of external barotrauma signs. These included high frequency of positive buoyancy, bloating, exophthalmia, and protrusion of the intestines from the cloaca in fish subjected to fast decompression (Figure 1). The intermediate decompression treatment resulted in some fish being bloated and positively buoyant, but the other symptoms were not as frequently observed. Fish subjected to slow decompression did not exhibit these signs.

### Histopathology

Histopathology of gill, heart, kidney, liver, swim bladder, and intestinal tissues failed to detect significant inflammation, necrosis, or gas embolism associated with barotrauma or venting in any treatment either pre- or post-collection. However, in one case a venting wound was detected in a fish subjected to slow decompression and venting, which was sampled immediately after collection. In this sample (Figure 2), there was locally extensive necrosis of body wall musculature and a localized influx of neutrophils surrounding the needle track.

### Cortisol

The mean ocean baseline cortisol concentration was  $8.9 \text{ ng}\cdot\text{mL}^{-1}$  ( $SE= 4.96 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ) and in some cases was at or below the detection limit for the assay ( $3.9 \text{ ng}\cdot\text{mL}^{-1}$ ). Decompression treatment significantly affected cortisol concentration (Two-way ANOVA:  $F=4.26$ ;  $df= 2,10$ ;  $p=0.03$ ), with fast decompression resulting in a significantly higher mean cortisol concentration ( $M=58.8 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ,  $SE=8.7 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ) than slow decompression ( $M=35.5 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ,  $SE=5.3 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ), with neither treatment being significantly different from intermediate decompression ( $M= \text{ng mL}^{-1}$ ,  $SE= \text{ng mL}^{-1}$ ) (Figure 3). Fast decompression produced the highest observed cortisol concentration ( $101.49 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ), whereas the highest observed cortisol concentrations in fish subjected to intermediate and slow decompression were  $59.09$  and  $68.03 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ , respectively. Venting resulted in higher mean cortisol concentration ( $M=47.7 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ,  $SE=6.9 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ) than the no venting treatment ( $M=38.2 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ,  $SE=4.3 \text{ ng mL}^{-1}$ ), but differences were not statistically significant. In addition, there was no significant interaction between decompression and venting.

### Discussion

The conflict between fishers and opponents of aquarium collecting in Hawaii is not only driven by the competition for tropical fish, but also by values differences (Capitini et al. 2004; Tissot 2005; Stevenson et al. in review). Because values are involved, science alone may not be sufficient to settle the dispute. However, because conflict surrounding the aquarium trade also suffers from scientific uncertainty (Capitini et al. 2004), we aim to provide the science necessary for full evaluation of potential management solutions directed at collection practices.

With the objective of informing management on collection practices in the West Hawaii aquarium trade, our study focused on the short- and long-term mortality of reef fish subjected to two different barotrauma mitigation practices: venting and decompression. Overall, we found that varying decompression methods produced little to no mortality and that venting reduced mortality in fish subjected to fast decompression. Furthermore, we found no evidence of significant tissue inflammation associated with venting, or lesions linked to barotrauma immediately after collection and after a 21 d holding period. Finally, decompression significantly elevated serum cortisol concentration above baseline values, with fast decompression resulting in significantly higher serum cortisol concentrations than slow decompression. However, consistent with mortality observations, venting did not significantly affect cortisol concentration. In the following sections, we discuss possible factors influencing our results, future research recommendations, and implications for management of aquarium fisheries.

### **Mortality**

A popular method used to collect yellow tangs and other aquarium fish species, fast decompression followed by venting, resulted in no mortality. Only fish subjected to fast decompression with no venting suffered post-collection mortality. Our finding that mortality rates in *Z. flavescens* are low is consistent with prior observations of the fishery by Stevenson et al. (2011). Our results indicate that venting following decompression does not cause short- (0 d post-collection) or longer-term (21 d post-collection) mortality. Venting likely improved survivorship in fish following fast decompression because venting causes fish to become neutrally or negatively buoyant, allowing them to control position in the water and avoid colliding with the transport container during transport to the holding facility. This is contrasted with fish subjected to fast decompression with no venting, which were positively buoyant and therefore at risk of acquiring secondary injuries during transport, as well as aerial exposure.

Additional factors that influence post-collection fish mortality include collection depth, body size, and species. Our study examined fish collected from 15-18 m depths, which is typical for most West Hawaii fishers, although some dive to  $\geq 27$  m for different species (Stevenson et al. 2011). At these deeper depths, the effects of decompression rate and venting may differ, and it is known that fish mortality and occurrence of barotrauma increases with capture depth (Collins et al. 1999; St John and Seyers 2005; Hannah et al. 2008; Jarvis and Lowe, 2008; Campbell et al. 2010). Interviews with West Hawaii fishers indicate that fish collected from  $>25$  m require more decompression time and venting at depth, or several venting applications during ascent. Fishers have also mentioned that larger fish exhibit more severe external barotrauma symptoms than smaller fish of the same species, which is similar to findings in studies on deep water fish (Hannah et al. 2008; St John and Seyers 2005). Just as different deep water fish species exhibit different responses to decompression (Hannah and Matteson 2007; Jarvis and Lowe 2008; Pribyl 2010), aquarium fish species reportedly react differently to decompression and venting. These differences are likely caused by variation in body shape and durability, and swim bladder volume between species. Methods used by fishers reflect these species differences, with practices such as performing venting on more delicate, soft-bodied fish like angelfish (Pomacanthidae) underwater to prevent (rather than mitigate) swim bladder expansion. Examining differences among aquarium fish species of varying sizes and investigating the variety of techniques employed by

fishers during collection would provide further insight into the prevalence and effectiveness of aquarium fish barotrauma prevention and mitigation methods.

### **Histopathology**

Histopathology did not detect significant widespread inflammation, organ damage or infection caused by venting. Only one case of a needle wound was found that showed some localized inflammation, with no visible bacteria. Because the microtome used in the histological process sliced tissue into a 5 µm sections, there may have been other fish with similar minor wounds that were undetected. However, the object of histopathology in our study was to determine if widespread inflammation or tissue damage were present in fish, indicating serious sublethal injury. If such injuries were present, they would have been detected in multiple sections of the tissues surrounding the venting wound. The fish in which the venting wound was detected was sampled 0 d post-collection, and serious infection is not be expected within hours of collection. Rather, inflammatory and epithelial cells mainly occupy the area of the wound within a few hours of injury (Roberts 2010), and invading bacteria would not have spread far from the wound in this time.

If fish were unable to heal in the 21 d holding period because of wound severity, we would have detected significant infection in fish sampled after 21 d. Because we did not, our results indicate that the venting procedure does not pose a significant threat to fish survival post-collection, nor cause significant sublethal effects. However, we caution that the fish in our study were held in an aquaculture facility for 21 d without additional handling and transport stressors as they normally would in the supply chain, thus potentially promoting recovery from injuries inflicted during collection. Future studies should investigate if additional stressors of the supply chain diminish the efficacy of venting in promoting long-term fish survival.

Because aquarium fish exhibited external signs of barotrauma similar to those observed in deep-water temperate fish, we expected internal barotrauma symptoms to be present similar to those described by Pribyl (2010). We did not detect tissue-level signs of barotrauma, even in fish subjected to fast decompression. However, externally observable signs indicated that barotrauma did occur and that aquarium fish likely also experience some internal signs of barotrauma. Because positively buoyant fish were bloated and showed protrusion of the intestines from the cloaca, with some presenting exophthalmia, organ displacement by the swim bladder and stretching of the optic nerve caused by exophthalmia were likely occurring immediately following collection, internal barotrauma signs detected in rockfish (Parker et al. 2006; Rogers et al. 2008). Determining if organ displacement occurs, and if venting relieves this issue in aquarium fish would further our understanding of the mechanisms with which venting reduces mortality in fish subjected to fast decompression.

### **Cortisol**

Fast decompression produced significantly higher cortisol levels in fish than slow decompression. This higher cortisol level may be driven by a higher frequency and severity of barotrauma signs in fish subjected to fast decompression. Because fish endured transport to the

holding facility prior to blood collection, fish exhibiting positive buoyancy (those not subjected to venting) should have produced higher cortisol concentrations because they were more susceptible to injury and stress from collision with the transport container. Venting, applied prior to transport, should reduce exposure to this transport stressor by eliminating positive buoyancy. However, though venting mitigated the effects of fast decompression by relieving positive buoyancy and reducing mortality, our results show cortisol concentrations were not significantly affected by venting. This suggests that other signs of barotrauma not relieved by venting (i.e. intestinal protrusion and exophthalmia), or experiencing positive buoyancy even if only for a short period of time, are likely driving the higher cortisol concentrations observed in fish subjected to fast decompression.

Comparisons with stressed (45-65 ng·ml<sup>-1</sup>) and non-stressed (10-25 ng·ml<sup>-1</sup>) plasma cortisol concentrations in a closely related acanthurid (*Ctenochaetus striatus*) (Soares et al. 2011) suggest that venting increases stress in fish subjected to fast decompression, but our results show that it also reduces mortality. However, because cortisol concentrations vary widely between fish species, these values should be interpreted cautiously. Because fast decompression followed by venting is a popular method used to collect yellow tangs, other ornamental aquarium fish, and food fish species, further investigation of stress following collection is warranted.

Handling in and transport between export, import, and retail facilities may exacerbate stress caused by collection. Chronic stress results in immune system suppression (Barton 2002), increasing susceptibility to infection and disease and the probability of delayed mortality. Because mortality occurring in hobbyist aquariums followed by fish replacement is one driver of the demand for more aquarium fish (Tissot et al. 2010), future studies should address stress as it relates to handling in and transport between each link in the supply chain beyond collection. In addition, tracking supply chains originating both inside and outside the US and investigating how fish stress relates to water quality, fish behavior, sublethal effects, and mortality would provide insight into drivers of stress and mortality in the aquarium fish and live food fish trade and lead to improved methods.

### **Implications for Management**

Venting did not cause mortality or sublethal injuries in yellow tangs, and banning venting may increase mortality rates if fishers continued to implement fast decompression. However, only allowing intermediate or slow decompression might be economically detrimental to fishers.

Our results further our overall understanding of the effects of venting. Previous studies show conflicting results on venting's effectiveness, both supporting and refuting the efficacy of its use for reducing fish mortality (Gotshall 1964; Keniry et al. 1996; Nguyen et al. 2009; Wilde 2009). Our results indicate that when performed properly, venting does not cause mortality or inflict significant sublethal injuries, although our inference is limited to a single species and within a relatively shallow depth range.

In contrast to other aquarium fisheries such as in the Philippines where cyanide is used and increases fish and coral reef mortality (Hall and Bellwood 1995; Hanawa et al. 1998; Rubec et al. 2001; Jones and Hoegh-Guldberg 1999; Jones and Steven, 1997), fishers in West Hawaii appear to implement non-destructive collection practices. Although the Hawaii fishery contributes fewer ornamental aquarium fish to the global exported catch relative to Indonesia and

the Philippines (Wood 2001; Walsh et al. 2004), if methods used by fishers in West Hawaii were to be implemented by these large scale aquarium fisheries where destructive fishing methods are popular, sustainability of the global trade would improve. To this end, we recommend that other aquarium fisheries adopt methods used in West Hawaii, which are economically feasible and foster sustainability.

### Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coral Reef Conservation Program (award #NA11NOS4820013). Work was performed under IACUC protocol xxxx. Washington State University Vancouver provided laboratory space and use of materials. Todd Stevenson contributed greatly to this study. Syd Kraul, Tyron Terrazono, Paul Masterjohn, Scott Brien, were an integral part of this project and assisted in formulation and execution of this research. Much thanks to Tony Spitzack, Cori Kane, Molly Bøgeberg, Meghan Dailer, Dr. Jim Beets, Caitlin Kryss, the Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources, especially Dr. Bill Walsh, Laura Livnat, and Kara Osada, Dr. Jordan and the Kona Veterinary Service, Ian McComas, Dr. Cheryl Schultz, Dr. Schreck, Julia Unrein, and the OSU Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Laboratory.

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FIGURES

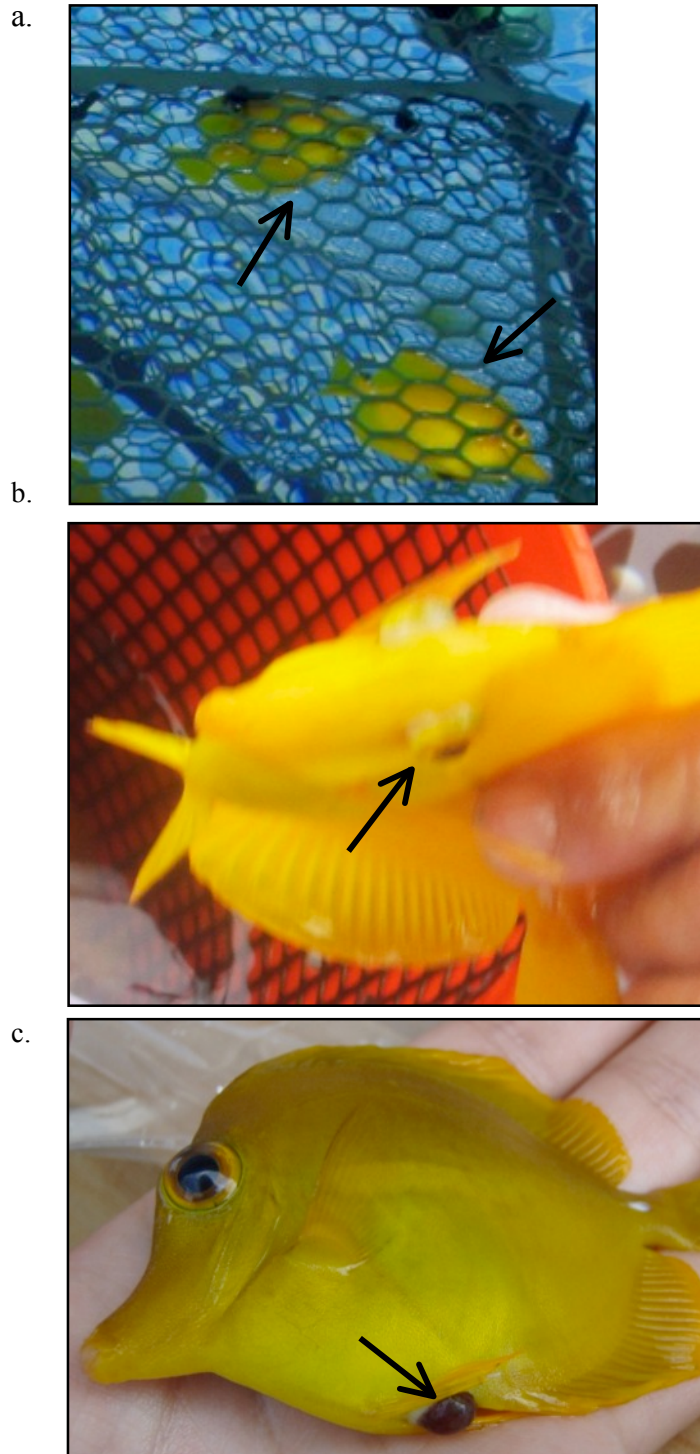


Figure 1: Barotrauma signs observed in yellow tangs following collection: (a) positive buoyancy (b) exophthalmia and (c) intestinal protrusion from the cloaca.

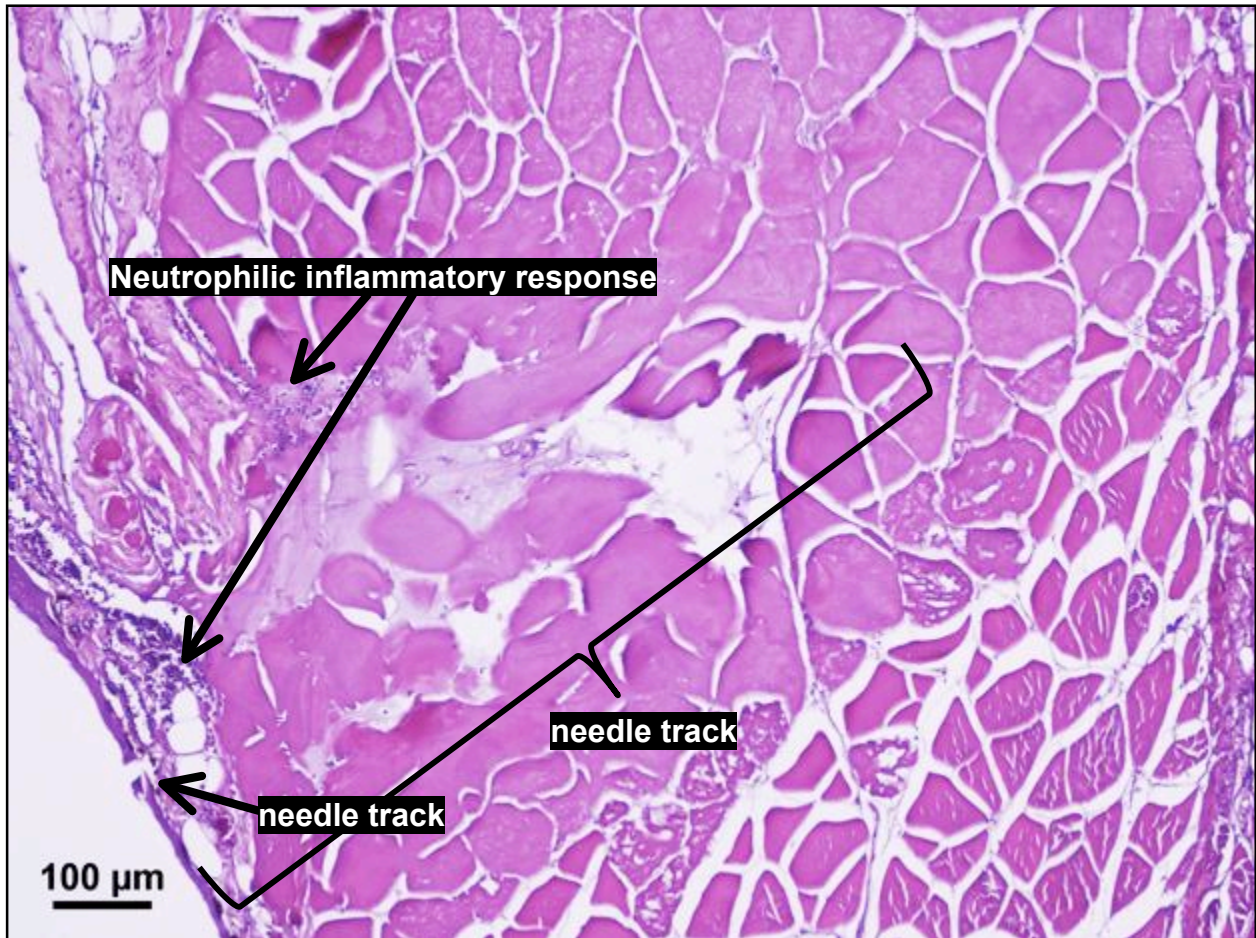


Figure 2: Histological section of needle track in a yellow tang subjected to venting showing muscle cell necrosis, edema, and neutrophilic inflammation, at 10x magnification.

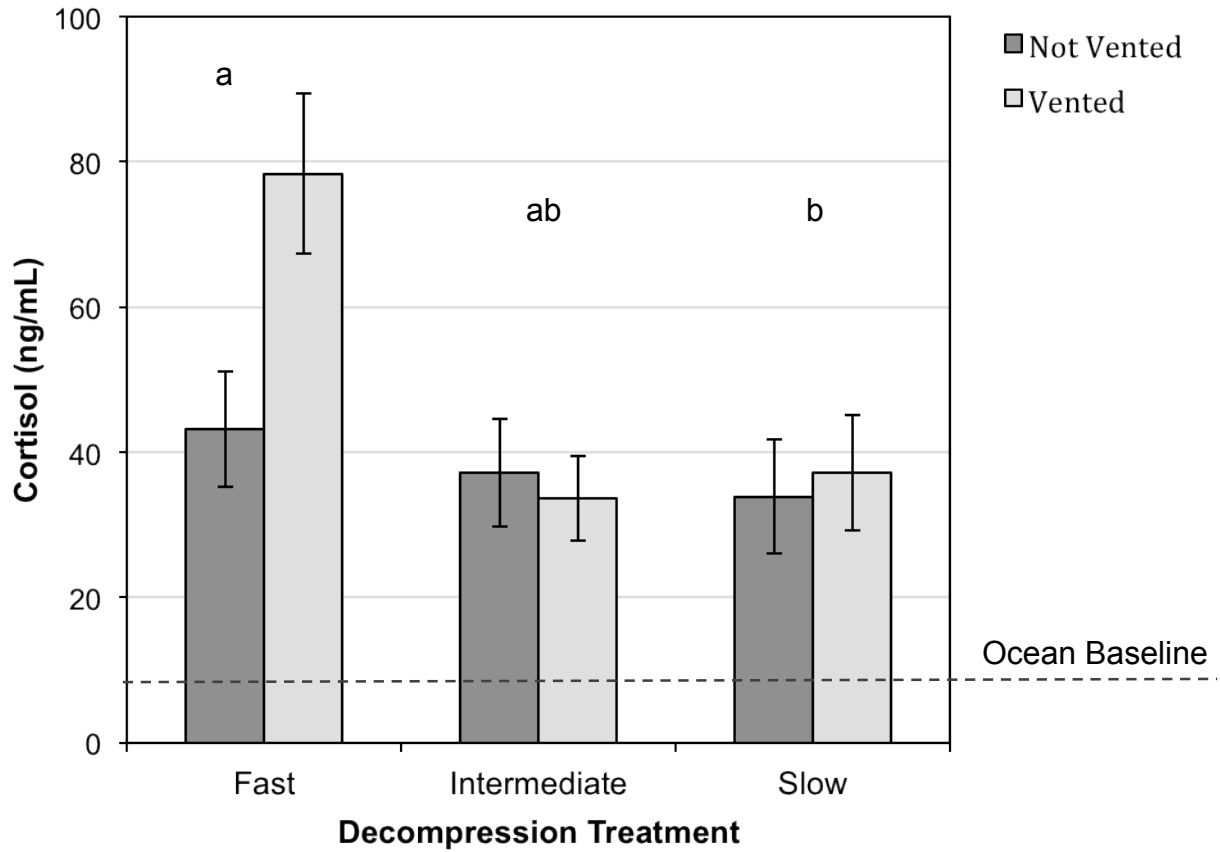


Figure 3: Cortisol concentration (mean +/-SE) by each treatment. Letter groups represent Tukey's multiple range test results comparing means between decompression treatments. All treatment groups are above the ocean baseline concentration of 8.9 ng mL<sup>-1</sup>.



Figure 3: Comparison of buoyancy in yellow tangs subjected to the fast decompression treatment, before and after venting was applied by an experienced aquarium fisher.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:26:28 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Kimsel	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

In strongly oppose HB2101. The aquarium fishers on Oahu and Hawai'i island all have submitted EIS or in the process of submitting. Let the DAR finish their rules package and see what it is before attempting to further ban an already banned fishery. This is a classic example of legislative corruption - when certain special interest groups cannot get their way, they change laws to achieve their goal. Let the process play out -- without government corruption the aquarium industry would've already resumed.

I oppose HB2101

Paul Kimsel

Fisherman

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:50:27 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Board members,

My name is David Ramos. Born and raised on Oahu. I oppose bill 2101. I have collected aquarium fish for over 30 years. If your going to ban a trade at least research it by using Aquatic Resourses for the stats and the fisherman who actually do it for the reef health. Then see if it makes sense to stop it. I can say for sure that none of the people from earth justice, any of the clubs or organizations have even bothered to talk to the people who actually do it. Isn't it strange to ban something you know nothing about. I have offered to take out anyone from the For The Fishes on my boat to let them see how we work but was told that they don't care if it's sustainable or not they don't want anyone doing it. With no compassion what so ever and in the middle of Covid DLNR stated on channel 2 news they were going to let fisherman use up their licences for the year and then close it untill a EIS was compleated. a week later we all got a notice that they shut it down. Kinda funny that that was never shone on the news. Now in the middle of Covid we have no job. Would you like to wake up tomorrow and have no income for your family. I guess the 15 fisherman and their wife and kids aren't that important. As a analogy lets say you wanted to buy a nice house someone has for sale but are not sure of the neighborhood. you would ask the neighbors not the person selling the house. Mahalo for your time

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:52:14 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
scott folsom	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please do not pass HB 2101; it would be the wrong decision. Untrue testimony opposed to the fishery would run counter to a long-standing fishery review, Oahu EIS submission, West Hawaii EIS passage, Supreme Court rulings, and BLNR vote 7-0 in favor of the current rules package. lengthy legal process, sound ecology, and decades of science. Rewarding those who use misinformation to shut down sustainable fisheries solely on the basis of opinion is unfair and a travesty of justice at the most basic moral level.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:42:05 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kapiolani Spencer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

HB2101 HD1

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members.

My name is Kapi'olani Spencer. I am a lineal descendant of this 'āina and a protector of our ocean, natural resources, and traditional practices.

I stand in strong support of HB2101 HD1 to ban commercial aquarium collection.

Let's be clear, this is not just about fish.

This is about systematic extraction of Hawai'i's natural resources for profit, while our ecosystems and our people bear the cost.

For decades, millions of reef fish, especially species like yellow tang, have been taken from our nearshore waters for the global aquarium trade. These are not random fish. These are key species that help maintain reef health by controlling algae and supporting coral ecosystems.

When you remove them, you destabilize the entire reef system.

And we are already seeing the impacts:

declining reef resilience

increased algal overgrowth

weakened ecosystems that our communities rely on for subsistence and cultural practice

This is not sustainable. This is exploitation.

From a cultural standpoint, this practice interferes with the ability of Kānaka Maoli to exercise traditional and customary rights, including fishing, gathering, and maintaining a relationship with a healthy, thriving ocean.

From a legal standpoint, the State has a public trust duty to protect these resources, not to facilitate their depletion for private commercial gain.

And yet, time and time again, we see outdated studies and industry-backed narratives used to justify continued extraction, while the voices of the people of this land are pushed aside.

That is not pono.

That is not kuleana.

That is mismanagement.

HB2101 HD1 is not extreme, it is necessary.

It is a line being drawn to say:

Enough.

Our kūpuna did not manage these resources for short-term profit.

They managed them for generational survival.

If we continue down this path, we are not just losing fish,  
we are losing our ecosystems, our practices, and our identity.

“He ali‘i ka ‘āina, he kauwā ke kanaka.”

We are meant to serve and protect them, not exploit them.

I urge you to PASS HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo ka ha‘aha‘a,

Kapiolani Spencer

Lineal & Cultural Descendant, Advocate for our Natural Land and Resources,

Protection of Kupuna 'Iwi

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:13:44 PM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elena Bryant	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Richards, Chair Lee, and Committee Members,

I am in strong support of HB2101 HD1 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 committees to amend HB2101 HD1 to include a ban on commercial aquarium collection statewide. The scientific data suggests that O'ahu's herbivore populations are in peril. Commercial aquarium collection threatens to remove hundreds of thousands of herbivores from O'ahu's coral reef ecosystems and DAR has failed to put forward any data on how it plans to measure the impacts of commercial aquarium collection on O'ahu. Moreover, O'ahu has minimal protected areas that would be closed to commercial aquarium collection.

When collection rates in Kāne'ōhe 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 Kāne'ōhe Bay Regional Council, Kāne'ōhe Neighborhood Board, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, Ko'olau Foundation, Kahalu'u 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 statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Elena Bryant

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:41:42 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaikea Nakachi	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Kaikea Nakachi and I strongly support HB2101 and a ban on commercial aquarium fishing. I stand on my written testimony from HB2101 in previous committees, as well as my testimonies supporting a ban to the Hawaii county council, and to the BLNR. I stand on my testimonies and the many cultural, ecological, economic, ethical, and logical reasons this commercial trade has no place. As a Native Hawaiian born and raised and still living on Hawai'i Island, I hope this committee will heed my words, and the words of the many voices and represented communities in West Hawai'i and across the pae'āina calling for this ban. I hope that Chair Richards will listen to fellow Hawai'i Island people to hear their plea for doing what is right for Hawaiian reefs and people. Please pass this bill and do not weaken it further. I would support amendments that increase the area of the ban to be statewide, but I would not support Hawai'i Island being removed from the ban. Please see my comments in previous committees to ensure that committee member DeCorte can be educated about the small number of very vocal aq fishers in her district should not outweigh the thousands of people in West Hawaii and other communities that support a ban. Particularly since O'ahu does not have an approved EIS and therefore would not be out of a job with this bill, they cannot collect with or without this bill. I have been heartened this legislative session to see committees asking great questions and paying more attention to Native Hawaiian voices. For too long DAR, BLNR, and the aquarium trade has ignored our voices and chosen industry over integrity. Please help us make the best decision for Hawaii and end this destructive trade once and for all.

Mahalo nui,

Kaikea Nakachi

**TESTIMONY OF KEALI'I PANG, PH.D.**  
Kaimukī, O'ahu  
**IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2101, HD1**

**TO: Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs**

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair; Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

**Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts**

Senator Chris Lee, Chair; Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, March 24, 2026

TIME: 1:01 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference, State Capitol

Aloha Chair Richards, Chair Lee, Vice Chairs Lamosao and Inouye, and distinguished members of the Senate Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Water, Land, Culture and the Arts:

My name is Keal'i Pang, Ph.D. I am a resident of Kaimukī, a lifetime member of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu, and have served as an environmentalist in Hawai'i for the last 35 years. I am also a retired federal biologist with extensive experience in aquatic and coastal resource management. I write today in strong support of HB 2101, HD1, which would prohibit the commercial harvest of aquatic life for aquarium purposes in counties with populations between 200,000 and 300,000—effectively ending the commercial aquarium collection industry on Hawai'i Island.

The dual referral of this bill to the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts is fitting. The aquarium collection industry has long operated at the intersection of Native Hawaiian cultural rights and nearshore resource management—exploiting both without adequate accountability to either. These two committees, together, hold the kuleana to ensure that what has been taken from our reefs for decades is finally protected.

**The Biology of the Problem**

As a retired federal biologist, I have spent the better part of my career documenting the ecological roles played by the reef fish targeted by the aquarium collection industry. Herbivorous reef fish—most prominently lauipala (yellow tang) and kole (goldring surgeonfish)—are not incidental members of the reef community. They are its maintenance crew. These fish graze the macroalgae that would otherwise outcompete coral following bleaching events, sedimentation pulses, or other disturbances.

The legislature has correctly found that climate change now requires the State to keep as many native fish in reef ecosystems as possible. This is not a precautionary statement—it is an ecological imperative grounded in decades of reef science. Removing herbivorous fish by the hundreds of thousands per year for the ornamental pet trade does not merely reduce a population. It dismantles the biological processes that underpin reef resilience: the capacity of our coral communities to recover from the increasingly frequent and severe bleaching events that warmer ocean temperatures are driving across the pae'āina.

Healthy reefs also provide services that extend far beyond the water's edge. They moderate wave energy, reduce onshore erosion, protect coastal infrastructure, and sustain the snorkeling and diving economy that draws visitors to our shores. The commercial aquarium industry privatized the profits from these public trust resources while socializing the ecological costs across all of us.

### **A Historical Wrong, Corrected**

The legislature's findings in this bill are striking and important. The 1953 territorial legislature, in authorizing commercial aquarium collection, falsely declared that the targeted fish had "little or no value as food fish" and were "not edible." This was not an oversight—it was a deliberate erasure of Native Hawaiian subsistence and cultural relationships with reef fish that had existed since time immemorial.

As a lifetime member of the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu, I know that the fish targeted by the aquarium trade—including lauipala and kole—have been part of Native Hawaiian food systems, cultural practices, and ecological stewardship for generations. HB 2101, HD1 corrects the legislative record and honors that history. It aligns state law with what the constitution already demands: that the State protect traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights and manage natural resources as a public trust.

### **A Decade of Recovery at Stake**

The commercial aquarium collection industry on Hawai'i Island was effectively shut down by court order in 2017 and has not operated commercially for nearly a decade. In that time, West Hawai'i's reefs have begun recovering. Fish populations have rebounded in areas where collection pressure was concentrated. That recovery is not guaranteed—it is fragile, ongoing, and entirely dependent on the absence of large-scale removal pressure.

The Division of Aquatic Resources has limited personnel, limited funding, and an expanding list of climate-driven management challenges. Reviving a defunct commercial industry—one whose legal foundation was built on a false assertion about the cultural and ecological value of Native Hawaiian reef fish—is not a responsible use of those limited resources. HB 2101, HD1 makes the status quo permanent and gives DAR the clarity it needs to direct its attention toward reef restoration and climate adaptation rather than industry oversight.

### **Conclusion**

The reef is not a commodity. It is a living expression of our collective kuleana to care for the kai and the 'āina. HB 2101, HD1 does not close an industry that is thriving—it closes the door on one that was built on a historical falsehood, has been idle for nearly ten years, and whose revival would set back the ecological recovery our reefs are finally beginning to achieve.

I respectfully urge both committees to PASS HB 2101, HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

*Me ka 'oia'i'o,*

**Keali'i Pang, Ph.D.**  
Kaimukī, O'ahu

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 1:43:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support including OHA 3/2/26 testimony

2101 HB RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

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.

# The effects of venting and decompression on Yellow Tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) in the marine ornamental aquarium fish trade

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## ABSTRACT

Each year, over 45 countries export 30 million fish from coral reefs as part of the global marine ornamental aquarium trade. This catch volume is partly influenced by collection methods that cause mortality. Barotrauma in fish resulting from forced ascent from depth can contribute to post-collection mortality. However, implementing decompression stops during ascent can prevent barotrauma. Conversely, venting (puncturing the swim bladder to release expanded internal gas) following ascent can mitigate some signs of barotrauma like positive buoyancy. Here, we evaluate how decompression and venting affect stress and mortality in the Yellow Tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*). We examined the effects of three ascent treatments, each with decompression stops of varying frequency and duration, coupled with or without venting, on sublethal effects and mortality using histology and serum cortisol measurements. In fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops or venting, a mean post-collection mortality of 6.2% occurred within 24 h of capture. Common collection methods in the fishery, ascent without decompression stops coupled with venting, or one long decompression stop coupled with venting, resulted in no mortality. Histopathologic examination of heart, liver, head kidney, and swim bladder tissues in fish 0d and 21d post-collection revealed no significant barotrauma- or venting-related lesions in any treatment group. Ascent without decompression stops resulted in significantly higher serum cortisol than ascent with many stops, while venting alone did not affect cortisol. Future work should examine links in the supply chain following collection to determine if further handling and transport stressors affect survivorship and sublethal effects.

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Additional Information and  
Declarations can be found on  
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## INTRODUCTION

Each year, over 45 countries remove and export 14–30 million fish from coral reefs as part of the marine ornamental aquarium trade (*Bruckner, 2005; Wood, 2001*). Although ~90% of freshwater aquarium fish are successfully cultivated in aquaculture facilities, most tropical marine aquarium fish are wild-caught (*Wood, 2001*). Collecting live fish for the aquarium trade involves removing reef fish from SCUBA diving depths (~10–35 m) to the surface. Collection is followed by transporting fish from the collection site to an export facility where they are held for 1–7 days prior to shipment. The fish are then packaged in plastic bags with enough water to turn around in and 100% oxygen, placed in boxes, and shipped to an import facility where they may be held for several days. The fish then are transported to a retail store and, finally, to a hobbyist aquarium. Mortality may occur at any point in this supply chain, impacting each participant in the industry, and negatively affecting coral reefs through increased collection pressure to replace losses (*Stevenson, Tissot & Dierking, 2011; Tissot et al., 2010*).

Aquarium fisheries that use destructive fishing practices (e.g. cyanide is used to stun ornamental fish for ease of capture) have high fish mortality, and this practice is still widespread (*Hall & Bellwood, 1995; Hanawa et al., 1998; Rubec et al., 2001; Rubec & Cruz, 2005; Bell et al., 2009*). While fishers in Hawaii do not use cyanide to collect fish (*Walsh et al., 2004*), and immediate mortality is low (<1%) (*Stevenson, Tissot & Dierking, 2011*), levels of delayed mortality are unknown. Because fish move rapidly through the supply chain, it is possible that aquarium fishers are unaware of collection methods that result in mortality further along the supply chain. Economically, delayed mortality shifts the burden of fish death and monetary loss from the collector to those further along the supply chain (e.g., the importer, or hobbyist) while also increasing the demand for fish and exacerbating pressure on coral reef ecosystems. Identifying methods that cause delayed mortality would reduce the overall mortality of aquarium fish in the aquarium trade, and thus the number of fish removed from the reef to compensate for these losses.

In order to identify industry methods that cause delayed mortality in aquarium fish, it is necessary to examine each link in the aquarium fish trade supply chain both independently and in succession. In this study, we examine the first step in the supply chain: removing fish from depth (15–18 m) to the surface. Mortality caused by removing live fish from coral reef depths to the surface is an important and controversial issue affecting the aquarium fishery; to our knowledge, ours is the first study to examine this problem.

To ensure that fish survive the transition from depth to the surface, aquarium fishers must either prevent or mitigate barotrauma. Fish experience barotrauma when they are brought to the surface. As water pressure decreases, the volume of swim bladder gas increases. This phenomenon is a result of Boyle's Law, in which decreasing pressure causes an exponential increase in gas volume. Barotrauma signs in fish manifest both externally and internally, and include: positive buoyancy caused by overexpansion of the swim bladder; bulging of the eyes, or exophthalmia; and protrusion of the intestine from the cloaca. While barotrauma has not been studied in shallow-dwelling (15–18 m) reef fish caught for the aquarium trade, there is ample research on the effects of depth changes on

**Table 1** External and internal signs of barotrauma observed in food fishes.

	External	Internal
<i>Gotshall, 1964</i>	Esophageal eversion	
<i>Bruesewitz, Coble &amp; Copes, 1993</i>	Esophageal eversion	
<i>Keniry et al., 1996</i>	Esophageal eversion, positive buoyancy	
<i>St John &amp; Seyers, 2005</i>	Esophageal eversion, exophthalmia	
<i>Parker et al., 2006</i>	Esophageal eversion	
<i>Hannah &amp; Matteson, 2007</i>	Esophageal eversion	
<i>Hannah, Parker &amp; Matteson, 2008</i>	Esophageal eversion, exophthalmia	
<i>Jarvis &amp; Lowe, 2008</i>	Subcutaneous gas bubbles, esophageal eversion, exophthalmia	Arterial embolism, hemorrhage, organ torsion
<i>Nichol &amp; Chilton, 2006</i>	Ruptured swim bladder	
<i>Rogers et al., 2008</i>	Exophthalmia	Damage to and displacement of organs surrounding swim bladder
<i>Pribyl et al., 2009</i>	Esophageal eversion, exophthalmia	Emphysema of heart ventricle
<i>Wilde, 2009</i>	Esophageal eversion	
<i>Brown et al., 2010</i>	Cloacal prolapse, exophthalmia, esophageal eversion	
<i>Pribyl et al., 2011</i>	Esophageal eversion	Emphysema of heart ventricle and epithelial surfaces, gas emboli in rete mirabile and head kidney

deeper dwelling (20–152 m) fish caught commercially and recreationally for consumption (Table 1).

Prior research has demonstrated that fish continue to exhibit sublethal injuries (not having caused death) for extended periods. Rupture of the outer layer of the swim bladder (tunica externa) persisted for at least one month after collection in rockfish (genus *Sebastes*) (Pribyl, 2010). This indicates that sublethal signs of barotrauma persist long after the initial trauma occurs. Knowing this, we predict that fish collected for the live ornamental aquarium trade also suffer sublethal injuries that could result in delayed mortality.

Because barotrauma can be potentially fatal to both shallower-dwelling aquarium fish and deeper-dwelling food fish alike, fishers implement methods that either prevent or mitigate it. Venting is a method that mitigates barotrauma and involves puncturing a fish swim bladder with a hypodermic needle to allow gases to escape the swim bladder, relieving positive buoyancy. Decompression, in contrast, is a method that prevents barotrauma. Decompression involves transporting fish from depth to the surface over a longer period of time, which allows expanding gases to be removed from the swim bladder, resulting in a fish that is not subjected to barotrauma at all. Fishers implement one or some combination of both of these methods in order to help fish survive the pressure transition. While the use of venting and decompression on aquarium fish has been documented (Randall, 1987; Pyle, 1993; LeGore, Hardin & Ter-Ghazaryan, 2005), ours is the first study to evaluate the efficacy of each of these procedures in preventing mortality.

In deeper-dwelling fishes, decompression takes a long time—up to several days (Parker *et al.*, 2006; Pribyl, 2010). In order to prevent barotrauma, one must allow adequate time for fish to naturally remove gas from the expanding swim bladder. Likewise, in Hawaii where fishers collect shallow-dwelling reef fish, ascent with multiple decompression stops can be time-consuming (~2 h). Providing fish time to naturally decompress and remove swim bladder gases prevents fishers from moving from one reef site to another because fish collection containers must be attached to the surface vessel. Fishers would rather remove fish from depth quickly in order to move to another reef site, return to depth, and collect more fish. However, bringing fish up to the surface quickly without decompression stops results in barotrauma. To mitigate this barotrauma, fishers use venting.

Research on deeper-dwelling food fishes disagree that venting reduces fish mortality. This is largely an artifact of the differences in species and depths the studies examine (Gotshall, 1964; Keniry *et al.*, 1996; Shasteen & Sheehan, 1997; Collins *et al.*, 1999; Kerr, 2001; Nguyen *et al.*, 2009; Wilde, 2009) as well as differences in the length of time fish are observed in captivity. We predict that long-term holding will allow us to definitively conclude how collection methods affect fish health.

As previously stated, fishers often use some combination of decompression and venting. For example, it is common for aquarium fishers to perform one or several decompression stops, pausing in the water column at intermediate depths before removal to the surface (LeGore, Hardin & Ter-Ghazaryan, 2005; Stevenson, Tissot & Dierking, 2011). In Hawaii, fishers typically vent the fish following this practice. While these methods of barotrauma prevention and mitigation likely positively affect fish health and mortality, these practices are controversial among the animal rights community. Such groups in Hawaii have repeatedly proposed legislation that would ban the harvest of marine species for the aquarium trade based on animal cruelty claims (see Lauer, 2011; Talbot, 2012; Wintner, 2010; Wintner, 2011). Groups opposed to venting claim that it inflicts stress and mortality on fish, while collectors maintain that venting is necessary for fish survival. People who oppose venting have suggested that decompression be used instead. While we may not solve the values conflicts driving in this controversy, we do hope to inform pending management decisions related to aquarium fish collection in Hawaii.

In our study, we seek to: (1) Determine short- and long-term mortality of reef fish caught for the aquarium trade subjected to the barotrauma prevention and/or mitigation practices of decompression and venting, respectively; (2) Examine sublethal effects of collection that could result in delayed mortality.

## METHODS

### Experimental design

This study was conducted on the west coast of the island of Hawaii in June–July 2011. The Yellow Tang (*Z. flavescens*) was selected as the study animal because it is the most commonly targeted aquarium fish species in Hawaii, consistently composing nearly 80% of the total catch of aquarium fish there (Cesar *et al.*, 2002; Tissot & Hallacher, 2003; Walsh *et al.*, 2004; Williams *et al.*, 2009). In addition, Acanthuridae, the family encompassing Yellow

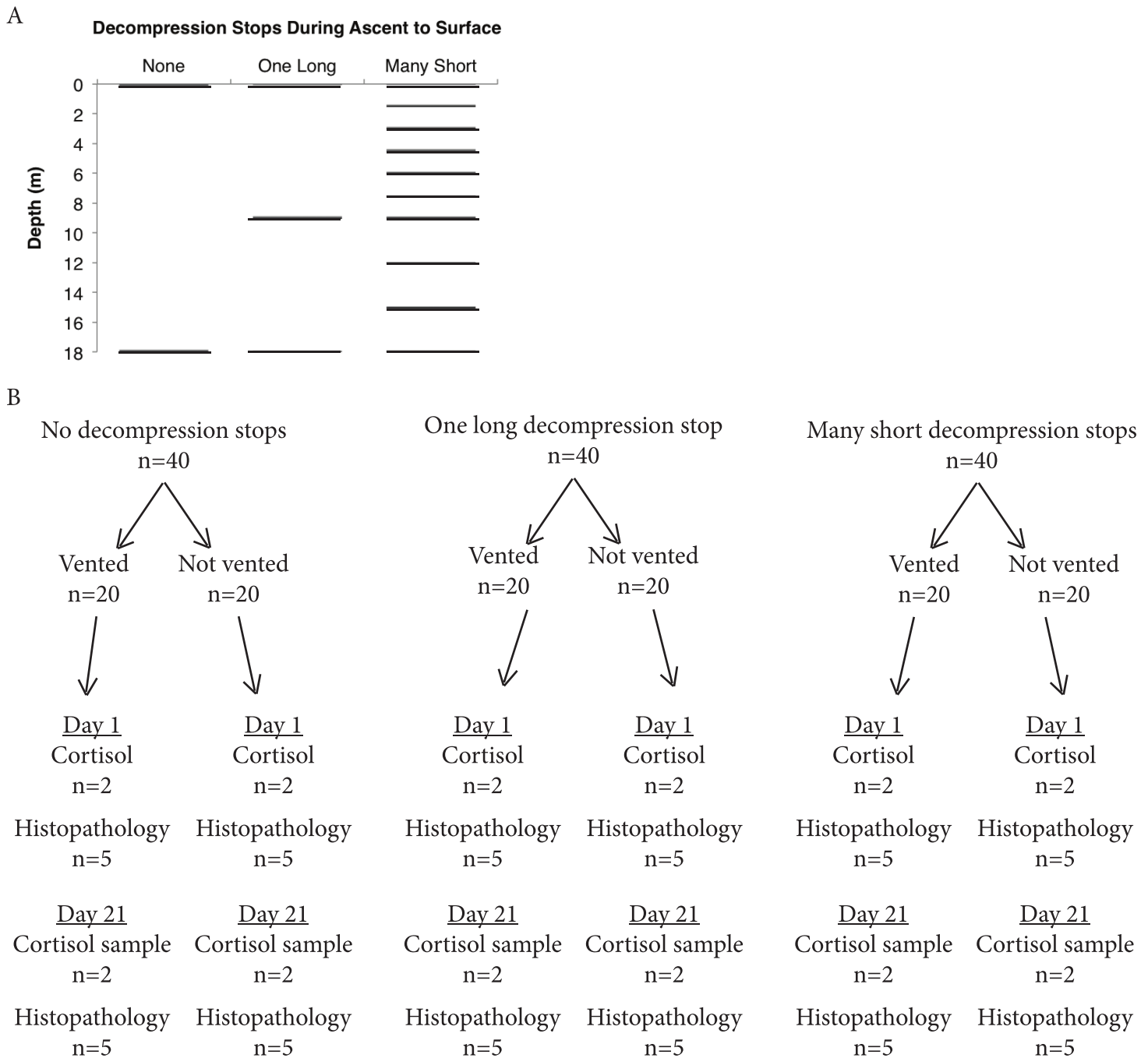
Tang and other surgeonfishes, is one of the most common families targeted globally in the live aquarium trade (*Rhyne et al., 2012*). Therefore, understanding how collection practices affect Yellow Tang health and survival is especially relevant to the marine aquarium fishery.

To examine the effects of collection practices on mortality of Yellow Tang, we used a fully crossed factorial experimental design. Three decompression treatments (no decompression stops, one decompression stop, many decompression stops) were coupled with venting (yes, no) in all possible combinations ( $k = 6$  treatments) ([Fig. 1](#)). Each of the six treatments was replicated three times, with  $n = 20$  fish in each replicate for a total of 360 individual fish.

Yellow Tang were subjected to collection methods typical of the fishery, as elucidated through interviews with active aquarium fishers. Fish were collected between 15–18 m depth, reflecting the range frequented by Hawaiian collectors (*Stevenson, Tissot & Dierking, 2011*). In order to accurately reflect methods used by aquarium fishers, an aquarium fisher with over 15 years of experience collected the fish. One aquarium fisher performed the experiment in order to maintain consistent methods throughout the experiment. Working with several fishers would be ideal, but this was not logistically or financially feasible. Fish collection occurred on SCUBA using a barrier net, as described by *Stevenson, Tissot & Dierking (2011)*. Following capture, fish were transferred to containers assigned to an ascent treatment. Following ascent to the surface vessel, half of the fish were vented and half were not.

Three ascent treatments were used: (1) ascent without decompression stops, (2) ascent with one decompression stop, and (3) ascent with multiple decompression stops. The rate of ascent between decompression stops was 0.25 m/s for all treatments, the recommended SCUBA ascent rate and the rate fishers ascend while transporting fish from depth to the surface. Fish subjected to ascent without decompression were brought directly to the surface from depth. Fish subjected to ascent with one decompression stop were brought up to half the maximum depth for a 45 min decompression stop, and then brought to the surface. Fish subjected to multiple decompression stops were brought up 3 m every 15 min. At 10 m (2 atm), these fish were brought up 1.5 m every 15 min because the volumetric change resulting from the decrease in pressure is especially great the last few meters of ascent. As is typical in the fishery, venting was performed by the fisher on the fishing vessel using a 20 G hypodermic needle, which was replaced after approximately 50 fish. Each fish was held out of water for less than 3 s by the fisher while the needle was inserted through the body wall toward the swim bladder, caudal to the pectoral fin and ventral of the lateral line. Following collection, fish were transported in the vessel's live well until they reached the holding facility. During collection and transit from collection site to port, fresh seawater was continuously circulated through the live well.

Initial histologic diagnostics were performed on fish ( $n = 5$  in each replicate group) immediately upon arrival at the holding facility to determine baseline health as well as to assess the immediate effects of venting and decompression. All fish that died were examined histologically to identify lesions that could have contributed to death. A final histologic diagnostic examination was also performed on surviving fish at the conclusion



**Figure 1** Experimental design of ascent and venting treatments. (A) Illustrates decompression stops for each ascent treatment. The rate of ascent between stops was 0.25 m/s for all treatments. Fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops were brought directly to the surface. Fish subjected to ascent with one decompression stop were brought to half the maximum depth for a 45 min decompression stop, then brought to the surface. Fish subjected to multiple decompression stops were brought up 3 m every 15 min. At 10 m (2 atm), these fish were brought up 1.5 m every 15 min. (B) Venting treatment scheme and fish sampling design. This experiment was replicated 3 times for a total sample size of  $n = 360$  fish.

of the holding period. Serum cortisol concentration was also measured upon arrival at the aquaculture facility. Serum cortisol serves as a proxy for stress in fish ([Donaldson, 1981](#)).

## HOLDING PERIOD

Post-collection, fish were observed for 21 d at an aquaculture facility located at the Natural Energy Laboratory Hawaii Authority (NELHA) in Kona, Hawaii provided with natural surface seawater at ambient temperatures. The experimental duration was chosen because after interviewing fishers operating in Kona, Hawaii, we determined that 21 d represents a reasonable time period for a fish to be transferred from the reef to a retailer or hobbyist in this particular chain. In addition, swim bladder healing in rockfish has been observed after 21 d ([Parker et al., 2006](#)) and is sufficient time to allow skin and muscle regeneration in fish ([Roberts, 2010](#)). Therefore, fish exhibiting lesions after 21 d may not have fully recovered in a supply chain environment and could be categorized as having sublethal effects from collection.

Fish were held in 1 m diameter mesh floating cages within three 10,000 l pools, which served as replicate blocks, each containing all six treatments. Incoming seawater was filtered to 5  $\mu\text{m}$ , and set to flow through each pool at a rate of 1 volume/d. Pools were exposed to natural sunlight, and temperature and salinity were measured twice daily. All fish were fed a natural algae diet (*Ulva fasciata*) rich in nutrients absorbed from food fish outflow in the aquaculture facility for biofiltration.

Fish were monitored daily and mortality was recorded. Standard length (SL) (from snout to base of caudal fin) of each fish was measured. Following mortality, fish were placed in 10% neutral buffered formalin for histopathology; the operculum was removed and body cavity opened to facilitate proper formalin fixation of the internal tissues. Moribund fish were humanely euthanized using an overdose solution (>250 mg/l) of tricaine methanesulfonate (MS-222) (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, Missouri, USA).

## Histopathology

To determine the sublethal effects of collection methods, fish ( $n = 5$ ) were chosen randomly from each replicate treatment group immediately upon arrival to the holding facility (0 d) and at the end of the holding period (21 d) for histopathology. Fish used for histopathology were euthanized using an overdose solution of MS-222, placed on ice, and shipped within 48 h to Oregon State University's (OSU) Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) for histologic examination. Fish that died during the experiment were fixed in 10% neutral buffer formalin as described above and examined.

Formalin-fixed fish were immersed for 24 h in Cal-Ex II (Fisher Scientific, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA) to decalcify bone, and serial cross sections were processed using standard histologic techniques, sectioned at 5  $\mu\text{m}$ , and stained with hematoxylin and eosin. Brown-Hopps Gram stain was used as necessary to assess for the presence of bacteria. All slides were examined using a Nikon Eclipse 50i microscope (Nikon, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan). Histologic examination focused upon gill, heart, kidney, liver, swim bladder, and intestine.

### Primary stress response

Because of the potential for cortisol concentrations to decrease when a stressor subsides, blood samples were collected from fish immediately upon arrival to the holding facility. Fish ( $n = 2$ ) were anesthetized from each treatment replicate group using MS-222 prior to drawing 0.3–1.0 ml blood from the heart using a 25G 2.54 cm needle and 3 ml syringe. Cardiac puncture was necessary because the small size of the fish. Following blood sample collection, fish were euthanized using an overdose solution of MS-222. To determine Yellow Tang ocean baseline cortisol concentration, blood was collected from fish ( $n = 4$ ) underwater on SCUBA at capture depth within 3 min of capture. Blood was injected into 3 ml vacutainer tubes with no additive (Becton-Dickinson, East Rutherford, New Jersey, USA), placed on ice, and centrifuged at 3,000 rpm for 10 min <1 h later. Serum supernatant was transferred to a clean vacutainer tube with no additive, placed on ice, and frozen <1 h later for  $\leq 40$  d in a non-frostless freezer, and transported overnight on dry ice to the OSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife for analysis.

Serum cortisol concentrations were determined using radioimmunoassay (RIA) as described by *Redding et al. (1984)*. Total binding, the ratio of the radiolabeled cortisol bound to the antibody to the total amount of radiolabeled cortisol in the sample, was 40%–50%. Samples showed adequate parallelism, and 3.9–500.0 ng/ml cortisol standards were used.

## STATISTICAL METHODS

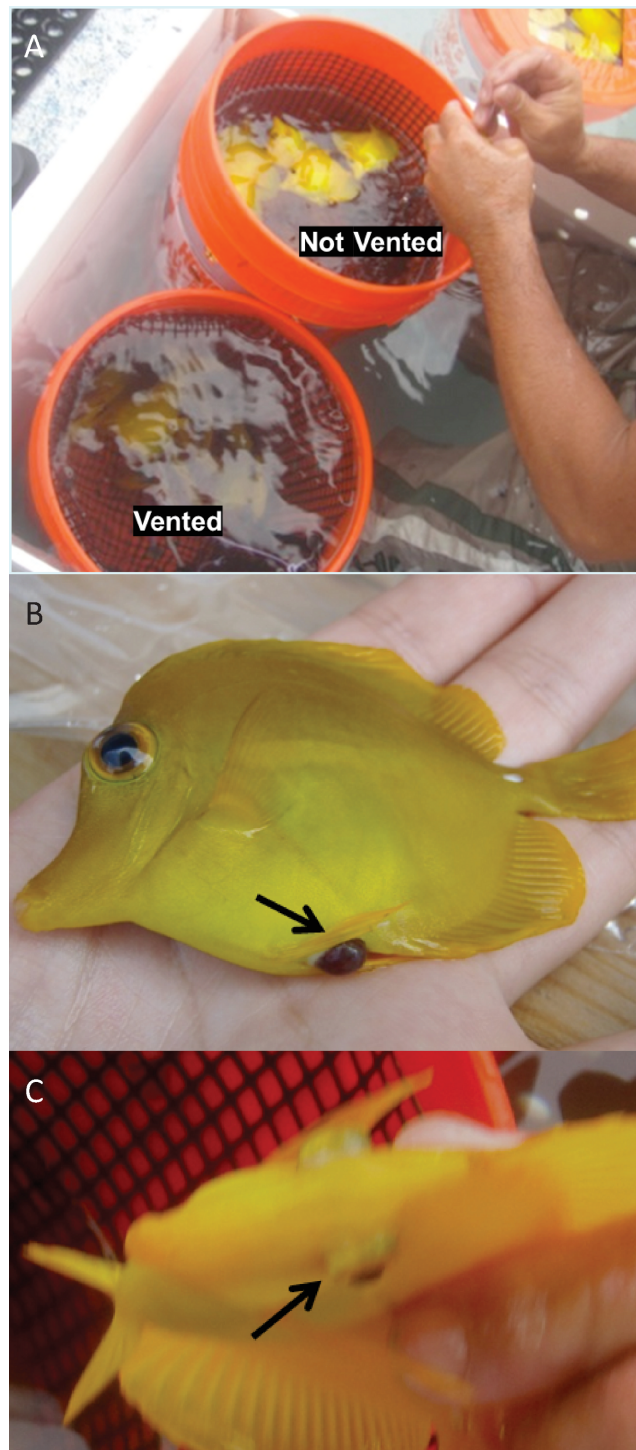
Statistical analyses were performed using the Minitab 15 Statistical Software program. To meet assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, data were transformed to square root (fish SL) or log (cortisol). A one-way t-test was used to compare mean cortisol concentrations of each treatment group with the ocean baseline parameter. A two-way ANOVA was used to compare mean cortisol concentrations, with decompression treatment and venting as fixed factors and replicate block as a random factor. Tukey's multiple comparisons test was used to determine significant differences between levels within each factor.

## RESULTS

### Mortality

Sizes of Yellow Tang in this study ranged from 5.0–10.0 cm SL with a mean value of 7.2 cm (SE = 0.05 cm). Mortality occurred <24 h post-collection in fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops or venting, with a mean mortality of 6.2% (SE = 0.6%). No mortality occurred in the other experimental treatments.

The incidence of mortality was consistent with observations of the frequency and severity of external barotrauma signs. These included high frequency of positive buoyancy, bloating, prolapse of the intestine from the cloaca, and exophthalmia (*Fig. 2*) in fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops. Venting relieved positive buoyancy and vented fish became neutrally or negatively buoyant (*Fig. 2*).



**Figure 2** Barotrauma signs observed in Yellow Tang following collection. (A) Positive buoyancy before venting and neutral to negative buoyancy following venting (B) intestinal protrusion from the cloaca and (C) exophthalmia.

## Histopathology

Histopathology of gill, heart, kidney, liver, swim bladder, and intestine failed to detect significant inflammation, necrosis, or gas embolism associated with barotrauma or venting in any treatment, in both the short- and long-term. A venting wound was detected in a fish subjected to ascent with many decompression stops and venting at day 0. However, this lesion consisted only of locally extensive necrosis of body wall musculature and a localized influx of neutrophils surrounding the needle track and not significant widespread infection (Fig. 3).

## Primary stress response

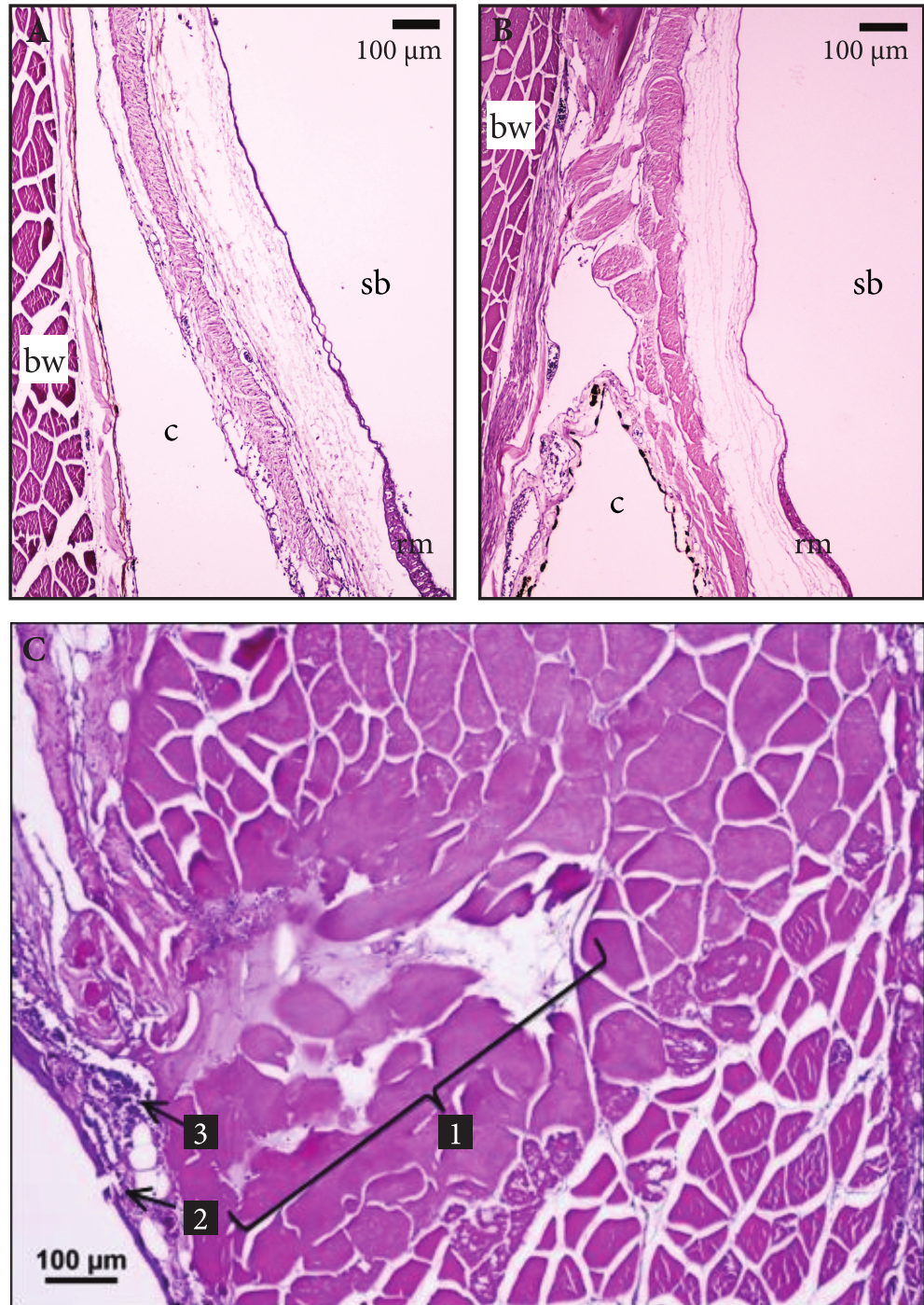
The mean ocean baseline cortisol concentration was 8.9 ng/ml (SE = 4.96 ng/ml) and in some cases was at or below the detection limit for the assay (3.9 ng/ml). All treatment groups were significantly elevated above the baseline cortisol concentration (One-way t-test;  $p < 0.05$ ). There was no significant interaction between decompression treatment and venting. Decompression treatment significantly affected cortisol concentration (Two-way ANOVA:  $F = 4.26$ ;  $df = 2, 12$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ) (Fig. 4). Ascent without decompression stops resulted in a significantly higher mean cortisol concentration ( $M = 58.8$  ng/ml, SE = 8.7 ng/ml) than ascent with many 15 min decompression stops ( $M = 35.5$  ng/ml, SE = 5.3 ng/ml), with neither treatment being significantly different from ascent with one 45 min decompression stop ( $M = 35.2$  ng/ml, SE = 4.3 ng/ml). Ascent without decompression stops produced the highest observed cortisol concentration (101.49 ng/ml), whereas the highest observed cortisol concentrations in fish subjected to one and many decompression stops were 59.09 and 68.03 ng/ml, respectively. While venting resulted in higher mean cortisol concentration ( $M = 47.7$  ng/ml, SE = 6.9 ng/ml) than the no venting treatment ( $M = 38.2$  ng/ml, SE = 4.3 ng/ml), this difference was not statistically significant.

## DISCUSSION

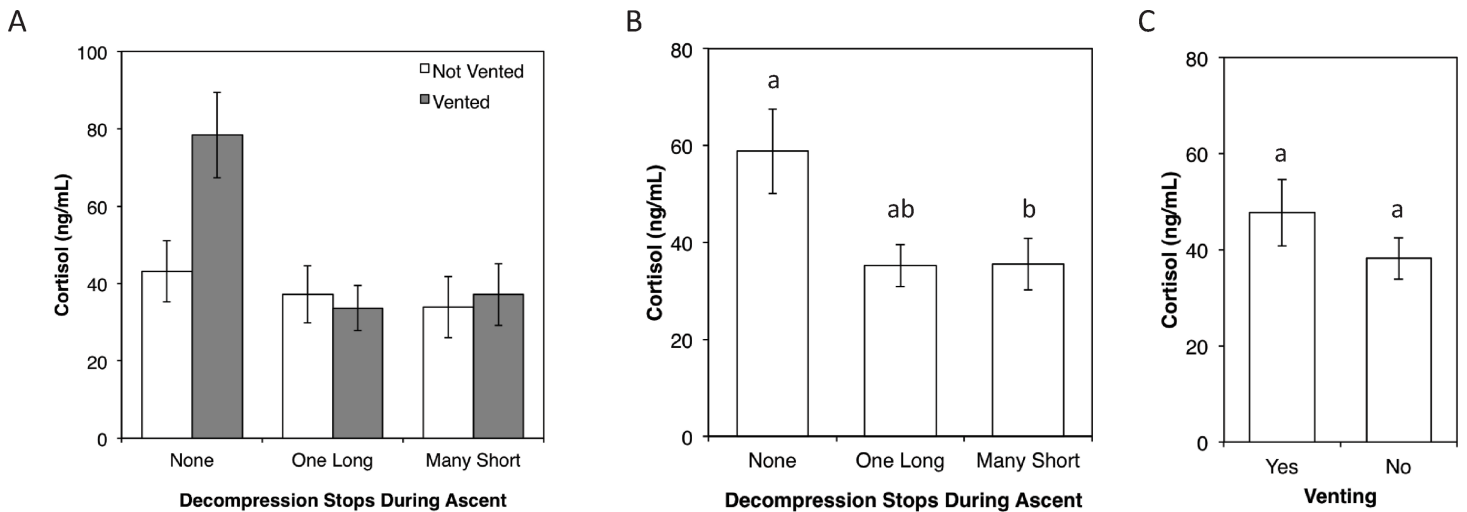
With the objective of informing management on collection practices in the aquarium trade, our study focused on the short- and long-term mortality of reef fish subjected to decompression and venting as barotrauma prevention and mitigation practices, respectively. Overall, we found that venting prevented immediate mortality in fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops. Ascent significantly elevated serum cortisol above baseline concentrations, and ascent without decompression stops resulted in significantly higher serum cortisol concentrations than ascent with many stops. Venting, however, did not significantly affect cortisol concentration. In the following sections, we explain our results, suggest future research recommendations, and discuss implications for management of this fishery.

## Mortality

We found that the methods commonly used in this fishery (ascent without decompression stops, or ascent with one decompression stop, followed by venting) resulted in no immediate or delayed mortality. Ascent without decompression stops followed by venting resulted in no mortality, while fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops and



**Figure 3** Histologic views of swim bladder tissues in vented Yellow Tang. (A)–(B) Representative histologic views of normal Yellow Tang swim bladder tissues in vented fish at (A) 0 days and (B) 21 days. Note lack of any inflammation, edema, or necrosis in lateral body wall (bw), coelomic cavity (c) swim bladder (sb), and rete mirabile (rm). (C) Histologic section of needle track in a Yellow Tang subjected to venting showing muscle cell necrosis, edema, and neutrophilic inflammation: (1) Needle track, (2) needle entry through coelomic cavity, (3) neutrophilic inflammatory response.



**Figure 4** Cortisol concentration (mean  $\pm$  SE) by each treatment. (A) venting and ascent treatments; (B) ascent treatments; and (C) venting treatments. Letter groups represent Tukey's multiple range test results comparing means. All treatment groups were significantly elevated above the ocean baseline concentration of 8.9 ng/ml.

no venting was the only treatment group in which mortality occurred. Venting alleviated positive buoyancy in fish following ascent with no decompression stops and in this way mitigated barotrauma sufficiently to prevent short-term mortality. Neutral buoyancy allowed fish to control body position and avoid colliding with the transport container during transport from reef to harbor. This is in contrast to fish subjected to ascent without decompression or venting, which exhibited positive buoyancy and were at risk of acquiring secondary transport-related injuries.

Additional factors that may influence post-collection mortality, but are outside the scope of this study, include collection depth, body size, and species. We examined fish collected from 15–18 m depths, which is typical for the Hawaii Yellow Tang fishery, though fishers do exceed this range (i.e.,  $\geq 27$  m) when targeting other species (Stevenson, Tissot & Dierking, 2011). At deeper depths, the effects of decompression and venting may differ, and it is known that fish mortality and occurrence of barotrauma increases with capture depth (Collins et al., 1999; St John & Seyers, 2005; Hannah, Parker & Matteson, 2008; Jarvis & Lowe, 2008; Campbell et al., 2010). Interviews with fishers indicate that fish collected from  $>25$  m require more decompression time and venting while at depth, or several venting applications during ascent. Fishers have also mentioned that larger fish exhibit more severe external barotrauma symptoms than smaller fish of the same species, which is similar to findings in studies on deeper-dwelling food fishes (Hannah, Parker & Matteson, 2008; St John & Seyers, 2005). Just as different deeper-dwelling food fish species exhibit different responses to ascent rate (Hannah & Matteson, 2007; Jarvis & Lowe, 2008; Pribyl, 2010), aquarium fish species reportedly react differently to ascent rate and venting. These differences are likely caused by variation in body shape, tissue durability, and swim bladder volume between species. Methods used by fishers reflect these species differences, with practices such as performing venting on more delicate, soft-bodied fish like angelfish

(Pomacanthidae) underwater to prevent swim bladder expansion. Examining differences among aquarium fish species of varying sizes and investigating the variety of techniques employed by fishers during collection would provide further insight into the prevalence and effectiveness of aquarium fish barotrauma prevention and mitigation methods.

### Histopathology

Histopathology did not detect significant widespread inflammation, organ damage or infection caused by venting. Only one case of a needle wound was found that consisted of localized necrosis and inflammation, with no visible evidence of infection. It is possible that histologic sectioning of tissues missed similar lesions in other fish, but this was minimized by focusing the sampling at the site consistently used by fishers for venting. However, the objective of histopathology in our study was to determine if widespread inflammation or tissue damage was present in fish indicating significant injury, which was not found. If such injuries were present, they would have been detected in multiple sections of the tissues surrounding the venting wound.

Wound healing with no evidence of ongoing necrosis or inflammation, as seen in these fish, indicates that the venting procedure does not pose a significant threat to fish survival post-collection, nor does it cause significant sublethal effects. However, we caution that the fish in our study were held in an aquaculture facility for 21 d without the additional handling and transport stressors they would normally experience in the supply chain, thus potentially promoting recovery from injuries inflicted during collection. It is possible that additional stressors of the supply chain diminish the efficacy of venting in promoting long-term fish survival.

Because aquarium fish exhibited external signs of barotrauma similar to those observed in deeper-dwelling food fishes, we expected internal barotrauma signs to be similar as well. However, we did not detect lesions resulting from barotrauma, even in fish subjected to ascent without decompression. However, externally visible signs of barotrauma did occur. Positively buoyant fish were bloated and had intestinal prolapse at the cloaca. Although not examined in this study, it is likely that organ displacement by the swim bladder occurred in these fish; an internal barotrauma sign observed in deeper-dwelling food fishes ([Rogers et al., 2008](#)). Determining if organ displacement occurs, and if venting relieves this issue in aquarium fish would further our understanding of the mechanisms with which venting reduces mortality in fish subjected to ascent without decompression.

### Primary stress response

Our results indicate that all collection methods produced elevated cortisol concentrations above the ocean baseline level. Though we did not perform stress treatments on Yellow Tang to determine a cortisol level that corresponds to a stressed state, [Soares et al. \(2011\)](#) did so with a closely related acanthurid (*Ctenochaetus striatus*). While cortisol concentrations vary between species ([Barton & Iwama, 1991](#)), stressed (45–65 ng/ml) and non-stressed (10–25 ng/ml) cortisol concentrations in *C. striatus* suggest that venting increased stress in fish subjected to ascent without decompression though this was not statistically significant. Despite this increase, we emphasize that venting did

mitigate positive buoyancy and ultimately prevented mortality. It appears that venting alone is a short-term stressor, but prevents mortality in fish subjected to ascent without decompression stops.

Future studies should investigate if cortisol levels subside, or remain elevated in the rest of the supply chain. Handling in and transport between export, import, and retail facilities may exacerbate collection-induced stress. Because chronic stress results in immune system suppression (*Barton & Iwama, 1991; Barton, 2002*), fish experiencing chronic stress are more susceptible to infection, disease, and delayed mortality. Because hobbyists whose aquarium fish die often replace these fish, delayed mortality is a great driver of aquarium fish demand (*Tissot et al., 2010*). It is likely that stress plays a role in this mortality, and future studies should examine stress as it relates to handling in and transport between each link in the supply chain beyond collection.

### **Implications for management**

While our work adds to scientific knowledge regarding collection practices of aquarium fish in Hawaii, it is also relevant to the global trade. Yellow Tang and other surgeonfish (family Acanthuridae), are one of the most common families targeted globally in the live aquarium trade (*Rhyne et al., 2012*). Our results also improve our understanding of the effects of venting. Previous studies show conflicting results regarding the effects of venting on fish mortality (*Gotshall, 1964; Keniry et al., 1996; Nguyen et al., 2009; Wilde, 2009*). Our results indicate that when performed properly, venting does not cause mortality or inflict significant sublethal injuries, though we caution that our inference is limited to a single species.

Though animal rights groups in Hawaii criticize venting, we did not find that it caused mortality or sublethal injuries in Yellow Tang. Banning venting may increase mortality rates if fishers implemented ascent without decompression. While opponents of venting have suggested that slow decompression be used instead, the time required to naturally decompress fish could be economically prohibitive. It is also worth pointing out the dichotomy of venting in the recreational fisheries versus the aquarium trade. Recreational fishers are often encouraged to vent fish before returning them to the water (see *Kerr, 2001; Stevely et al., 2011; Theberge & Parker, 2005*), while venting remains controversial in the aquarium trade.

In conclusion, we determined that the methods commonly used by aquarium fishers in Hawaii do not cause mortality in Yellow Tang. However, all collection methods produced elevated cortisol concentrations in fish, and this warrants more investigation. Further handling in and transport between links in the supply chain could cause chronically elevated cortisol concentrations in fish, exacerbating stress and minor injuries inflicted during collection.

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### Competing Interests

Tim Miller-Morgan is an employee of Hatfield Marine Science Center.

### Author Contributions

- Emily S. Munday conceived and designed the experiments, performed the experiments, analyzed the data, contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools, wrote the paper, prepared figures and/or tables, reviewed drafts of the paper.
- Brian N. Tissot and Tim Miller-Morgan conceived and designed the experiments, contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools, reviewed drafts of the paper.
- Jerry R. Heidel conceived and designed the experiments, performed the experiments, contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools, prepared figures and/or tables, reviewed drafts of the paper.

### Animal Ethics

The following information was supplied relating to ethical approvals (i.e., approving body and any reference numbers):

This work was performed under WSU IACUC protocol #04151-004.

## Data Deposition

The following information was supplied regarding the deposition of related data:

The National Oceanography Dataset: <http://data.nodc.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/iso?id=gov.noaa.nodc:0125562>

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Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Samuel M Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:33:08 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

Please protect our reefs! Aquarium fishing only benefits a small number of fishers and a off-island corporations selling aquarium accessories. And please tell DAR to stop wasting state resources on developing new rules that would allow aquarium fishing

mahalo,

Cory Harden

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:46:58 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Bo Breda

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:52:05 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Peter Wilson

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 2:13:14 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to PASS this measure.

Sincerely,  
Christy Shaver

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:43:42 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeremy Claisse	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Esteemed Senators,

Please do not pass HB 2101; Those groups in support of HB2101 who want the closure of the aquarium fishery have been misled by misinformation or are biased and lack knowledge of fisheries, and we should DAR and University scientist depended science, not biased user group propaganda, when managing and regulating fisheries. Please do not pass HB2101.

Jeremy Claisse PhD (California State Polytechnic Univeristy, Pomona)

Claisse JT, McTee SA, Parrish JD (2008) Effects of age, size, and density on natural survival for an important coral reef fishery species, yellow tang, *Zebrasoma flavescens*. *Coral Reefs* 28:95–105

Claisse JT (2009) The life history and movements of yellow tang, *Zebrasoma flavescens*, with implications for fisheries management using protected areas. PhD dissertation, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, HI.

Williams ID, Walsh WJ, Claisse JT, Tissot BN, Stamoulis KA (2009) Impacts of a Hawaiian marine protected area network on the abundance and fishery sustainability of the yellow tang,. *Biol Conserv* 142:1066–1073

Claisse JT, Kienzle M, Bushnell ME, Shafer DJ, Parrish JD (2009) Habitat- and sex-specific life history patterns of yellow tang in Hawaii, USA. *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 389:245–255

Bushnell ME, Claisse JT, Laidley CW (2010) Lunar and seasonal patterns in fecundity of an indeterminate, multiple-spawning surgeonfish, the yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens*. *J Fish Biol* 76:1343–1361

Claisse JT, Clark TB, Schumacher BD, McTee SA, Bushnell ME, Callan CK, Laidley CW, Parrish JD (2011) Conventional tagging and acoustic telemetry of a small surgeonfish, *Zebrasoma flavescens*, in a structurally complex coral reef environment. *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 91:185–201



**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:54:43 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Hunt	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.

I, and MANY of us, have been supporting, advocating, and testifying for this ban on aquarium collection for more than a decade. It is well past time to DO THIS. NOW.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:18:52 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Rodar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Jodi Rodar 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,

Jodi Rodar

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:50:26 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

Cindy Freitas

makainanqi@gmail.com

## **TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB2101 UNLESS AMENDED**

He Mele komo a he mele aloha no na kupuna o ke au i hala Aloha mai kakou.

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Freitas and I'm a Native Hawaiian descended of the native inhabitants of Hawai'i prior to 1778 and born and raised in Hawai'i.

I am also a practitioner who still practice the cultural traditional customary practices that was instill in me by my grandparents at a young age from mauka (MOUNTAIN TO SEA) to makai in many areas.

I submit this testimony in **opposition to HB2101 unless the language is amended.**

### **'Ike Kūpuna & West Hawai'i Reef Practices**

From **mauka to makai**, our kūpuna understood that each species has a role in maintaining reef balance.

In **West Hawai'i**, we know:

- **Yellow Tang (Lau'ipala)** graze algae and keep reefs from being overgrown
- **Kole Tang (Kole)** clean detritus and maintain reef health
- **Achilles Tang (Pāku'iku'i)** are indicators of strong current and healthy reef systems
- **Potter's Angelfish (Kīkākāpu)** are endemic and reflect Hawai'i's unique marine biodiversity
- **Ornate Butterflyfish (Kīkākāpu 'ā)** rely on coral health and signal reef stress when populations decline

Our kūpuna did not treat all species the same. They understood:

- which species could be taken
- when they could be taken
- and when they must be left alone

This is **adaptive management**, not blanket prohibition.

## **Visual Context: Key West Hawai'i Reef Species**







## Problem with Blanket Prohibition

HB2101, as written, **treats all aquarium species as if they are equally threatened**, when that is not scientifically or culturally accurate.

For example:

- **Yellow Tang (Lau‘īpala)** populations in West Hawai‘i have shown **strong recovery and sustainability under regulated management**
- Some species are **abundant and fast-reproducing**
- Others are **rare or habitat-sensitive**

A **one-size-fits-all ban ignores this reality** and contradicts both:

- **modern science**, and
- **‘ike kūpuna**, which is always species-specific and place-based

## Hawai‘i Constitutional & Case Law (Applied to Marine Species)

Under **Article XII, Section 7**, practices tied to these species whether for:

- subsistence
- cultural use
- or ‘ike-based stewardship

must be **identified and protected**.

As held in:

- **Ka Pa‘akai O Ka ‘Āina v. Land Use Commission**  
→ The State must evaluate impacts on traditional practices tied to specific resources
- **Public Access Shoreline Hawaii v. Hawaii County Planning Commission (PASH)**  
→ Access and use of natural resources cannot be broadly eliminated without protection of Native Hawaiian rights

By banning the take of all aquarium species without:

- species-specific findings
- cultural analysis
- or practitioner input

HB2101 risks violating these legal standards.

## West Hawai‘i Reality

West Hawai‘i is already one of the **most studied reef systems in the world**, with:

- **Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs)**
- Long-term monitoring
- Proven management success

The lesson from West Hawai‘i is clear:

**Management works when it is targeted, enforced, and informed—not when it is absolute and disconnected from place.**

## **REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT (STRENGTHENED)**

This bill must be amended to:

1. Require **species-specific findings** (e.g., Lau‘īpala vs. rare endemics)
2. Recognize **successful West Hawai‘i management models (FRAs)**
3. Include **kūpuna and local practitioners in co-management**
4. Avoid **blanket prohibition** and instead create:
  - adaptive limits
  - seasonal controls
  - area-based protections

## **Closing**

Our reefs are not just ecosystems they are **ancestral systems of knowledge and responsibility**.

To ignore:

- the role of **Lau‘īpala** in reef health
- the balance maintained by **Kole and Pāku‘iku‘i**
- and the ‘ike passed down through generations

is to legislate without understanding.

For these reasons, I respectfully:

**OPPOSE HB2101 UNLESS THE LANGUAGE IS AMENDED.**

Mahalo,

Cindy Freitas

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:02:40 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marlies Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

They can breed aquarium fish in captivity !

No need to take from our oceans no more.

- Removing thousands of herbivorous reef fish each year works against reef recovery, not for it.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:12:41 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Schacht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Good Morning,

I write as a long time diver, DiveMaster and videographer with hundreds of dives in Hawaiian waters to strongly urge you to support the ban on the aquarium trade embodied in HB 2101, but also to expand it into a statewide ban.

Although the huge profits from the trade do benefit a few, the rest of us are rightly appalled by the near 50% reef fish mortality rates after capture and during transit, the scandalous complicity of DLNR in this needless suffering, and long term harm it does to Hawaii's already climate-challenged reefs.

It's time to finally, FINALLY, put a stop to it. We look to you for leadership, courage and strength now that the measure is in your hands. Mahalo for your time and attention to this vital environmental issue. Pls vote Yes!

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:16:52 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeanne P Dunning	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Removing herbivorous fish undermines reef resilience; it does not support it. I strongly support banning commercial aquarium collection.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:25:27 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean Jewell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legeslatures,

As a resident of Hawaii over 70 years, and always an active ocean person, I have witnessed the degradation of our reefs over time. The fish collecting industry, these past 50+ years, has seriously added to the degradation.

Our reefs are in peril due to increasing ocean temperature and other natural issues we cannot directly control. However, we can control the taking of the fishes, an important part of the reef health. This taking of our reef populations is only for purposes of ornamentation!

I support HB 2101 and I ask that you do as well.

Mahalo,

Jean Jewell. 96725

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:27:39 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Valerie Barnes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2101 to end aquarium collection in West Hawaii. I swim nearly daily and even with the current ban, the number and variety of reef fish has already significantly declined over the past decade. We can't afford to take more when the reefs and fish are going to face greater challenges as climate change progresses.

Mahalo for protecting what reef resources we have left.

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

## 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*

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

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery and I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Elliana Reeves

Committee Members,

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.

Mahalo,  
Dominik Nino

Aloha Committee Members,

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.

Casey Lessard

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

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

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

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

Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery, and issuing permits.

Albert Barnette

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

*Committee Members,*

*I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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,  
Niko Abraham*

Committee Members,

I support re-opening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Alison Black

Aloha Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishers and believe the fishery has been proven sustainable and should be re-opened in West Hawaii. This fishery has been very well managed and now has an accepted environmental impact statement. The West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery should be allowed to resume activity now.

Mahalo,  
Aki Tolentino

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and I support managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Andy Tieger

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.

Thank you,  
Sera Malone

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

Aloha Committee Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Russel Tan

Committee Members-

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,  
Al Lednisky

Committee Members:

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 local livelihoods and encourages stewardship by connecting fishers directly to the health of the reefs they depend on.

Kaleb Royston

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,  
Mike Maneco

Committee Members,

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,  
Beth Sato

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,  
Tray Banks

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.

Eddie Fernando

I support reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mindy Beringer

TO: Members of the Committee

Aloha,

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.

Mahalo,

Joel Sandager

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Angel Lucas

Committee Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,  
Maricel Pineda

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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.

Penn Kelsey

To - Committee Members:

I fully support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery in west Hawaii.

Mahalo,  
Leo Blair

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.

Thank you,  
Jordan Sloane

Committee Members:

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,  
Brendan Casnoff

Committee Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,  
Natalie Melker

## 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.

Katie Chewning

Aloha Committee Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,  
Sean Bradshaw

## Committee Members:

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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.

Wrenn Bosworth

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,  
Natalie James

Committee Members,

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.

Steve Larue

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

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

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery. A well regulated fishery supports local livelihoods while providing incentives for stewardship, compliance, and continuous improvement in sustainable practices.

Ben Idato-  
Hilo

Committee Members,

Please don't support this ban. Permits should be issued to 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.

Sarah Halpin

Hello,

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Austin Walton

Committee Members:

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Jacquelyn Dominguez

Committee Members,

I support re-opening the west Hawaii aquarium fishery and I support science based management provided by DAR.

Gale Bensi

Aloha 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

I support re-opening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Dianna Aguada

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Teresa Balangue

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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,  
Dani Chambers

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.

Kaena Adlawan

## 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.

Dina Kaplan

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii.

Hazel Ignacio

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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.

Thank you,  
Drew Tassi

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Seth Cowan

Committee Members,  
I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by  
science provided by DAR.

Regina Lim

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.

Mahalo,  
Celia Dasilva

Committee Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you very much,  
Chloe Herredia

Committee Members,

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,  
Emilabeth Watts

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.

Bobby Parisi

Committee Members,

Please don't support a ban. 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.

Mahalo,  
Bonita Stepeck

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Toby Demski

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.

Thank you,  
Catherina Dastrup

Committee Members:

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.

Tammy Hernandez

## Committee Members-

I strongly 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.

Scott Brewer

Dear Committee Members,

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,  
Erik Bench

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mickey Flanks

Committee Members,

I'm in support of 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,  
Jestine Nez

Committee Members,

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

**Committee Members,**

**I am in support of reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.**

**Bea Ireland**

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.

Thanks,  
Mitch Richmond

Aloha 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

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

*Committee Members,*

*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*

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

Committee Members,

I am in support of issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

Gary Ferguson

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

Committee Members,

I strongly 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,  
Abee Brewer

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

I am in support of issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

Justin Rockmael

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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.

Thank you,  
Amy London

Committee Members,

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,  
Stef Kohler

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

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for fishing in west Hawaii. This is a model sustainable fishery.

Thank you,  
Clive Shelton

Committee Members,

I am in strong support of reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing fishing permits as soon as possible.

Thank you,  
Viv Mills

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members,

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.

Chey Hayashi

I oppose a ban and I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Denise Waller

**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**

Committee Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,  
George Tapu

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

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. Please do not support a ban.

Thank you  
Owen Hammond

Committee Members:

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

Committee Members:

I support issuing permits to allow aquarium fishing in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR. I oppose a ban.

Penny Pudiquet

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

Committee Members,

I oppose a ban and I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Amber Hopkins

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

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Nikki Vermillion

Committee Members,

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

Aloha,

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,  
Ianuali Anderson

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Penny Smith

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.

Thank you.

Joshua Benally

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members-

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

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

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

Aloha Committee Members,

I stand in support of the west Hawaii aquarium fishery and hope permits will be issued and the fishery finally reopened.

Mahalo,  
Simon Grandi

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

Committee Members,

The aquarium fishery has been heavily managed over the years ensuring sustainability. I support issuing permits and reopening the fishery.

Kimo Aikawa

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

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.

Mahalo,  
Deann Levine

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members,

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

TO: Committee Members

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,  
Ulani Wach

Committee Members -

I support reopening the aquarium fishery. A well regulated fishery supports local livelihoods while providing incentives for stewardship, compliance, and continuous improvement in sustainable practices.

Thanks,  
Aaron Cormack

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.

Thank you,  
Elina Mathis

## Committee Members–

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

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

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

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members:

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

**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**

Committee Members,

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.

Thank you,  
Shara Rash

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Lito Cayetano

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,  
Scott Brewer

Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and issuing permits. I urge you not to support banning sustainable fisheries.

Mahalo,  
Geoff Manousakis

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

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

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS,**

**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**

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

Committee Members,

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.

Sage Winterton

Committee Members-

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

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.

Trenton James

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to re-open the aquarium fishery and reissue permits for west Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Liz Fletcher

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

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

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

Committee Members:

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

Committee Members,

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

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

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

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

Committee Members,

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

## Committee Members:

I'm in support of 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.

Lynette Norwitz

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

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,  
M. Aika

**Committee Members,**

**I am in support of issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.**

**Mahalo,  
Erin James**

## 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

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

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Jason Khai

**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**

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Genevive Vitalis

Aloha 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

Committee Members,

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,  
Kanu Nieto

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery. Please don't support the ban.

Peter DeMaio

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.

Davis Passigila

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Jia Gavanis

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.

Shay Diallo

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,  
BJ Moen

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Jonjon de Vera

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,

Carl Loftin

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. Scientific assessments over decades have shown that Hawai'i'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.

Mason Howell

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits. A well regulated fishery supports local livelihoods while providing incentives for stewardship, compliance, and continuous improvement in sustainable practices.

Thank you,  
Diana Lazzara

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,  
Marisa Kincaid

Committee Members,

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

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

Committee Members:

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery and I support continued management by DAR using a science based approach.

Thank you,  
Kristen Duenez

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

Committee Members,

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

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

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

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

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

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

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

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

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

Committee Members,

I oppose this ban and I support opening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Stephen Poulos

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. I oppose a ban. This is the only fishery in the state to go through the HEPA process.

Thank you,  
Kenzi White

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.

Mahalo,  
Brian Fitzpatrick

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

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:33:53 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane Taylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of a complete ban on aquarium fishing of all kinds and in all communities regardless of how many people are in that community. That is a silly loophole. Climate change and human impact are destroying the ecosystems and fish should only be taken for subsistence so that the resilience of the reefs may last longer. To allow taking for such an ultimately trivial (to say nothing of cruel) purpose is wrong on many levels. Please ban permanently all aquarium fishing in and around Hawaii.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:37:39 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anita Bhakta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB2101 and wish to 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.

Let's keep our wildlife and reefs healthy.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:56:34 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Venema	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm a Maui resident writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. I am a boat captain and have been a part of the commercial tourism sector for over 25 yrs educating tourist and locals about the reef ecosystems. I've watched the reefs change due to environmental stresses. Taking precious herbivores from the reefs would be one more stress the systems do not need. Most Hawai'i residents support this ban statewide, and with aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to take the wild ones. Please support this bill. Thank you , Amy Venema

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:12:20 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Kathryn Afable	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Mary Afable and I live in Hilo.

**I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.**

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.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:14:51 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 one limited to the moku o keawe. Please amend the bill to make it statewide and reverse the decision of the House.

lynne matusow

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:21:43 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Liz Lees	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a full time Hawaii resident residing in Kona on the Big Island. I am an avid ocean swimmer and I have seen first hand how the ban has allowed fish stocks to rebound. Aquarium collection benefits very few but harms many. Please ban all aquarium collection. Mahalo!

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:23:22 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandria Siwecki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please honor the fish and our beautiful Aina and leave the fish alone!

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:36:49 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shari Olander	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Leave our tropical fish alone. How will it help attract tourists if our beautiful tropical fish are taken?! Keep Hawaii beautiful. No commercial fishing of our lovely tropical fish. Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:42:00 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beverley Brand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support banning the collection of fish for aquariums.

Beverley Brand,

Waikoloa HI

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:03:13 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erik John Winkler	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I absolutely oppose the measure of legalizing and opening aquarium Fisheries. This measures you should be dropped and permanently banned throughout the state of Hawaii and never brought up again. The money never goes in the state and the permit holders are always out of state greedy business holders and taking from the Hawaiian people do not approve aquarium Fisheries

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:03:56 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Richard Bodiein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

End this travesty. Ban aquarium fishing. Thank you.

Richard

Hāwī

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:11:27 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephen D Lopez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Having enjoyed Big Island for nearly 30 years on the leeward coast I enjoyed the ocean swells and scuba diving teeming with yellow tang and other such near shore fish. Having been nicknamed the "gold coast" for this reason I am disheartened by the decimation of natures living aquarium where all may enjoy. The death of so many in a harvest simply from transportation and other adverse effects to place in shops is an irreputable cost. PLEASE SUPPORT HB2101 for the preservation of life for all to enjoy as we once did.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:31:03 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS BILL.**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:33:51 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Marvin Porter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I strongly support HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection and reinstating the statewide ban that was in the original bill. I have been a resident of Hawai'i Island since 1994 and have snorkeled yearly all around the island. Unfortunately, I have seen the fish population diminish through the years. Our reefs face compounding stresses from sedimentation events, warming seas and bleaching, and storms and hurricanes. Removing herbivorous reef fish further undermines reef resilience.

January 2026, Hawaii County Council passed resolution No. 422-25 “URGES THE HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE TO PROHIBIT THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM STATE MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES.”

As part of long-term planning for sustainability we need to end the catching of fish for aquariums. Now is the time to do everything possible to protect and even try to expand our fish population.

Mahalo,

Mary Marvin Porter

Island Eyes Video

Kea'au, Hawai'i

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:33:52 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:38:22 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith Soltz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is critical to protect the reefs and fish. Pass this bill now. Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:35:33 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Monica Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Comittee Chair and Members,

Please 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.

Mahalo,

Monica Stone

Kona, HI 96740

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:41:03 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

**I strongly support HB2101 HD1**

As a non indigenous person I have to ask would dictating policy that contradicts the majority will of an indigenous people be considered culturally unacceptable?

I'm testifying today because Hawai'i's coral reefs cannot speak for themselves — and they are in trouble.

Our reefs are not just scenery. They are living, breathing communities that protect our shorelines, feed our families, sustain our culture, and support our economy. Yet they are slowly unraveling before our eyes. I urge you to enact much stronger fines and enforcement measures to protect Hawai'i's grazing fish — especially those targeted by the aquarium trade — because without them, our reefs cannot survive.

**Even with the current aquarium collection ban in place, paired with fines that are simply too weak to deter violations, herbivorous fish populations have not rebounded in a statistically significant way. That should deeply concern all of us. A ban without meaningful enforcement is not protection — it is a promise left unfulfilled.**

Herbivorous fish such as parrotfish, surgeonfish, and tangs are the reef's gardeners. Every day, they tirelessly graze on algae that would otherwise smother and suffocate corals. Without them, algae spreads rapidly, blocking sunlight, weakening coral growth, and preventing reefs from recovering after bleaching events, storms, and rising ocean temperatures. When we remove these fish, we tip the balance toward collapse.

The commercial aquarium trade has significantly depleted local populations of these essential species. Removing large numbers of grazing fish for export disrupts the delicate ecological balance that coral ecosystems depend on. What follows is not abstract or theoretical — it is visible. Coral decline. Biodiversity loss. Fewer fish. A reef that becomes quieter, emptier, less alive.

And when reefs suffer, Hawai'i suffers.

Our tourism economy depends on vibrant, thriving reefs. Visitors travel across the world to snorkel above colorful coral gardens and swim alongside abundant marine life. As reefs degrade,

the experience diminishes. Visitor satisfaction declines. Local businesses — from dive shops to hotels to restaurants — feel the impact. Jobs are put at risk. Protecting grazing fish is not only an environmental necessity; it is an economic safeguard.

Stronger fines and real enforcement send a clear message that Hawai‘i values its natural heritage. Implementing firm catch limits, expanding managed reef zones, and ensuring meaningful penalties for violations are practical, cost-effective steps that will protect both our marine ecosystems and our economic future.

If we fail to act decisively, we are not just losing fish. We are losing resilience. We are losing biodiversity. We are losing part of what makes Hawai‘i extraordinary.

Future generations deserve to inherit reefs that are alive — not memories of what they once were.

Please stand for our reefs. Strengthen the fines. Protect our grazing fish. Let your actions reflect the value we place on Hawai‘i’s living treasures.

With respect and aloha,

Bob Douglas

Hilo/Miloli‘i Hawaii

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:46:28 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am a West Hawaii resident and a frequent user of our coral reef resources - as a snorkeler, scuba diver, and underwater photographer. Like thousands of others who depend upon these same resources for recreation or their livelihoods, I am a non-consumptive user, leaving everything intact for the next person, or next generation, who wishes to enjoy it. Fish collectors, however, remove the resources from their habitat, making the fish unavailable for other humans to enjoy, unavailable to contribute to the gene pool of their population, and unavailable to perform their ecosystem services, such as consuming the algae that can overgrow corals and kill them, devastating the reef structure itself. In addition to removing a certain number of fish, collectors train all the fish on the reef to fear humans, so that the fish retreat into their shelters at the sight of an approaching person, or the sound of bubbles from scuba gear. So the number of fish that become unavailable to the ocean recreation industry is much larger than the number actually taken. I believe that this legislation is needed because the DLNR has never adequately managed the aquarium collection trade. Poaching was rampant during the previous years of legal collecting, due to only very sporadic enforcement, and outgoing shipments were never inspected. We can expect the same situation if DLNR's plans to re-open the fishery are allowed to proceed. The plan to re-open is entirely contingent upon the acceptance of an EIS which concludes that the amount of collecting proposed will not permanently harm the resource. However that conclusion is based on the amount of legal collecting allowed under the permit. Since we all know that legal collecting will provide cover for rampant poaching, the actual number, and types, of fish removed will be much greater, invalidating the conclusions of the EIS. Most critical to my concerns, during the previous period of collecting many of the rarest species - those which are found only in Hawaii - disappeared almost entirely from reefs within safe scuba diving depths. These rare endemic fish are very under-studied and we know little about their population sizes or susceptibility to artificial mortality (e.g. through collecting). These natural treasures occur only in Hawaii, and it is only we, the people of Hawaii, who can protect them. They are our kuleana. All surveys taken show that the majority of Hawaii residents want to protect them. It is only the government that has stood in the way. I humbly implore you to embrace your kuleana and pass HB2101 for the protection of those native species which, even if unseen on a daily basis, are a vital part of the natural tapestry of life here which we are duty-bound to pass on to the future in good condition. Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:49:29 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Kite	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is richard kite 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,

Richard kite

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:38:02 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Andrew Isoda 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Isoda  
Lahaina, Mau'i

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:41:41 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Earl J. 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Earl J. Kim

Aloha Chairs Richards and Lee, 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: 3/22/2026 10:50:45 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Remo	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.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:23:08 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wendy Noritake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101 to permanently ban aquarium collecting. My name is Wendy Noritake, and I am a resident of Kapaau, North Kohala. I am a witness to the devastation of our reef fish, in particular, the Yellow Tangs among many other endemic reef fish. I know that the majority of residents in the State of Hawaii wish to see a permanent ban on aquarium collecting. Please pass this bill! It's time to put a stop to this inhumane practice.

Thank you so much!

Wendy Noritake

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:28:14 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Menchetti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**60 seconds):**

“Aloha, I’m a Hawaii island resident & swimmer/diver writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Most Hawai‘i residents support this ban statewide, and with aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to take the wild ones. Please support this bill.”

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:28:50 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Bambara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to you, dear Representatives of Hwai'i nei to Please 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.

Mahalo nui loa for your support of this bill.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:35:02 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eden Peart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Malama our reefs for our moopuna and everyone!

Support this bill!

mahalo,

Eden

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:44:43 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elisa Plauche	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I SUPPORT of HB2101 HD1because I love seeing fish when I snorkel as do our visitors. It's important to protect species from commercial exploitation.**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:50:40 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wendy Harvey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Wendy Harvey and I've been a resident of Kihei, Maui, Hawaii for over 20 years. I am also an avid scuba diver and I've watched in sadness as our local reefs become more unhealthy while some die. We need a healthy reef in order to protect our shores, provide local fisherman with food, offer clean beaches and safe water sports for locals and to encourage tourism to help sustain many of our careers. The aquarium collecting trade has lead to entire reef systems collapsing.

I support this bill to ban aquarium collecting.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:58:50 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lynn Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to ban the aquarium trade. It is increasingly more obvious and critical to keep fish, which can be aquacultured, on the reefs where they belong. Aquarium collection causes harm to the fish (eg: barotrauma), and removing them from the reefs has long term consequences including damaging the health of the reefs and impacting the coastline.

I urge you to support this bill and ban the aquarium trade.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:01:36 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 Hawai'i 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. Hawaii's 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 Island we traveled here frequently to dive and enjoy a unique environment. 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 about eight or nine 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.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:23:05 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robyn Scarth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear State Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2101, with the important amendments to remove the human population stipulation and to reinstate the original bill’s statewide ban on the aquarium collection of fish.

Hawai‘i’s natural resources are our most valuable and irreplaceable assets. Our reefs are not only central to our cultural identity and way of life, but they also sustain our economy, protect our shorelines, and support biodiversity found nowhere else on Earth. Allowing the continued commercialization of aquarium fish collection undermines these critical resources at a time when they are already under immense stress.

An independent analysis of the Division of Aquatic Resources’ own data indicates that yellow tang populations did not recover as biologically and historically expected following the 2017 shutdown. This raises serious concerns about the long-term sustainability and management assumptions behind reopening the fishery.

At the same time, Hawai‘i’s reefs are facing escalating threats from climate change, including warming ocean temperatures, coral bleaching events, sedimentation (as seen currently following the Kona Low Storms that just hit our islands), and an overall decline in ecosystem resilience. In this context, removing thousands of herbivorous reef fish each year—species that play a crucial role in controlling algae and supporting coral health—works directly against reef recovery rather than supporting it.

For these reasons, I urge you to support HB 2101 with a full statewide ban on aquarium fish collection. Taking a precautionary and science-based approach now is essential to preserving Hawai‘i’s reefs for future generations.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Robyn Scarth

62-1200 Puahia St.

Kamuela, HI 96743

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:38:56 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherry A. Marek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB2101.

Who thinks it would be appropriate to issue permits to collect Pueo owlets or any other winged wildlife in Hawaii to be shipped off and sold as “pets”?

The Hawaii State Legislature passed a ban on chemical sunscreens to protect the reef. How about protecting the reef inhabitants: the fish. The majority of residents and registered voters statewide support a ban on commercial Aquarium collection of Hawaii’s reef fish.

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek, Big Island resident

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:04:43 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Allowing aquarium collecting is not only cruel and destructive to reefs, it is costly. Most visitors snorkel as a part of their Maui vacation and I have heard the complaints related to depleted fish numbers and reefs. They consider visiting other places instead of Hawaii where better care is taken of the ocean environment.

There is also the direct revenue. Coral and reef related activities generate over \$800 million annually. Aquarium collecting is a fraction of this, about \$2 to \$3.2 million. It has historically generated **less than \$25,000 annually** in revenue for the state, while costing taxpayers over \$500,000 to manage.

Between 90 and 98% of wild caught marine fish collected for aquariums die within the first year. Between 10% and 80% die en route to their sales destination. They tend to take the most beautiful fish.

The aquarium collecting industry has employed high cost lobbyists. They may say aquarium collecting is the most valuable near shore fishing industry in Hawaii. This is because the only other near shore fishing is people fishing for their families and a few other people with fishing poles etc. Near shore is not viable for significant food fishing.

Lobbyists and the very few who profit are no reason to sacrifice the enjoyment of locals and visitors and the economic and environmental security of the islands.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:12:17 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zett Elyss Amora	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I am a 22 year resident of Kohala Coast and a DAILY ocean swimmer. I am saddened by the continuous, noticable decline of reef fish and strongly support the bill HB2101 to PERMANENETLY BAN COLLECTION OF WILD FISH FROM OUR REEFS. Nature belongs to everyone not just to those parties who wish to profit from the rape of our ocean sealife. Since aquaculture has also been introduced which supplies the tropical fish trade there is absolutley no reason to allow our natural resources to be exploited any further. Mahalo for your support of this bill to BAN the practice of taking fish from the wild. Zettelyss Amora, Waimea Big Island.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:15:14 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leslee Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable State Legislators, thank you for listening to your constituents. I represent 50 voting citizens covering all of the islands of Hawaii, though I live on the big island. Please accept my apology that I can't speak in person via Zoom, but I have a time conflict. This is a very important issue and I'm very tired of having to re-testify every year! Thank you for passing this bill to make this a permanent ruling. Our reef fish have not made a comeback and we do not have a plethora of seahorses and reef fish to share with aquariums around the world or in Monterey Bay Sea Aquarium any longer. Thank you for putting our islands as a priority and leaving these wild precious few Hawaiian Pacific Reef Fish and seahorses for our grandchildren and great grandchildren to swim among. Mahalo nui loa, Leslee Cook,MA,LMFT

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:27:24 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
laurie boyle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I support HB2101 because aquarium fishing on our shores is harming the populations of our gorgeous diversity of reef fish. Aquariums can be filled with farm raised fish.

Mahalo

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 2:54:44 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MIU LAN W PAALUA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Miu Lan W Paalua 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Miu Lan W Paalua

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:03:48 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Manu Powers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** HB 2101 HD1: Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection, 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.

I respectfully urge the State of Hawai'i Legislature to pass this important measure that will have a significant impact on our community and future generations.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:23:00 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mehana Vaughan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui no,

Mahalo for your work to support Hawaii. I am writing in strong support of the aquarium fishing ban. This bill is vital to protecting Hawaii's reef ecosystems and has long been worked for by the many communities who rely upon and care for these ecosystems. Aquarium fishing is an unsustainable and damaging practice, removing fish at key trophic levels who help to protect coral and reef health. The short term commercial gain is not worth the cost to future generations, nor the loss of revenue from visitors who come to snorkel and see these fish in the natural aquarium of our oceans, nor to the reefs which protect our islands from storm surge. Please vote in support of this bill.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Dr. Mehana Blaich Vaughan

Kīlauea, Kauai

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:23:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nina Monasevitch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I strongly support HB2101.**

Alarming, 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

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:39:25 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joy Fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass H2101 to prohibit the collection of reef fish by the aquarium industry to end depletion of our natural resources, the beautiful reef fish in the waters that surround our island.

The aquarium industry can and should raise its own fish stock for sale instead of depleting our God-given natural resources.

Joy Fisher

Kamuela, HI 96743.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 3:44:16 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark A Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

**I SUPPORT the banning of the aquarium fish trade.**

As a Hawaii Island resident, and life long lover of the ocean, I believe that reef fish are not meant to live in aquaria. Most of the fish taken die in transit or shortly thereafter. Millions have already been taken from West Hawai'i reefs and no more should not be added to this huge amount.

Reef fish are important to keeping reefs healthy, and their numbers do not rebound as quickly as thought.

Given the pressures of climate change we must add protections to our native wildlife, not cater to the few who want to look at OUR fish in their aquaria. As your constituent, I urger you to listen to the majority of Hawaiian residents who to not want this trade to continue.

Reopening this fishery puts our reefs at too high of risk from all the pressures they already experience.

Sincerely,

Mark Johnson

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:04:08 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Kaleiheana Stormcrow 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Kaleiheana Stormcrow

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:11:37 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**SUPPORT**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:26:26 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisette Akamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

**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 nearly 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons:

1. Commercial aquarium fishing is in complete opposition to 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 exploited for private profit. Prior to the current ban, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which die: 50% during the collection and transport process, while 80% of the surviving the fish reportedly die within a year after being sold. In the wild, these fish can live for decades.
2. This extractive and cruel 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.
3. 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.
4. Hawai‘i’s critical marine and nearshore ecosystems support food security, cultural and subsistence practices; healthy coral reefs provide shoreline protection; and on-reef tourism activities that depend on vibrant and healthy ecosystems generate approximately **\$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits**.

5. On the other hand, DLNR has estimated that managing the aquarium pet trade *costs* taxpayers over **\$500,000 annually**, while the trade generates less than **\$25,000 per year** in direct revenue for the state.

In light of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment - from pollution, to extractive fishing practices to climate change and coral bleaching - a statutory ban is necessary to protect a major economic engine and a cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban *statewide*, as originally drafted.**

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Lisette Akamine

Kahalu'u, O'ahu

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:30:35 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai‘i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u.

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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:48:43 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a grandmother and avid snorkeler living in Waimea on Hawai'i Island, I support this bill. The era of the aquarium fishing industry on this island has passed. There are many big issues negatively impacting the health of our reefs that are much harder to put into action, such a warming climate and run-off pollution. This is one of the easy ones. Let's do what we can to ensure we are not the last generation to be able to enjoy live reefs and marine life, as well as do subsistence fishing from our shores.

Doris Segal Matsunaga

Waimea, Hawaii Island

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 4:51:32 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
clara loprinzi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

These are our ohana....Article 12 Section 7, STOP and defeat this bill. They are our lahui. enough already Clare Loprinzi, Indigenous Practitioner.

In January 2026, the Hawai'i Island County Council unanimously passed Resolution No. 422-25. In early March of 2026, Maui County unanimously passed Resolution No. 26-53, 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 and Maui has been clearly expressed,*** along with thousands of testimonies across the islands, calling for a statewide ban on this commercial practice.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:02:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

**Aloha Senators~**

**I am writing today to offer full support of and sincere urging for passing the ban bill regarding 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 very and welcomed and needed 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 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: 3/22/2026 5:10:22 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Grant Heidrich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Grant Heidrich and I have been a long timwe property owner on the Big Island. I totally support the passage of HB 2101 and hope it can apply statewide.

I have been an active scuba diver and enjoyed this sport all around the workd, in particular the endemic species found only in Hawaii.

Th eongoing extaction of fish from the reefs upsets the delicate ecological balance of the ecosystem and degrades the entire system,. It must be stopped. It aslo violates our traditional cultural practices and violates everything Hawaiian.

Please pass the permanant ban.

Respectfully,

Grant Heidrichj

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:12:20 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jon Luft	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am in support of the original language and intent of HB2101**, prohibiting the taking of reef fish for ornamental display and commercial profit from Hawaiiin Coastal waters. **I DO NOT** support the amended language in HB2101 HD1 establishing County population as the basis for allowing or not allowing the taking of fish for these purposes. The added language in HD1 artificially targets certain islands and not others. The aquatic ecosystem of the Islands is a shared community and the benefits of promoting and stewarding a healthy aquatic ecosystem across all the islands accrues to the benefit of the entire local population and visitors, our oceans, and planet, regardless of a county's population. Common sense tells me this provision added in HD1 is promoted by a "special" interest trying to dilute the intent of the original HB2101. I strongly urge you to amend HB2101 HD1 and **remove the county population-specific criteria as a means to allow or prohibit the ban.** Jon Luft - Kalaoa

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:16:26 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dorothy Norris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please give this bill your focus and support. The aquarium fishing industry targets many species that support reef health and continued growth. Many factors contribute to the loss of healthy reefs, please don't allow the lack of herbivores add to it's decline. All efforts toward maintaining a coral based reef will ensure this vital resource will be available to future generations.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:16:57 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kapulei Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HB2101 that would ban the collection of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. I would urge 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. Please help us protect our reefs, aquatic ecosystems, and the many fish that call Hawai'i home.

Mahalo, Kapulei

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:28:37 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Crista Francis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom I may concern,

I am a North Kohala resident and avid ocean lover. I am submitting this testimony to urge lawmakers to pass resolution HB2101 and support the health of our ocean and ALL of its creatures. It is just criminal and cruel to be capturing healthy fish to be imprisoned in aquariums! Catching fish for food is one thing, but it is just senseless to support the aquarium trade, especially in this day in age where so many people are waking up to the injustices we inflict on the animal kingdom just for profit and entertainment. The damage done is not worth the money a few stand to make from industries such as this!

Please listen to your hearts, do the right thing, and ban the collection of our beautiful reef fish for a life in prison. Their home is in the sea as nature intended.

Sincerely,

Crista Francis

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 5:35:03 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anne Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2101

In 2023 BLNR supported no collecting of reef fish for the aquarium trade. Yet DAR turned around and proposed large scale commercial extraction. How can this be? 1) Law makers/guardians are to be guided by constitutional statues of public trust to protect our land and resources (malama aina). 2) In 2017 after shutdown of collection an independent scientific study proved that the reef fish populations did not rebound. So monitoring of reef fish populations was reduced to once a year instead of 4-6X a year for the destruction to remain hidden longer!! 3). The fish lose, the reefs lose, tourists lose and residents lose as they do not benefit while bearing all the environmental and enforcement costs!!!! Soooooo. Who gains to suggest such blatantly poor legislation that hurts Hawaii, the ocean and our people???? Maybe the people at DAR that proposed this or the lawmakers that agree..... What are the conflicts \$\$\$ of interest?

Anne Allison, Kihei, Maui

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:17:38 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leila Atkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai'i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne'ohe, and Kahalu'u.

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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leila atkin

Kailua Kona, Hawaii

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:19:21 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelsea	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose the bill HB2101 and do not agree to a total ban of responsible aquarium fishing. Multiple scientific studies have proven there is a sustainable way to keep the fishery open while keeping fish numbers safe and reefs healthy. Please consider following the science and facts.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:20:50 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eric	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill because I support the clear data and research that supports aquarium fishing that has no negative impact on Hawaiian reefs whatsoever. I also oppose this bill because I am in support of the local divers, fisherman and economic impact it has on our community.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 6:42:55 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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. But 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 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.

This critical ecosystem supports food security, cultural and subsistence practices, shoreline protection provided by healthy coral reefs, and on-reef tourism activities dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems that generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. In light of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect a major economic engine and a cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101 HD1, 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: 3/22/2026 7:10:32 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jason Murray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I'm a Big Island resident calling in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Most Hawai'i residents support this ban statewide, and with aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to take the wild ones. Please support this bill."

Hawai'i's wildlife is not for sale. These important reef fish are way more important on the reef than in a pet store waiting to die. Our reefs and Hawai'i's future depends on us to care about our wildlife.

Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:12:40 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Monica Morris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai‘i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u.

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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Monica Morris, Honolulu, Hawai'i

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:24:55 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dee Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1.

- Aquarium collection was shut down by court order in 2017 after years of controversy and has remained closed for nearly a decade
- DAR is now moving to reopen West Hawai‘i’s waters, claiming it is required by statute
- This measure should make the shutdown permanent in law and prevent reopening for the ornamental trade
- Reef fish, especially herbivores, are essential to reef health, shoreline protection, and ecosystem balance
- They are also critical to subsistence practices and hold cultural and spiritual value
- Past collection removed massive numbers of fish, harming biodiversity and reef function
- It undermined cultural, subsistence, and recreational use while prioritizing private profit over public trust resources
- Residents and the Board of Land and Natural Resources have supported a permanent statewide ban
- DAR should not spend limited resources reviving a defunct industry and should focus on more urgent marine management needs

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:32:20 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm a Maui resident calling in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Most Hawai'i residents support this ban statewide, and with aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to take the wild ones. Please support this bill."

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:32:20 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I'm a Maui resident calling in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Most Hawai'i residents support this ban statewide, and with aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to take the wild ones. Please support this bill."

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:28:54 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roberts "Bob" Leinau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,

HB2101 is important as it relates to our reef life in nearshore waters. The DLNR needs to improve our aquatic natural resources to a place where they were 50 years ago when I first started looking around. In the chicken and the egg game ... the resource needs to come first ... before the money exercise. The ocean needs all of the help it can get!!

Mahalo for this opportunity to give testimony..

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 8:52:27 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Reed Gach	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB2101 COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

My wife and I want to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

We live in Kihei, Maui, and absolutely love swimming with the fish. This is very important to us. Please support and pass HB 2101.

Thank you for considering this testimony from local residents.

Barbara & Michael Gach  
Kihei, Maui 96753

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:06:06 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aileen K . F. Yeh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 which would establish a ban on the collection of marine life. I also think there should be a ban throughout the State.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:08:36 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Holst	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou,

I am in strong support of HB2101 HD1 banning the collection of Hawai'i's marine life for commercial sale and export out of Hawai'i as aquarium pets.

i also request this ban be extended from Hawai'i Island to the whole state. This is for three reasons: 1) protect areas of Hawai'i's reef ecosystems that are targeted by aquarium collectors: 2) ensuring reef health that is critical for Hawai'i's economy; and 3) with its simplicity, reduces regulatory cost.

Thus, it is imperative to approve HB2101 HD1 in order to maintain our reefs and oceans. For these reasons and more, please approve HB2101 HD1.

Mahalo,

Mark Holst

408-334-4874

mmht1962@gmail.com

Kailua-Kona

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:10:10 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Belinda Pate	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you reading my written testimony. Hawaii depends on a healthy reef to ensure the success of not only our environment, but also of tourism and fishing. Reef fish depopulation initiates a destructive chain of events that results in an irreparable loss of the famed aesthetic beauty of Hawaii and the success of our local fishing industry, both of which fuel highly profitable and sustainable industries. Don't let a special interest rob Hawaii of our most valuable assets.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:13:01 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
oesim fukuda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

what happened to fishermen's rights? especially, AQrights, if this cyrrrent process is allowed for permitting AQ fishing, each AQ fishermen must have a HEPA credentials to fish, closing fishing rights! why don't they require all license drivers using roads, also must have EIS credentials needed to construct those roads! this state provide permits to fish but only under management rule, without it we could not fish. permitted to fish state waters but need to clear EIS and cultural impacts these waters? whose water have authority over? this state's various agencies and departments involved in project planning must complete HEPA. these obedient follows every order, expending all funds for HEPA and now lets just stab these fishermen in the back and ban fishing. the bias continues but be fair and let the process resume! stop manipulating the rules and end hb2101 from going forward. i am opposed to any ban of AQ fishing. oesim fukuda

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:25:22 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeffrey Iverslie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm a Hawaii Island resident voicing my complete support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Hawaii's reefs and reef fish are a precious resource that deserves protection. With aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to capture wild fish. Please support this bill and permanently protect Hawaiians reef fish from aquarium collection.

Mahalo, Jeffrey Iverslie

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 9:47:53 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Richardson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB 2101 to protect our fragile reefs and reef fish from the commercial aquarium collection trade.

Patricia Richardson, Hilo,

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:37:00 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the banning of aquarium collection and making amendments to remove the human population stipulation and reinstate the statewide ban from the original bill.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:42:27 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I stand in support of HB2101 as it seeks to protect and Mālama our kai as well as life that sustains us. Let us protect species that ensure balance is maintained.

Mahalo,

Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 11:39:59 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Kau'i Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly support HB2101 HD1, which will stop the ecologically and culturally harmful commercial aquarium industry on my home island. Divest from harmful capitalist practices and invest in collective environmental restoration.

me ka mana, Kau'i Young

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:13:48 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Enos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Richards, Vice Chair Senator Lamosao, Chair Senator Lee, Vice Chair Senator Inouye, and members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs and the Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts,

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 HD1** which permanently bans the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. I also respectfully ask 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.

Prohibiting commercial aquarium fishing will provide the highest form of protection to Hawai‘i’s 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 of protection.

Mahalo to the committee for hearing this measure and for the opportunity to provide testimony. I strongly urge this committee to pass SB2101 HD1.

Me ke aloha nui,

Kanani Enos

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:33:59 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Matthew Gurewitsch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I'm writing in impassioned, unconditional support of HB2101. Hawaii needs a permanent, statewide ban commercial aquarium collection! My wife and I have been full-time Maui residents for 15 years. Weather permitting, we're in the ocean every day exploring the reefs and its wildlife. We've been seeing a heart-breaking decline in fish stocks. Tourists on the beach are forever asking us, "What happened to all the fish?" Often, they've been here before--and they tell us that they won't be back, since our reefs are in such diminished shape. To support our economy, protecting our wildlife is VITAL. Also, it's just the right thing to do! Especially now that aquaculture farms fish that can thrive in aquariums, the practice of collecting wild specimens is totally absurd. Example: the seahorse farm on the Big Island breeds specimens that each food you can get in a pet store, Wild seahorses can't survive on commercially available food. So, when they are taken, they get delivered and die. What's the point? Our wildlife deserved to thrive! A few unscrupulous poachers get a windfall while destroying our aina. Support HB2101!

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 2:57:59 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lehua Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am Lehua Alapai from Kekaha wai 'ole o na Kona, Hawaii island.

Please, I urge you to pass HB2101.

You already know that our ocean ecosystems are under major stresses because of human behavior. Together, we can undo the many decades of unchecked aquarium collection. Please, there is no need to catch wild fish for personal aquariums anymore.

Hawaii is a diverse collective of people, place, flora and fauna and we all have decided to make this place our home. I believe Hawaii inspires deep reciprocal relationships and calls on us to take loving care of each other. Let us all hold this awesome responsibility close. Please support the multitude of voices and caretakers of this land. Pass HB2101.

Mahalo for all you do,

Lehua Alapai, lineal descendant, Kekaha Wai 'Ole o Na Kona, Hawaii Island

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:56:24 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jon L Rishi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hereby testify as a Native Hawaiian and a career biologist in support of HB2101 to prohibit the collection of marine life in the waters of the Hawaiian Islands for the purpose of commercial sale and export in the aquarium pet trade. The Hawaiian Islands are a well-documented and world renowned biodiversity hotspot due to its extreme geographic isolation, with over 10,000 terrestrial and marine species that occur no where else on Earth. Hawai'i is also known as the endangered species capital of the world, containing over 40% of species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act for the entire U.S. The critical importance of protecting and preserving the wild, unique species endemic to the Hawaiian Islands far surpasses and supercedes the desires of aquarium owners on a global scale to possess these life forms for their personal captive enjoyment or the commercial pet trade from profiting off of the priceless natural resources of Hawai'i. The harvesting of wild Hawaiian marine organisms to satisfy worldwide appetites within this discrete and relatively minute geographic area is unsustainable and this practice must be stopped immediately. Alternatives to wild collection exist for the aquarium pet trade, such as captive breeding and propogation programs aka ornamental aquafarming. HB2101 is legislation that should have been enacted long ago and is vital to protect the unique natural marine resources of the Hawaiian Islands.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:07:10 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 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 HD1 too. Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:19:46 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
János Samu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou a me Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai‘i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u.

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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:36:31 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
McMichael Simmy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2101 to Permanently Ban Aquarium collection and Reinstate the Statewide Ban. I sent a testimony on 02/16/2026 already and I want to submit again in support.

We need to Malama and not take away our reef fishes. This is not tradition and our cultural and natural resources need to be protected. Its not all about Kala (money). This collection is a mult million dollar industry and it will drive to remove thousands of our reef fishes each year.

In January 2026, it is the first time I've seen our County of Hawaii County Council have a hearing and passed unanimously Resolution No. 422-25, to prohibit the taking of our reef fishes for ornamental commercial aquarium purposes. The County Council are elected officials voted by the people who represent the public. Mahalo to our County Council for this, so Pono!

I lived in Kona since the early 1970's the ocean is my life. I have visually seen the change, clearly less reef fishes.

Its our Kuleana to take care and Malama for the sake of our Cultural and Natural Resources. Its also for the now and next generation. Important is to leave our Aina better not worse.

Please Ban the Aquarium once and for all!

Mahalo,

Simmy McMichael

Born in the territory of Hawaii.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:54:13 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joe Culbertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha.

My name is Joe Culbertson. A resident of the Big Island, I live in Keaau. I live and love this island for its beauty, lifestyle and AQUATIC RESOURCES.

I strongly urge you to support SB2101 to protect what is left of our local fisheries and help repopulate the species in danger. The Aquarium Trade has NO place in our waters, especially with aquaculture's role in the supply of fish for the trade.

Please stop DAR from the destructive goal of opening up the fisheries to corporate greed and money that cares NOTHING about Hawaii's future.

Let your true ALOHA prevail.

Mahalo,

Jore Culbertson

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:54:14 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of HB2101 HD1.

As a scuba diver on the Kona Coast I know that our reefs cannot handle more aquarium poaching. All animals have a place on the reef and if some are taken, the balance is off. When the balance on the reef is off, reefs start dying - our oceans and our communities that depend on the reefs cannot handle this.

Please pass HB2101 statewide.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:03:51 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Fiona Cameron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101 to ban commercial aquarium fishing in Hawaii. There is zero benefit to the environment or public in allowing this to occur. Reef life is threatened daily by pollution and climate change. The recent storms and outflows into the ocean are a good example of the threats.

Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:20:39 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heidi White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Our reefs and communities cannot afford a return of the aquarium trade.**

**We need to have at least 50 years for the reef to recover from the damaging effects of this terrible practice of Aquarium fishing.**

**I ask that you please**

- Schedule HB2101 for a hearing**
- Support and pass HB2101 to protect Hawai'i's reef fish.**

**Heidi White**

**76-6129 Plumeria Rd, Kona Hawaii 96740**

**808-895-4304**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:32:04 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jason helyer	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Concerned about the outcome of this bill to ban a fishery. While not everyone will agree on the interpretation of data or existing/proposed management of the fishery, the fishery has more regulations aimed at protecting both fish abundance and ecosystem health than any other fishery in Hawai'i. The Legislature directed the Division of Aquatic Resources to manage this fishery which resulted in considerable efforts to address conflicts between user groups in the late 1990's. While banning the fishery is the only outcome consistent with the values of some users, a departure from managing the fishery has serious implications for other fisheries issues in the state.

Please note: I work for the Division of Aquatic Resources. This testimony reflects my personal views and not the views of the Division.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:57:18 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
daniel	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Daniel Cottrell oppose this bill. The aquarium Industry is a sustainable fishery back by science, it is the most regulated fishery in Hawaii. A lot of livelihoods depend on your decision thank you.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:02:33 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Grutter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I am a marine biologist and live on the island of Hawaii.

Reefs are important to me for many reasons, including their beauty, and recreational, economic and cultural importance to Hawaii.

I urge you to pass HB2101 statewide.

Sincerely,

Lexa

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:03:29 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Sweeney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate members,

I have lived on Hawai'i Island for nearly 30 years, and cannot believe we are still dealing with this issue. Please pass this vital legislation to end the barbaric practice of aquarium collection and save our precious reef fish, and protecto our fragile ecosystems.

Thank you,

Cynthia Sweeney, Kailua-Kona

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:08:44 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cade Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Cade and I live here in Hawai‘i. I’m writing in opposition to HB2101.

I understand the need to take care of our ocean and natural resources—we all depend on it, and we all want to protect it. But this bill doesn’t feel balanced. It feels like a broad approach that’s going to affect a lot of people without really showing that it’s the best solution.

From what I can see, there are already rules and regulations in place. Instead of adding more restrictions, it seems like we should be focusing on better enforcement and making sure the current system is actually working the way it’s supposed to.

I’m also concerned about unintended consequences. When you shut things down here, it doesn’t mean the demand disappears—it just moves somewhere else, usually to places with less oversight. That doesn’t really help the environment in the long run.

At the end of the day, I think we need to be careful about passing laws that are too broad without fully understanding the impacts. We should be working toward solutions that are based on solid data and that include input from the people who are directly affected.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you oppose HB2101.

Mahalo for your time.

Cade

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:11:17 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cara Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Cara and I am the daughter of someone who has worked in Hawai‘i’s tropical fish trade for many years. I’m writing in opposition to HB2101.

Growing up in this environment, I’ve seen firsthand the care, responsibility, and knowledge that goes into sustainable fish collection. My family has always followed the rules, respected our reefs, and worked hard to make sure our practices don’t harm Hawai‘i’s marine environment. This is not just a job for us—it’s a way of life, part of our family’s livelihood, and part of our connection to the ocean.

HB2101 threatens to disrupt families like mine by putting unnecessary restrictions on a trade that is already heavily regulated. It risks harming small businesses, local families, and communities who have invested generations in learning how to collect and care for tropical fish responsibly. At the same time, it could shift demand to sources outside of Hawai‘i where there is little oversight and fewer protections for the environment.

I care deeply about Hawai‘i’s reefs and marine life, and I want them protected for future generations. But this bill is not the right approach. Instead of broad restrictions, we should focus on supporting responsible, regulated practices and working with local families who know and care for these ecosystems.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you oppose HB2101.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Cara

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:35:02 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megaan M. Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 10 years. I also request that this ban be extended statewide for the following reasons:

Protect Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium fishing contradicts 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. Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale, export, and captivity – the vast majority of which reportedly die within a year after collection. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities repeatedly call for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai‘i; whilst similar resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u, call on the legislature to ban the practice.

Ensure Reef Health

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 remain on the reef.

Reduce Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would simplify enforcement and reduce the cost of this industry to the state. The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) recently created a quota-based permit system that

would reopen West Hawai'i waters to commercial aquarium collection, concluding that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai'i is sustainable. DARs quota-based system essentially closes the industry to the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process, it closes economic pathways to industry newcomers, and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

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. DAR claims that they are mandated to propose rules to reopen West Hawai'i waters to commercial aquarium collection under state law, but agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Thus, the legislature has the authority – and responsibility – to decide whether this activity should even be permitted. The majority of Hawai'i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a total ban on commercial aquarium collection.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Yours truly,

Megaan M. Clark

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:36:26 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janine Dumaguin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Janine K. Dumaguin 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to PASS this measure.

Sincerely,

Janine K. Dumaguin

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:37:19 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mathew Belcher, DVM	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in support of HB2101

Mathew Belcher –Resident of Kamuela, HI 96743

I am writing in strong support of HB2101

Removing herbivorous reef fish undermines reef resilience. The Aquarium Collection trade *does not support* a healthy reef fish population.

A healthy reef fish population is critical to me on an almost daily as a swimmer and diver. Adding my voice and action to protecting the herbivorous reef fish for current and future generations is my responsibility.

Stop the taking of marine life for commercial profit to be sold as pets or ornamental display.

Respectfully submitted 3/23/2026

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:45:38 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laura K. Legge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please end this practice once and for all! We need our fish on our reefs!

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:46:39 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Nanea Lo 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to PASS this measure.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Clean Elections Hawai‘i Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai‘i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:58:43 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Louis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai'i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāneʻohe, and Kahaluʻu.

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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Malia Louis

Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:59:19 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malialani Dullanty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Malialani Dullanty, Kānaka Maoli and resident of Moku o Keawe. I am writing to urge the council to pass HB2101 HD1 with the ammendment for a statewide ban, as originally drafted.

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 nearly 10 years. Making the ban statewide provides longterm protection for our reefs, which might allow for an increase in overall reef health.

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai‘i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u.

Meanwhile, healthy and vibrant coral reefs 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 remain on the reef.

A clear statewide 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

With these things in mind, I urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Me ka mahalo

Malialani Dullanty

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:05:34 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support of. Healthy, fish-filled reefs matter to me. I urge statewide passage of HB2101. Thank you.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:05:43 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pua'ala Pascua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

I submit this testimony 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to PASS this measure.

Sincerely,

Pua'ala Pascua

My name is Lynn Ryan, Hawaii Island, Kailua Kona. I snorkel often with respectful ocean loving people and see the decline in reef fish. Please support HB2101 and ban commercial reef fish collection statewide.

Removing thousands of herbivorous reef fish each year stops reef recovery. BLNR can deny permits. The EIS failed to address environmental and ethical harms. We need our reefs to be healthy to offer resilience against warming seas, bleaching events, increased sedimentation,

Reef fish monitoring has been drastically reduced. Data shows yellow tang populations recovered as expected after 2000 inside Fish Replenishment where collection was banned. The remaining 65% of coastline was healthy until 2017 aquarium collection shutdown and has not recovered to natural levels. Poaching cases and weak enforcement remain a documented concern. Many of wild-caught fish live more than a year in hobby tanks, such a waste. We must protect our ocean wildlife.

Mahalo, Lynn Ryan

Committee Members,

I do not believe a ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Mahalo,

Wagner Alfaro

Aloha,

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Katya David

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Kayla Gillespie

Committee Members-

I oppose a ban and encourage you to support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery with careful management backed by science.

Will Wakefield

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 and should not be banned.

Mahalo,  
Kory Giron

Committee Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. It's been through the HEPA process and is proven sustainable.

Mahalo,  
Ken Kauhane

Aloha Committee Members,

I respectfully encourage you to vote against the ban and allow permits to be issued for West Hawaii. I support the fishery because it has been through HEPA and has good management behind it.

Mahalo,  
Katherina Blair

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery. All requirements have been met and the fishery has good management to help protect the future fish population.

Mahalo,  
Kim Gunning

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Kip Olson

Committee Members-

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and not banning it. Please issue permits, it is a sustainable fishery that Hawaii should be proud of.

Mahalo,  
Keola Reis

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Krysta Thorne

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Thank you,  
Linda Burroughs

Committee Members,

I strongly support opening the aquarium fishery and I support managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,  
Lionel Macaraeg

Committee Members,

I do not believe a ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Thank you,  
Somchai Anong

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. I oppose a ban.

Mahalo,  
Summer Bentley

Aloha Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Chuck Purdham

*Committee Members,*

*Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.*

*Cora Ramos*

Committee Members,

I do not believe a full ban is warranted for a fishery that can be sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Charline Smith

Committee Members,

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. There is no reason to ban this fishery.

Mahalo,  
Connor Sui

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that is sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Thank you,  
Derek Adams

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and not banning. The aquarium fishery has fulfilled the court ordered HEPA review and has catch limits in place to ensure fish abundance on the reefs. I support opening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing.

Thank you,  
Dom Chaichana

Committee Members,

I do not believe a ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Thank you,  
Diane Fanning

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Doug Kane

Committee Members,

I strongly support sustainable fisheries and as the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery is such, I support issuing permits and re-opening. The fishery has also been through the HEPA process and no other fishery in Hawaii has done so. It's a great documentation of how well managed the fishery has been and it should be allowed to operate.

Mahalo for your time,

Dana Littlefield

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening west Hawaii for aquarium fishing. DAR has done a great job of implementing effective, targeted management of the fishery over the years and the scientific data supports that it's a healthy fishery.

Mahalo,  
Dawn Porter

Committee Members,

I oppose banning tis fishery. I support issuing permits for West Hawaii. The aquarium fishery has cleared the HEPA process and is sustainable.

Drew Santos Jr.

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing, not a ban. The fishery is backed by years of research and data supporting it's sustainable.

Mahalo,

Dane Washington

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Doug Witt

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Thank you,  
Gloria Wakefield

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Erica Daffron

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Ethan Gray

Committee Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Elijah Hamaguchi

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Thank you,  
Eva Kaizer

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

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

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Dustin Nacion

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Mahalo,  
Sven Green

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS,**

**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**

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Sheila Berry

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Sebastian Poe

Committee Members,

The aquarium fishery is the best managed near shore fishery in the state and it has been through the HEPA review, therefore I support issuing permits to reopen the fishery in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,  
Sabrina Vick

Committee Members:

I do not believe a full ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Tae Biel

Aloha Committee Members,

I urge you to vote against a ban...I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Tracey Dublin

Aloha Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery in Hawaii and encourage you to issue permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing again. HEPA requirements have been met and it's time to reopen this fishery.

Mahalo,  
Tyler Fujita

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that is sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Thank you for your time.

Andrea Duran

Committee Members,

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

**Aloha Committee Members,**

**Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.**

**Thanks,  
Aaron Nyquist**

Aloha Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Will Palmer

Dear Committee Members,

I'm testifying 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 managed fishery in Hawaii. I do not support banning it.

Thank you,  
Zane Seale

Aloha Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Allen Steiner

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

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Thank you,  
Bret Harris

Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and encourage you to issue permits and re-open it, not ban it.

Mahalo,  
Thom Ludwig

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Tammy Latham

Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Thank you,  
Tandy Galanis

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Thank you,  
Tony Schram

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and re-opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery. There is no reason for a ban. It's been through HEPA and is sustainable.

Valerie Rosales

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and re-opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery. DAR has managed it well and it remains a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,  
Zeny Saquing

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Thank you,  
Muriel Walsh

Aloha Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Thank you,  
Neal Neldi

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods..

Mahalo,  
Priya McIntyre

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Mahalo,  
Pam Short

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits to reopen the West Hawaii Aquarium fishery and I oppose a ban.

Thank you,  
Philip Whedon

Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Mahalo,  
Rubilyn Gurat

Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Mahalo,  
Rowan Kenerly

Aloha Committee Members,

I oppose the ban. The aquarium fishery is the only fishery in Hawaii to complete the HEPA process and it should be re-opened and given permits for West Hawaii.

Thank you,

Augustine Dore

Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Rita Lawrence

Aloha 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 Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Bryant Hogan

Aloha,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Bill Mangkhut

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Bobby Pearl

Aloha Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing. The aquarium fishery has been Hawaii's most heavily managed and the data supports that there are healthy fish stocks.

Mahalo,  
Brian Teixeira

Aloha Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and believe it is time to reopen the fishery in West Hawaii. It's a model fishery in Hawaii and serves as a great example of how a sustainable fishery should be managed.

Mahalo,  
Cal Chui

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Claire Shi

Committee Members,

I do not believe a full ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Thank you very much,  
Christina Esteves

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Mahalo,  
Carmen Ewalt

Committee Members:

I support the reopening of the west Hawai'i aquarium fishery and issuing permits because it completed the HEPA review and has been determined to be sustainable. Please vote against a ban.

Thank you.

Anna Adare

**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 and not ban it.**

**Mahalo,  
Chet Narak**

Committee Members,

I do not believe a full ban is warranted for a fishery that can be sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Thank you very much.

Miller Anderson

Committee Members,

I do not believe a full ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Mahalo,  
Marlen Beese

Dear Committee Members,

I do not believe a full ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Mercy Battung

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Thank you,  
Jose Terrah

Aloha Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. This fishery has been the best managed in the state and remains sustainable thanks to those efforts. There's no need for a ban.

Mahalo,  
Manuel Dolan

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mark Fryer

Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Malcolm Hauata

Committee Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. This fishery should not be banned.

Mahalo,  
Marni Hughes

Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Micah Jurgansen

Committee Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and oppose banning it. It's successfully been through HEPA and proven a sustainable fishery. I support permitting and opening West Hawaii for fishing.

Mahalo,  
Kaori Coloma

Committee Members,

I support reopening the Aquarium Fishery. The fishery deserves to have permits issued and resume operation because it has cleared the HEPA process and is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,  
Mariann Kopilec

Committee Members,

I oppose a ban and support issuing permits to reopen aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Lyle Colasse

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access..

Mahalo,  
Maya Limbu

I'm in support of opening the aquarium fishery since it has passed the HEPA process. It's a sustainable fishery and should not be banned.

Francis Te Rito

Committee Members,

I support opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery because it passed HEPA and has been proven to be environmentally sound.

Gordon Makens

Committee Members,

I oppose banning a sustainable fishery and I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,  
Kristin Scofield

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. I urge you to vote against a ban.

Thank you,  
Grant Owens

Aloha Committee Members,

I'm in support of the aquarium fishery and encourage you to vote against a ban. This fishery is proven sustainable with effective management ensuring it will remain that way.

Mahalo,  
Jack Enkamp

Aloha Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Hilda Acosta

Aloha Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Joel Gibson

Committee Members,

I do not believe a ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Mahalo,  
Josie Hilaw

Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Thank you,  
Jacob Ballen

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

June Franko

Committee Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the West Hawaii Aquarium fishery. It has successfully been through HEPA and is the most heavily regulated fishery in the State.

Jason Getty

Aloha Committee Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,  
Julie Bushido

Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Jerry Miura

Aloha Committee Members,

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Mahalo,  
Andrew Alleje

Rather than prohibit a fishery that operates sustainably, I encourage a management approach grounded in science. Reopening it with controlled permits would support both resource protection and practical use.

Mahalo,  
JACKSON SCHNELL

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not support banning a sustainable fishery that can be responsibly managed using science-based regulations. Instead, I urge you to reopen the fishery and implement a regulated permit system that ensures long-term ecological balance while supporting local livelihoods.

Mahalo,  
Janine Thibodeaux

Aloha 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

Aloha Committee Members,

I oppose closing a fishery that can be sustainably managed through science-based oversight. Please consider reopening it with a structured permit system that protects marine resources while allowing responsible use.

Thanks very much,  
Karen Clowers

Aloha Committee Members,

I do not believe a ban is warranted for a fishery that is sustainably managed. Reopening it with clear regulations and a permit system would better balance conservation goals with responsible access.

Thank you,  
Martin Labrador

Aloha Committee Members,

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Thank you,  
Mike Pires

Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery as it is well managed and has successfully been through the HEPA review process, unlike any other fishery in the state.

Mahalo,  
Michaela Rasa

Committee Members,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and I don't support banning a sustainable fishery.

Roger Stuart

Committee Members:

Banning a sustainable fishery is unnecessary when effective management tools already exist. I support reopening the fishery with regulated permits to ensure both environmental protection and continued access.

Bruce Stanford

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:29:09 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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 are 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 on 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: 3/23/2026 9:29:23 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erik Stockdale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of the Big Island of Hawaii. I strongly support HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our tropical fish belong in our local waters and their collection should be banned statewide. They are worth more to our economy right where they are - in our waters - than to be shipped elsewhere. The collectors should be looking to aquaculture to fulfill their industry needs, not to our reefs. Please protect our reefs and our economy. They are an important part of our coastal ecosystem and play a role in resilience against coral bleaching events associated with warming seas. Please consider the voice of the many over the noise of the few.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:34:56 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary True	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's time that a silver stake is put through the heart of this issue. Aquarium collecting benefits no one, but a few individuals with deep pockets; and harms all who who live in Hawaii and love and enjoy our beautiful fish found on our already struggling reefs. All you have to do is look at the comments to see that Hawaiians want this predatory practice stopped.now. Do we live in a democracy or an oligarchy where the rich purchase what they desire at the cost of all the rest of us? Please...

Aloha and mahalo, Mary True, Pepekeo

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:34:58 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony in support of HB2101.

Aquarium collection in Hawaii is a misuse of public resources for commercial purposes and should not be allowed statewide. While some of the counties have already passed ordinances to prevent this, this should be a statewide ban. The collection of aquarium fish alters the balance of the ecosystem, causing our reefs to degrade in health, affecting our nearshore waters into perpetuity. This cannot be allowed to continue, and the collection of aquarium fish should be banned statewide.

This bill should be amended to apply statewide, not just Hawaii county.

Mahalo,  
Keoni Shizuma

I write in support of HB2101. I'm a resident of Hawi for 50 years. I'd like to present two important considerations:

1. We are at the beginning of what is forecast to be a strong El Nino year. That indicates that ocean temperatures will be extra warm this fall. We are likely to get substantial damage to our coral reefs, similar or worse than we experienced in 2015. Loss of healthy reef means loss of suitable habitat for the very reef fishes that the commercial aquarium fishers want to take away. Hence these fishes could be doubly impacted.

2. It is clear to those of us in the west Hawaii communities that the general public is opposed to the unnecessary removal of our reef fishes. Especially so with those of us that spend lots of time in the ocean. I would think that our representatives in the legislature should give constituent sentiment heavy weight in their decision making.

Thanks in advance for hearing my input, here.

--Bill Graham

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:44:25 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aspen Russell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

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 STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.**

Following the ban on commercial aquarium collection in 2017, the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is planning to reopen West Hawai‘i to this extractive practice. Our waters have not recovered from this relatively short ban period, and we are not seeing a return to momona - the abundance previously witnessed by our kupuna and ancestors. The extraction of our fish deteriorates our coral reefs leading to lower fish health and populations, and large-scale erosion. All of which affects the numerous industries dependent on visiting our near shorelines. Reef fish also play a longstanding and critical role in Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing practices. Every facet of our lives and occupations depends directly or indirectly on reef fish. It is for this reason that HB2101 HD1 must be passed and extend the ban to all Hawaiian Islands.

Through every step of this process a broad set of stakeholders across private industry, non-profit organizations, local organizations, community groups, and individuals have consistently shown up to express their support for a full ban. We will continue until the full ban on commercial aquarium collection passes. This is the moment for our legislators to carry the baton and fulfill the ban - by enforcing the ban across the pae ‘aina, all Hawaiian islands.

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: 3/23/2026 9:45:43 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Avalon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2101 for the welfare of our oceans and marine lifeforms.

Mahalo,

Avalon Paradea

Waikōloa, HI 96738

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:48:41 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Briana Banua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm a born and raised O'ahu resident and am in strong support of HB2101 HD1. I work directly with marine ornamental aquaculture to sustainably provide Hawaiian marine life to the world. We fund research at local Hawai'i Universities like Oceanic Institute of Hawai'i that is used to further advancement of both food and ornamental aquaculture.

We have seen significant poaching continue after the closure while enforcement is failing which already impacts the work we are doing.

If the collection were to open it would directly impact the work we do and the funding provided to Hawai'i marine research and risk jobs on the island.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:02:50 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
james ward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing again to voice my support for HB 2101. The profits from the aquarium industry ( that benefits a few) do not make up for the decline in reef fish species in Hawaiian waters. This ecosystem is vital to the health of our reefs as well as our tourism industry. How many times in the last 20 years have i heard " doesn't seem like theres as many golden fish". The yellow tang as well as meny others have been in steady decline. Some of it due to natural causes, but they doin't need additional threat from aquarium collection. As a scuba diver in south Kona, I've witnessed the harm firsthand. It still goes on, but penalties keep the abuse down

Mahalo

James Ward 808-895-9656

Aloha! I'm a resident of Hawai'i island writing to express my support for the idea of HB2101 and, most importantly, to my support for amending it to cover the entire state of Hawai'i.

Our island chain's soul comes from the unique life we have in our waters, reefs, and land. This life is under constant stress from agricultural pollution, human waste, overfishing, climate change, and other human created pressures. There is no good reason to add to that list of stresses to satisfy the aesthetic desires of people who keep, manage, and visit aquariums. As a diving instructor I see the joy and wonder our living reef fish provide to countless people all the time. To allow them to be collected is a travesty, denying the fish their natural lives, the state the tourism attraction, and those people who see them in their natural environment a transcendental moment of natural beauty.

Please amend HB2101 so that it bans all aquarium collection across the state, or so that the population range varies from 10 to 1 million residents. Failing that, don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, and please do support this half measure that will at least protect our reef fish here on Hawai'i but then go back to work to extend that protection across the state.

Mahalo for your service

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:12:41 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
SCOTT ALAN KAIMI GARLOUGH	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Scott Garlough, 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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. Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,

Scott Garlough

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees, My name is Rosie Alegado, from Kahalu'u O'ahu, 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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, have 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 lay the groundwork to do the same throughout 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. Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure. Sincerely, Rosanna 'Anolani Alegado

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:19:41 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimana Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

**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 nearly 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. But 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 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.

This critical ecosystem supports food security, cultural and subsistence practices, shoreline protection provided by healthy coral reefs, and on-reef tourism activities dependent on vibrant and healthy ecosystems that generate approximately \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. In light of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect a major economic engine and a cornerstone of resilience for our present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leimana Kāne

Wailuku, Maui

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:20:40 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lori Cox	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Lori, and I am in strongly opposing this bill. The west Hawaii fishery is sustainable, and Hawaii fishers deserve to provide for their families.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:35:49 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jackie Moore-Andresen, PHR	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly in SUPPORT of banning Fish collection for Aquariums

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:50:12 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Dadds, PA-C	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Ryan Dadds, am in strong support of HB 2101 HD1, which prohibits the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes in specified counties. Surfrider Foundation prefers the original version of this bill which applied statewide, rather than the county- based population limitation in the HD1 version.

Protecting Hawai‘i’s coral reefs is essential to safeguarding clean water, coastal ecosystems, and the communities that depend on them.

Healthy reefs function as critical natural infrastructure - improving water quality, supporting biodiversity, sustaining cultural and subsistence practices, and reducing coastal erosion and storm impacts. Herbivorous reef fish play a key role in maintaining reef health and resilience.

The commercial aquarium trade directly undermines these ecosystem functions by removing essential reef species for ornamental use. Decades of extraction have reduced reef fish populations and degraded reef ecosystem health that Hawai‘i communities rely on.

This is a public trust issue - Hawai‘i’s reef ecosystems must be managed for the benefit of present and future generations, not depleted for private commercial gain. This is especially critical as reef ecosystems face increasing stress from climate change and land-based pollution.

HB2101 represents an important step toward protecting reef health, water quality, and long-term coastal resilience. We support this measure and urge the Legislature to consider expanding these protections statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support on behalf of Surfrider Foundation Hawai‘i’s three chapters and members statewide

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:43:46 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robyn Cox	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi my name is Robyn Cox, I oppose this bill. This fishery is heavily and properly managed and, it is also proven to be sustainable through extensive research and observation. This fishery also provides jobs for the local community.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:53:26 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Awana	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Malia Awana,

I oppose to HB 2101. As a person who was born and raised in Hawaii my whole life and has native Hawaiian blood, I am disappointed to see that Hawaiians are being manipulated by outsiders for personal gain.

## I Support the Permanent Ban on Aquarium Collecting in Hawai‘i

Aloha,

I respectfully urge you to uphold the permanent ban on aquarium collecting in Hawai‘i by passing bill **HB2101**.

The data is clear. Approximately 25 to 27 million reef animals are collected globally each year, and over 90 percent of wild caught marine fish die within their first year in captivity. Many more die during capture and transport before ever reaching an aquarium.

In contrast, these same fish can live decades in the wild. For example, yellow tang can live over 30 years on Hawai‘i reefs.

Some observed collection practices are damaging to the coral as well, further harming the fragile reef ecosystems these species depend on.

Aquarium collection in Hawai‘i has already been halted since 2021 due to environmental and legal concerns, and 2026 presents a critical opportunity to make this protection permanent.

While individual fish may be sold at high markups, Hawai‘i’s reefs generate approximately 800 million dollars annually through tourism and ecosystem services, far outweighing the short term profits of extraction.

Protecting reef fish protects reef health, our economy, and future generations.

I respectfully ask you to keep the ban in place.

With aloha,

Laura Roberts

Dive Instructor and USCG Boat Captain of 15 years in Kona, Hawaii.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:08:21 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Kipapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees on Water, Land, Culture & Arts and on Hawaiian Affairs,

My name is Malia Kipapa, and I am writing in **strong support of HB2101 HD1**. I respectfully urge this joint committee to ban aquarium fish collection on Hawai'i Island and statewide.

I am from North Kona, Hawai'i, and a lineal descendant of Pāhoehoe, Kona. I come from generations of *lawaiia* who have cared for and depended on these waters, and my 'ohana continues to practice our traditional and customary rights as *Kānaka 'Ōiwi* of this place. Our family relies on our reef fish, crustaceans, and *limu* for food, and we want to ensure that these resources remain healthy and abundant for the generations that follow.

For this reason, it is vital that we take a firm stance against extractive commercial practices that harm our nearshore ecosystems. We say, "A'ole", we do not want these foreign, wasteful practices here in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and share my mana'o on this important bill. I again urge your committees to pass HB2101 HD1 in strong support.

With Aloha,

Malia Kipapa

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:09:09 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jadey Cox	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose the bill HB2101.

The science proves that the fishery is sustainable and does not harm fish populations .

passing this bill would hurt local families, who follow regulations, and depend on this work to support their families.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on HB2101.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:14:57 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kainalu Keli'ikuli-Grace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Senator Lee, Senator Inouye, Senator Richards, Senator Lamosao, and all other committee members. My name is Kainalu Keli'ikuli-Grace and I am a lineal descendant of Kapalilua(South Kona) as well as a Hoa'āina for Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui(HKN). I AM IN FULL SUPPORT OF HB2101, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method or collection.

I attended the 2025 Hawai'i Civic Club meeting here in South Kona where we adopted Resolution 2025-40 which states, "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." Resolution 2025-40 also states, "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)." Differing HB2101 also goes completely against the Hierarchy of Use Policy (1998) which states that resource preservation and conservation comes first and commercial use for economic gain comes last. There is also a significant overlap in species that Native Hawaiians hold of utmost importance and Aquarium Fishers have high demand for. As a Native Hawaiian scientist and cultural practitioner, I know how important species like Lau'ipala (Yellow Tang), Pāku'iku'i(Achilles Tang), and Kihikihi(Moorish Idol) are for cultural practices and subsistence. These fish and many others are also keystone species that play a critical role in keeping balance within our delicate and already depleted reef ecosystems throughout the entire Pae 'Āina.

For these reasons, I AM IN FULL SUPPORT OF HB2101. Mahalo piha Senator Lee, Senator Inouye, Senator Richards, Senator Lamosao, and all other committee members for taking my testimony into consideration.

## **Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:**

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 NEARLY 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai'i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne'ōhe, and Kahalu'u.

### **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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Lena Carver  
Keaau, Hawaii

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:19:33 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tom Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support 2101. And do the right thing to preserve our oceans health. I'm well aware that aquarium collecting is not the only thing affecting the health of our reefs, but it is something that we can take action on. Studies have repeatedly shown that if you leave the reefs alone they can return to a balanced state.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:25:17 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Lorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees,

My name is Anne M. Lorenzo 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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

Sincerely,  
Anne M. Lorenzo

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:27:28 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiffany Jacobus	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Tiffany, and I live here on Hawai'i Island with my son.

The ocean is not just something I enjoy, it is a part of who I am. It is where I've experienced some of the most meaningful moments of my life, from diving alongside marine life to watching whales with my family.

That is why I am in strong support of HB 2101.

Each year, tens of thousands of reef fish are taken from Hawai'i waters for the aquarium trade. Studies have shown that a significant percentage of these fish die before they ever reach an aquarium, and mortality can continue after purchase. In contrast, many of these same species can live for decades in the wild.

Beyond the loss of life, removing key species disrupts the natural balance of our reefs. Fish like yellow tang play a critical role in controlling algae and keeping coral healthy. When they are removed, reef systems become weaker and more vulnerable.

At the same time, Hawai'i's nearshore reefs generate approximately 800 million dollars annually through tourism and ecosystem services. Their long-term value alive far exceeds their value in a tank, even though aquarium fish can be sold for hundreds of times more than their food value.

Some observed collection practices have also caused damage to coral habitats, adding further stress to ecosystems already impacted by climate change and pollution.

We are at a point where we must choose protection over extraction.

I want my son, and future generations, to experience Hawai'i the way I have, full of life, beauty, and abundance.

We have the opportunity right now to lead with stewardship instead of waiting for irreversible loss.

Please support HB 2101.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Warm aloha,

Tiffany Jacobus, Dive Instructor and business owner

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:28:58 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am testifying in support of HB2101. I agree with the Legislature that in this time of climate change West Hawaii's waters (in fact the entire state's waters) should not be open to the aquarium trade. I believe it will cause irreparable harm to our marine ecosystem. Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:04:46 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paige Isham	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Paige Isham, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2101.

I urge you to vote NO on this measure.

Aquarium Fishing has been in my family since I was a little girl. It's sad to see that due to misinformation and selfishness, my family was stripped of what they have known since they were children. As someone with Native Hawaiian blood I grew up being educated on my culture. And know that Hawaiians have been fed false information by foreigners to gain something every-time. Do not let this be another one of those cases where our PEOPLE loose to selfishness and arrogance of foreigners.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:15:58 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
ANITA MAE K NAONE	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony Supporting HB2101 HD1 (Mar 23, 2026)

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai'i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne'ohe, and Kahalu'u.

**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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Anita Mae K. Naone  
Kailua, Oahu

**Chairs Richards and Lee, Vice Chairs Lamosao and Inouye, and Members of the Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts:**

My name is Rick Warshauer, from Volcano on the Big Island. I write to ask you to pass HB2101 HD1 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.

# TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2101 HD1

## Committee on Water and Land / Hawaiian Affairs

Aloha, Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Frederick Smith. I live in the Kealakekua ahupua'a in the Kona moku and am a graduate student at UH Hilo focused on marine science and policy. I **strongly support HB2101 HD1**.

HB2101 HD1 is a narrowly focused measure that prohibits commercial aquarium collection. It does not restrict fishing for consumption or bait, affect cultural or subsistence practices, or alter existing scientific or educational permit frameworks, and, over time, supports the continued availability of the resources those practices depend on.

From a Hawaiian Affairs perspective, this bill supports the continued availability of nearshore resources for subsistence, customary, and community-based uses. Reef fish that are commonly targeted for aquarium collection are part of nearshore food systems and contribute directly to the productivity of these ecosystems. Maintaining these populations is not only an ecological issue, but also a question of long-term access. When key species are reduced, reef systems can shift in ways that affect both ecological function and the reliability of nearshore resources over time. Healthy populations of these species support overall reef productivity, which in turn supports more abundant and reliable nearshore fisheries that communities depend on for food and access.

This also raises a question of resource allocation, where a small number of commercial operators may generate impacts that are disproportionately borne by the broader community through reduced availability of nearshore resources relied upon for subsistence and customary use. This is particularly relevant as coral reef systems continue to experience repeated stress from bleaching and other cumulative impacts, and many targeted species have not fully recovered to historic levels.

From a Water and Land perspective, HB2101 HD1 provides clear statutory direction on a question that has remained administratively unresolved. The Department of Land and Natural Resources has continued to operate within an existing permitting framework while recognizing that broader policy determinations regarding commercial aquarium collection rest with the Legislature. This measure resolves that ambiguity through a clear and consistent policy approach.

The bill also improves administrative efficiency. A clear prohibition reduces ambiguity, simplifies enforcement, and avoids the need for complex, resource-intensive regulatory systems. Compared to a managed collection framework, it provides a more straightforward and consistent approach that allows limited enforcement resources to be used more effectively.

This measure aligns with the State's constitutional obligations under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i Constitution to conserve and protect natural resources for present and future generations, and under Article XII, Section 7 to safeguard customary and traditional practices that depend on the continued availability and healthy functioning of nearshore resources.

Importantly, the bill is narrowly tailored. It does not create new permitting systems, does not expand agency staffing needs, and does not impose additional regulatory burdens beyond its specific prohibition.

HB2101 HD1 provides a clear, limited, and administratively consistent policy approach that supports long-term access to resources, ecosystem function, and responsible management. I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Frederick Smith

Captain Cook, HI

SUBJECT: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB2101 HD1 - Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection**

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affair,

My name is Kēhau Springer, and I am a kanaka 'ōiwi practitioner and researcher residing in Kea'au, Moku o Keawe. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB2101 HD1**.

HB2101 HD1 is timely, necessary and long overdue. It addresses a fundamental policy question that has been deferred for decades: whether Hawai'i's nearshore reef species should be treated as export commodities for private profit, or protected as public trust resources essential to ecological integrity, cultural practices, and intergenerational well-being.

After years of sustained community concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the commercial aquarium collection was halted by court order in 2017 and has remained largely shut down for nearly a decade. However, DAR is now moving to reopen West Hawai'i's waters through administrative rulemaking, asserting that it is statutorily required to do so. This moment makes clear why legislative action is necessary. Agency rulemaking can regulate how an activity operates, but only the Legislature can determine whether that activity should be allowed at all.

**Protecting Public Trust Resources and Community Stewardship:**

Commercial aquarium collection is a for-profit, export-oriented industry that commodifies Hawai'i's nearshore reef ecosystems for ornamental markets abroad. It removes fish that serve critical ecological functions—particularly herbivorous species essential to reef resilience and that hold deep cultural significance for Kanaka 'Ōiwi as food sources, indicators of ecosystem health, and participants in customary practices.

Peer-reviewed research has documented significant declines of targeted reef species at aquarium collection sites (Tissot & Hallacher, 2003), with later studies showing continued depletion in areas open to harvest despite management interventions (Williams et al., 2009; Stevenson et al., 2011). These findings confirm what lawai'a have long observed. At a time when our reefs are already under severe stress from climate change, bleaching events, and land-based pollution, continued extraction for luxury markets is neither prudent nor pono.

**Upholding Constitutional and Cultural Responsibilities:**

HB2101 aligns with Hawai'i's constitutional obligations. Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, affirms that marine resources are held in trust for present and future generations. Article XII, Section 7 further mandates the protection of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. The Ka Pa'akai o ka 'Āina (2000) decision reaffirmed that state agencies must identify cultural practices, assess the impacts of proposed actions, and adopt protective measures.

Commercial aquarium collection fails these standards. It displaces traditional lawai'a relationships, disrupts konohiki stewardship systems, and erodes the spiritual and ecological balance foundational to our identity as people of the sea. There is no cultural or ecological justification for continuing this extractive practice.

### **Why Legislative Action Matters Now**

When the industry was active, commercial aquarium collections removed hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of reef fish annually, with disproportionate impacts in places like West Hawai‘i. This level of extraction undermined reef biodiversity, comprised subsistence and cultural practices, and reinforced the treatment of public trust resources as commodities for private gain.

Despite the industry’s closure, DAR is now advancing rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i and potentially set the groundwork for expansion elsewhere. This approach expends public resources to revive a defunct and highly contested industry, rather than addressing more urgent marine management needs for supporting community-based stewardships efforts already underway across the pae ‘āina.

HB2101 HD1 provides needed clarity. It affirms that Hawai‘i’s reef ecosystems are not to be managed for ornamental export, and allows the State to redirect its limited capacity toward restoring fisheries, supporting co-management, and strengthening long-term resilience.

### **A Call for Pono Governance:**

Since the passage of Act 306 in 1998, which established the West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area and effectively institutionalized the commercial aquarium trade, Hawai‘i’s Legislature has introduced more than a dozen bills seeking to limit, regulate, or prohibit this practice. Despite widespread community concern and mounting ecological evidence, nearly every measure since has died in committee or been vetoed. This persistent pattern reflects a structural reluctance to prioritize reef protection over commercial extraction. HB2101 HD1 represents an opportunity to help break that cycle and align state policy with community values, constitutional obligations, and long-term reef protection.

Our reefs are more than commodities and ornaments, they are our ancestors, our teachers, and providers that sustain our identity and resilience as Kanaka ‘Ōiwi. Mahalo nui loa to this committee for advancing HB2101 HD1 and for standing in support of Hawai‘i’s people, moana, ‘āina, culture and lāhui. I respectfully urge your full support of this measure.

Mahalo nui for your consideration!

Na‘u

*Shauna Kēhaunani Springer*

na Shauna Kēhaunani Springer

Kea‘au, Moku o Keawe, Hawai‘i

Founder & Executive Director, Ka Pa‘akai Consulting

Member of Nā Kai ‘Ewalu

PhD Candidate, Te Whare Wānaga o Waikato (The University of Waikato)

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:37:43 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katherine Fryer	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. Now the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) claims that it is statutorily forced to reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection, in a move that could lead to reopening the industry throughout Hawai‘i. This would disastrously impact our unique reef ecosystems, the traditional fishing practices that rely on reef fish species, and the pristine natural beauty that is essential to our tourism industry.

Reef fish (particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors) play vital roles in maintaining a healthy nearshore environment, including the coral reefs that protect our coastlines from storm surge, tsunamis and coastal erosion. While the collection industry was active, the removal of hundreds of thousands if not millions of reef fish per year undermined coral reef biodiversity and resilience. In our era of rising seas and increasingly violent storms, we urgently need the coastal buffer that healthy reefs provide. We must promote reef ecosystem recovery and prevent the undue strain of overfishing.

We should follow the example of Native Hawai‘ian cultural practitioners by protecting our environment and taking no more from it than we need. Vast numbers of wild creatures should not be caught and sold off to the ornamental pet trade. Corporate greed should not take precedence over environmental protection or the public interest. Most Hawai‘i residents oppose commercial aquarium collection, and the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for permanently banning this industry from our state.

Please enact our aquarium collection shutdown into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i Island’s waters should not be reopened for aquarium trade exploitation.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:38:48 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
MichaelGaulke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“Aloha, I’m a Hawaii Island resident writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Most Hawai‘i residents support this ban statewide, and with aquaculture now supplying the trade, there is no reason to take the wild ones. My wife and I are long time divers and lovers of the oceans. Please support this bill.” Give our future generations the opportunity to live the underwater experiences we have so loved! Mahalo.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:43:45 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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 our now longstanding aquarium collection shutdown 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.

Accordingly, I respectfully but strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** this measure.

--Shay Chan Hodges, Maui, Hawaii

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:50:10 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Norrington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of banning aquarium collection of reef fish in Hawaiian waters. Our reef fish already face extensive risk with over fishing, warming waters, soil runoff (recent floods bringing excessive runoff!) and recreational activities. The numbers and diversity have declined while tourism and local demand has increased. With the reefs dying there should be little doubt that our fish need protections.

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:46:53 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Thank you.



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Testimony of SUPPORT  
HB2101–HD1  
Mar. 23. 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.



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Testimony of SUPPORT  
HB2101–HD1  
Mar. 23. 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: 3/23/2026 1:04:21 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucienne de Naie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha Chairs Lee and Richards and Vice-chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

I strongly support HB2101 HD1. Please support what our courts and our communities - Hawaii County Council and various neighborhood boards on O'ahu are asking: a ban on aquarium collecting on our neighbor islands, as well as the island of O'ahu.

Commercial aquarium collection rplunders native fish species from our reefs. These species are a vital part of our reef ecosystems . Our reefs themselves are struggling to survive- they were never designed to support large extraction of targeted species.

Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry. Over 15 years ago, Maui County passed its own ordinance to make aquarium collecting, virtually illegal. Now we need a clear prohibition for the other islands to help make enforcement efforts practical.

Mahalo for your consideration of our concerns

Lucienne de Naie, Huelo, Maui

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:21:37 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carter Collins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2101.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:48:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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 a 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.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 1:55:37 PM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Cates	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB2101, which would implement a permanent ban on the aquarium fishery in West Hawai'i. If enacted, this policy will likely expand statewide, including to O'ahu, and would effectively nullify the time, effort, and resources local fishers have invested in complying with the judicially mandated environmental review required for the reissuance of aquarium permits.

On March 10, HB2101 passed third reading in the House with many members expressing reservations. Floor discussion emphasized that effective fisheries management is best carried out by the appropriate state agencies—specifically DLNR and DAR—whose expertise and scientific capacity support sustainable use, environmental protection, and management of coastal marine resources. The West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area already reflects this approach, setting aside approximately 30% of the Kona coastline as no-take areas for aquarium collection to support fish stock replenishment and reef health.

Management of fisheries should remain with agencies equipped to apply science-based, adaptive management—not through legislative prohibition. The Legislature's role is to ensure these agencies are properly funded and able to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

HB2101 bypasses established scientific management frameworks and undermines the environmental review process required by law. Rather than supporting a data-driven, regulated pathway for aquarium fishing through HEPA compliance and subsequent regulations determined by fishery management, the bill imposes a permanent ban that precludes adaptive management authority and informed decision-making by the BLNR. I respectfully urge both Committees to reject HB2101 and defer to existing statutory authority, and allow the O'ahu environmental review process to proceed before enacting a permanent ban. A completed evaluation ensures all future decision making is grounded in science, law, and public input.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Lisa Cates

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 2:25:43 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chairs and all Committee Members,

I strongly support this bill to ban AQ collection and OHA's intention in creating it for the benefit of Native Hawaiians and their traditional practices. Numerous groups and individuals of all backgrounds have testified in support to finally end permits.

Herbivores play an important role in our kai ecosystem. We need them to perform their function in keeping our reefs healthy. **Removing over 100,000 herbivorous reef fish a year undermines reef resilience — it does not support it. Our collective kuleana requires we collectively manage these precious 🌺 🌍 🐠 for future generations.**

Sustainability works best when connected to subsistence such as Native Hawaiians practiced rather than based on an extractive profit motive. Aquarium fishing is not a cultural practice, subsistent nor sustainable for our kai ecosystem.

Hawai'i's unique and limited natural, cultural, and historic resources are held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawai'i nei, and its visitors, and in particular Native Hawaiians as stated in Article XII Section 7.

The applicant is not a fisher but a continent-based pet trade industry group called Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council located in Alexandria, Virginia. They have no expressed ties or direct knowledge to Native Hawaiians practices. Their only goal is Profit. The applicant Failed to Consult with citizen groups and communities who are affected. The FEIS did not address the local community's specific issues and concerns raised in the earlier environmental assessments, nor did it appropriately disclose adverse effects to the unique biological and cultural resources that are part of the public trust that the State of Hawaii has the responsibility to protect. The preparer of the FEIS (PIJAC) did not answer the Native Hawaiians substantive questions, and did not provide verifiable data sources for its statements.

Both DAR and the FEIS failed to provide appropriate baseline data from which to analyze sustainability and the risks posed by cumulative factors that include unregulated collecting, climate change, under-reporting of catch, failure to monitor and take enforcement actions when violations occur. Also as Charlie Young has testified the trade began under the territorial rule decades before DAR began collecting data in the 1990s. The baseline should be from the 1950's when the permits were first issued rather than the 1990s. The reef's momona experienced by

lineal descendants's grandparents has been taken just as their 'Aina and Kai was stolen for the profit of land and power in Hawai'i.

The FEIS failed to address changes to habitat from natural and human perturbations historically. The resources of the ocean and the nearshore waters are a component of the Public Trust held for the benefit of Native Hawaiians. For instance the FEIS failed to acknowledge the significant impacts of aquarium collecting on lawai`a (fishing) and its effect on Hawaiian traditional culture, contemporary practice and way of life. The CIA concluded that a significant cultural impact would occur if issuance of Aquarium Permits under an alternative would cause a significant decline in the population of a White List Species considered to be a cultural resource, either directly through the collection of fish or indirectly through habitat impacts.

The FEIS Failed to offer appropriate mitigation for these impacts, it lacks regulation to ensure reporting of all collection.

Furthermore, it fails to address the Cruelty to which the collected animals are subjected to. The FEIS from PIJAC a so called pet advocate failed to respond to questions/ concerns about the cruelty. I know because I was one of commenters on Animal Cruelty based on Hawai'i Animal Cruelty Laws. The over 500 dead Tangs in trash at Honokohau boat ramp is not pono nor traditional practice it is another example of a greedy few only see Tangs as \$\$\$ not their intrinsic value left on the reefs a value held by a majority of residents.

I respectfully ask you to uphold PTD and traditional rights,

Diane Ware

Moku o Ka'u Volcano/Keauhou

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 2:34:35 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kilihea Inaba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

This testimony is in strong support of 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 nearly 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, export, and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas – with measurable negative effects on the local densities of fish and other species. Affected communities have repeatedly called for closure of the industry, as reflected in a recent resolution from the County of Hawai‘i calling on the legislature to ban the practice, as well as resolutions from the Neighborhood Boards of Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u.

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 remain 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 the seven businesses who participated in the environmental review process. A quota-based permit system closes economic pathways to industry newcomers and also 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 for the benefit of a small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1, with an amendment to restore the ban statewide, as originally drafted.

Change must come or future generations will not have what we now and those prior have been so blessed with.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kilihea Inaba

Kaloko, Kona, Hawai'i

Testimony Relating to HB 2101 HD1 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

To: Chair Herbert M. “Tim” Richards, III (Committee on Hawaiian Affairs)

Chair Chis Lee (Committee of Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts)

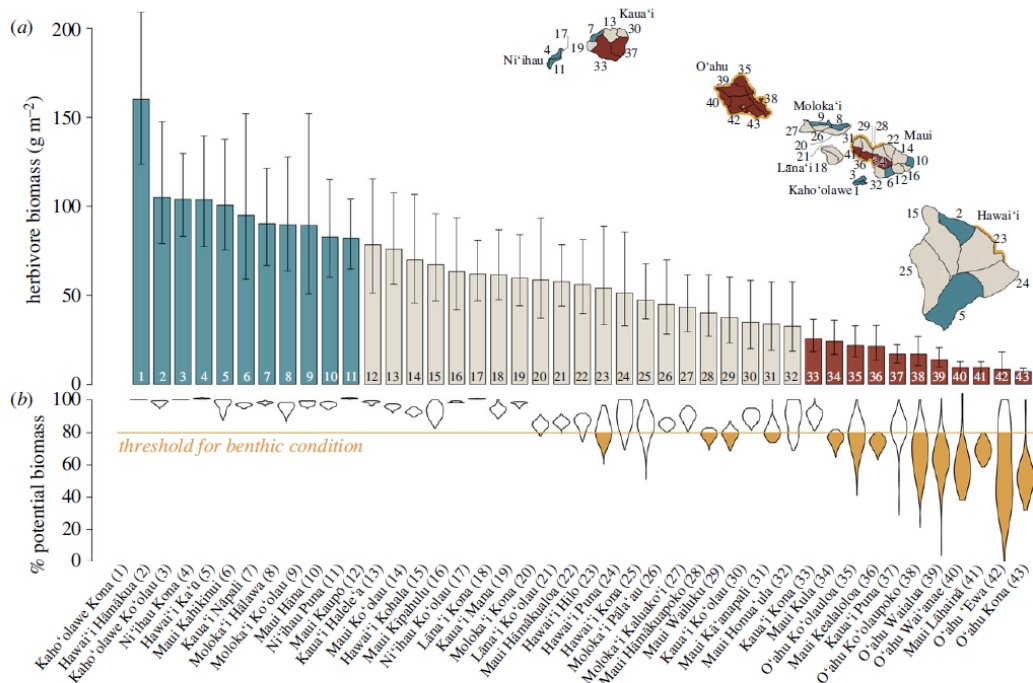
From: Jo-Ann Leong, Director Emerita, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology  
Distinguished Professor Emerita, Oregon State University



Aloha Chair Richards and Chair Lee,

I have been asked to comment on HB 2101 HD1 by the community of the Koolau-poko Hawaiian Civic Club. At issue is the community’s desire to protect the resources of Kaneohe Bay.

I have read the testimonies submitted by citizens and action groups in support of and opposed to HB2101 HD1, as well as the scientific papers that support the fact that DLNR enacted sustainable practices in the West Hawaii Fishery management area. However, what is missing from this discussion is that Oahu’s herbivore biomass is very low (Donovan



**Figure 2.** (a) Posterior estimates of herbivore biomass summarized across moku (land divisions). Bars are means and error bars are 50% intervals of posterior predictions for all 100 m pixels in each moku, and thus are post-stratified estimates that account for the relative distribution of habitat and variation in other predictors. Moku with mean values in the upper quartile (top fourth) are colored turquoise, and moku with mean values in the lower quartile (bottom fourth) are colored red. Numbers correspond to labels at the bottom of (b) and to numbers on map (inset) (a larger map of moku boundaries with labels is provided in electronic supplementary material, figure S6). (b) Violin plots of per cent potential biomass for all 100 m pixels in each moku estimated as the expected biomass from model in figure 1 divided by the potential biomass when fishing is minimized and all other predictors are held constant, with threshold (80%) below which benthic condition is predicted to decrease (from figure 3b). Moku with greater than 44% of area under the threshold are coloured yellow in b and the coastline is coloured yellow in the inset.

et al., 2023). It is so low that the benthic condition, the health of the ecosystem, is predicted to decline, and restoration of that ecosystem is needed.

This study, based on the analysis of 20,242 fish transects from 2004 to 2014, is comprehensive. Clearly, Oahu Island needs protection and should be included in the ban.

Reference: Donovan, Counsell, Donahue, Lecky, Gajdzik, Marcoux, Sparks, and Teague 2023. Evidence for managing herbivores for reef resilience. Proc. R. Soc. B 290:20232101.

I ask that the committee include Oahu in this ban.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 3:21:55 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Suparna Vashisht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2101 HD1, Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection**

The aquarium trade is hurting our reef systems by taking out important species just for decoration. After years of this, reef fish populations have dropped, and the overall health of reefs that Hawai'i communities depend on has taken a hit.

This is really about public responsibility—Hawai'i's reefs should be cared for in a way that benefits everyone now and in the future, not drained for private profit. That matters even more as reefs are already under stress from climate change and pollution coming from land.

HB2101 is a solid step toward protecting reef health, keeping our waters clean, and helping coastal areas stay strong over time. I support it and hope the Legislature will look at expanding these protections across the state.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:44:02 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kala Cates	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please do not pass HB2101. This bill sets an unfair precedent for all fishermen and sustainably managed fisheries in Hawaii.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 4:47:36 PM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James D Cisler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All! Please restore the ban on the collection of reef resources by commercial aquarium representatives. Our surrounding ocean and reefs and everything they contain need ecological and cultural protection, and always will. Then enforce this ban with all the resources available to you.

Thank You!

James D Cisler

**LATE**

## 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 and marine aquarist. I am writing to strongly **oppose HB 2101**. While I support reef conservation, this bill as written is discriminatory and misguided. Moreover, the entire effort to protect Hawaii's reef ecosystem is ill-conceived.

Specifically, HB 2101 as written embodies:

### **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, the disabled and others 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 while allowing others to continue is not sound policy.

### **A Better Solution: Resource Management**

I believe in protecting our resources for the people of Hawaii. Rather than a total ban on commercial aquarium collection, management of the resource for all ought to be implemented based on scientific data and sound judgement. This would ensure that a sustainable resource is perpetuated.

### **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 all Hawaii's people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:03:10 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susie Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in Kapaau, Kohala, Big Island and I urge passage of HB2101 Statewide.

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, DLNR needs 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 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

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 7:14:28 PM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregg Gruwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill! Based on my observations as an avid snorkeler, living here since 1990, I have seen a huge decline in Yellow Tang and other reef fish populations!

Tourists come here by the millions to see and swim with these animals. Stop the trade please!

Gregg Gruwell, Kamuela HI

Ban aquarium collecting in Hawai'i

I strongly support HB2101 HD1. 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

**LATE**

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:53:29 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Von Kaanaana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly urge the committee to SUPPORT HB2101 HD1.

Extraction of Hawai'i's already threatened resources only hasten our point of no return in global warming. Hawai'i is the international leader in environmental bioscience concerning reef fish in the pacific; this is a no brainer of a decision that further enshrines our environmental future. Destabilizing our own ecosystem for extractive industry is not a good trade. The reef health depends on the prosperity of these wild animals who serve an irreplaceable purpose in the maintenance in a normal predictable weather cycle.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:03:30 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelle C Pahinui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha e Chairs Lee and Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:**

I strongly support HB2101 HD1 to ban commercial aquarium collection.

As a cultural practitioner and community-based arts leader, I believe our natural resources are inseparable from our cultural identity. Our nearshore reefs are not just ecosystems—they are living classrooms, food sources, and places where ‘ike and practices are passed from one generation to the next. The removal of reef species for commercial export disrupts this balance and impacts the communities who depend on these resources for subsistence, cultural practice, and connection to place.

For nearly a decade, these waters have remained closed, allowing reef systems and communities time to recover. Reopening them for the benefit of a small number of commercial interests does not align with the long-term wellbeing of Hawai‘i’s people or environment.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB2101 HD1 and to restore the ban statewide to ensure consistent protection of our marine resources across the pae ‘āina.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Chelle Pahinui**  
Hawai‘i Island  
Nā‘ālehu Theatre

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 10:30:39 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill, to help protect our reef fish. I have been a sport SCUBA diver for over 30 years, primarily on Oahu and Big Island. By my experience, both locations have shown a decrease in both the number and biodiversity of reef fish during that time. The more exotic fishes, and those that are more colorful, have been noticeably less prevalent, to where some are very rare and hard to find anywhere.

There are so few people who collect fish for the aquarium trade, and they hurt the reef for all the rest of us who want to enjoy seeing the fish, and want to have a rich biodiversity to keep our reefs safe. Plus, the number of fish that die during collection, shipping and sale, means that there is needless sacrifice of our reef fish for the small economic gain for a few people.

So please, help us protect the fish so all can enjoy them.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 8:12:02 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pam Madden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Pam Madden; I am a resident of Kona on Hawaii Island. I strongly support HB2101 to ban aquarium collection in the State of Hawaii, especially along the Kona Coast! Aquarium collection is a purely extractive industry for the benefit of out-of-state people and companies. The economic value of having healthy, diverse, and thriving reef fish significantly surpasses the tax revenue from a few collectors. Conversely, those few AQ collectors have an enormous detrimental impact on our reefs and ecosystem. Healthy reefs and fish are vital to supporting Hawaii's Blue Economy and with the sustainable aquaculture advancements of growing ornamental fish at NELHA, UHH PACRAC and HIMB, it is well past time to stop exporting our natural resources off island. There is overwhelming community support for banning all aquarium collection in the State. Please listen to your constituents, not the high-paid lobbying interest group, and stop aquarium collection once and for all.

Mahalo for your time,

Pam Madden

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 9:57:55 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Lee, Chair Richards, Vice Chairs Inouye and Lamosao, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Hawaiian Affairs:

My name is Tiare Smith and I am writing from Kahalu‘u, O‘ahu in **strong support** of **HB2101 HD1**. This bill bans the commercial collection of Hawai‘i’s marine life for sale and export as aquarium pets while explicitly preserving important exceptions for traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, scientific research and education (such as the Waikīkī Aquarium), aquaculture and captive-breeding programs (including fishponds), and personal use such as bait.

I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1 **and amend it to restore the ban statewide**, rather than limiting it only to counties with populations between 200,000 and 300,000 (Hawai‘i Island). Commercial aquarium collection has highly localized but severe impacts on specific reefs and communities, and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners across the pae ‘āina have long called for an end to this industry to protect our nearshore ecosystems.

For nearly a decade, since the 2017 Hawai‘i Supreme Court ruling under the Hawai‘i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA), commercial aquarium collection has not been legally permitted. Yet the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is now proposing rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to the seven businesses that completed the environmental review process. The proposed quota system would lock out new participants and require intensive DOCARE enforcement resources — resources that could instead support co-management with Native Hawaiian communities and address other urgent threats to our marine resources.

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital reef species for private commercial gain and export, often resulting in high mortality rates. This practice undermines the State’s constitutional public trust doctrine, which requires our natural and cultural resources to be conserved for the public good rather than private profit. Healthy coral reefs provide food security, shoreline protection, cultural and subsistence practices, and generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue. Allowing even a limited reopening threatens these benefits and the resilience of our marine environment at a time when reefs face increasing stressors.

A clear statutory ban — applied statewide — would protect reef health, honor the repeated calls from affected communities (including resolutions from the County of Hawai‘i and neighborhood boards in Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, and Kahalu‘u), simplify enforcement, reduce regulatory

costs to the State, and free DAR and DOCARE to focus on higher-priority needs, including true co-management with Native Hawaiian communities.

HB2101 HD1, strengthened to a full statewide prohibition, is the right step to safeguard our reefs, uphold Native Hawaiian rights and self-determination, and ensure these precious marine resources remain for future generations rather than being exported for short-term commercial gain.

I strongly urge the Committees to pass HB2101 HD1 with an amendment restoring the statewide ban.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership in protecting Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.

Tiare Smith Kahalu'u, O'ahu

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 10:06:29 AM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in STRONG support of **HB2101 HD1**.

**LATE**

**HB-2101-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 11:20:25 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/24/2026 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denise Fisher	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose