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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAIʻI | KA MOKUʻĀINA ʻO HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA ʻOIHANA KUMUWAIWAI ʻĀINA
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. KANAKAʻOLE
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. KANAKAʻOLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committees on
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
and
WATER & LAND

Wednesday, February 18, 2026
8:45 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2101
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

House Bill 2101 proposes to prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection. **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 Hawaiʻi aquarium fishery for sustainable commercial use based on science and monitoring, gear restrictions, and in West Hawaiʻi, Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs), which have contributed to increased populations of the two most heavily collected aquarium fish species. For example, in West Hawaiʻi, 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi. 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.

OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2101

RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land
Hawai‘i State Capitol

February 18, 2026 8:45 A.M. Room 411

Dear Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land:

Mahalo for setting this bill for hearing. This bill is part of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA's) 2026 Legislative Package and OHA submits this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT.

This measure is necessary to balance the use of our public trust marine resources and to protect the communities most directly affected by commercial aquarium collection. In introducing this package as part of its 2026 Legislative Package, OHA joins other representative bodies responding to their constituents by calling for a legislative ban of this practice including:

- The County of Hawai‘i;
- County of Kaua‘i;
- The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; and
- The Neighborhood Boards of Kahalu‘u, Kāne‘ohe, Kailua and Waimānalo.

The Current Law Allowing Commercial Aquarium Collection is a Relic of the Past

Established pursuant to the terms of Section 5 of the Admissions Act and the Hawai‘i State Constitution, Article XII, sections 4, 5, and 6, OHA serves as a semiautonomous agency and trust vehicle for the betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians. OHA's constitutional duties include administering its pro rata share of public trust revenues for the benefit of its Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, and formulating policy related to Native Hawaiians. HRS Chapter 10 further expands upon OHA role and duties in protecting and promoting Native Hawaiian rights across state agencies that have practices and policies that impair the exercise of such rights or affect OHA's mission to improve Native Hawaiian social and economic conditions. *See* HRS § 10-3.

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

Aquarium Collection Conflicts With Other Reef Uses

The state's commercial aquarium trade in native reef species has raised concerns among and inspired committed grassroots advocacy to protect reef ecosystems and the communities that depend on them for decades. In 2012, a coalition of Native Hawaiian lawai'a (fishers) from West Hawai'i, in partnership with other concerned ocean users, sued to halt collection pending completion of environmental review. In 2017 the Supreme Court agreed that without environmental review under the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA), continued aquarium collection was illegal. Aquarium collection stopped in the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) in 2017,[1] and statewide in 2021, after a second lawsuit ended a loophole for collection outside of West Hawai'i under commercial marine licenses. Therefore, there has not been any legal aquarium collection in the state for nearly a decade, and this bill would not cause immediate displacement of any ongoing economic activity.

In early October 2025, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) proposed rules to reopen commercial aquarium collection in the WHRFMA following industry participants' completion of a Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement (RFEIS) in 2023.[2] Significantly, three Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) members voted to approve the 2023 RFEIS and three voted to reject it. Therefore, the RFEIS was deemed approved by operation of law due since no action was taken within the 30-day approval period. *See* HRS § 343-5(e).

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[1] WHRFMA extends along the west coast of Hawai'i Island, from Ka Lae, Ka'u (South Point) to Upolu Point, North Kohala, excluding Kawaihae commercial harbor. *See* HRS § 188F-2.

[2] Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits and Commercial Marine Licenses for the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area at p.2 (May 26, 2021) ("RFEIS"), *available at* https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EA_EIS_Library/2021-06-08-HA-Revised-FEIS-Hawaii-Island-Commercial-Aquarium-Permits.pdf.

On October 15, 2025, West Hawai‘i beneficiaries attended OHA's Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment to testify in opposition to DAR's proposal, and to ask OHA for support in addressing the negative effects of commercial aquarium collection in their communities. Subsequently, on October 24, 2025, the BLNR received over five hours of community testimony on the proposal to reopen the industry, overwhelmingly in opposition. During the public hearing, some Board members expressed the opinion that existing law *allowing* DLNR to issue commercial aquarium collection permits, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 188-31, *requires* that it permit industry participants after they comply with HEPA.[3] This is also a position advanced by the Attorney General's Office in related litigation.

Despite widespread community opposition highlighting ecological and cultural concerns with the proposal, the BLNR voted to send the rules out for public notice and comment, moving one step closer to reopening state waters to commercial aquarium extraction despite the limited economic value of the industry to the state. According to the industry's own advocates, the aquarium trade in WHRFMA generates between $499,416 to $2,022,686 of income per year within the state (as 67% of statewide industry activity), with additional indirect economic benefits.[4] In contrast, healthy coral reefs generate more than **$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue** and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security, further enhancing their economic value.[5] Costs for DAR to administer the permitting program and police compliance with geographically defined marine protected areas further reduces the value of this industry to the state.

The Public Trust in Natural Resources Further Supports a Ban

Hawai‘i's constitutional public trust doctrine, Haw. Const. Art. XI, § 1, requires that public resources be managed for the benefit of present and future generations, with commercial uses that negatively impact these resources disfavored under the law. Where commercial uses are permitted, commercial users have a high burden to justify their needs considering negative consequences on public trust uses including long term preservation of the resource itself. Moreover, where there is scientific uncertainty concerning the effects of commercial use, the public trust doctrine cautions application of the precautionary principle to preserve resources long term. Native Hawaiian cultural practices are one of the uses constitutionally protected under the public trust doctrine. *See In re Waiāhole*, 94 Haw. 97, 115-142 (2000).

These constitutional principles clearly caution the state against permitting an industry shown to repeatedly impinge upon the interests and concerns of the general

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[3] *See* Board Members Denise Iseri-Matsubara's and Riley Smith's statements on the Board's purported lack of authority to ban commercial aquarium collection, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=PLDh6ZXzdUvQkHtqVoauOkfa26NfNLh2pK&index=4 at 8:10:27; 7:22:09; 7:55:33.

[4] RFEIS at p. 102.

[5] Restoring Hawai‘i's Reefs | The Nature Conservancy (Sept. 16, 2018).

public and those most intimately connected to the affected place and ecosystems. Beyond the specific interests of affected communities, businesses, and Native Hawaiian practitioners, up to 84% of Hawai‘i Island and O‘ahu residents favor banning the industry.[6]

This widespread concern with the aquarium industry points to a fundamental policy question that this legislature must confront: in an age of ecological uncertainty, with coral reefs facing potential extinction within the next fifty years, does the commercial extraction of reef fish serve a beneficial public purpose? OHA respectfully submits that it does not, and urges the legislature to pass this ban to protect Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, Hawai‘i’s nearshore ecosystems, and the broader public interest. Moreover, DAR’s sustainability conclusion for West Hawai‘i is based on a permit-quota system that rests, in turn, upon untested enforcement and closes this industry to newcomers, further limiting the extent to which this industry benefits the public beyond existing industry participants.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to present testimony. OHA asks that the Committees PASS this bill.

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

Holeka Goro Inaba, Ed.D.
Council Chair, District 8, North Kona

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HAWAIʻI COUNTY COUNCIL

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

February 15, 2026

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

RE: **Support for HB2101**, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.
Prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.
Hearing: **Tuesday, February 18, 2026 at 8:45 a.m.**

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

I am writing in strong support of **HB2101.**

As Chair of the Hawaii County Council, as an representative for Council District 8 in North Kona, I am representing the island with the largest coastline and some of the most ecologically significant reef systems in the State, I recognize the vital importance of protecting our nearshore marine resources for present and future generations.

Our coral reefs are foundational to Hawaii Island's environmental health, food security, cultural continuity, and economic resilience. Herbivorous reef fish such as lauʻipala (yellow tang) and kole play a critical ecological role in maintaining reef balance by grazing algae and enhancing coral recovery—particularly as our reefs face mounting pressures from climate change, warming ocean temperatures, and ocean acidification.

H.B. No. 2101 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.

This measure appropriately aligns state law with constitutional mandates contained in Article XI and Article XII of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii, which affirm the State's obligation to conserve and protect Hawaii's natural resources and to safeguard traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices. The bill clearly preserves subsistence fishing, traditional practices, fishpond management, aquaculture, and scientific research, while ending commercial extraction for the ornamental aquarium trade.

Hawaii Island communities have long expressed concern about the commercialization of our public trust resources for private export markets. Our reefs are not commodities—they are living systems that sustain cultural practices, shoreline protection, biodiversity, and our visitor industry. Protecting reef fish populations strengthens food webs, supports local subsistence, and enhances reef-based tourism such as snorkeling and diving.

Prohibiting commercial aquarium collection is a precautionary and responsible policy choice. In the face of accelerating climate impacts, it is imperative that we prioritize reef recovery and ecological integrity over commercial exploitation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass H.B. No. 2101.

Sincerely,

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

HGI.wpb

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:14:51 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Councilmember Tamara Paltin	Councilmember - West Maui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair and members,

I write in strong support of HB2101. We have long seen the negative impact of the commercial aquarium industry and their collection on our reef ecosystems, this bill is especially critical in light of other impacts our nearshore waters are experiencing with sedimentation, runoff, over development and lack of defined managed retreat policy pathways.

Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i counties have all enacted resolutions limiting or outright banning commercial aquarium collection. Communities where the industry has targeted its collections have seen the highly localized impacts and detriment to subsustence uses of reef resources and the negative impacts on Natice Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.

Banning aquarium collection would allow DAR to focus its limited resources and attention where it is critically needed, this measure is long overdue in sustainably caring for our nearshore ecosystems.

Mahalo for taking the time to read this testimony and your service to our communities, please pas HB2102.

Tamara Paltin Councilmember - West Maui

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo

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

HAWAIʻI COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawaiʻi 96720

DATE: February 17, 2026

TO: House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2

SUBJECT: HB2101

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support of HB2101**. Hawaiʻi'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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi'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

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

February 18, 2026,

To: House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water & Land,

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

Aloha Chair Lowen, Chair Hashem, and members of the EEP and W&L Committees:

Mahalo for hearing this important bill that is so critical to protecting our marine herbivores and invertebrates.

In 2023, the **Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously passed an** overwhelmingly supported, community-led proposal to **permanently ban commercial aquarium collecting state wide through rulemaking — then abruptly claimed it lacked the legal authority to do so.** Instead, **it directed communities and advocates to pursue a legislative solution instead**.

So Friends of Hanauma Bay joins the vast majority of Hawaii residents testifying in strong support of HB2101 for many reasons:

- The aquarium trade is in **fundamental conflict** with **local culture and Native Hawaiian values**, including pono fishing practices that limit take to what is truly needed.

- The aquarium trade is **inconsistent with mālama ʻāina** and the State's **constitutional public-trust obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations.**

• **Published cost-benefit analyses** show residents receive **no public benefit** from the aquarium trade while bearing **all environmental and enforcement costs.**

• The trade uses **unimaginably cruel methods** and **tolerates obscenely high mortality rates** absolutely unthinkable for any other pet trade. But it's acceptable for our reef wildlife!

We urge you to **pass HB2101**, and mahalo for this opportunity to testify in its strong support!

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop, MS
Friends of Hanauma Bay I President

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/14/2026 8:07:42 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

We oppose. After EIS was forced upon aquarium fishers, it backfired on enviros because it proved the aquarium collection is sustainable. Fishing both comercial and subsistence is our culture as native Hawaiians.

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of this committee,

My name is Maki Morinoue, and I am testifying on behalf of HULI PAC. HULI PAC is an organization whose mission is to endorse and support candidates and office holders of integrity who serve the āina and people of Hawai'i Island as a priority.

* *Important, Hawai'i Island County Council representatives unanimously passed **Res. No. 422-25** in January 2026, sending a stronger message to our Hawai'i State Legislature to take the action of prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for ornamental commercial aquarium purposes.*

HULI PAC strongly supports **HB2101**, which permanently prohibits the commercial collection of aquarium fish. This bill is grounded in science, cultural values, and our responsibility to future generations.

Healthy reefs depend on **fish abundance**. Herbivorous reef fish like surgeonfish and tangs are not decorative extras—they are **essential reef caretakers**. They graze algae that would otherwise smother coral, especially after heat stress and bleaching events. Scientific studies consistently show that reefs with higher herbivore populations recover faster, resist invasive algae, and are far more resilient to climate change.

When fish are removed for the aquarium trade, reefs lose this natural defense system. Fewer fish means more algae, weaker coral, less biodiversity, and ultimately, reef collapse. No amount of "managed take" can replace the ecological role of fish that evolved to live and work on the reef.

This is also a matter of **pono and kuleana**. Hawaiian values recognize that reef fish are part of a living system that sustains food security, culture, and community—not private profit. Taking fish for ornamental display removes life from the ecosystem permanently, while providing no benefit to reef health or public good.

Economically, living reefs matter more alive than extracted. Snorkeling, diving, shoreline protection, and subsistence fishing all depend on vibrant fish populations. A reef full of fish supports long-term, community-based economies; an emptied reef supports no one.

HB2101 protects:

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

We need fish on our reefs—not in tanks. Please pass **HB2101** and choose life, science, and responsibility.

Mahalo,
Maki Morinoue (HULI PAC, Hawai'i Island)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 1:07:01 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha members of the joint committees hearing HB 2101!

Yes!

'Big Island Reef Keepers hui' stands with OHA sponsored legislation to ban the commercialization of aquatic life from our reefs. It's overdue!

Scientists say our reefs may only have another 24 years of existence due to climate change overtaking all other factors.

What will we tell our children about these critical times?

Cut off the low hanging fruit by banning this wasteful practice that steals from our people and our planet!

This is something that YOU can do now.

Mahalo!

Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

February 15, 2026

To: House Committee on Energy and the Environment
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

House Committee on Water and Land
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2101 relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection
Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 8:45 am, Conference Room 411 & video
Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha, Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and the Environment, and on Water and Land!

The approximately 6,680 members of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i strongly support HB 2101. It has been many years that we have joined other groups in struggling to stop the environmentally wasteful and devastating, rampant collection of our reef fish for the aquarium pet trade. As the first section of this bill notes, our coral reefs are already being severely damaged by climate change.

The Environmental Caucus would add the continued use of **cesspools** is also killing our reefs, and the unrealistic far-out deadline of 2050 for upgrade of all cesspools encourages people not take any action for another quarter century!!

The species of reef fishes that are popular with the aquarium trade are precisely the herbivorous species that protect the reef from overgrowth of algae, which kills the reefs.

Our reefs need this long-overdue relief! Please pass this bill! Mahalo!

Respectfully,

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

Mike@energyjustice.net

Legislativepriorities@gmail.com

To: The Honorable Nicole Lowen and Mark Hashem, Chairs, the Honorable Amy Perruso and Dee Morikawa Vice Chairs, and Members of the Energy and Environment and Water and Land Committees.

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

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 8:45 a.m. CR411

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Energy and Environment and Water and Land Committees!

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!**

This measure is urgently needed because:

• 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 could be lost by mid-century without strong local protections, including increased herbivore abundance and biomass to control algal overgrowth.**

• Food fishers and subsistence communities are paying the price for decades of aquarium collecting. The aquarium trade historically removed 1.8 times more fish from West Hawai‘i reefs than all food fishers combined, primarily herbivores (DLNR 2020 Report to the Legislature).

• On Oʻahu, 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).

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

Additional benefits of HB2101 include:

• **Clear economic benefits** to Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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 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 to help protect Hawaiʻi's reefs and reef wildlife!

Mahalo!

Hawaiʻi Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

SIERRA CLUB
OF HAWAIʻI

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

February 18, 2026 8:45 AM Conference Room 411

In SUPPORT of HB2101: RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

Aloha Chair Lowen, Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawaiʻi **strongly supports HB2101**, which would establish a Hawaiʻi-wide prohibition on the commercial collection of marine life for the aquarium trade.

Hawaiʻi'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. 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 Hawaiʻi'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, and leveraging the willingness and ability of communities throughout the islands to help co-manage their nearshore waters. By finally prohibiting commercial aquarium collection, this measure would allow DAR to focus its limited capacity on upholding its critical mission and the public trust in our marine ecosystems, rather than expending disproportionate time and resources on catering to the profit-seeking demands of a handful of private entities.

SIERRA CLUB
OF HAWAIʻI

For these reasons, the Sierra Club of Hawaiʻi respectfully urges the Committees to **PASS** HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

KUA'ĀINA ULU 'AUAMO

Testimony Before The
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection (EEP)
House Committee on Water & Land (WAL)
IN SUPPORT OF HB2101
February 18, 2026, 8:45 a.m., Room 411 & via Videoconference

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Kevin Chang, Kuaʻāina Advocate and Executive Director, respectively, testifying on behalf of Kuaʻāina Ulu ʻAuamo (or KUA). "Kuaʻāina Ulu ʻAuamo" 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.** Hawaiʻi'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 ʻāina (caring for our ʻāina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko iʻa (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawaiʻi) and wai ʻōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko Iʻa ("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 ʻĀINA MOMONA – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.**

KUA supports HB2101 as an incremental step toward ʻāina momona.

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

KUA supports this bill based on the long term place-based opposition by traditional fishing communities in West Hawaiʻi and the growing sentiment of support for a statewide approach to addressing this matter within our networks. E Alu Pū members in West Hawaiʻi 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 lawaiʻa pono and place-based fishery management. In 1998, the West Hawaiʻi Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) was created along with the West Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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.

Aloha ‘Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/13/2026 6:31:16 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB2101

Dana Keawe

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:32:34 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee

The Kihei Community Assoc. www.gokihei.org is an all volunteer unfunded non profit community org in So Maui, and we are asking for your support on this measure. Hawai‘i's reef fish belong and are needed within the coral reef structure. They should not be extracted for someone's financial gain via an inefficient system where many die during the export process. Mahalo

Mike Moran for KCA

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:16:17 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Kaaumoana	Hui Hoomalu i ka Aina	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Hui Hoomalu i ka Aina wasa established in the mid 1980's to address threats to our natural and cultural resources on which we depend for life and economy.

As our earth reacts to the abuses of man, our climate changes and our very existance is in peril as an island dependent on the food and protection of our coral reef systems.

Removing key protections of these systems is a threat to us all.

Commerical take of our fish for any purpose less than feeding us is the very definition of "hewa", wrong. In fact it is tantamount to murder of the sea.

Please kill HB 2101.

Mahalo

Makaala Kaaumoana

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

February 17, 2026

To: Rep. Nicole Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A.Perruso, Vice Chair
& Members
Committtee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
& Members
Committee on Water & Land

From: Mahealani Cypher, President

Re: H.B. 2101– Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection – SUPPORT

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice chairs Perruso and Kim, and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation strongly supports H.B. 2101, which would prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Our organization is dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian cultural resources and practices, historic preservation of wahi pana and wahi kapu, and the resources which enrich our lives here in pae`aina Hawai`i.

We are deeply concerned at the disregard that has been exhibited by those who seek to profit off island natural resources for personal commercial gain. We have witnessed this creating a serious issue in Kane`ohe Bay, where native fish are so badly diminished that it is challenging to find more than a few of those creatures in a place that once flourished just a few decades ago.

Aside from the obvious cultural and environmental concerns however, we'd like to address the reasons why anyone would want to allow the depletion of precious natural resources: is this truly more about deregulating use of island waters? Are we entering a season where we will disregard the need for balance in the use and protection of our resources for personal profit from those individuals and companies who do not give back to the resources from which they gather?

We urge your committee to consider the legacy that you leave to your children and generations to come, should you allow the continuation of gathering aquarium fish until the resource is completely gone.

We urge all of you to do what is pono by passing out this important legislation to protect our brothers and sisters in the seas of Hawai`i.

Mahalo for considering our mana`o.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

February 18, 2026

Supports HB2101

Aloha Chairs Lowen & Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso & Morikawa 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 aligns with the Legislature's findings that commercial aquarium collection is unsustainable and contrary to mālama 'āina and responsible stewardship, and it takes a clear step toward protecting reef ecosystems for future generations.

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

Toni

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

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:44:41 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Conall K. Ravenscraft	Hoala Kealakekua Nui Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha chair Lowen and vice chair Peruso and members of the Energy and Environmental Protection Committee, chair Hashem and vice chair Morikawa and members of the Water and Land Use committee,

Please let this serve as testimony for myself Conall Kahaka'ioikamalie Ravenscraft Director of Field Operations for Hoala Kealakekua Nui Inc. (HKN) and a lineal descendant of Napoopoo, Kealakekua, HI.

I am in full support of HB2101 which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Resolution 2025-40 of the Association of Native Hawaiian Civic Clubs supports this action in accordance with community advocates on the grounds of: 1. Upholding the State of Hawai‘i's Public Trust Doctrine. 2. Upholding the mission of DAR which states *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*. 3. Upholding the State of Hawai‘i DLNR Hierarchy of Use Policy prioritizing first Resource Protection, second Public Use, and third Commercial Use.

I thank you for your time and consideration on this measure and urge the commitee to move HB 2101 forward.

Aloha

C. Kahaka'io Ravenscraft

EARTHJUSTICE

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE AMY A. PERRUSO, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

REPRESENTATIVE MARK J. HASHEM, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE DEE MORIKAWA, VICE CHAIR

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

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Lown, Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members:

Earthjustice submits this testimony in **strong support** of HB 2101, which would prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide. HB 2101 proposes to ban commercial aquarium collection by adding this prohibition as a new section to Haw. Rev. Stat. ch. 188; repealing Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31 (aquarium fish permitting statute); repealing Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31.5 (governing receipts for the sale of aquarium collected fish and aquatic life to commercial marine dealers); removing reference to commercial aquarium collection from Haw. Rev. Stat. § 189-11 (governing receipts generally for the sale of fish and aquatic life to commercial marine dealers); and removing reference to Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31 from Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-22.9 (Hā'ena community-based subsistence fishing area).

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

An Opportunity To Reverse A Historical Injustice

In 1953, Hawai'i's territorial legislature passed a law allowing "aquarium fish permits" that would enable collectors to use fine-meshed nets to capture juvenile fish targeted by the commercial aquarium trade. See Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31. This law's passage was based on the ignorant view by those in power that the fish species sought after by the industry are "not edible." S. Stand. Comm. Rep. 442, in 1953 Senate Journal, at 669. ***Such a finding would never***

stand today. Commercial aquarium collectors target popular food fish including kole (goldring surgeonfish) and pāku'iku'i (achilles tang), herbivorous fish that are essential to coral reef health, and other colorful fishes that are found nowhere else in the world—all of which are culturally significant for Native Hawaiians. Because of this outdated legislation, commercial aquarium collectors have enjoyed a ***decades-long pass to extract hundreds of thousands of fish from Hawai'i's reefs annually***, which has devastated nearshore ecosystems by reducing fish populations and directly damaging reefs through harmful collection methods.

Litigation And Other Community-Led Advocacy

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

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

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

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

[2] See Board of Land and Natural Resources Oct. 24, 2025 Meeting, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=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;
- Kaua'i County Council;
- Neighborhood boards for Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne'ohe, and Kahalu'u;
- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs;
- Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club;
- Ko'olau Foundation; and
- Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council.

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

Hundreds Of Thousands In State Subsidies For The Trade

If the legislature does not act and the Board proceeds as planned, collectors would pay just $100 per year (just ***$700 total*** for 7 West Hawai'i collectors, which are the only permits even potentially on the table at this time) for a program that the Division of Aquatic Resources has estimated would cost the state ***$300,000-$500,000*** annually to administer ***for Hawai'i Island***

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

alone.[3] Enforcing the Board's proposed aquarium catch quotas—*if it even were possible*—would be extremely resource-intensive, since enforcement would require counting live fish at sea and onshore, further straining the Division of Conservation and Resources and Enforcement's limited resources. Collectors would extract hundreds of thousands of fish and ship them overseas to sell as ornamental pets, while Hawai'i's reefs increasingly struggle to feed local families and withstand climate change. The legislature should prioritize pono food fishing and reef resilience to benefit all Hawai'i citizens over an extractive practice that benefits only a handful of commercial collectors.

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.

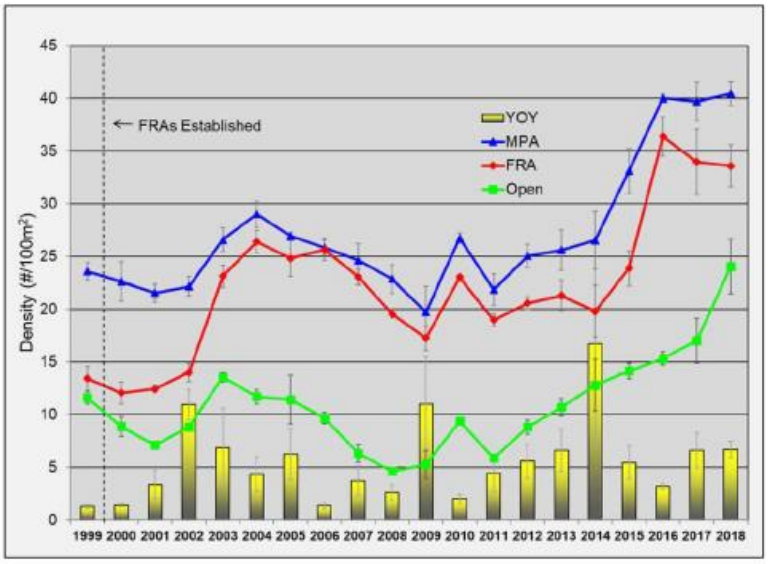

Figure 5. Overall changes in Yellow Tang density (Mean ± SE) in FRAs, MPAs, and Open Areas, 1999-2018. Yellow vertical bars indicate mean density (MAY-NOV) of Yellow Tang YOY. YOY are not included in trend line data (DAR 2019a).

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

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'īpala (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

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

Siena I. Schaar *, Linda J. Cox

Department of Land and Natural Resources, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 1910 East-West Road, Sherman Laboratory 101, Honolulu, HI 96822 USA

ARTICLE INFO

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Marine aquarium fishery
Marine ornamental trade
Fisheries management

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 (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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Available online 17 February 2021

ATTACHMENT

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
A. Status Quo (2019)			
- 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. Permitting System (2016)			
- 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		
C. Statewide AQ Collection Ban			
+ 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		
D. Captive Breeding Collection			
- 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 (HFMAs) 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[a]
Explores four policy alternatives, including a ban.	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 evidence-based recommendations based on impact estimates, descriptions, and the distribution of them among stakeholder groups.	Provided a recommendation based on direct market benefits of the industry.
Recommends a statewide ban on the collection and export of marine aquaria. Suggests that captive breeding collection might hold potential if properly managed.	Recommends reducing the number of permits to ten across the State.
Completed as a student project using existing secondary data and not funded by any industry, government agency or non-profit organization.	Funded by the PIJAC.

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

[a] Indicates endemic species
[b] 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	*Zebrasoma flavescens*	$74.41	$16.00	465.1
Goldring Surgeonfish	*Ctenochaetus strigosus*	$71.88	$14.00	513.4
Achilles Tang	*Acanthurus achilles*	$392.32	$150.00	261.5
Orangespine Unicornfish	*Naso lituratus*	$152.71	$37.50	407.2
Chevron Tang	*Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis*	$233.11	$150.00	155.4
Longnose Butterflyfish	*Forcipiger flavissimus*	$46.00	$15.00	306.6
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon multicinctus*	$35.37	$10.00	353.7
Fourspot Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon quadrimaculatus*	$78.99	$40.00	197.5
Tinker's Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon tinkeri*	$699.99	$350.00	200.0
Moorish Idol	*Zanclus cornutus*	$49.98	$10.00	499.8
Potter's Angelfish	*Centropyge potteri*	$108.06	$30.00	360.2
Yellowtail Coris	*Coris gaimard*	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	*Zebrasoma flavescens*	322,651	284,784	88.26
Goldring Surgeonfish	*Ctenochaetus strigosus*	45,765	44,106	96.37
Achilles Tang	*Acanthurus achilles*	6787	5758	84.84
Orangespine Unicornfish[a]	*Naso lituratus*	9966	10,338	103.73
Chevron Tang	*Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis*	5126 (B.I only)	4135	80.67
Longnose Butterflyfish[a]	*Forcipiger flavissimus*	1329	1507	113.39
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish[a]	*Chaetodon multicinctus*	314	666	212.10
Fourspot Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon quadrimaculatus*	480	448	93.33
Tinker's Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon tinkeri*	293 (B.I only)	218	74.40
Moorish Idol[a]	*Zanclus cornutus*	805 (B.I only)	970	120.50
Potter's Angelfish[a]	*Centropyge potteri*	6708	8726	130.08
Yellowtail Coris Wrasse[a]	*Coris gaimard*	866	993	114.67

(B.I only) indicates collection and reporting on detailed catch report only from Hawai'i island
[a] Indicates sales or export reporting over 100% of what was reported on initial detailed catch report.

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ASSOCIATION OF
HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

February 18, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the House Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Water & Land
In Support of

HB 2101 - RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

Aloha Chair Lowen, Chair Hashem, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees,

The Association of Hawaii Civic Clubs submits testimony in **support** of HB 2101 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.

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

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

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this measure.

ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

A RESOLUTION

NO. 2025 - 40

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DreanaLee Kalili

DreanaLee Kalili, President

Hui Aloha Kīholo

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

House Committees: EEP, WAL, FIN 16 February 2026
Hawai'i State Capitol - Room 401
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Support for HB2101 from Hui Aloha Kīholo

Dear Honorable Representatives:

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

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

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

Interdisciplinary Science

- **Inclusive `Ike:** Inter-disciplinary "convergence" science, honors and respects modern science as a vital addition to ancestral knowledge to guide better decision-making in a dynamic world. Hui Aloha Kīholo has worked and/or continues to work with NSF-NCAR[1], DLNR DAR[2], DOFAW[3], NOAA[4], NPS[5], TNC[6], CI[7] USFS[8], UH[9], and others to co-develop/learn from science.

[1] National Science Foundation National Center for Atmospheric Research (NSF-NCAR)
[2] Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (HDLNR) Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)
[3] HDLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)
[4] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Department of Commerce (NOAA)
[5] National Parks Service, United States Department of Interior (NPS)
[6] The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
[7] Conservation International
[8] United States Forest Service (USFS)
[9] University of Hawai'i (UH)

- **Traditional Management Cultivates Abundance:** Pacific Island marine life management empowered peoples of place to ensure wise decision-making that sustains abundant marine life[10].
- **Fish Reproduction is Cyclical:** Seasonal and lunar rhythms in spawning are well documented by UH scientists in the Pacific and Kona[11], in full alignment with Hawaiian management practice and knowledge cultivated over hundreds of years.

Fishery Sustainability

- **Scientific Sustainability Recommendations Never Implemented:** While research showed that yellow tang populations responded positively to protection in west Hawai'i, scientific recommendations to improve sustainability by limiting effort and protecting spawners were never implemented.[12]
- **Hawai`i Island is a Source not a Sink:** Although strongly protecting source populations is a sound fishery management strategy, large protected areas (e.g. Papahānaumokuakea) to the north are unlikely to re-seed surgeonfish (e.g. Yellow Tang) lost from southern islands[13]. Larval west Hawai'i Yellow Tang travel up to 114 miles *from south to north*[14].
- **Most Yellow Tang do not Survive to Adulthood:** Even when protected from fishing, only about 1% of Yellow Tang recruits to a west Hawai'i reef survive to adulthood[15].
- **Surgeonfish Develop Slowly:** Yellow tang recruits to deeper finger coral reefs move to shallow habitats upon reaching sexual maturity; yellow tang mature between 4.6 and 11.6 years in west Hawai'i; they can live *at least 41 years*[16].

[10] "The right to harvest marine resources in the waters in the vicinity of a village or municipality is controlled by families, clans or chiefs, and no outsiders can use these resources without permission" (Johannes, 1977)
[11] UH - Johannes, 1978; Walsh, 1987
[12] DAR/NOAA - Williams et al, 2008
[13] UH, University of Arizona, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, University of Florida - Eble et al, 2009
[14] Oregon State University, Washington State University, UH, NOAA - Christie et al, 2010
[15] UH - Claisse et al, 2008
[16] UH, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (AUS) - Claisse et al, 2009.

- **Habitat Damage Occurs:** Accounts of nets, crowbars, poison, and trampling being used to capture cryptic fish for the aquarium trade, including insider knowledge from former fishers, is manifold. Science is unable to refute these observations as data are inadequate to substantiate a claim of no impact of aquarium collecting on live coral habitat, by design. The WHAP research design did not take into account confounding factors beyond aquarium fishing known to impact reef health. Survey sites were selected in areas exposed to proven coral threats including sedimentation, sewage pollution, golf course run-off, groundwater withdrawal, storm exposure, SCUBA diver damage, trampling, anchoring, stormwater, grey water, and petrochemical pollution yet these did not factor into any analyses[17].

Cultural Impact

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

Authority and Accountability

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Chad Wiggins
Executive Director
Hui Aloha Kīholo
cwiggins@kiholo.org
808-756-2080
huialohakiholo.org

Scientific Literature Cited

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE on ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and WATER AND LAND
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 18, 2026 8:45 a.m. Room 411

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa and members of House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land,

Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN) is in **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2101**, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

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

In 1969, Kealakekua Bay became a Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD), the highest form of protection legally offered by the State. MLCDs are only pockets of sanctuaries that are sporadically placed around the state, yet provide insight on how the entire state can support socially responsible enterprises. The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) is providing avenues to maintain one Hawai'i's largest economic engine, only for another state agency to tear it down by allowing the desecration of fish populations that support coral reef health. The economic ramifications to the coral reef outweigh the profits generated by the commercial AQ Pet Trade.

This measure will further assist the DLNR in upholding their Hierarchy of Use Policy (1998), which provides guidance in prioritizing natural and cultural resources over commercialization[1].

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[1] "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.";

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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 and urge the next committee to hear this measure.

Mahalo Nui,

puakalo!

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen
Executive Director

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

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:23:25 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Robinson	Big Island Aviation, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

17 February 2026

Support for HB2101
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 in Hawai‘i county (Big Island Aviation, LLC), and my business brings over $100,000 of impact to the county’s economy. My business is tied directly to the health and biodiversity of Hawai‘i’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.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming that commercial aquarium collection damages the fragile reef ecosystem. (1,2) 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.

If commercial aquarium collectors seek to refute the established scientific literature and the obvious fish population declines noted by divers like myself, then they (not 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!"

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

February 18, 2026

TO: House Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection, and Water & Land

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

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice chairs Perruso and Morikawa and Members of the Committees,

We are Native Hawaiian, environmental, marine, and animal-protection organizations and businesses writing in **strong support of HB2101**, 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.

For decades local communities and residents across Hawai'i have sought to end the destructive aquarium pet trade that has taken millions of important marine animals, primarily herbivores, from our reefs, for sale to pet stores and private aquariums outside Hawai'i. Mortality throughout the supply chain is well documented and would never 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 well-documented environmental, cultural, and ethical concerns and conflicts with local values.

This measure is urgently needed because:

• **Herbivorous fishes are essential to reef resilience**, particularly as Hawai'i's reefs face escalating climate stress. Beginning in 2014, unprecedented marine heat waves caused widespread coral loss, and scientists project **annual heat-stress events by as early as 2030**. Scientific consensus indicates that **up to 70% of Hawai'i's reefs could be lost by mid-century** without strong local protections, including increased herbivore abundance and biomass to control algal overgrowth.

• **Food fishers and subsistence communities are paying the price** for decades of aquarium collecting. The aquarium trade historically removed **1.8 times more fish from West Hawai'i reefs than all food fishers combined**, primarily herbivores (DLNR 2020 Report to the Legislature). The recent prohibition on take of paku'iku'i (Achilles tang) 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 SB2996 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 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, Surfrider Foundation | Hawai'i Region, Keiko Conservation, Legacy Reef Foundation, Haereticus Environmental Laboratory, Ocean Defenders Alliance | Hawai'i, Oceanic Preservation Society

Aquarium Collecting and the Failure of Reef Fish Recovery in Hawai‘i

Independent state and federal monitoring data show that yellow tang populations in Hawai‘i failed to recover—and in some cases declined—after aquarium collecting ceased, contradicting sustainability claims, population doubling theory, and Hawai‘i’s own historical recovery experience.

Why These Findings Matter for Aquarium Trade Legislation

Claims that aquarium collecting can be conducted sustainably have been advanced by the aquarium trade and relied upon in environmental reviews, agency rulemaking, and management justifications for continued or renewed aquarium collecting. While sustainability is frequently asserted, it is rarely defined with specificity or tied to empirically testable recovery benchmarks. For yellow tang—the most heavily targeted aquarium species in Hawai‘i—long-term monitoring data allow these sustainability claims to be evaluated directly. The results demonstrate that recovery cannot be presumed and that continued authorization of aquarium collecting poses substantial biological and management risks. To date, policymakers have not required a clear definition of sustainability or objective recovery criteria against which these claims can be evaluated.

If aquarium collecting were truly sustainable, the cessation of harvest would have resulted in timely and sustained population recovery; instead, monitoring data show post-closure stagnation or decline rather than recovery.

What Happened After Aquarium Collecting Stopped

West Hawai‘i (State and Federal Monitoring)

- Commercial aquarium collecting was halted by court order in 2017 in previously open areas of the West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA).
- Based on population doubling time theory and prior recovery following protection, yellow tang populations were expected to approximately double by 2021.
- Although abundance increased briefly in 2018, this increase was not sustained, and by 2021, yellow tang abundance in formerly collected areas had declined back to levels comparable to those observed during active collection.
- No population doubling has occurred through 2024 based on both Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and NOAA monitoring data.
- **Historical precedent:** Yellow tang populations in West Hawai‘i doubled within ~4 years after protection in 1999, a recovery not observed following the 2017 closure.

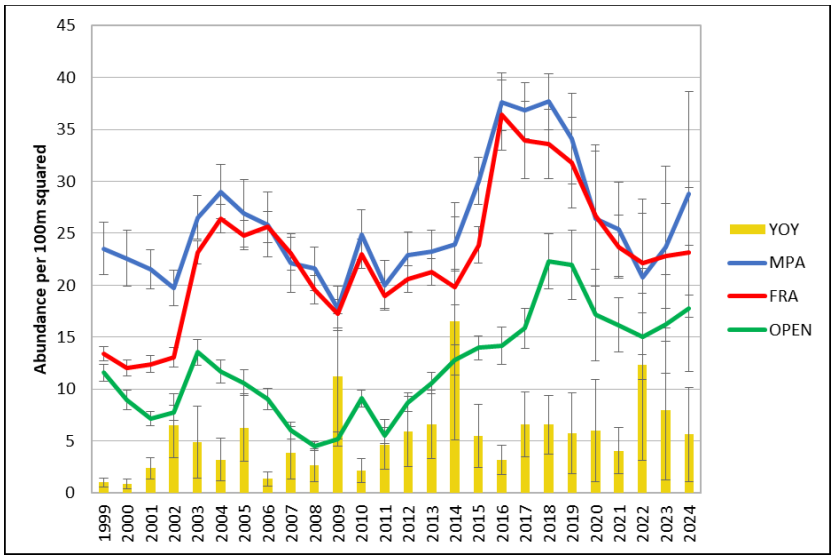

Figure 1. West Hawai‘i yellow tang abundance by management area (DAR monitoring). Abundance in formerly collected (OPEN) areas briefly increased after the 2017 closure but subsequently declined, reverting by 2021 to levels similar to those observed during active collection.

Oʻahu (Federal Monitoring)

- Aquarium collecting on Oʻahu was halted in 2020 following a second court order, after a longer period of intense harvest pressure than in West Hawaiʻi.
- Using West Hawaiʻi as an empirical benchmark, population doubling would have been expected by approximately 2024.
- NOAA monitoring data instead show that yellow tang abundance in 2024 was significantly lower than in 2019.
- Non-overlapping error bars between 2019 and 2024 indicate a **statistically distinguishable decline** rather than recovery.

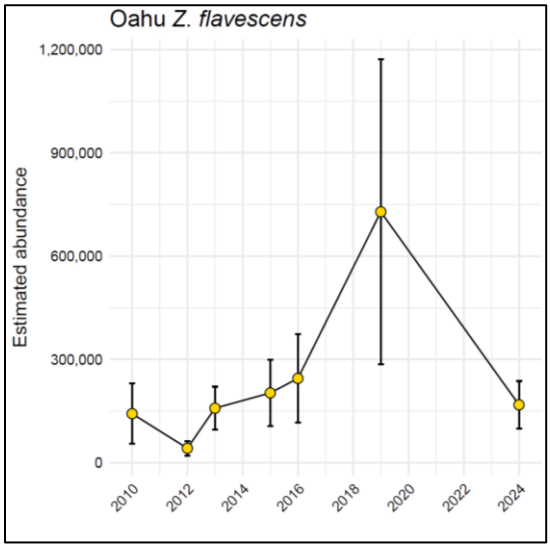

Figure 2. Oʻahu yellow tang abundance (NOAA). Estimated yellow tang abundance around Oʻahu before and after the 2020 cessation of aquarium collecting. The 2024 estimate shows a marked decline relative to 2019 with non-overlapping error bars, indicating a statistically distinguishable decrease rather than recovery.

Across both islands, ending aquarium collecting did not produce sustained population recovery. Instead, post-closure abundance either declined or reverted toward levels observed during active collection.

Why These Results Are Reliable

- West Hawaiʻi conclusions rely on long-term DAR monitoring conducted prior to 2022, when survey effort was robust and statistically sound.
- NOAA monitoring provides an independent dataset showing consistent outcomes across islands.
- Claims of recent "upward trends" rely on post-2022 data, when DAR reduced sampling from 3–6 survey rounds per year to a **single annual survey**—substantially reducing statistical power.
- Large and overlapping error bars in NOAA data limit the ability to infer recovery trends, but do not obscure the absence of population doubling where recovery was expected to be most evident.

Implications for Legislative Action

Empirical monitoring data no longer support the assumption that reef fish populations will reliably recover following aquarium collecting, even after harvest pressure is fully removed. Continued authorization of commercial aquarium collecting therefore entails significant ecological and management risk, particularly for species that have already experienced decades of intense exploitation. The Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) has stated that it lacks the authority to permanently end aquarium collecting through rulemaking alone.

Permanent legislative prohibition is therefore necessary to prevent further long-term harm to Hawaiʻi's reef ecosystems and to provide clarity, consistency, and durability in state marine conservation policy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Rene Umberger | rene@forthefishes.org

HB 2101

Hello Chair, Vice chairs, and committee 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 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.

A Community Dedicated to Saving Puakō Reef

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

www.Puako4reefs.org * Puako for Reefs Facebook

Story map of Puakō: Wahi Pana -A Sacred Place

HEARING FOR STATE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and WATER & LAND
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 411, State Capitol

DATE: February 17, 2026

TO: House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection Chair Nicole Lowen, and Vice-Chair Amy Perruso, and all members and House Committee on Water and Land Chair Mark Hashem, and Vice-Chair Dee Morikawa, and all members

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

Puakō For Reefs is in complete agreement with the intent and purpose of HB 2101 to ban all aquarium fish collection from Hawaii`'s waters. Puakō For Reefs is expending massive efforts as well as millions of dollars in community donations, not to mention copious hours of volunteer time, to remove a major stress (wastewater) on the coral in the South Kohala area. To have another stress undermining our efforts and threatening the reef ecosystem is extremely difficult for us to watch.

There are so many relevant facts associated with this practice:

1. Due to the extremely limited number of enforcement resources, illegal poaching occurs on a regular basis. The only way to stop the poaching is to ban aquarium fish collection. This will simplify all the enforcement protocols.
2. Local fishing practices, stewardship and respect for Native Hawaiian values for our oceans are massively neglected. The idea that there is a limitless supply of reef fish is obviously incorrect. The same fish that are heavily collected are the primary algae-eaters, helping to keep our reef alive and healthy.
3. Our state constitution lays out the public-trust obligations to protect our natural resources. Now is a wonderful time to take this more seriously.
4. And, for the sad economic news. Nobody receives any benefits from the aquarium trade while residents, and all tax payers, bear the environmental as well as the enforcement costs.

Please vote in favor of this bill so we can finally get serious about our reef and ocean waters.

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

Moana Ohana
PO Box 4454, Kailua Kona, HI 96745
Phone (808) 640-3871 **Fax** (808) 325-5560
mike@moanaohana.com
February 16th, 2026

Aloha mai Kakou, Chair Lowen of EEP and Chair Hashem of WAL, Vice Chairs and other honorable house members of these committees.

Moana ‘Ohana submits this testimony in **strong support** of HB 2101, 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 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.

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

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

Malama Pono,

Michael Nakachi,
Moana Ohana LLC

HUI KAHUWAI

OUR MISSION IS TO PERPETUATE THE LEGACY OF OUR FOREBEARERS BY ADAPTIVELY AND COLLABORATIVELY LEARNING ABOUT, PROTECTING, TENDING, AND RESTORING THE BIOCULTURAL RESOURCES AND PRACTICES OF KEKAHA, NORTH KONA, HAWAIʻI ISLAND, FOCUSING ON KAʻŪPŪLEHU

February 17, 2026

Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, Committee on Water & Land
Conference Room 411
State Capitol
415 South Beratania Street

Re: Testimony in support of HB2101

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

Hui Kahuwai **strongly supports HB2101**. Hui Kahuwai represents the continuation of marine stewardship that spans generations in Kekaha, North Kona of Hawaiʻi Island. Our mission, shown above, details our commitment to learning about, protecting, tending, and restoring the biocultural resources and practices Kekaha. Our coastline has no surface freshwater sources, making low elevation agriculture particularly difficult. This meant an increased reliance on marine resources to survive and thrive. As a result, the people of Kekaha show a rich history of protecting and actively stewarding marine resources against all types of impacts.

In the scope of centuries, the AQ trade is a relative newcomer to the shores of Hawaiʻi, but has quickly shown its potential for severe damage. We have remained firm on our stance to not allow this disrespectful and unnecessary industry in Kaʻūpūlehu and Kūkiʻo. We supported the designation of the Kaʻūpūlehu Fish Replenishment Area (FRA), and helped design and implement a 10-year no-take zone called the Kaʻūpūlehu Marine Reserve. We are currently collaborating with the Department of Aquatic Resources to craft a fisheries management plan with rules to sustainably manage resources and replace the marine reserve with a Fisheries Management Area, which will include reinstating FRA protections.

Hui Kahuwai joined the dozens of communities and over 1300 individuals in 2025 that rallied against re-opening commercial AQ operations in West Hawaiʻi, and we supported SB2996 last week. We were dismayed in 2025 the BLNR was of the opinion that they did not have the administrative ability to ban commercial aquarium collection. So, we urge these committees and the entire state legislature to do what the BLNR felt they could not, and listen to the myriad of communities across the paeʻāina calling for the end of this destructive trade. Please support HB2101 to ban commercial aquarium collection.

ʻO mākou nō me ka ʻoiaʻiʻo,

Hannah Kihalani Springer,
Hui Kahuwai President

Kaikea Nakachi,
Hui Kahuwai Vice President

EARTHJUSTICE

REPRESENTATIVE NICOLE E. LOWEN, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE AMY A. PERRUSO, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

REPRESENTATIVE MARK J. HASHEM, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE DEE MORIKAWA, VICE CHAIR

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

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Lown, Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members:

Earthjustice submits this testimony in **strong support** of HB 2101, which would prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide. HB 2101 proposes to ban commercial aquarium collection by adding this prohibition as a new section to Haw. Rev. Stat. ch. 188; repealing Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31 (aquarium fish permitting statute); repealing Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31.5 (governing receipts for the sale of aquarium collected fish and aquatic life to commercial marine dealers); removing reference to commercial aquarium collection from Haw. Rev. Stat. § 189-11 (governing receipts generally for the sale of fish and aquatic life to commercial marine dealers); and removing reference to Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31 from Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-22.9 (Hā'ena community-based subsistence fishing area).

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

An Opportunity To Reverse A Historical Injustice

In 1953, Hawai'i's territorial legislature passed a law allowing "aquarium fish permits" that would enable collectors to use fine-meshed nets to capture juvenile fish targeted by the commercial aquarium trade. See Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31. This law's passage was based on the ignorant view by those in power that the fish species sought after by the industry are "not edible." S. Stand. Comm. Rep. 442, in 1953 Senate Journal, at 669. ***Such a finding would never***

stand today. Commercial aquarium collectors target popular food fish including kole (goldring surgeonfish) and pāku'iku'i (achilles tang), herbivorous fish that are essential to coral reef health, and other colorful fishes that are found nowhere else in the world—all of which are culturally significant for Native Hawaiians. Because of this outdated legislation, commercial aquarium collectors have enjoyed a ***decades-long pass to extract hundreds of thousands of fish from Hawai'i's reefs annually***, which has devastated nearshore ecosystems by reducing fish populations and directly damaging reefs through harmful collection methods.

Litigation And Other Community-Led Advocacy

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

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

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

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

[2] See Board of Land and Natural Resources Oct. 24, 2025 Meeting, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=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;
- Kaua'i County Council;
- Neighborhood boards for Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne'ohe, and Kahalu'u;
- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs;
- Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club;
- Ko'olau Foundation; and
- Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council.

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

Hundreds Of Thousands In State Subsidies For The Trade

If the legislature does not act and the Board proceeds as planned, collectors would pay just $100 per year (just ***$700 total*** for 7 West Hawai'i collectors, which are the only permits even potentially on the table at this time) for a program that the Division of Aquatic Resources has estimated would cost the state ***$300,000-$500,000*** annually to administer ***for Hawai'i Island***

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

alone.[3] Enforcing the Board's proposed aquarium catch quotas—*if it even were possible*—would be extremely resource-intensive, since enforcement would require counting live fish at sea and onshore, further straining the Division of Conservation and Resources and Enforcement's limited resources. Collectors would extract hundreds of thousands of fish and ship them overseas to sell as ornamental pets, while Hawai'i's reefs increasingly struggle to feed local families and withstand climate change. The legislature should prioritize pono food fishing and reef resilience to benefit all Hawai'i citizens over an extractive practice that benefits only a handful of commercial collectors.

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.

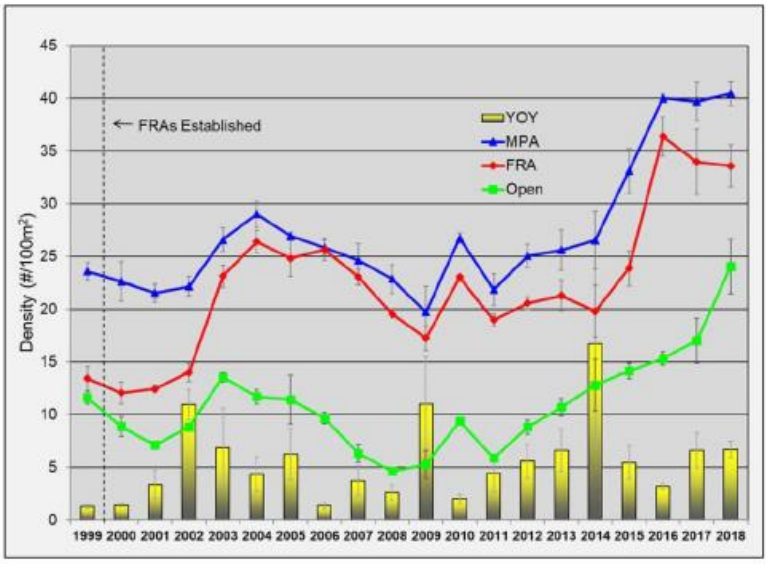

Figure 5. Overall changes in Yellow Tang density (Mean ± SE) in FRAs, MPAs, and Open Areas, 1999-2018. Yellow vertical bars indicate mean density (MAY-NOV) of Yellow Tang YOY. YOY are not included in trend line data (DAR 2019a).

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

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'īpala (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

Marine Policy 127 (2021) 104429

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

Siena I. Schaar *, Linda J. Cox

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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 (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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ATTACHMENT

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
A. Status Quo (2019)			
- 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. Permitting System (2016)			
- 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		
C. Statewide AQ Collection Ban			
+ 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		
D. Captive Breeding Collection			
- 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 (HFMAs) 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[a]
Explores four policy alternatives, including a ban.	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 evidence-based recommendations based on impact estimates, descriptions, and the distribution of them among stakeholder groups.	Provided a recommendation based on direct market benefits of the industry.
Recommends a statewide ban on the collection and export of marine aquaria. Suggests that captive breeding collection might hold potential if properly managed.	Recommends reducing the number of permits to ten across the State.
Completed as a student project using existing secondary data and not funded by any industry, government agency or non-profit organization.	Funded by the PIJAC.

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

[a] Indicates endemic species
[b] 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	*Zebrasoma flavescens*	$74.41	$16.00	465.1
Goldring Surgeonfish	*Ctenochaetus strigosus*	$71.88	$14.00	513.4
Achilles Tang	*Acanthurus achilles*	$392.32	$150.00	261.5
Orangespine Unicornfish	*Naso lituratus*	$152.71	$37.50	407.2
Chevron Tang	*Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis*	$233.11	$150.00	155.4
Longnose Butterflyfish	*Forcipiger flavissimus*	$46.00	$15.00	306.6
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon multicinctus*	$35.37	$10.00	353.7
Fourspot Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon quadrimaculatus*	$78.99	$40.00	197.5
Tinker's Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon tinkeri*	$699.99	$350.00	200.0
Moorish Idol	*Zanclus cornutus*	$49.98	$10.00	499.8
Potter's Angelfish	*Centropyge potteri*	$108.06	$30.00	360.2
Yellowtail Coris	*Coris gaimard*	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	*Zebrasoma flavescens*	322,651	284,784	88.26
Goldring Surgeonfish	*Ctenochaetus strigosus*	45,765	44,106	96.37
Achilles Tang	*Acanthurus achilles*	6787	5758	84.84
Orangespine Unicornfish[a]	*Naso lituratus*	9966	10,338	103.73
Chevron Tang	*Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis*	5126 (B.I only)	4135	80.67
Longnose Butterflyfish[a]	*Forcipiger flavissimus*	1329	1507	113.39
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish[a]	*Chaetodon multicinctus*	314	666	212.10
Fourspot Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon quadrimaculatus*	480	448	93.33
Tinker's Butterflyfish	*Chaetodon tinkeri*	293 (B.I only)	218	74.40
Moorish Idol[a]	*Zanclus cornutus*	805 (B.I only)	970	120.50
Potter's Angelfish[a]	*Centropyge potteri*	6708	8726	130.08
Yellowtail Coris Wrasse[a]	*Coris gaimard*	866	993	114.67

(B.I only) indicates collection and reporting on detailed catch report only from Hawai'i island
[a] Indicates sales or export reporting over 100% of what was reported on initial detailed catch report.

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HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:32:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in STRONG Support of HB2101 – WITH RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS FOR FAIRNESS

Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

** Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB2101**, a core bill in the Office of Hawaiian Affairs 2026 legislative package. This measure permanently prohibits the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for **commercial aquarium purposes** (defined as taking for profit, gain, or livelihood to sell into the aquarium trade for captivity as pets or ornamental display).

It repeals the outdated 1953-era permit system (§188-31) and export monitoring (§188-31.5), while explicitly protecting:

- Traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices

- Lawful taking for personal consumption or bait - Captive-breeding and aquaculture (§187A-3.5)

- Special activity permits for scientific, educational, or propagation purposes (§187A-6)

- Management of traditional fishponds (loko iʻa) This is pono. Commercial wild collection is unsustainable, harms reef resilience (especially herbivores like lauipala and kole), and contradicts mālama ʻāina, aloha ʻāina, and kuleana. 84% of Oʻahu and Hawaiʻi Island residents support ending it.

Reefs and nature-based tourism (hundreds of millions in value) far outweigh the small industry (~41 active collectors out of 3,000+ commercial marine licenses, generating roughly $1.2–2 million annually).

However, some families do make a living from this work.

I acknowledge their economic reality and urge the committees to adopt reasonable amendments so the ban is fair, compassionate, and supports a just transition for all parties.

Recommended Amendments for Balance and Pono

1. **18–24 Month Phase-Out Period**: Grandfather existing commercial marine licensees who have reported aquarium catch in the last 3 years. Allow them to continue under current rules until [date 18–24 months after approval] to wind down operations or transition. This prevents sudden hardship while reefs recover.

2. **Economic Transition & Retraining Fund**: Appropriate $500,000–$750,000 (a tiny fraction of tourism reef value) for DLNR/DOL/DHHL to provide: - Retraining grants and low-interest loans for aquaculture startups or captive-breeding facilities - Skills programs in sustainable fishing, reef tourism guiding, or restorative aquaculture - Priority hiring for affected workers in DLNR monitoring or marine stewardship roles

3. **Aquaculture Incentives**: Direct DLNR to fast-track permits and offer technical assistance/grants for local captive-breeding operations so displaced collectors can shift to farm-raised fish that supply the aquarium trade without harming wild reefs.

4. **Annual Reporting**: Require DLNR to report to the Legislature for 3 years on the number of workers who transitioned, jobs created in alternatives, and reef health indicators. These amendments honor the small number of families impacted while advancing the bill's core purpose. They turn a ban into a pathway for sustainable livelihoods aligned with Hawaiian values. I have testified in strong support of every OHA package bill this session. Pass **HB2101 with these fair amendments** to protect our kai, uplift our people, and show true aloha for all who depend on Hawai‘i's resources.

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana. Imua!

Respectfully submitted,

Pikachu Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman – www.Ohanaunityparty.com American Party (@AmericanPartyOG) Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

KEIKO
CONSERVATION

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2101

On behalf of thousands of supporters, we strongly SUPPORT HB2101.

For years, local communities, scientists, and even visitors to Hawai‘i have urged lawmakers to further protect Hawai‘i’s fish from the commercial aquarium trade by implementing a true ban on the capture and sale of these animals, regardless of the method of collection.

The islands’ fragile reef ecosystems are already plagued by invasive species, warmer waters, and increased acidity. The aquarium trade, which removes tens of thousands of these fish annually, is incompatible with the need to protect and restore our marine ecosystems. Allowing this destructive practice to continue jeopardizes our already struggling reefs and undermines the best available science on how to protect them. It is unacceptable to risk these ecosystems for the monetary gain of a small number of individuals who export the islands’ wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope you will SUPPORT this bill.

Natalie Parra
Co-Founder, Keiko Conservation

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha, my name is Tyson Pizarro. I have been part of the marine and saltwater industry for over 25 years. My love for the ocean and the protection of our marine resources is of the utmost importance to me.

My journey began as a young kid when I was introduced to the marine industry through Modern Pet Center, which sold marine fish. After starting my first marine aquarium, I knew from that moment that I wanted to learn everything I could about marine life and responsible care. That early experience shaped the path I walk today.

Today, I own and operate an aquarium and pond service company, along with a fish store that specializes in marine fish. My goal is to educate customers about the ocean so we can create a better future for our younger generations. Through education, responsible practices, and stewardship, we can teach people how to care for marine life and understand the importance of protecting our reefs and ecosystems.

If it were not for Modern Pet Center, I may never have become part of this industry. As a Kanaka Maoli with Hawaiian ancestry, I feel a deep responsibility to lead by example for future generations and to promote a marine industry grounded in respect, sustainability, and education.

I respectfully oppose Bill HB 2101. I support reopening the fishery so that we can continue to teach all generations how to care for our oceans and understand their importance. With proper management, education, and cultural responsibility, we can protect our marine resources while also fostering knowledge, stewardship, and opportunity for the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tyson Pizarro

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

KALANIHALE

Aloha e Chair Nakamura 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.

SB2996 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 SB2996.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Ka'imi Kaupiko
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Ka Moku'aina 'O Hawai'i Aha Moku O

Pae'Aina State of Hawai'i Aha Moku

P. O. Box 621

Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

Testimony of
Leimana DaMate, Luna Alaka'i
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee

Before the House Committees on

Energy and Environmental Protection (EEP) Water and Land (WAL)

In SUPPORT OF

HOUSE BILL 2101 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

House Bill 2101 prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Attached administratively to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku) is comprised of the eight main Hawaiian Islands, Moku O Keawe (Hawaii), Moku O Pi'ilani (Maui), Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe), Nana'i Kaula (Lana'i), Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i), Manokalanipo (Kaua'i), and Ka'Aina O Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau).

Per Act 288, SLH 2012, the Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC), functions as a governing board, and consists of a Po'o selected by the people of each island through a traditional process of natural and cultural resource sustainability. This process was brought forward from the 9th century, and translated through ancient chants and oral mo'olelo by Kawaikapuokalani Hewett, one of the five founders of the traditional Aha Moku. Lineal descendants and those with generational cultural knowledge of an ahupua'a are the highest level in this process and all Po'o and Moku Representatives defer to these Kupuna and practitioners of all native disciplines. There are forty-six (46) moku, and six-hundred and six (606) traditional natural and cultural resource districts within the eight main Hawaiian Islands.

Working with the native Hawaiian communities and Public Trust, generational knowledge of these resources has been handed down generation to generation for centuries. The value of this knowledge shared with all stakeholders and protectors of Hawaii's environment is the continued sustainability of

Hawaii's unique ecosystem which differs island to island.

For decades now, native Hawaiian *lawaia* (fishermen and gatherers) of all main Hawaiian Islands have reported critical declines of endemic marine resources due to the aggressive collecting of fish and marine species on coastal and offshore areas.

One of the hardest hit areas is West Hawaii on Moku O Keawe (Hawaii Island). In 2018 the West Hawaii aquarium collecting ban resulted in the largest yellow tang abundance ever documented on those reefs. However, that is only one example of the success of an aquarium collecting ban on one island. This ban must be for all eight islands in the Pae'Aina (State of Hawaii) as all islands suffer from copious aquatic commercial collecting.

Additionally, as stated in HB2101, the Haena Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) is further protected by konohiki and native Hawaiian traditional and cultural practices. This was formalized originally by AMAC Po'o, Tommy Hashimoto. However, Haena also suffers from unchecked aquarium collectors.

Aquatic Commercial Collecting overlooks, discounts and effectively abolishes the traditional uses of Hawaiian reef fish – customary practices that are protected by generational knowledge handed down throughout the generations by Kupuna and Konohiki.

The fear now, if HB2101 is opposed, that the traditional subsistence species on which native Hawaiian traditional practices depend on all islands – will be wiped out sooner than later. Where all eight islands are in danger, Niihau is continuously a victim of illegal aquarium collecting. There is no enforcement available to Niihau.

Because commercial aquarium collecting is such a grave concern to *lawaia* within the entire Pae'Aina, the Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) polled their individual moku of each of their islands to see if generational 'ohana could now accept HB2101. The responses were unified in their support!

Currently, *lawaia* continue to contend with climate change within their ahupua'a. The unusual ocean heat waves are already impacting the normal life cycles of marine species. However, in anticipation of and preparation for the difference in ocean temperature, *konohiki* (resource managers) are taking steps in adjusting *kapu* and resting of the gathering of different marine species. While this works ahupua'a to ahupua'a, cautionary protection will be for nothing if HB2101 not supported by the legislature.

Our understanding is that the bulk of aquarium collection is exported directly to the mainland or to other foreign countries as "pet" or for ornamental purposes. So the indigenous host culture asks, "why will our traditional and cultural practices, protected by the Hawaii State Constitution, be put into a dangerous decline on all main Hawaiian Islands so that people from other places can benefit through their ornamental trade?" It is not only the native Hawaiians who will suffer if HB2101 is not supported but all Hawaii stakeholders in the protection of our ecosystems.

Finally, should HB2101 be opposed by the legislature, then the AMAC ask that the Kapa'akai Analysis be conducted for every commercial permit for aquarium collection be done. According to AMAC Po'o, and *lawaia* that we have spoken to, aquarium harvest is illegally happening on all islands. There is no enforcement available that would prevent this.

Hawaii is unique in that our endemic marine species can be found nowhere else in the world. We are unique in that all of us in Hawaii depend on our marine resources as a sustainable resource. We urge and advise the Legislature to continue to protect our marine resources from exploitation from those who would make money off of Hawaii. Please remember that they "take" but do not give back.

Mahalo nui loa, for the opportunity to stand with *lawai'a* in the protection of our endemic marine species, that can not be found outside of the Pae'Aina of Hawai'i Nei. Please know through our AMAC Island Po'o, we bring the voices of the *lawai'a* of the islands forward to protect our finite ecosystems, and to protect our cultural practices.

We ask that the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection (EEP), and Water and Land (WAL) adopt HB2101so our legislators can continue to protect our environment, and our water and land.

Respectfully and humbly yours,

Rocky Kaluhiwa, State Chair
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Hawaii State Aha Moku 2026

PAE'AINA – HAWAII NEI

MOKUPUNI – MOKU – AHUPUA'A

Compiled by Kupuna of the eight (8) main Hawaiian Islands using generational knowledge

MOKUPUNI	**MOKU**	**AHUPUA'A**
Moku O Keawe (Hawaii)	Kohala	*Wainanaliilii, Waikoloa, Puako, Ouli, Kawaihae, Waika, Kahua, Kaalaala, Kipi, Kaiholena, Lamaloloa, Lapakahi, Mahukona, Awalua, Hihiu, Honoipu, Opolu, Kokoiki, Puuipa, Kealahewa, Opihipau, Kahei, Hawi, Kapua, Pahoa, Kapaau, Laaumama, Honopueo, Iole, Halelua, Halaula, Halawa, Aamakao, Makapala, Niulii, Pololu, Honokane Nui, Honokane Iki, and Awini.* (41)
	Hamakua	*Manowaialee, Kealakaha, Kaula, Kaao, Kukalau, Kaholalele, Paauilo, Pohakuhalku, Opihilala, Kaumoali, Kaapahu, Papalele, Keahau, Kalopa, Kahawailiili, Paauhau, Papuaa, Nienie, Ahualoa, Honokaia, Kapoaula, Keahakea, Kapulena, Waikoloa, Waikoekoe, Kukuihaele, Waipio, Muliwai, Wiamanu, Laupahoehoe, Naokooko, Apua, Ohiahuea, Kolealiilii, Honopue, and Honokea* (37)
	Hilo	*Waiakea, Pueo, Kalalau, Wainaku, Honolii, Paukaa, Papaikou, Alakahi, Makahanaloa, Honomu, Kaiwiki, Hakalau, Mae'e, Umauma, Honohina, Waikamalo, Maulua, Puohai, Papa'aloa, Laupahoehoe, Humuula, and Ookala.* (22)
	Puna	*Apua, Kealakomo, Panau, Laeapuki, Kamoamoa, Poupou, Kii, Kalapana, Kaimu, Keokea, Kehena, Opihikao, Kauaea, Kaukulau, Keahialaka, Pohoiki, Puala'a, Kapoho, Kula, Puua, Kahuwai, Nanawale, Waikahekahe, Keonepoke, Mahuu, Waikhekhe, Keaau* (27)
	Ka'u	*Keawaiki, Pohue, Kahuku, Kapininui, Pakiniiki, Kalilikii, Kalae, Kawela, Kiolakaa, Waiohinu, Kamilo, Honuapo, Kaalaiki, Hiilea, Ninole, Wailau, Punalu'u, Makaha KopuMoaula, Paauau, Kauhuula, Kaalaala, Kapapala, Kaaha, and Keauhou* *(25)*
	Kona	*Puuanahulu, Puuwaawaa, Kiholo, Kaupulehu, Kukio, Awakee, Laemano, Kalupulehu, Koelehuluhulu, Kau, Kaiaoa, Ooma, Kaloko, Honokohauiki, Puapuaa, Holualoa, Kaumalumalu, Kahaluu, Keauhou, Honuaino, Kaumo'o,*

		Kealakekua, Keei, Honaunau, Keokea, Kealia, Kalahiki, Hookena, Waiea, Honokua, Kaohe, Maunaoni Makuu, Kolo, Olelomuana, Opihihale, Kaapuna, Kipahoehoe, Alika, Papa, Ho'opuloa, Milolii, Honomalino, Okoe, Kapua, and Kaulanamauna. (45)
Moku O Piilani (Maui)	Hamakuapoko	*Paihiihi, Waiawa, Honohina, Waiopua, and Poniau.* (5)
	Hamakualoa	*Papaaea, Hanawana, Hanehoi, Huelo, Waipio, Mokupapa, Honokaia, Hoolawa, Honopou, Kealiinui, Kealiiki, Peahi, Opana, Ulumalu, Kapuakulua, Kuiaha, Pauwela, and Haiku.* (18)
	Koolau	*Ulaino, Keaa, Mokupipi, Honolulunui, Hopenui, Puuhaehae, Kapaula, Puakea, Kaliae, Wailua, Pauwalu, Keanae, Honomanu, Keopuka, Loiloa, Kolea, Mooloa, and Makaiwa.* (18)
	Hana	*Kualuu, Koali, Muolea, Puuiki, Mokae, Hamoa, Haneoo, Oloewa, Wanalua, Palmo, Niumalu, Kawaipapa, Wakiu, Kaeleku, and Honomaele.* (15)
	Kipahulu	*Koalii, Wailua, Puuhaoa, Papauluana, Kaumakani, Alae, Wailamoa, Kikoo, Maulili, Poponui, Kapuakini, Kukuula, Kaapahu, Kukuiulaiki, Popolua (15)*
	Kaupo	*Kukoa, Pahihi, Nuu, Kakou, Kaumahalua, Kaupo, Manawainui, Niumalu, Kahuai, Maalo, Mikiiki, and Kealepa.* (12)
	Kahikinui	*Lualaihia, Alena, Kipapa, Na Kaohu, Na Kaaha, Mahamenui, and Manawainui.* (7)
	Honuaula Note: Also connected to Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	*Paeahu, Palauea, Maluaka, Mooloa, Moomuku, Kanehena, Kualapa, Kahili, Papaka, Kaloi, Kanaio, and Aualu.*(12)
	Kula	*Pulehunui, Kalepolepu, Waiohuli, Keokea, and Kamaole.* (5)
	Kealaloloa	*Oluwalu, Ukumehame, Papaiaua, Kumaalaea, and Pokahea.* (5)
	Lahaina	*Hanakaoo, Wahikuli, Molalii, Makila, Waiamahole, Pahoa, Polanui, Launiupoko, Koonepolaielaeia, and Awahia.* (10)

Kaanapali		*Honokohau, Honolua, Honokahua, Napili, Honokeane, Alaeloa, Mailepai, Kahana, Mahinahina, Honokawai, and Makaiwa.*(11)
Wailuku		*Waikapu, Iao, Waiehu, Ahikuli, Waihee, Makaliula, Wailena, Kahakuloa, and Nakalele.*(9)
Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	Kona	*Lae O Kaka, Kamohio, Kaneloa, Wai Kahulu, and Kealaikahiki.* (5)
Koolau		*Honokoa, Kii, Ahupa, Kaukamoku, Kuheia, Kaulana, Papaka, Lua O Kealialuna, Hakioawa, Owawahie, and Konapou.* (11)
Honuaula* Note: Located on Piilani (Maui)		*Paeahu, Palauea, Maluaka, Mooloa, Moomuku, Kanehena, Kualapa, Kahili, Papaka, Kaloi, Kanaio, and Aualu.* (12)*
Molokini		*No ahupuaa*
Nana'I Kaula (Lana'i)	Kona	*Ka'a, Kamoku, Kalulu, Kaunolu, Palawai and Kamao.*(6)
Koolau		*Kaohai, Paawili, Maunalei, Mahana, and Paomai.(5)*
Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i)	Kaluakoi	*Punakou, Makaolehua, Kuunala, and Paohaku.*(4)
Koolau		*Kalaupapa, Kepuhi, Moomomi, Keapukukaloa, Halawa, Puaahaunui, Hakaaano, Papala, Wailua, Pelekunu, and Waikolu. (11)*
Kawela		*Kaunakakai, Kapaakea, Kamiloloa, Makakupaia, Kawela, Makolelau, Kapuaokoolau, Kamalo, Wawaia, Puahala, Kaamola, Kawanui, Ohia, Ualapue, Kaluaaha, Mapulehu, Puko'o, Kupeke, Ahaino, Homomuni, Kawaikapu, Kainalu, Puinuohua, Waialua, Moanui, Kumini, Honouliwai, Honoulimalo'o, Lepehu, Pohakupili, and Moaka'e.* (31)
Palaau		*Iloli, Hoolehua, Naiwa, Kahanui, and Kalamaula.*(

Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu)	Kona	*Moanalua, Kahauiki, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, Waikiki, Waialae, Wailupe, Niu, and Kuliouou.* (10)
	Ewa	*Honouliuli (Puuloa and Kapolei), Hoaeae, Waikele, Waiawa, Waipio, Waimanao, Manana, Waiau, Waimalu, Kalauao, Aiea, Halawa*(12)
	Waianae	*Nanakuli, Lualualei, Waianae, Makaha, Keaau, Hikilolo, Makua, Kahanahaiki, and Keawaula.*(9)
	Waialua	*Kapaeloa, Punanue, Kuikuiloloa, Lauhulu, Kawailoa, Paalaa, Kamananui, Mokuleia, Aukuu, Kihahi, Kawaihapai, Kealia, and Kaena.*(13)
	Koolauloa	*Waimea, Pupukea, Paumalu, Kaunala, Wailelea, Pahipahialua, Opana, Kawela, Hanaka'oe, Oio, Ulupehupehu, Punaluu, Kahuku, Keana, Malaekahana, Laiewai, Laiemaloo, Kaipapau, Hauula, Makao, Kapeke, Papaakoko, Haieaha, Kaiaha, Puheemiki, Waioho, Punaluu, Kahana, Makaua, Kaawa (30)*
	Koolaupoko	*Maunalua, Koko, Waimanalo, Kailua, Mokapu, Kaneohe, Heeia, Kahaluu, Waihee, Kaalea, Waihole, Waikane, Kakipuu, and Kualoa.*(14)
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)	Koloa	*Mahaulepu, Paa, Weliweli, Koloa, Aepo, Lawai, Kaiaheo, Wahiawa (8)*
	Makaweli	*Hanapepe, Kupua, Makaweli (3)*
	Waimea	*Waimea, Kapena, and Kekaha. (3)*
	Waiawa, Opelu, Kaawaloa, Nonomahiki, Kahelunui, and Kolo.(6)	
	Napali	*Kauwila, Haeleele, Hikimoe, Kaaweiki, Kauhao, Makaha, Milolii, Nualolo, Wawapuhi, Honopu, Kalalau, Pohakuau, Hanakoa, Hanakapiai (14)*
	Halelea	*Kalihiwai, Kalihikai, Pupoa, Waipa, Hanalei, Waikoko, Lumahai, Wainiha, Haena, and Limahuli* (10)
	Koolau	*Anahola, Aliomanu, Papaa, Moloaa, Kaakaaniu, Lepeuli, Waipake, Pilaa, Waiakalua, Kahili, Kilauea, and Namahana (12)*
	Puna Akau	*Kamalomalo, Kealia, Kapa'a, Waipouli, Olohena, and Wailua (6)*
	Puna Hema	*Kipukai, Kipu, Haiku, Niumalu, Nawiliwili, Kalapaki, Hanamaulu (7)*

Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau)	Kona	*Kaikane, Mauuloa, Nonopapa, Halo, Pauahula, Pu'uwai, Kaumuhonu, Keanauhi, Pohueloa, Nianiau, and Lehua.(11)*
	Koolau	*Koolaukani, Apu, Ka'ula, and Oki'i.(4)*
	Puna	*Koahi, Haialii, Honuaula, Kalaoa, Nomilu, and Pueo. (6)*

SUMMARY ISLAND	**MOKU**	**AHUPUA'A**
Moku O Keawe (Hawaii)	6	197
Moku O Piilani (Maui)	13	142
Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	4	28
Nana'I Kaula (Lana'i)	2	11
Moloka'i Pule O'o	4	51
Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu)	6	88
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)	8	69
Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau)	4	23
Islands – 8	**47**	**609**

***The Honuaula Moku is listed on Piilani. But because it is directly connected to Kanaloa, it is listed there as a moku as well. It is the only Moku that is connected to two separate islands.**

Note: No one living on the following moku **ISLAND**	**MOKU**	**AHUPUA'A**
Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	Kona	5
Koolau	11	
Molokini	0	
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)	Napali	14
Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau)	Ko'olau	2 (Lehua & Ka'ula)
Islands – 2	**4**	**32**

Actual Working Moku (Less the Moku & Ahupua'a where no one lives in the district, and less the ahupua'a of Honuaula which is listed twice – once under Piilani and once under Kanaloa)

51 **577**

OCEAN JANITORS HAWAII

Testimony of **SUPPORT**
HB2101
February, 17th, 2026

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Taha'a Kahele, Testifying on behalf of Ocean Janitors Hawaii a 501(c)(3) Non-profit organization that focuses on marine ecosystem stewardship and marine-debris removal. **Ocean Janitors Hawaii stands in strong and unwavering support of HB2101.** For many years Aquarium Fishing has been contributing to the decline in health of our marine ecosystems. With science constantly showing fish populations decreasing in large numbers and coral reefs on the decline. This should already have been a sign of the aquarium fisheries unsustainable practices.

With Hawaii's reefs already incapacitated and the thought of allowing aquarium trade back into our waters will only cause further damage to our already ailing ecosystem. With a recent article providing substantial evidence on how AQ fisheries and its claims to it being a sustainable practice is a contradiction. Furthermore with the Ocean Institute of the Hawai'i Pacific University and their cultivation efforts of several species targeted by AQ. I see no reason to result in the wild harvest of these species.

The Aquarium Fisheries Trade does not understand how important these marine ecosystems are to the Hawaiian people *(Kanaka Oiwi)* and instead insist on contributing to the decline of a major lifeline that plays a crucial role in the sustainability of the native Hawaiian way of life. For many years our *kupuna* (ancestors) have seen the change in our waters from less fish to dying reefs to sea level rising. This isn't just a problem that didn't happen overnight; it's a result of years of harmful unsustainable fisheries practices like the aquarium trade.

With many of our reefs already surpassing the "point of no return" , what logic permits a highly unsustainable trade such as the aquarium fisheries back to our state waters, even inviting them to the table is unorthodox. The irony to disregard the AQ trade as not being a big contributor to the decline of reefs and fish is utter insanity and goes against one's conscience. Knowing the full ramifications of allowing the trade to continue.

When will we realize that what we are as humans in whatever we do, whether it be good or bad, leaves an imprint on the ecosystem that surrounds us. We as humans have the ability to be more cautious of our environment. We just tend to pick and choose when we want to be cautious. We pick what bill benefits us the most rather than seeing what benefits our communities as a whole. We as humans have a predescended nature to be selfish and greedy. Leading the collapse of a resource that is meant to be stewarded not commercialized.

So I urge the committee today to consider passing this bill to allow our reefs and our *wahipana* to recover from this, with our conservation efforts steadily improving the conditions of these marine ecosystems. We realize that they will never be the same as how my grandparents described it. We can only hope to preserve what's left for the next generation. Help us to contribute to preserving a pristine resource for generations to come.

We at Ocean Janitors would like to leave you all with this *'Olelo No'eau* that we constantly reminisce on. ***"He Ali'i Ka 'Aina He Kauwa Ke Kanaka."*** (The land is a chief and man is its servant).

Let this testimony be a voice for the fishes, a mouthpiece for the seas. A proclamation for the *Moananuiakea*.

Thank you for allowing us to present this testimony,

Taha'a H. Kahele, Director of Conservation & Cultural Management

Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 17, 2026

To: Chairs Reps. Nicole Lowen and Mark Hashem
Vice Chairs Reps. Amy Perruso and Dee Morikawa
and Members of the Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Water & Land

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

RE: Testimony in support of HB 2101:
Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection
Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026, 8:45 a.m., Room 411 & Videoconference

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On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 2101, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

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 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.

As the oldest and largest animal welfare nonprofit in the state of Hawai‘i, the Hawaiian Humane Society advocates for the humane treatment of all animals, including our native wildlife. This is a balanced measure that will prevent the needless deaths of our reef fish.

Please pass HB2101. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:06:28 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please pass HB2101. As an island state, we rely upon clean waters and healthy reefs. The aquarium industry continues to rape our reefs of the important herbivorous fish that have the beauty which collectors want.

The industry is cruel and wasteful - most of the fish collected die enroute to buyers. Please pass HB2101 - and save our coral reefs from bleaching. Tourists will cease coming if our nearshore waters have no fish.

Mahalo

HAWAIʻI OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

February 18, 2026

Hawaiʻi State Legislature
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
House Committee on Water & Land

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

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, 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, 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 responds to long-standing concerns about the ecological and cultural impacts of removing native reef organisms from Hawaiʻi's waters for the aquarium trade. Coral reef ecosystems are essential to Hawaiʻi'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 Hawaiʻi'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 with a favorable recommendation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

1099 Alakea Street, #2530, Honolulu, HI | (808)447-1840

February 17, 2026

To: Members of the EEP/WAL & FIN Committees
From: Dr. Roxane keli'ikipikāneokolohaka, Executive Director, Kia'i Kanaloa

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2101

Aloha,

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

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

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

In service to our Kanaloa,
Roxane K. Keliikipikāneokolohaka
Dr. Roxane Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka
Kia'i Kanaloa, Executive Director

(808) 987-0453

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The Nature Conservancy
Hawai'i and Palmyra

The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i and Palmyra
923 Nu'uanu Avenue
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Tel (808) 537-4508
nature.org/HawaiiPalmyra
hawaii@tnc.org

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting HB2101, Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Committee on Water & Land
February 18, 2026 at 8:45 am
Conference Room 411 and via Videoconference

Dear Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra supports HB2101, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

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

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

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

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

to aquarium harvest and trade in West Hawai‘i is longstanding, spanning over 50 years. This 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 Hawai‘i’s fishery resource.

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

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

Testimony on behalf of He‘eia National Estuarine Research Reserve
Strongly Supporting HB 2101
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
House Committee on Water & Land

February 17, 2026

Aloha to the Chairs and the members of the Energy & Environmental Protection Committee and the Water & Land Committee,

I am writing to express my **strong support for HB2101** relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection. I am submitting this testimony as Director of the He‘eia National Estuarine Research Reserve, which dedicated to conducting research on how to bring back abundance to the lands and waters of He‘eia specifically, and Kāne‘ohe Bay broadly.

Our research program aims to understand the social and ecological impacts of mālama ‘āina practices. Commercial collection of aquarium fish is not a pono practiced that is recognized by our community. In fact, it is broadly recognized as the antithesis of mālama ‘āina. It takes fish off the reef for a commercial interest for a few, while negatively impacting the many by decreasing both the ecological integrity of coral reefs and the food security for our the community.

This bill would be a big statement that the State of Hawai‘i recognizes that the importance of ecological integrity and food security, and will prioritize that above the commercial interests of a few individuals. As such, I encourage you to support it. Thank you for your consideration.

Me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,

Kawika Winter, Ph.D.
Director, He‘eia National Estuarine Research Reserve

February 17, 2026

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

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

My name is Jonnetta Peters, Executive Director of Conservation Council for Hawai'I (CCH), a non-profit conservation organization protecting and saving native species and their habitat, and CCH is the Hawai'I affiliate of The National Wildlife Federation**. CCH STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.**

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai'i's waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai'i. DAR's justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs. **Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101**.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Jonnetta Peters
Executive Director

Telephone/Fax: 224.338-6511 | email: info@conservehi.org
web: www.conservehawaii.org | P.O. Box 2923, Honolulu, HI 96802

Opposed to HB 2101

Aloha Esteemed Representative,

Please vote no on the unconstitutional anti-ecology bill HB 2101

From Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM 8-year research degree

The passage of HB 2101 would ignore the HWN and WTL Senate votes to not pass the SB 2996 companion bill to 2101. The hearing and passage of this type of bill would go against the latest Supreme Court decision supporting the EIS-approved fishery opening, and it also contravenes the EIS laws and the EIS approval process.

Testimony from DAR in the SB 2996 hearing, "the fishery DAR review shows will be sustainable." Watch on YouTube at 1:25 min. link. 2024 Report to the Legislature also shows very healthy fish populations during the report years. DAR also stated that "No negative impacts are expected by the fishery reopening."

Pro-Hawaiian-based BLNR, Board of Land and Natural Resources, passes rules to proceed with permitting laws and supports the fishery in a unanimous 7-0 vote. Every year, DAR, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and its leading scientists testify, drawing on decades of science, supported by all the leading scientists in Hawaii, in support of the return of the aquarium fishery. Passage of this ban bill would contradict the EIS, the Senate deferral, the BLNR unanimous decisions, and the courts' rulings, and it would not be based on science.

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

EIS laws are meaningless if they are bypassed by the legislature!

“Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Economic Value with Sustainability”

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

Ctenochaetus Strigosus Kole Tangs, Zebrasoma flavescens Yellow Tangs are currently among the most populous fish. They are not in decline. Contrary to the opposition's recent misinformation on the science.

See the findings in the chart below.

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

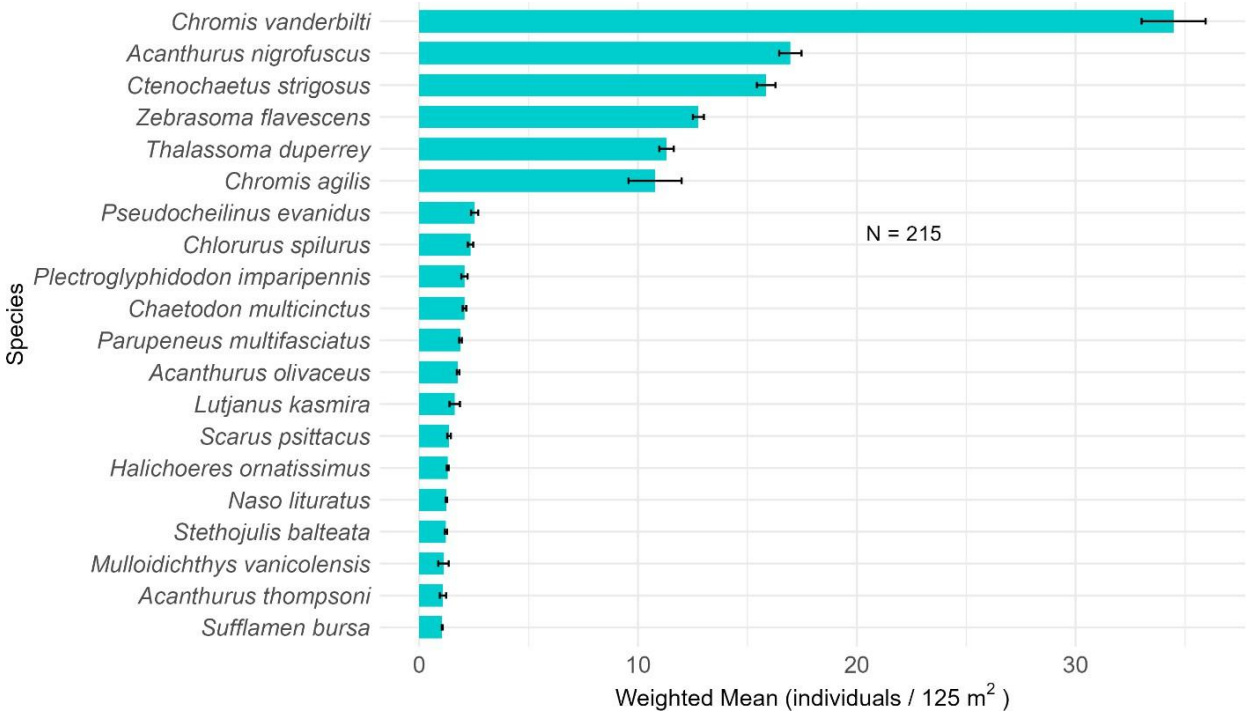


Figure 20. *The 20 most abundant reef fish species recorded during 2022-2023 FAHU surveys. Mean density per transect (125 m^2) weighted by stratum weights with error bars to show weighted standard error for the sample size of 215 surveys across nine strata. Scientific names were used to distinguish species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

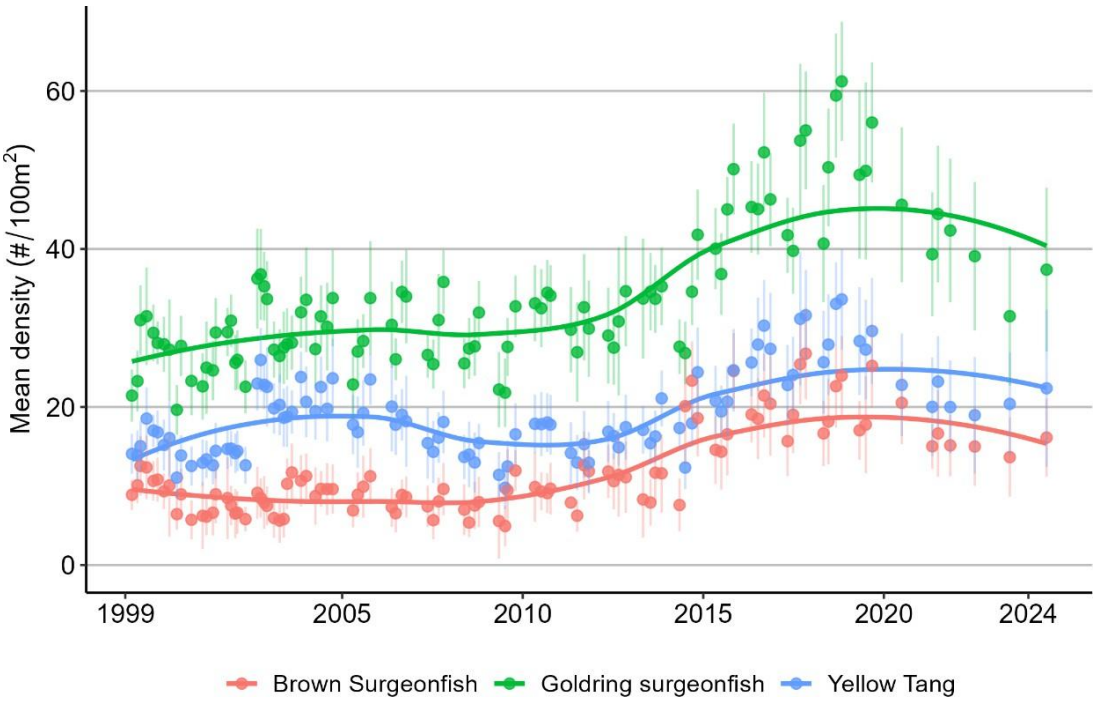


***Figure 23**. Mean density of select small surgeonfishes in WHAP surveys. Points represent mean density across 25 WHAP sites for each survey round per species. Error bars represent standard deviation to depict the level of variability between sites. Recruit sized individuals are removed from these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

This data are significant because, following the closure of the fishery in 2017, no population increase was observed. Meaning the fishery did not affect fish populations. The opposition points out that, 5 years later, populations declined and attributes this to fishery. Natural declines and increases occur.

Aquarium Fish are Ambassadors for Tourism

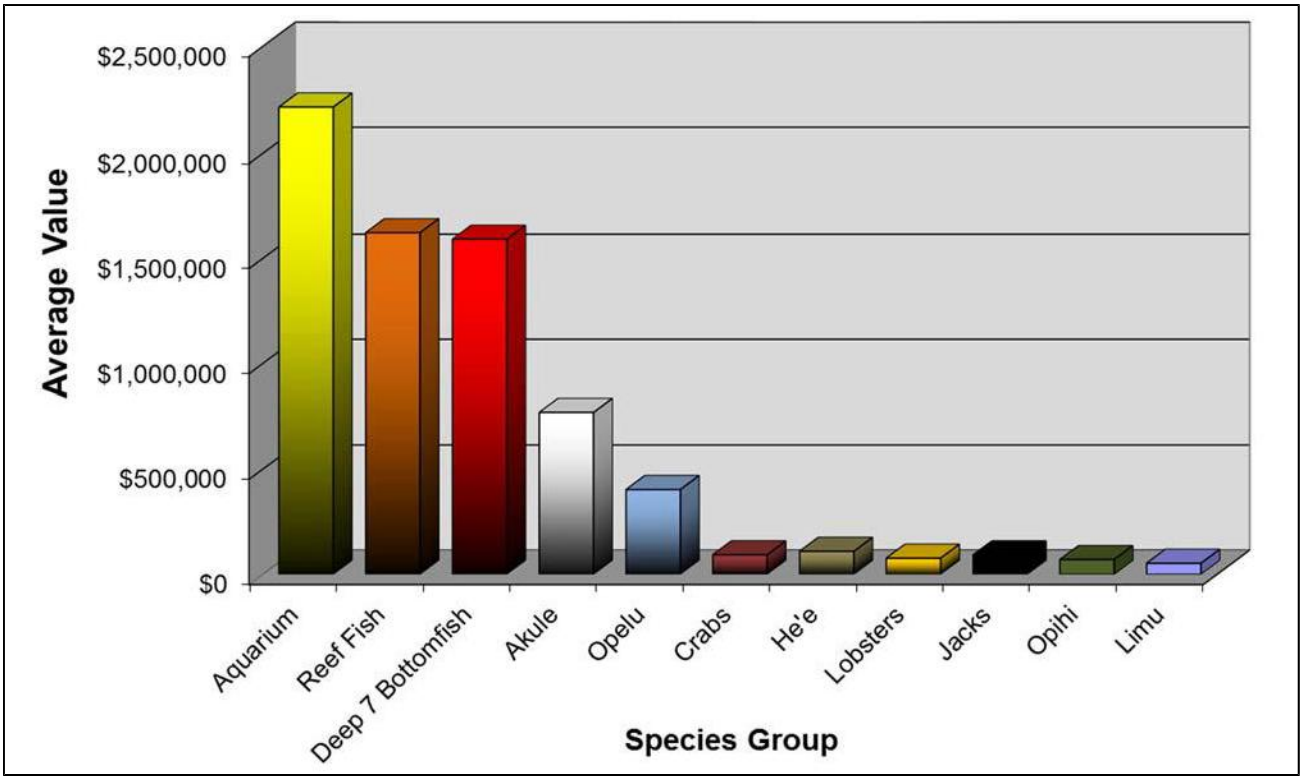
Hawaii's colorful reef fish are "**ambassadors**" for the state's marine ecosystems, exported globally to aquariums and private collectors, raising awareness and promoting tourism, science, sustainability, and fishery husbandry worldwide.

Tourism

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

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

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



1980 Comparison of the economic value of the fishery harvest in Hawaii.

Who Benefits?

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

All public and private aquaria, aquaculture facilities, and even fishponds in the state rely on live fish, which only tropical fishers can catch. These include: The Natural Energy Center Kailua Kona and it's numerous facilities. Sea Life Park, Waikiki Aquarium, Oceanic Institute, Nui Nui Fisheries, Aulani Disney Resort, Maui Ocean Center, UH Hilo Pacific Aquaculture and Coastal

Resource Center (PACRC), Kaua'I Ocean Center, Mokupapapa Discovery Center Hilo, Doctor and Hospital, and Aquariums like Shriners for Children.

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

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

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

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

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

In late 2025, monthly imports could exceed $200 million while exports were under $40 million, highlighting the imbalance. Significantly less cargo leaves Hawaii, and the HERO reports below stress the importance of increased sustainable renewable exports from the State and its dangerously high dependence on imports. The aquarium fishery could help fulfill those states' needs.

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

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

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

UH News » Research » Where can Hawai‘i diversify...

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

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

“Based on industries already in Hawai‘i, the study shows Hawai‘i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as fishing, fish farming and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism”.

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

The value of Hawaii's nearshore oceans is worth 15.3 billion dollars in highly renewable resources in 2024, with a current 50%

estimated increase every 20 years, which means one of The state of Hawaii's most valuable resources is our Ocean. *Tourism impacts are Hawaii's biggest ocean ecological offender and the largest source of Carbon Footprint and is not sustainable*.

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

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

University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization report in 2024 by UHERO.

"Hawai'i's economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years". The University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawai'i to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

What UHERO found based on industries already in Hawai'i, the study shows Hawai'i has great potential for ocean- based industries—such as *fishing, fish farming* and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.

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

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

Hawaii Controls It's Own Future

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tourism Effects on Fish Populations

News article discusses the loss of fish in tourist areas.

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

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

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

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

We found that when tourism shut down due to COVID restrictions in 2020, fish biomass increased and predatory species increased usage of shallow habitats, where tourists typically concentrate. When tourism resumed, fish biomass and habitat use returned to pre-pandemic levels. These displacement effects change fish community composition and biomass, which could affect key processes such as spawning, foraging and resting, and have knock-on effects that compromise ecosystem function and resilience.

Management of non-consumptive uses, particularly in heavily visited MPAs, should be considered to sustain these ecosystems.

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

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

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

Populations of the most targeted fishery and their value.

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

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

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

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

Tourism Economic Impact of Aquarium Fishery, The Data

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

The relevance of these declines may not be fishery-associated, but there is, definitively, no statistical evidence of any decline in economic value to the State from keeping the fishery closed.

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

[Number of units]

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

NA Not available.

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

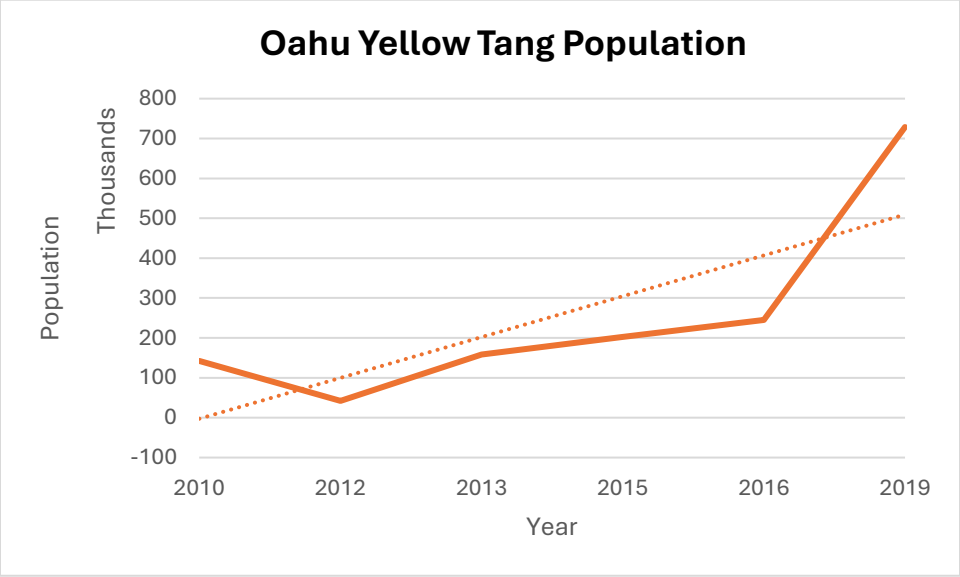
Thus, the loss of the Aquarium Trade harms tourism economically.

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

Sustainability is clear. DAR researchers have been clear on this repeatedly.

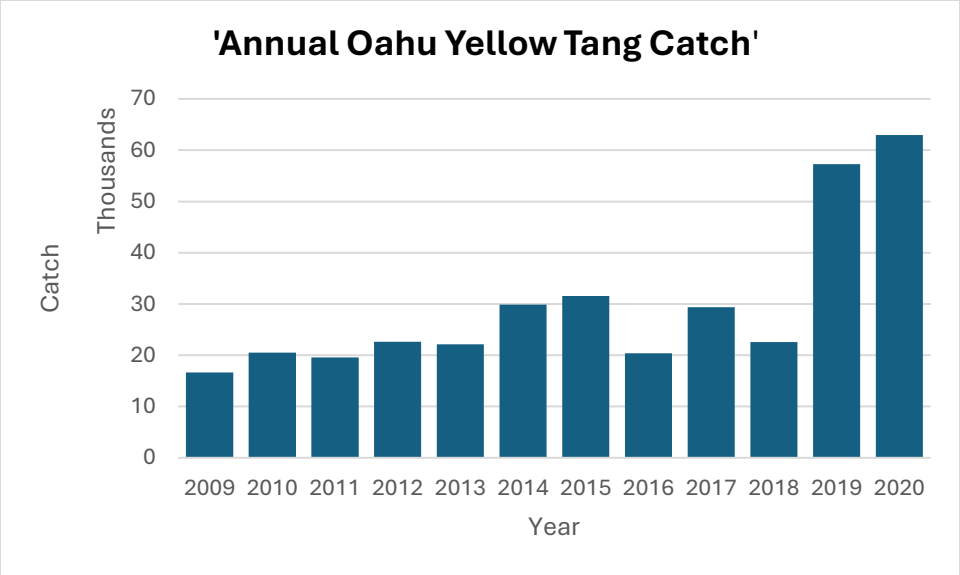
The Facts Oahu Yellow Tang CML take stats:

Oahu Yellow Tang, ***Zebrasoma flavescens,*** **DAR** Catch Report Data for the Aquarium Fishery between 2009 to 2020, comparison to Fish Populations 2010 to 2019 done by **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, Yellow Tangs, from 2009 to 2020, has the following data that supports the fishery despite increased take being done at a sustainable level.



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. Data is only available for the years of surveys listed above



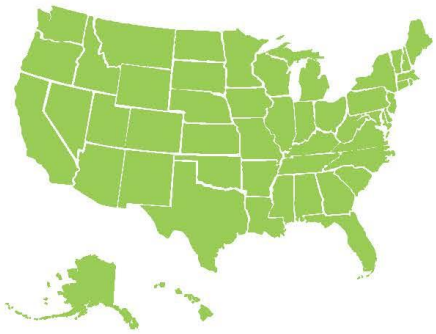
DAR Catch Report Stats Yellow Tangs Zebrasoma flavescens 2009-2020

Clearly, Fish Counts and all available data show a Sustainable Fishery! Please support sustainability and the use of the most renewable resource use. Vote no to HB 2101!

Thanks, Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM research degree.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE U.S. PET SECTOR

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



There are **131.4M** households in the U.S.

About **57%** own at least one pet

About **51%** own at least one dog

And **25%** own at least one cat

Average of almost **1.7** pets per household

$109.15B spent by United States pet owners on pets in 2024

$302.64B annual transactions in United States, with multiplier effects

1,273,464 jobs in pet-related goods and service industries

2,747,159 jobs linked directly or indirectly to pet support sector

$140.12B in earnings

$21.68B total estimated tax revenues generated by pet-related businesses

federal tax revenue	$3.85B
state tax revenue	$8.04B
local tax revenue	$9.79B

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

APPA American Pet Products Association · Pet Advocacy Network · pet food institute · PIDA Pet Industry Distributors Association · WPA World Pet Association

Sources:

An extensive, detailed environmental review is available upon request.

Source in-text links and now below:

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https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/reports-to-the-legislature/2020/AR20-WHRFMA-Rpt-FY19.pdf

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(Lough et al., 1999) (Bagnato et al., 2004; Damassa et al., 2006; Cantin et al., 2010)

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

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

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

(https://www.iucnredlist.org/

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

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

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

Opposed to SB 2996 Aquarium Fishery Ban Bill

From Ron Tubbs, B.S.N.D. UHM 8-year research degree

The passage of SB 2996 ignores the latest Supreme Court decision supporting the EIS-approved fishery opening and contravenes EIS laws and the EIS approval process.

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

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

EIS laws are meaningless if they are bypassed by the legislature and do not support sustainable resource use!

"Hawaii Aquarium Fishery Economic Value with Sustainability"

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

Ctenochaetus Strigosus Kole Tangs, Zebrasoma flavescens Yellow Tangs are currently among the most populous fish.

See the findings in the chart below.

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

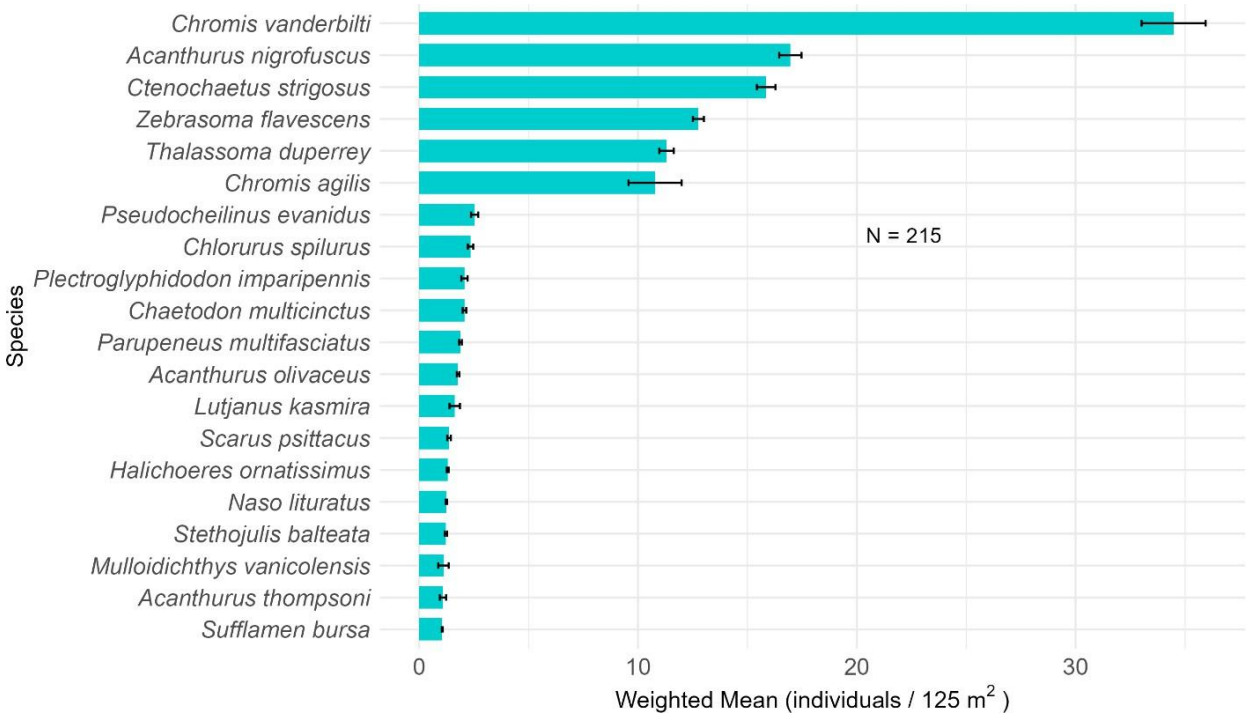


Figure 20. *The 20 most abundant reef fish species recorded during 2022-2023 FAHU surveys. Mean density per transect (125 m^2) weighted by stratum weights with error bars to show weighted standard error for the sample size of 215 surveys across nine strata. Scientific names were used to distinguish species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

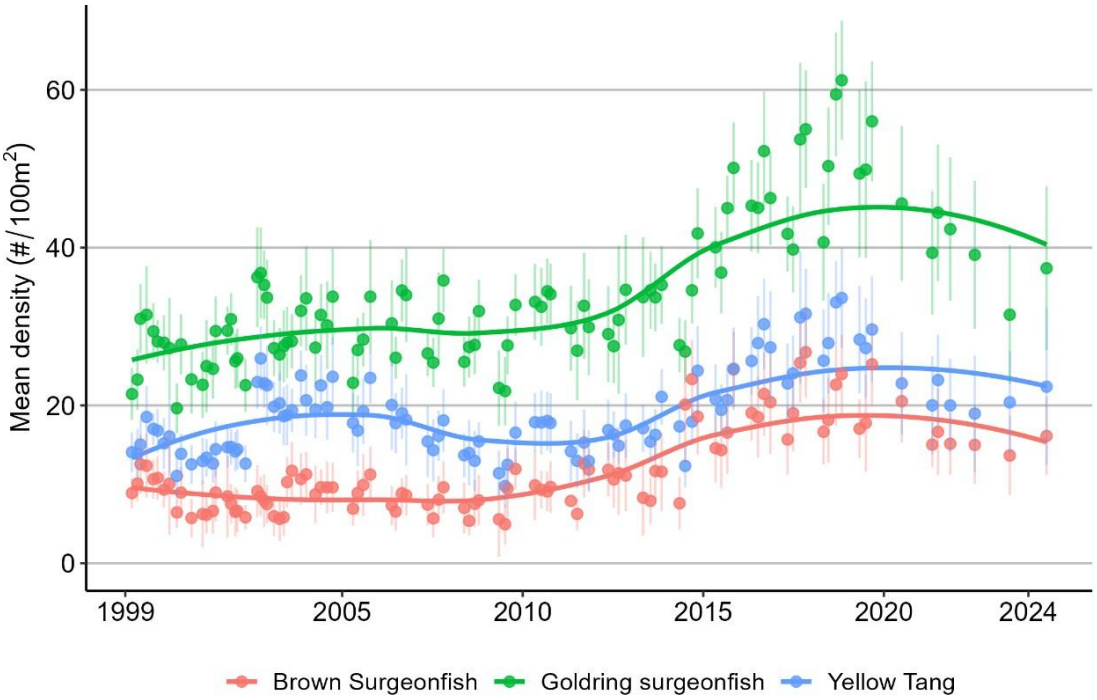


***Figure 23**. Mean density of select small surgeonfishes in WHAP surveys. Points represent mean density across 25 WHAP sites for each survey round per species. Error bars represent standard deviation to depict the level of variability between sites. Recruit sized individuals are removed from these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

This data is significant because, following the fishery closure in 2017, no significant population increase was observed. During the fishery, no declines linked to increased take occurred! Meaning the fishery did not affect fish populations. The opposition points out that, 5 years later, populations declined and attributes this to fishery. Natural declines and increases occur.

Aquarium Fish are Ambassadors for Tourism

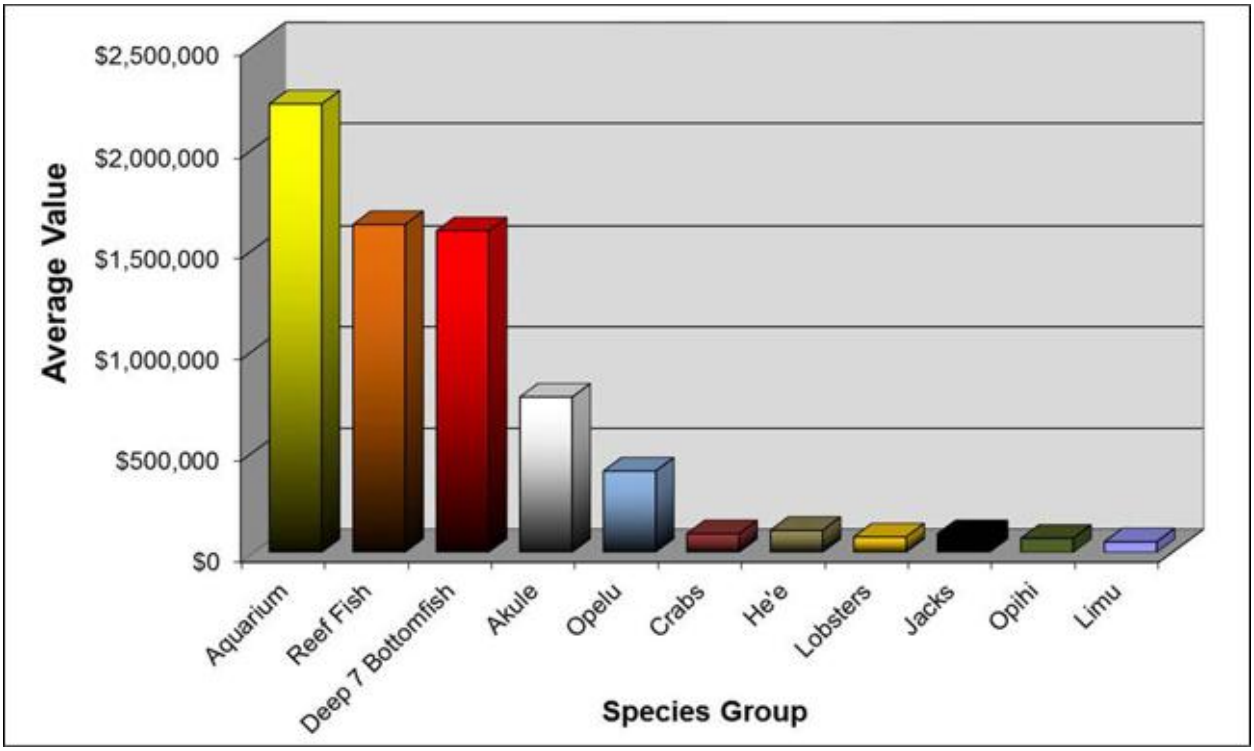
Hawaii's colorful reef fish are "**ambassadors**" for the state's marine ecosystems, exported globally to aquariums and private collectors, raising awareness and promoting tourism, science, sustainability, and fishery husbandry worldwide.

Tourism

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

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

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



1980 Comparison of the economic value of the fishery harvest in Hawaii.

Who Benefits?

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

All public and private aquaria, aquaculture facilities, and even fishponds in the state rely on live fish which only tropical fishers can catch. These include: The Natural Energy Center Kailua Kona and it's numerous facilities. Sea Life Park, Waikiki Aquarium, Oceanic Institute, Nui Nui Fisheries, Aulani Disney Resort, Maui Ocean Center, UH Hilo Pacific Aquaculture and Coastal

Resource Center (PACRC), Kaua'I Ocean Center, Mokupapapa Discovery Center Hilo, Doctor and Hospital, and Aquariums like Shriners for Children.

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

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

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

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

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

In late 2025, monthly imports could exceed $200 million while exports were under $40 million, highlighting the imbalance. Significantly less cargo leaves Hawaii, and the HERO reports below stress the importance of increased sustainable renewable exports from the State and its dangerously high dependence on imports. The aquarium fishery could help fulfill those states' needs.

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

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

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

UH News » Research » Where can Hawai‘i diversify...

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

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

“Based on industries already in Hawai‘i, the study shows Hawai‘i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as fishing, fish farming and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism”.

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

The value of Hawaii's nearshore oceans is worth 15.3 billion dollars in highly renewable resources in 2024, with a current 50%

estimated increase every 20 years, which means one of The state of Hawaii's most valuable resources is our Ocean. *Tourism impacts are Hawaii's biggest ocean ecological offender and the largest source of Carbon Footprint and is not sustainable*.

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

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

University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization report in 2024 by UHERO.

"Hawaiʻiʻs economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years". The University of Hawaiʻi Economic Research Organization (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawaiʻi to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

What UHERO found based on industries already in Hawaiʻi, the study shows Hawaiʻi has great potential for ocean- based industries—such as *fishing, fish farming* and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.

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

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

Hawaii Controls It's Own Future

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tourism Effects on Fish Populations

News article discusses the loss of fish in tourist areas.

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

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

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

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

We found that when tourism shut down due to COVID restrictions in 2020, fish biomass increased and predatory species increased usage of shallow habitats, where tourists typically concentrate. When tourism resumed, fish biomass and habitat use returned to pre-pandemic levels. These displacement effects change fish community composition and biomass, which could affect key processes such as spawning, foraging and resting, and have knock-on effects that compromise ecosystem function and resilience.

Management of non-consumptive uses, particularly in heavily visited MPAs, should be considered to sustain these ecosystems.

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

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

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

Populations of the most targeted fishery and their value.

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

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

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

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

Tourism Economic Impact of Aquarium Fishery, The Data

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

The relevance of these declines may not be fishery-associated, but there is, definitively, no statistical evidence of any decline in economic value to the State from keeping the fishery closed.

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

[Number of units]

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

NA Not available.

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

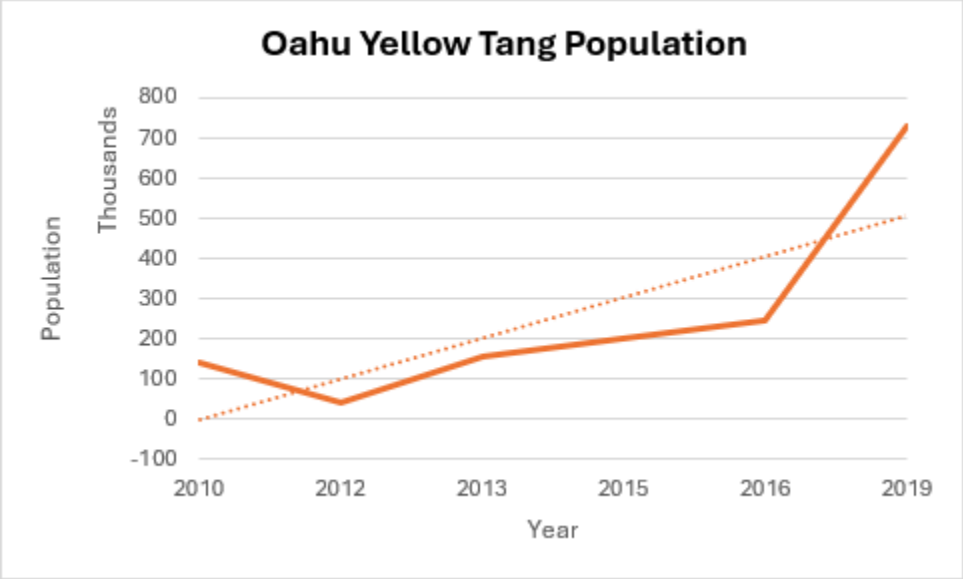
Thus, the loss of the Aquarium Trade harms tourism economically.

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

Sustainability is clear. DAR researchers have been clear on this repeatedly.

The Facts Oahu Yellow Tang CML take stats:

Oahu Yellow Tang, ***Zebrasoma flavescens,*** **DAR** Catch Report Data for the Aquarium Fishery between 2009 to 2020, comparison to Fish Populations 2010 to 2019 done by **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, Yellow Tangs, from 2009 to 2020, has the following data that supports the fishery despite increased take being done at a sustainable level.

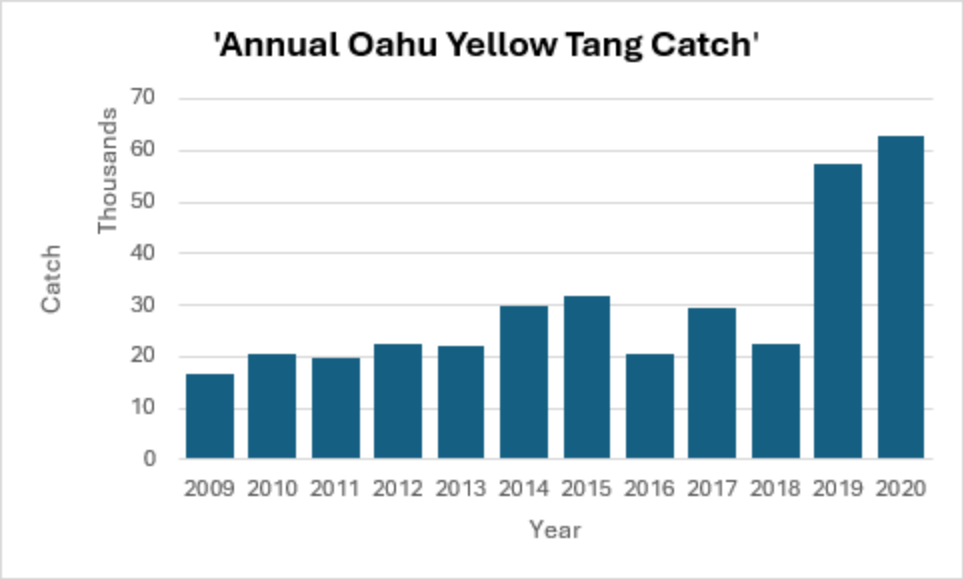


2010 to 2019 done by PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC)

Yellow Tangs Zebrasoma flavescens 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom

0-98 ft only. Currently done only every three years. Data is only available for the

years of surveys listed above

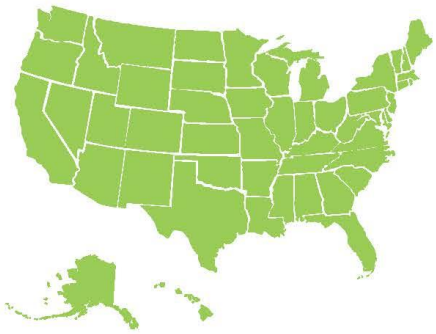


DAR Catch Report Stats Yellow Tangs Zebrasoma flavescens 2009-2020

Clearly, Fish Counts and all available data show a Sustainable Fishery!

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE U.S. PET SECTOR

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



There are **131.4M** households in the U.S.

About **57%** own at least one pet

About **51%** own at least one dog

And **25%** own at least one cat

Average of almost **1.7** pets per household

$109.15B spent by United States pet owners on pets in 2024

$302.64B annual transactions in United States, with multiplier effects

1,273,464 jobs in pet-related goods and service industries

2,747,159 jobs linked directly or indirectly to pet support sector

$140.12B in earnings

$21.68B total estimated tax revenues generated by pet-related businesses

federal tax revenue	$3.85B
state tax revenue	$8.04B
local tax revenue	$9.79B

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

APPA American Pet Products Association · Pet Advocacy Network · pet food institute · PIDA Pet Industry Distributors Association · WPA World Pet Association

Sources:

An extensive, detailed environmental review is available upon request.

Source in-text links and now below:

Jablonski D (1986) Mass and background extinctions: the alternation of macroevolutionary regimes. *Science* 231:129–133

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Forsgren, Kristy, et al. "Reproductive biology of the ocean sunfishes." *The Ocean Sunfishes* (2020): 87- 104.

Rønsted, Nina, et al. "Extinction risk of the endemic vascular flora of Kauai, Hawaii, based on IUCN assessments." *Conservation Biology* 36.4 (2022): e13896.)

https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2020/12/impact-of-the-pandemic-on-tourism-behsudi)

https://www.westhawaiitoday.com/2020/06/25/opinion/my-turn-we-expect- better/hjawaiitropicalaquairumfish

https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/reports-to-the-legislature/2020/AR20-WHRFMA-Rpt-FY19.pdf

ME Bushnell, JT Claisse, CW Laidley - Journal of Fish Biology, 2010

Eble JA, Toonen RJ, Sorenson L, Basch LV, Papastamatiou YP, Bowen BW (2011) Escaping paradise: larval export from Hawaii in an Indo-Pacific reef fish, the yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens*. Mar Ecol Prog Ser 428:245-258. https://doi.org/10.3354/meps09083

(Lough et al., 1999) (Bagnato et al., 2004; Damassa et al., 2006; Cantin et al., 2010)

Muir, Paul R., et al. "Species identity and depth predict bleaching severity in reef-building corals: shall the deep inherit the reef?." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 284.1864 (2017): 20171551

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

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

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The Effects of Venting and Decompression on Mortality and Sublethal Effects in Yellow Tangs (Zebrasoma Flavescens) Caught for the West Hawaii Aquarium Trade. Diss. Washington State University, 2012.

Mathew, K. J. "Net avoidance behaviour among larval, juvenile and adult euphausiids." *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of India* 30.1&2 (1988): 93-98.

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

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

(https://www.iucnredlist.org/

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

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Cultural Significance

Ron Tubbs

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:24:03 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

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

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition supports HB2101. 100% of the reef fish caught for the aquarum supply business die...mostly through poor aquarium maintenance with salt water.

If we remove huge stocks of our reef fish, why would tourists or locals bother to buy snorkels and masks to view empty reefs?

HB2101 would prohibit the commercial collection of marine life for the aquarium trade, and prevent the Division of Aquatic Resources from re-opening the aquarium collection industry after it was shut down for most of the last decade.

HB2101 would make it clear that the DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources must not waste its extremely limited time and resources developing, implementing, monitoring, and enforcing proposed regulations to reopen the commercial aquarium collection industry, which has already been shut down for nearly a decade - and to instead focus on much more important priorities, as our fisheries and reefs face unprecedented threats

Mahalo for your time.

KO`OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

February 17, 2026

LATE

To: Rep. Nicole Lowen, Chair
Rep. Amy A.Perruso, Vice Chair
& Members
Committtee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
& Members
Committee on Water & Land

Re: **H.B. 2101– Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection – SUPPORT**

The Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club strongly supports H.B. 2101, which would prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Our organization is dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian cultural resources and practices, historic preservation of wahi pana and wahi kapu, and the resources which enrich our lives here in pae`aina Hawai`i.

We are deeply concerned at the disregard that has been exhibited by those who seek to profit from island natural resources for personal commercial gain. We have witnessed this creating a serious issue in Kane`ohe Bay, where native fish are so badly diminished that it is challenging to find more than a few of those creatures in a place that once flourished just a few decades ago.

Aside from the obvious cultural and environmental concerns, however, we'd like to address the reasons why anyone would want to allow the depletion of precious natural resources: is this truly more about deregulating use of island waters? Are we entering a season where we will disregard the need for balance in the use and protection of our resources for personal profit from those individuals and companies who do not give back to the resources from which they gather?

We urge your committee to consider the legacy that you leave to your children and generations to come, should you allow the continuation of gathering aquarium fish until the resource is completely gone.

We urge all of you to do what is pono by passing out this important legislation to protect our brothers and sisters in the seas of Hawai`i.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Charles Naumu, President Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

The Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is one of the largest in the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs nationwide. Ko`olaupoko HCC is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians and providing leadership and scholarships. Its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart."

P. O. Box 664 * Kaneohe, HI 96744
Email: koolaupokohcc@gmail.com * Website: www.koolaupoko-hcc.org

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:59:12 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Butts	Kohola Coffee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jeannette Butts. I am a small business owner in Kona and the owner-operator of Koholā Coffee, a locally rooted, ocean-inspired business built around the values of mālama ʻāina and stewardship of Hawaiʻi's natural resources. I am writing in strong support of HB2101.

Hawaiʻi's reefs are not just scenic backdrops — they are living ecosystems that protect our shorelines, sustain biodiversity, support food systems, and drive our visitor economy. Reef fish are not ornamental commodities. They are critical contributors to reef health, grazing algae, maintaining coral balance, and sustaining ecological resilience.

The aquarium collection trade removes key species from already stressed reef systems. At a time when our coral reefs face warming oceans, bleaching events, invasive species, and coastal development pressures, we cannot afford additional extraction that undermines reef stability.

Many of these fish have high mortality rates during capture and transport. Others are removed at volumes that disrupt local ecological balance. While regulations have been attempted in the past, enforcement gaps and ecological uncertainty remain. When science shows risk to a fragile ecosystem, precaution is not extreme — it is responsible governance.

Beyond ecology, there is cultural and economic context. Hawaiʻi's reefs are foundational to Native Hawaiian practices, subsistence, recreation, and identity. Protecting reef health protects food security, shoreline protection, tourism, and long-term economic stability for local residents.

As a business owner whose livelihood is tied to Hawaiʻi's natural beauty and environmental integrity, I believe our policies should reflect long-term sustainability, not short-term extraction.

HB2101 is a step toward prioritizing reef health, ecosystem resilience, and responsible stewardship.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting Hawaiʻi's reefs for future generations.

Respectfully,
Jeannette Butts
Kona, Hawai‘i

LATE

OCEAN ERA

17 February 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, and
COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

FOR HEARING: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 8.45 AM, Conference Room 411

r.e. In ***Support*** of House Bill No. ***2101***
(RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.)

Dear Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice-Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and members of the respective Committees,

I **strongly support the provision in this bill at the start of Section 2** that states that *"Nothing in this section shall be construed to: Affect: (A) Captive-breeding and aquaculture activities pursuant to section 187A-3.5"*

The State should be encouraging the development of captive breeding and aquaculture for food, and should not be placing an onerous burden on the collection of adult fish (broodstock) for spawning to produce captive-reared fry. Aquaculture is a great way for us to relieve pressure on the oceans, for both aquarium fish and food fish, and to create sustainable jobs.

Ideally, this provision would also include language that specifies that an SAP is NOT REQUIRED for each and every collection of any form of marine life – even that which is otherwise unregulated – taken from within the West Hawaii Regional Fisheries Management Area (WHRFMA). This would alleviate the burden on DAR, requiring them to issue SAPS, and would encourage more aquaculture activities on Hawai`i Island.

As currently written, the statutes **obligate DAR to issue an SAP for all purposes**, for all organisms, including aquaculture breeding purposes for any collection in the WHRFMA. This creates unreasonable delays, and clogs the already-busy permit processes in DAR. Our most recent permit for collecting uku for broodstock (breeders) took over 6 months, out of a 24 month Federally-funded research program. This meant that we lost an entire summer when we could have been conducting spawning and hatchery research trials to culture uku. Instead, we were stalled in bureaucracy.

At the same time, however, we could have gone out into the WHRFMA area and caught and killed as many uku as we wanted to, with no permit required. So long as the uku were over 1 lb, and we weren't fishing in an FRA, we could have killed a thousand uku. But because we wanted to catch twenty uku **and *keep them alive***, we needed an SAP.

73-4460 Queen Kaahumanu Highway, Box No. 123, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740-2632, USA·
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www.ocean-era.com

I believe that this existing requirement is a disincentive to aquaculture research in Hawai`i. By stifling R&D, it limits our potential to grow more sustainable fish, and alleviate pressure on wild stocks. It therefore is counter to the intent of the original aquarium-fishing legislation.

I am trained as a marine biologist, and have worked in fisheries management and aquaculture my entire professional life. I have lived in Kona for over 35 years, and in that time have started up a number of aquaculture R&D companies, working with native Hawaiian species, to increase the bounty of our oceans, to create jobs, and to help feed our communities.

I have worked with the native Hawaiian black-lip pearl oyster, a range of marine foodfish – including kahala (aka kanpachi), ulua, giant grouper, omilu, moi and mahi mahi – and aquarium fish – including Flame Angels and Yellow Tangs – and most recently limu. I am also a member of the West Hawaii Fisheries Council.

Whatever your attitude towards aquarium-fish collecting, the regulations should not hinder the progress of scientific research that is key to a deeper understanding of our marine environment, the creation of new industries and jobs, and the provision of sustainable, local supplies of food for our people.

Thank you in anticipation.
Sincerely, with aloha,

Neil Anthony Sims, M.Sc.
Founder, CEO, Ocean Era, Inc.

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SIERRA CLUB
HAWAIʻI ISLAND GROUP

LATE

February 17, 2026

Representative Nicole Lowen, Chair, Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
Representative Mark Hashem , Chair, Committee on Water and Land
Hawai‘i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Strong Support for House Bill 2101

Aloha House Committee Chairs Lowen and Hashen and EEP/WAL Committee members,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2023 BLNR Petition for Rules to Prohibit

In 2023, Kalanihale, KUPA Friends of Hoʻokena Beach Park, Moana ʻOhana, Koʻolaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and For the Fishes filed a Petition for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes (With Exemptions). At its December 8, 2023 meeting, the BLNR granted the petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please pass HB2101 out of the Committees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

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

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:41:07 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Moennich	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I strongly oppose HB 2101.

Please do not pass this bill.

This bill does not strike a balance of two opposing ocean user groups.

We have one group who wants no aquarium collection at all in the state of Hawaii. On the other side we have fisherman that count on this industry to survive in Hawaii.

I myself am a firefighter here in Hawaii and even with my firefighter salary, due to the high cost of living here, need to supplement my income in some way to survive.

Collecting aquarium fish can be done sustainably and responsibly. We fishermen all support proper regulation and bag limits of our fishery to monitor the fishery and keep it sustainable.

Whether I catch food fish and sell them at the market for cash and then go buy groceries or whether I catch aquarium fish and sell them to individuals with aquariums for cash that I then go buy groceries with, the net result is the same, commercial fishing to support me financially, in a very expensive place to live.

If you decide to shut down aquarium fishing, a commercial fishing activity, then you should strongly consider shutting down all commercial food fishing. Aquarium fishing is no more harmful than food fishing. In fact I would strongly argue that aquarium fishing is dramatically less harmful than commercial food fishing. In order to make the same amount of money food fishing I would have to take many many more of a species of food fish from the ocean than I would if I took only one fish of the same species to sell alive to the aquarium trade.

In summary, please do not pass this bill. This bill is only fair to one user group and not the other. We live in a place where we all believe in coming together to find balance and harmony. Please strike a balance of both sides and only pass legislation that allows both user groups to share the ocean together.

Sincerely,

Eric Moennich

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:48:57 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles KH Young	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem and members of your committees. I support the passage of HB2101. My name is Charles Young. I live in Kealia South Kona and was an original member of the Reef Fish Working group that eventually help pass HB306 that created the West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA). I expressed concern as early as 1998 that our community in S. Kona opposed Aquarium Fish Collecting 1) in our community fishery and 2) all of West Hawaii. My position has not changed. I urge you to pass HB2101.

Mahalo

Charles Young

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:51:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alohi Nakachi	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees,

I am writing in support of SB2078 and HB2101. I support increasing fines on penalties of aquarium fishing, as well as prohibiting the capture and sale of species for aquarium purposes. However, noting how difficult it is to enforce penalties on aquarium collecting and shipping when legal, I support the outright ban of aquarium collection.

My name is ʻAlohi Nakachi, I was born and raised on moku o Keawe but I now reside on the island of Oʻahu as I moved here to pursue a PhD. I have obtained a PhD from the University of Hawaiʻi 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 ʻike Hawaiʻi 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 ʻike Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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. 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 ʻāina momona, or abundance from traditional management systems. Additionally, sustainable from an Indigenous science view often means ensuring ʻāina 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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 ʻāina of Hawaiʻi 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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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HB 2101
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION and WATER & LAND
Hawai‘i State Capitol

February 18, 2026 8:45AM Room 411

Aloha Chair Lowens and Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso and Morikawa, and members of House Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Keanu Binney-Medeiros. I am a lineal descendant of Kealakekua Bay and a hoa‘āina of Ho‘āla Kealakekua Nui. I work as a research diver and digital media specialist, spending much of my time underwater documenting reef health, species presence, and the impacts of human activity on our nearshore ecosystems.

I submit this testimony in **strong support** of HB2101 which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection because our reefs are not products, they are living systems that feed us, protect our shorelines, and carry the stories of our kūpuna.

When fish are taken for the aquarium pet trade, especially species that help keep our reefs in balance, we feel that loss underwater. Herbivorous fish play a critical role in controlling algae and giving coral a chance to grow and recover. When they are removed in large numbers, the reef shifts. It becomes harder for coral to thrive and the ecosystem becomes weaker.

I see every day that reef recovery does not happen by accident. It takes time, restraint, and intentional protection. Our reefs are already under pressure from warming oceans, pollution, and heavy human use. Allowing continued extraction for the aquarium pet trade places additional strain on ecosystems that are already struggling.

HB2101 reflects a simple but powerful principle, the health of the ecosystem must come first. When we protect the reef as a whole, we protect everything connected to it — cultural practice, subsistence gathering, recreation, and the future of our communities.

If we truly believe our natural resources are held in trust for the people under the Public Trust Doctrine, then our management decisions must reflect that responsibility. We cannot prioritize short-term profit over the long-term abundance of our reefs. Trust is not a suggestion, it is a duty.

I respectfully urge you to support HB2101 and stand for the enduring health of Hawai‘i’s reefs.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to share my testimony.

Keanu Binney-Medeiros

16 February 2026

Re: HB2101 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Aloha e Committee Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Water & Land,

I am Uʻilani Naipo of Moku O Keawe, and I am writing in strong support of this measure to prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Our reefs have sacrificed for too long. Millions of dollars are about to being invested through Green Fee projects to monitor, evaluate, and restore our natural resources — from our watersheds and forests, to trails, and down to our nearshore and marine ecosystems. In West Hawaiʻi, we are actively working to restore our reefs. How can we justify allowing the continued removal of reef fish, which play essential roles in maintaining healthy marine habitats, while we are simultaneously investing so heavily in their recovery?

> *So how can we justify reopening this practice – allowing the removal of reef fish that are essential to healthy reefs – while we are investing millions in their recovery?*

I was raised grounded in the values of taking only what you will eat, mālama ʻāina, and sustaining ʻāina 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 lawaiʻa practices emphasize fishing to feed family and community, and when fish are sold, it is to feed people — not for ornamental trade. Removing reef fish for aquarium purposes conflicts with these values and with the principle of taking only what is appropriate.

Community observations and lived experience reflect growing concern about reef health and the impacts of extraction, including effects on tourism and nearshore abundance. Many local fishermen and ocean users believe that management decisions must reflect what is seen and experienced in the water, not only what is defined as sustainable on paper.

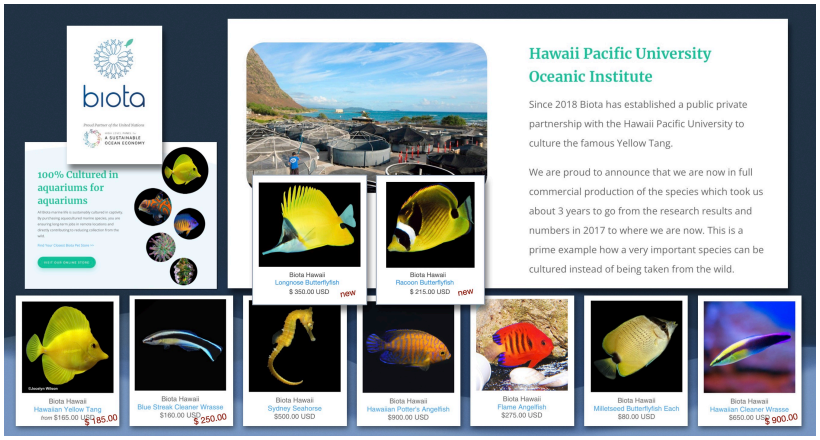
At its core, this perspective calls for responsible stewardship: fish in ways that sustain food systems, protect reef health, and ensure abundance for future generations.

Hawai'i's Constitution Public Trust Doctrine Under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, the State has a constitutional obligation to manage natural resources pursuant to Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. These resources are held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations and require the highest level of scrutiny when proposed for private commercial use.

Hawai'i's reef fish are among the most unique and fragile in the world. Many species exist nowhere else on Earth and play essential ecological roles that maintain reef health, biodiversity, and resilience. For decades, millions of fish have been removed from Hawai'i's reefs, disrupting the balance of already vulnerable marine ecosystems. The commercial aquarium trade further undermines these ecosystems at a time when reefs are under increasing stress from climate change, warming oceans, coral bleaching, invasive species, and land-based pollution.

- Hierarchy of Use

Under a reasonable hierarchy of use, the health and long-term sustainability of public trust resources must remain the foremost consideration. Subsistence use and fishing for the local food market appropriately follow in priority, consistent with sustainable management. All other uses must be evaluated to ensure they do not impair the resource or diminish its availability to the public. Commercial aquarium fishing is an extractive activity that serves external commercial markets rather than the people of Hawai'i. It is inconsistent with the principles of mālama 'āina and mālama kai and with the State's public trust responsibilities, as it provides no meaningful public benefit while placing additional pressure on shared natural resources.



• An Alternative

The Ka Paʻakai Analysis requires evaluation of alternatives. A very viable alternative to aquarium fishing already exists – aquaculture. The lauʻīpala (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.

Rather than removing *100,000* lauʻīpala from Hawaiʻi's reefs, along with over a thousand of the **endemic species** Potter's Angelfish from Hawaiʻi'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 Hawaiʻi's ʻāina and shared natural resources over privatized economic benefit.

Cost of Fishery – The full public cost of managing this fishery has not been disclosed by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) or DOCARE. A 2021 study estimated annual administrative, operational, compliance, and enforcement costs between $300,000 and $500,000 when the fishery was last active in 2017. Adjusted for current conditions, a realistic estimate today would likely exceed $500,000 annually. This public expense would occur while collecting only approximately $100 per permit, limited to seven permittees and a small number of safety divers, while commercial collectors and associated businesses may generate millions of dollars in gross revenue.

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 Hawaiʻi'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 Hawaiʻi 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.

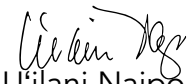
Beyond ecological concerns, this issue carries deep cultural significance. Native Hawaiian traditions recognize the reciprocal relationship between people and the ocean, and the principles of mālama ‘āina, aloha ‘āina calls for stewardship, restraint, and responsibility to future generations. Hawai‘i’s reefs, are not commodities; they are living systems that support subsistence practices, cultural continuity, recreation, education, and a sustainable visitor economy. Protecting reef life in its natural habitat ensures these benefits remain available to local communities rather than being depleted for markets elsewhere.

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 must be on deck — and all fish must remain on our reefs.

Policy decisions ultimately rest with the Legislature, and passage of HB2101 provides the appropriate path to establish clear policy on this issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2101.

Sincerely,



U'ilani Naipo

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/14/2026 3:29:32 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Oppose

Klayton Kubo

Waimea, Kaua'i

OPPOSED to HB 2101 2/15/26

Honorable Chairs and Representatives,

As a Data Specialist, Teacher, and member of the NEA, Retired, who worked in Hawaii's schools for 35yrs., I ask you to **please VOTE NO on HB 2101:**

1. The premise that the aquarium fishery is responsible for irreparable harm to fish populations years after closure- is false, many other factors can affect fish counts. Let's not ignore **the positive upward trend in Yellow Tang fish counts when the fishery was active, nor disregard natural variation in fish populations, the effect of overcrowding, and the fact that ecosystems can change in as little as 7 months.** For this is what happened during Covid in 2020, when a snorkeling sanctuary receiving 1 million visitors a year, but which was never fished by aquarium divers, was suddenly shut down for 7 months. Research conducted by the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology [*Ocean Sustainability* (Aug., 2025)], found that when the crowds left, the fish returned. Hanauma Bay was revitalized into a vibrant "haven for wildlife."

2. This bill takes away **aquariums- a valuable tool for teaching students and the public** about biodiversity, ecosystems, ocean chemistry, and our fundamental values of appreciating, respecting, and caring for nature.

3. This bill **ignores the scientific facts of DAR-one of our nation's most strict managers of fisheries-**and **defies the opinion letter of 21 oceanographers-**many of whom are world renowned, **that Hawaii's Aquarium fishery IS SUSTAINABLE.** The current rule-making process will make it even more so.

4. This bill **ignores legal decisions of (1) the BLNR which already voted 9-0 in favor of an Aquarium Rules package being passed, and (2) of the Hawaii Supreme Court, which mandated an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** for the fishery. **It unjustly disregards the rights and efforts of aquarium fisher's who have lost (5) to (8) years of income, and thousands of dollars complying with the Supreme Court's order.**

5. Economic Reasons to avoid closure: Several peoples livelyhoods including many suppliers who are supported by Hawaii's aquarium fishery have lost their jobs & income. **Isn't the state short of funds? Why kill a sustainable trade that bring in taxes to the state?**

Please vote NO on HB 2101.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Tubbs, M.Ed., NEA Retired

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:04:04 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair(s) & committee members,

im writing to you in advance and plan on giving testimony via Zoom.

I'm in strong opposition to this bill for a multitude of reasons. For starters, this commercial fishery is sustainable and this has been proven beyond a shadow of of a doubt. After completing a lengthy a revised Environmental Impact Statement and having it accepted by the BLNR, this was also certified by the state Supreme Court. Through all of this lengthy process, DLNR/DAR has fully supported the fishery and have testified it' to be sustainable, "low to no impact", and the ONLY fishery in Hawaii to meet such a standard. West Hawaii in particular has had a very comprehensive management plan in place for 26 years and the end result is crystal clear data and trends showing stable or increasing populations of reef fish even with historical high average take that is no longer the case. For example, in west Hawaii, yellow tang(lau ipala), the average take is 275k fish and even with that rate, populations increased or were stable in the long term trends. This is DARs findings. There's no question the science, supports the fishery.

The next issue is the yellow tang being characterized as Kaukau fish. This isn't supported by Kama aina or cultural knowledge. Sure there may be outliers where a person may eat one or two, but to categorize this alongsided manini or kole is revisionism. It's not accurate. Even in Hawaiian fishery history literature such as "Lawaia", Lau Ipala is not listed as food fish. Most shoreline gatherers consider this fish rubbish and it's NOT a desirable catch.
Kole obviously is and always has been a food fish and this is the reason WHY the land board has removed this fish from the White List! It's not even legal to catch Kole going forward. Furthermore, the Kole was also prohibited by the Herbivore rule package that passed in 2024. So, this is a nonissue.

In Hawaii, throughout the USA, and in most places in the world, commercial fisheries exists. Even in old Hawaii, commercial fisheries exist. Now, some say yes but commercial fisheries are for food, and that may be the end result, but that's not what the fishery or fisherman is doing. The fisher isn't eating his catch, he intends to SELL the catch for monetary compensation. The commercial AQ fishery is the same exact thing. What really matters is the take, not the end use. A fish removed is a fish removed. Can the resource be used in such a way in a sustainable manner? Of course it can and this is proven. The commercial AQ fishery contributes

significantly to our communities. It nets large amounts of dollars for such TINY amounts of biomass being removed. The highest return per pound OF ANY FISHERY IN HAWAII. The entire fishery is less than 1 ton of biomass per year compared to other fisheries that are thousands of tons. Yet it's the most valuable inshore fishery in all of Hawaii. It also provides good paying careers to Kama aina so we can raise our ohanas. Not just the fishers but also packers, husbandry technicians, and logistics managers. This fishery of all the commercial fisheries in Hawaii actually sustains people in ways beyond a meal. It enriches our people so we can SURVIVE and thrive. I've participated in all fisheries in Hawaii and none of them can compare and provide a way of life as good as this fishery can. It's unfortunate some people want to tear it down because they don't understand it or the resource itself.

we the fishers were asked by the State to prepare a impact statement. We were asked to satisfy a Supreme Court order. We have been through a living Hell jumping through hoops and have spent all our savings after losing our livelihoods. It has wiped us out and now the activists that asked for all this, will not accept the result, will not accept the science and are now moving to ban us. Where is the aloha? It's cold hearted and cruel and I know the legislature is wise enough to see this. Do what's right, stand with the victim, stand with the fishermen. Defer or vote down this bill

mahalo for your time,

Eric Koch

Naalehu Hawai'i

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:41:55 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Board members,

My name is David Ramos and I oppose this bill. I was born and raised on Oahu. I'm a 30 year veteran of Aquarium Fish Collecting which should denote the sustainability of the fishery. My wife of 35 years Leatrice Kauhilani Lonoaea Ramos is almost full blooded Kanaka Maoli and the 5th great grandaughter of King Kamahameha and KauhilaniMaka. It breaks our heart to see Hawaiians fighting Hawaiians. This is by design and a result of the forked tongued Malihini's who started this whole war against the aquarium trade.Their intent is to divide and conquer. I would like to say to the Kanaka who support this bill please research the aquarium trade yourself, talk to the fisherman to are in he trade before you let the divide and conquer people tell you what you think.

Mahalo

It

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:26:02 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgie Fong	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support a PERMANENT ban on commerical collection for aquarium !!!.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:07:13 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miniano Doran	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I Oppose this bill due to the fact that our fish shouldn't be taken out of their natural habitat to be displayed in aquariums. There are ways to do research on our fish other than taking them away. They deserve freedom and not to be held in any aquariums.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:06:29 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kapiolani Spencer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Open Testimony in Support of HB2101

Aloha e Chairs and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kapi'olani Spencer and I am a resident and lineal descendant of Moku O Keawe. stand in strong support of HB2101 to ban the commercial collection of Hawai‘i’s marine life for the aquarium trade.

Our reef ecosystems are not commodities — they are living systems that sustain our food security, cultural practices, shoreline protection, and local economy. For decades, commercial aquarium collection has removed culturally and ecologically important species from targeted reefs, diminishing fish abundance in areas that Native Hawaiian communities rely upon for subsistence and traditional practices.

The majority of aquarium fish taken from our reefs do not survive long-term in captivity. Meanwhile, healthy coral reefs generate over a billion dollars annually through responsible tourism and ecosystem services that benefit all of Hawai‘i. Protection of our reefs serves the public good — not private gain.

The Hawai‘i Supreme Court halted this practice in 2017 pending environmental review. After nearly a decade of closure, our reefs deserve continued recovery, not renewed extraction. State resources should focus on co-management, climate resilience, and food security — not policing a small commercial industry.

HB2101 places protection over profit. It aligns with Hawai‘i’s public trust doctrine and preserves traditional and customary gathering, research, aquaculture, and personal use. It ensures that future generations inherit living reefs, not depleted ones.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify., Kapi'olani Spencer

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:27:01 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TODD SHIRAKI	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please Oppose HB2101.
This is one of two fisheries in the state that has an approved EIS!! There is no evidence to support Banning this fishery.
Thank you

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:00:05 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nick Ramirez	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony for hb2101 : We oppose hb2101 and any Aquarium fishery ban

List of people who oppose hb2101:

1. Nick
2. Angelica
3. Lee
4. Trina
5. Bryan
6. Cathrin
7. Charles
8. Sherry
9. Gina
10. Allen
11. Andrew
12. Al
13. Angela
14. Kim
15. Susan
16. Thomas
17. Todd
18. Carol
19. Candace
20. Marie
21. Alex
22. Betty
23. Chris
24. Ashley
25. Beatriz
26. Sylvia
27. Austin

28. Becky
29. Kelsey
30. Ben
31. Adam
32. Al
33. Dennis
34. Patrick
35. Richard
36. Wayne
37. Anthony
38. Marla
39. Ann
40. Naomi
41. Grant
42. Becca
43. Robert
44. Alex
45. Lorene
46. Randal
47. Kenney
48. Alan
49. Chris
50. Daniel
51. John
52. Brandon
53. Eric
54. Jason
55. Taylor
56. Robynne
57. Carolyn
58. Craig
59. Veronica
60. James
61. Bryon
62. Alfred
63. Stan
64. Kelly
65. Jean
66. Joe
67. Oscar
68. JR
69. Micheal
70. Leanne
71. Elizabeth
72. Tyler
73. Ken

74. Tom
75. Charles
76. Courtney
77. Vicky
78. Vince
79. Glen
80. Sandra
81. George
82. Jeff
83. Shelley
84. Scott
85. Will
86. Ray
87. Teresa
88. Greg
89. Nate
90. Joseph
91. Leslie
92. Karen
93. Jordan
94. Troy
95. Deanna
96. Robert
97. Mike
98. Jay
99. Marie
100. Rick
101. Clayton
102. Charley
103. Teri
104. Liz
105. Ericka
106. Anne
107. Barbra
108. William
109. Jennifer
110. Micheal
111. Brandon
112. Robert
113. Leland
114. Melissa
115. Arianna
116. Victoria
117. James
118. Samantha
119. Amanda

120. Beth
121. Tyler
122. Jordan
123. Greg
124. Sonja
125. Cody
126. Taylor
127. Madelynne
128. Margot
129. Mark
130. Maryjoyce
131. Justy
132. Mary
133. Kristen
134. Derick
135. Taryn
136. Leona
137. Garrett
138. Bruce
139. Aaron
140. Tyler
141. Sonny
142. Matt
143. Malcom
144. Tyson
145. Zac
146. Amanda
147. Kc
148. Steven
149. Sam
150. Joe
151. Adrian
152. Christi
153. Ross
154. Jared
155. Sierra
156. Olivia
157. James
158. Stacy
159. Shannon
160. Troy
161. Jasmine
162. Dave
163. Leila
164. Duke
165. Sean

166. Bryant
167. Daxton
168. Sunny
169. Dan
170. Bryce
171. Sarah
172. Jessica
173. Brittany
174. Kyle
175. Amelia
176. Emily
177. Justin
178. Nicole
179. Jessica
180. Megan
181. Jenna
182. Sarah
183. Shane
184. Chelsea
185. Mitchel
186. Carol
187. pat
188. Kody
189. Stephanie
190. Sheldon
191. Dustin
192. Krissy
193. Cassandra
194. Anthony
195. Lauren
196. Alexis
197. Lance
198. Cecily
199. Brian
200. Betty
201. Melvin
202. Bill
203. Kevin
204. Kathrine
205. Tim
206. Brad
207. Brandon
208. Carla
209. Chasen
210. Charles
211. Chad

212. Jim
213. Ted
214. Marsha
215. David
216. Cory
217. Wallace
218. Milton
219. Amie
220. Tom
221. Nate
222. Clark
223. Cody
224. John
225. Pete
226. Cindy
227. Elias
228. Angel
229. Alex
230. Gary
231. Logan
232. Steve
233. Jameson
234. Bob
235. Chuck
236. Heather
237. Lisa

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:13:40 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
riley koch	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

i oppose this bill. as a person born and raised in hawaii where i've spent all my life in the ocean, ive never came across anyone who eats yellow tang. this fishery is already well managed and more rules are being created. i dont support banning anything, if it can be well managed with science.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:28:24 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hello board my names Kai Koch I am from the big island of Hawaii, i grew up with and around the aquarium trade I am in strong opposition of this bill please make the right decision lives are at stake thank you.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:17:37 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rufus Kimura	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Rufus Kimura, a lifelong resident of Waianae, Oahu, until the state's previous restrictions on aquarium fishing forced me to relocate to Alaska in pursuit of commercial fishing opportunities. I am writing this testimony in strong opposition to HB2101, which seeks to impose a blanket prohibition on the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. As someone who built a successful tropical fish import/export business over 25 years, employing local divers and packers from underserved Westside communities, I have witnessed firsthand how misguided bans devastate families, economies, and sustainable practices. This bill not only ignores ongoing scientific and regulatory efforts but also threatens the equitable management of Hawai‘i's marine resources. I urge you to reject HB2101 and allow science-based processes to proceed.

I was born on Molokai and moved to Waianae at age 8. In a community plagued by poverty, gun violence, drug use, and homelessness—as recent headlines continue to highlight—diving became my escape and pathway through life. After school, I snorkeled the shoreline, collecting specimens to sell locally, which funded my education at Leeward Community College and the Albertson College of Idaho. Returning home, I joined the Honolulu Fire Department as a Search and Rescue Specialist, leveraging my ocean skills, while building a business that employed 8-10 locals 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 aquarium collection shattered this. Without permits, I shut down my operations, laying off my team and selling my home and warehouse. I moved to Alaska, where I've seen firsthand how science-based management allows equitable sharing of resources like King Salmon among diverse users—commercial, sport, subsistence, and indigenous groups. Alaska's Department of Fish and Game divides harvests sustainably through accurate counts and allocations. If they can manage vast fisheries with tax-funded oversight, Hawai‘i can do the same for our limited-entry aquarium fishery.

HB2101 undermines this potential by preempting the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)'s authority to regulate through established processes. The fishery has proven its sustainability through court-mandated reviews, and DAR verifies it as the most managed in Hawai‘i. Yet, this bill halts the unanimously approved Chapter

91 rulemaking process, disregarding public input, hearings, and data-driven limits that balance conservation with use.

This prohibition overlooks the fishery's full compliance with legal mandates—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, exacerbating displacement as locals are priced out of paradise. Moreover, enacting HB2101 sets a dangerous precedent, potentially leading to statutory bans on other commercial fisheries and introducing legal instability in resource management. Banning outright dismisses equitable solutions, favoring ideology over science.

Sincerely, Rufus Kimura

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:03:58 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jai Cox	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hi my name is Jai, I'm a fisherman from Ka'u and I am against this bill trying to close the fishery. I am in the water all the time and what I see is much different than what the opposition is saying. I see huge schools of yellow tang, large amounts of other fish as well. I believe in science, and the science supports this fishery.

I am opposed to this bill:

The very premise of this bill is based on a lie.

“The legislature finds that the capture and sale of Hawaii's native reef wildlife for ornamental display and commercial profit is unsustainable.”

The state’s own Scientists that were hired by the Legislature finds the industry to be sustainable. In the 2020 report to the Legislature the actual fish counts from 1999-2018 (representing the last 20 years that the industry was open) show the number of yellow tangs increased on the Kona Coast by 3.4 million fish. Why do you need to destroy an industry and people’s livelihood when the resource is being properly managed.

People say they are worried about the reef due to global warming, then why are we allowing over 1,000 snorkelers a day destroy Kahaluu Beach park from severe overuse? Why are we allowing Pine Trees to be destroyed from hundreds of scuba divers? No one cares about something that is actually a major problem but, they say one diver, per day, in 0ver 150 miles of coast line can wipe out everything and needs to be banned.

People say on Subsistance fishing is pono. You should only take we you can consume. They why is it no one is proposing to shut down every other fishery in Hawaii?

I am told it is ok to kill hundreds of pounds of Ahi a day to serve to the tourists in the restaurants but it is no ok to save 10 pounds of yellow tangs!

I am told that we should leave them on the reef to suffer the same fate as the millions of other yellows tang that perish every year by being eaten by other fish. The facts are that 83% of juvenile yellow tags die in the first year on the reef. 99% die before the end of their 2 year.

This industry is the most regulated fishery in the state. It is Sustainable, renewable and non-polluting and brings in millions of dollars into the state.

How many of you campaigned on destroying jobs and livelihoods for no valid reason so that people in Hawaii have to move away. That is what this is bill is.

Please vote no on this bill.

Jim Lovell

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:30:25 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim coke	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I oppose this.

I would expect a ban to be based on factual information and not full of misinformation.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:44:45 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekoa Alip	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Kekoa Alip and I strongly support this bill.

February 17, 2026

Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, Committee on Water & Land
Conference Room 411
State Capitol
415 South Beratania Street

Re: Testimony in support of HB2101

My name is Kaikea Nakachi and I **strongly support HB2101**.
Being born and raised on Hawai‘i Island, I have personally witnessed the damage of the entitled, unnecessary, insensitive, and inappropriate aquarium trade. I watched the droves of Maui aquarium fishers move to Hawai‘i Island after they were banned on Maui. I watched them illegally continue after the supreme court mandated them to stop when it was determined the state violated HEPA by issuing permits without cultural or environmental review.

As a kanaka maoli who holds a master’s degree in tropical conservation biology and environmental science, I have both the mo‘okū‘auhau containing generational knowledge of pono and sustainable practices in Hawai‘i, as well as the academic background of western research and management. It allows me clarity in seeing how wrong this industry is, and that it should never have been allowed to begin with. Now, as we face unprecedented global threats of climate change, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification, we cannot afford to overfish our local ocean. I will always support what our kūpuna taught us: reciprocal practices to steward healthy marine resources that allow sustainable subsistence fishing.

Unfortunately, we have lost our way. Most of the fishing done today is no longer reciprocal. There is so much take and take and so little given back. The aquarium industry is the absolute worst in this regard. Taking millions of fish over the years, majority being keiki, who will never contribute to Hawai‘i. They will not get a chance to provide the ecosystem service as herbivores to help coral recover from bleaching. They will not be available as prey for other fish or animals to eat and become momona. They will not get the chance to grow up and contribute to the next generation of their own species.

In the face of food insecurity, it is in the best interest of the people of Hawai‘i to limit these inappropriate types of commercial fishing and focus on promoting abundance to support subsistence fishing and allow fish populations to be healthy and resilient enough to weather climate change and the myriads of other threats.

I am proud to be one of many voices that have shown up year after year to defend Hawaiian reef fish in legislative committee hearings, BLNR meetings, county council meetings, and even supreme court hearings. Last year I joined dozens of communities and over 1300 individuals from across the pae‘āina to urge the BLNR to not move forward with a permit process for commercial aquarium collection. In 2024 I supported the resolution sent to BLNR for administrative rules to ban commercial aquarium collection. I was incredibly disheartened to hear the opinion of the BLNR feeling that HRS § 188-31 prevented them from banning commercial aquarium collection outright. I tried to urge them that the statute states that the board **may** issue an aquarium fish permit, not **shall**. The word **may** would give the board the decision-

making power issue or not issue permits. I also attempted to argue that the statute would still be satisfied with a permit process that is limited to non-commercial applicants.

I get very frustrated with DAR, who continue to provide you all with flawed and misleading data. Communities and nonprofits like mine have worked for decades to protect parts of the coast. With act 306 in 1998 we began protecting parts of west Hawaii from aquarium collection. The place I steward with the org Hui Kahuwai was the first no take zone/marine reserve in west Hawaii, and before that was a FRA that did not allow aquarium collection. We have the highest fish biomass in all west Hawaii and it is because aquarium collection has not been allowed for over 20 years. However, our fish and all the communities that protect against aquarium fishing, are all part of the population numbers DAR presents for west Hawaii. So while they claim hundreds of thousands of fish doesn't have a large impact on west Hawaii what they fail to do is show how poorly the population of fish is in the areas where collection would occur. Hundreds of thousands of fish is a much higher percentage of those open areas and we will certainly see an impact if we allow them to collect again. I urge you all to ask DAR, what is the population of the targeted fish species in the areas of West Hawaii that would be open to collection, not just all of West Hawaii. When they cannot answer you, I hope you take that as an additional reason that we do not know just how damaging this industry is, particularly because there is a high guarantee they will not even follow the rules.

Communities have been instrumental in helping DOCARE enforce rules in the past and nearly all of the poaching incidents were only caught because of communities watching out for resources. Even now, a collector that was caught has fled the state and has a warrant out for his arrest. He left two women stranded with their catch and they were forced to swim ashore and seek aid from a gas station, still in their wetsuits.
https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/09/17/breaking-news/state-officers-arrest-big-isle-aquarium-collector-after-bizarre-kona-incident/
This is the greed of the industry, and we are trying to give them a legal pathway to pillage our reefs? The head of DAR, Brian Nielsen, was quoted in 2020 after that incident ""Illegal collection of aquarium fish in West Hawaii is turning into a persistent problem… this is the third arrest that we've seen associated with illegal aquarium harvest in West Hawaii just this year which indicates this is a larger problem the department's going to need to deal with." Well to me the best way to deal with this is banning this harmful industry and the only enforcement needed is to ensure poaching does not occur.

I hope the committees do not fall for their outcry that a small handful of fishers will be out of jobs. When the impacts of those handful of fishers is felt by every other user group. Their take impacts subsistence fishers, other commercial fishers, recreational fishers, and all the tourism operators. The other fishers always claim we are going to come for them next, but that has never been the case. I advocate for sustainable subsistence fishing. And the AQ trade is not that. In west Hawaii those 7 fishers wouldn't have been here if DLNR had listened to these communities sooner. Hundreds of native Hawaiians participated in the cultural impact statement that the aquarium trade did for their eis and they ignored all of our comments and just summarized to say "no cultural impact."

Last week for SB2996, a handful of Oʻahu fishermen testified that a bill to ban would put them

out of a job, but failed to mention they cannot aquarium collect right now because they do not have a passed eis, so HB2101 would not put them out of business. They are not even cleared for business. West Hawaii is the first eis attempting to go through with a permit system being proposed by DAR. Of the 1300 folks who said no to blnr last year and the near 200 who supported SB2996 last week, many of us are west Hawaii constituents who have directly seen the impact of aquarium fishing in west Hawaii and do not want it to return. 7 fishers finding new jobs is much easier than trying to mitigate their damages and have it be felt by every other ocean user group. That is not fair and I want all to know that every snorkel business, dive business, non aq commercial fisher, and most importantly to me, native Hawaiian subsistence fishermen will all be impacted by aquarium fishing returning. Is keeping 7 jobs worth degrading the resource itself and every other ocean user that depends on it for food, jobs, and recreation? I would welcome those 7 fishers to become divers for tourism, or even as permitted collectors to gather smaller amounts of brood stock for aquaculture. They are also welcome to join DAR itself or the many nonprofits as scientific divers to survey the fish, or better yet give back by planting coral to atone for the millions of fish they have removed over the years. West Hawai‘i is currently ground zero with these 7 collectors wanting to start up again. There are thousands of Native Hawaiian community members from West Hawai‘i who vehemently oppose them starting up again. The Hawai‘i County Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting legislation to end the aquarium trade. Every Hawaiian Civic Club passed a resolution supporting a ban on aquarium fishing. Please listen to us, and help us.

I urge these committees to please pass HB2101, and help protect our ocean from the greed of this industry.

Mahalo nui,
Kaikea Nakachi

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 6:19:43 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David N Kuahiwinui	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I fully support the fishermen and women to gather aquarium fishing

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 6:53:00 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Bryant	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Committee Members,

I am in strong support of HB 2101 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.

Ever since collection rates in Kāneʻohe Bay skyrocketed in 2019 and 2020, numerous organizations in our community have had robust discussions about this destructive trade and have decided that commercial aquarium collection is not consistent with our community values and priorities. Some of the Ko'olaupoko organizations that have passed resolutions seeking a legislative ban on commercial aquarium collection include the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council, Kāneʻohe Neighborhood Board, Koʻolaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, Koʻolau Foundation, Kahaluʻu Neighborhood Board, Kailua Neighborhood Board, Waimānalo Neighborhood Board, as well as the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, which represent the voices of nearly 4,000 members.

I strongly urge this committee to stand with the thousands of residents in our community seeking a legislative ban on commercial aquarium collection and pass HB 2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Elena Bryant

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/13/2026 6:31:16 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB2101

Dana Keawe

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/13/2026 9:22:17 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Mendelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Erin Mendelson, and I am writing to urge you to take immediate action to protect our fragile coral reef ecosystems. As an avid diver, I have personally witnessed the dramatic degradation of our reef populations. Where there was once vibrant life, I now see mass die-backs along our shorelines due to compounding human impacts.

We are facing an existential crisis in our oceans. Therefore, we must protect them by every means possible. Specifically, it is vital that we stop the capture and sale of aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade. While a full ban may seem like an extreme measure to some, the current state of our reefs demands bold and decisive action to prevent total ecosystem collapse.

Thank you,

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:21:24 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2101 HB RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/14/2026 3:33:15 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Folsom, MS	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposed to HB 2101

Aloha Esteemed Representative,

Please vote no on the unconstitutional anti-ecology bill HB 2101

From Scott Folsom, MS, former marine biologist with University of Hawaii, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

The passage of HB 2101 would ignore the HWN and WTL Senate votes to not pass the SB 2996 companion bill to 2101. The hearing and passage of this type of bill would go against the latest Supreme Court decision supporting the EIS-approved fishery opening, and it also contravenes the EIS laws and the EIS approval process.

Testimony from DAR in the SB 2996 hearing, “the fishery DAR review shows will be sustainable.” Watch on YouTube at 1:25 min. link. 2024 Report to the Legislature also shows very healthy fish populations during the report years. DAR also stated that “No negative impacts are expected by the fishery reopening.”

Pro-Hawaiian-based BLNR, Board of Land and Natural Resources, passes rules to proceed with permitting laws and supports the fishery in a unanimous 7-0 vote. Every year, DAR, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and its leading scientists testify, drawing on decades of science, supported by all the leading scientists in Hawaii, in support of the return of the aquarium fishery. Passage of this ban bill would contradict the EIS, the Senate deferral, the BLNR unanimous decisions, and the courts' rulings, and it would not be based on science.

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

EIS laws are meaningless if they are bypassed by the legislature!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/14/2026 3:52:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jameson Powers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/14/2026 5:02:30 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Prohibiting the capture of reef fish for the aquarium trade will: 1) benefit native fish populations including rare and endemic species; 2) benefit the coral reef ecosystem by maintaining healthy populations of herbivores; 3) benefit the marine tourism sector which is much more valuable than the aquarium collection industry; 4) benefit the aquaculture operations which grow ornamental fish for sale to the aquarium industry without harming the natural populations. I fully support HB2101.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:08:17 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

SAVE Aquarium Reef Fish from Extraction and Extinction. I have testify numerous time over years, trying to save Hawai'i's fish, please make it happen this year.
Aloha, Thank goodness the County of Hawaii County Council can join in to send a STRONG MESSAGE to the State, that we want our Island's natural resources protected from deadly commercial operations.
"They ruined Paradise to put up a parking lot."
If you would not do it on land for all to see, you should not do to the Ocean. We must preserve Hawai'i Natural Resources. Yes, that means limiting 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 alive and well here in their natural habitat.
Please stop the blinking $$ dollar signs in peoples eyes... Over and over, I have testified, Why does this persistently keep coming up? What kind of force, money, evil ? Is behind this.
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, instead of staying on the reefs to support ecosystem health and Native Hawaiian fishing practices that have been handed down for generations
Also a December 2025 article:
https://www.justice.gov/usao-hi/pr/honolulu-man-who-trafficked-illegally-caught-hawaiiantropical-
fish-sentenced-probation
Please protect Hawaii. Most Sincerely

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:23:21 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. A permanent ban on the aquarium trade should have been put in place long ago.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:25:11 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I stand in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban the commercial collection of aquatic life for the aquarium trade. This bill is a critical, necessary, and long-overdue legislative action to end a destructive and extractive industry that has operated against the will of our communities, the health of our reefs, and our values for far too long. The path to this hearing has been paved by decades of community advocacy, sound science, and now, a unified call from the Hawai‘i County Council for a permanent, statewide ban.

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 ʻāina.
- **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 Hawaiʻi:** Published cost-benefit analyses confirm that the people of Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi's people?

The answer is clear. I urge you to pass HB2101 and enact a permanent ban on the commercial aquarium trade. It is the only pono path forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:48:48 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support. This is a much needed bill. Please move this measure forward.

lynne matusow

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:01:50 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Dennis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

We are once again urging support for a permenent ban on the collecting of reef fish for the aquarium trade. We own a home on the Kohala Coast for the last 23 years and have been diving and snorkeling here for 40+ years. We have seen a steady decline in the reef both corals and reef fish. We need to eliminate any collecting to give the reef a chance to recover.

My wife and I teach ocean conservation at the world renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium. We encourage visitors who are interested in a home aquarium to only but tank raised fish. As high as 40% of reef fish die in transit and many more don't live long in home tanks. Salt water fish are hard to keep.

On behalf of our 6 grand-children and the next generation of divers and snorkelers, please ensure an end to aquarium fish collecting.

Mahalo,

Steve & Sona Dennis

Mauna Lani Terrace

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:54:28 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani Hao	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe there should be a licensed group of individuals who can collect the aquarium items from the State waters and regulate the collections, seasons, size and quantity just as they do the hunting gathering. As a previous carrier of a license to hunt in Hawai‘i I am knowledgeable via the information given on seasons, bag limits and maps of areas of hunting grounds. We go to a hunting class, test and are certified to purchase a hunting license. I know of a Kamehameha schools graduate, 3rd cousin on my mother's side who has collected and sold for aquarium use the ocean fish. Puna Brown. I have not been in touch with him in awhile but I know it was his livelihood. Hawaiian way is to take what you need and leave the rest for others, sharing in communication with the other gatherers. My grandfather, Louis Kanoa Hao, a. Hawai‘i from minolii, big island, said they would feed the fish in the old Hawai‘i crated kalo, uala and the fish would come like chickens. They scoop 'Hao' them with the net. Every family would feed the fish, and take only what they need, leaving for others to do the same. A kapu would be put on the area if they wanted the fish to replenish themselves, multiply. Noa would be called when they could fish again in the area. The hui that is formed to regulate these areas. Mahalo for requesting this testimony.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 4:43:45 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monique Perreira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE HB2101

The aquarium fish industry should not be allowed to harvest from our fragile reef ecosystem for profit. The fish rarely surrvive transport to the buyer and thats even more of a reason to stop aquarium fish trade. You law makers love to scream "climate change" yet have no problem allowing the distruction of this precious habitat resource.

I respectfully urge the comittee to oppose HB2101.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique Perreira

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:39:11 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Fernley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Please vote "No" on HB 2101.

Having lost my tropical fish business (Coral Fish Hawaii) of 50 years with 12 employees due to the shut down in 2021, I strongly feel that it was wrong that the fishery was unjustly targeted. Since then,I've had to alter my life, get a second morgage and pray that I can financially continue to live in the beautiful state.

The science of it's sustainability has **always** been there conducted by State of Hawaii (DLNR) and NOAA researchers. To deny this science is irresponsible,unjustified and unwarrented.

The fishery needs to be opened up immediately as it has completed all required EIS requirements and has been sucessful in passage with the land board. In fact,this EIS requirement has not been required with any other fishery or tourist related business in the state. Why?

Mahalo for your time,

Randy Fernley

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:06:14 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua DeMello	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am commenting in opposition to this bill. Not based on the merit but on the process. The legislature should not be managing the natural resources and instead should be directing the DLNR to take action. The legislative process does not provide the venue or the transparency for discussing the nuances of resource management. Instead, these decisions should be made through the current Chapter 91 process by DLNR and DAR.

A complete ban on the harvest of resources serves no purpose but to limit Hawaii's economic opportunities for the perceived gain of increasing resources. Instead, the legislature should identify the REAL problems and direct the DLNR to take appropriate action. For example, if there are areas that need to be made Kapu, do so. If there are certain species that are important for the ecosystem or for food, put a Kapu on them. People taking too much? put a limit.

There are management tools available to the DLNR that this legislation is not considering because it lays a blanket prohibition. Why? because legislation doesnt allow for the discussion and intricacies of management. That's DLNRs job. Let them handle it. They have a process for public comments and hearings that will allow for greater input.

I suggest that you amend the legislation to direct DLNR to look at the issue instead and stop entertaining bills that micromanage Hawaii

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:44:49 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michdelle Melendez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing as a Hawaiʻi resident regarding HB2101. I appreciate the goal of protecting our reefs and marine ecosystems. However, I am concerned that this measure moves from regulation to complete elimination of a long-standing activity rather than improving management practices.

Many locals depend on responsible ocean use for their livelihood, and a total prohibition removes the opportunity to balance environmental protection with sustainable economic activity. I respectfully ask the committee to consider whether stronger regulation, monitoring, and enforcement could achieve conservation goals without permanently ending the industry.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:31:24 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luci Price	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB 2101. As commercial aquarium fishing is not currently legal in Hawai‘i and the possible reopening of the fishery is still under formal state review, it is premature to debate or advance this bill. It seems the more appropriate course would be to allow the state's existing regulatory and review process to conclude before considering new legislation. For these reasons, this bill should be deferred at this time.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:44:32 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Ashford	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2101

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:20:26 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caelly Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not support HB 2101. AFTER THE EIS WAS MADE THE FISHERY WAS FOUND TO BE SUSTAINABLE.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:29:05 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noreen M Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2101. There is no evidence that the fishery is unsustainable. The EIS says the fishery is sustainable.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:56:45 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Lyerly	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Congressmembers: I am VERY much opposed to reopening the aquarium trade!! Finally our reefs are being repopulated with yellow tang and other reef fish. There does still need some oversight as to poaching!! Please do not open to commerical collection!! The reefs are just still recovering and need our reef fish to keep the inner waters clean and healthy.

Please! Mahalo for this opportunity to be heard.

Linda Lyerly Lahaina. 96761

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:06:37 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander Min	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony Submitted to HB 2101.

Aloha,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB2101: Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection.

I am strongly **opposed** to this legislation and **strongly urge** the committee to consider the following.

1. The Aquarium fishery has completed an Environmental Review, and satisfactorily met all requirements to showcase this as a sustainable fishery. To ban it now sets a dangerous precedent and fails to recognize the hard work done by a fishery that was wrongly shutdown in the first place.
2. Kole already cannot be taken based on current rules and regulations, making this bill full of misinformation and deceiving to the public.
3. Yellow tang has never been considered a food fish.

I am gravely concerned and frustrated with the on-going protectionism driven by a few that is causing locals to lose their livelihoods and have to move off island or struggle to make it here. It is ridiculous that we must commit time to responding to countless bills every year that are making it impossible for us to feed our families, harvest fish sustainably, and survive. For far too long the State has neglected the livelihoods of locals and sold out to lobby groups and the rich who make a profit on our resources through eco-tourism. Allow fishermen to make a living sustainably, consider us just once. Please work with us because our traditions of fishing and harvest to feed the community are dying trade due to the overwhelming legal regulations and burden the State is placing upon us.

A concerned community member and fisherman.

Sincerely,

Alex Min

Honolulu, HI

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:09:32 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cade Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please Oppose this bill. This bill has no scientific evidence that AQ is a unsustainable fishery. This ban will devistate may local fishermen and their families.
Please oppose this bill.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:26:15 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cara Shiraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose hb2101. This bill is an attack on local fishermen and their families. This fishery is sustainable and backed by an approved EIS. Please do not pass this.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:12:28 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaren Niimi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I opposed

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:19:18 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
rhythm rivers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:55:58 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Tiongco	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2101

My name is Jason Helyer. I am a Research Statistician in the Fisheries Section of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources – Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). My testimony reflects my personal views and is not testimony on behalf of DAR.

I am writing to ask the legislature to please check with DAR about the veracity of statements like “the capture and sale of Hawaii's native reef wildlife for ornamental display and commercial profit is unsustainable”. A 2024 report by DAR reviewed commercial aquarium catch in West Hawai'i, a main area of commercial aquarium effort and catch. The report explored multiple data summaries from fisheries independent data sources collected by DAR as well as NOAA’s Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. Investigations failed to produce results which one would expect had the rate and magnitude of “capture and sale” of reef fish for ornamental display and commercial profit” been unsustainable. DAR’s report, which also pointed out that approximately 47.7 percent of total fishing area was closed to aquarium fishing, suggests that from a fisheries sustainability perspective, specific targets of the commercial aquarium fishery in West Hawai'i like lauipala (yellow tang) were likely some of the most sustainable fisheries managed by DAR.

There are other fisheries in Hawai'i (and specifically West Hawai'i) which receive less management and public attention while also being exposed to greater fishing and/or non-fishing threats compared to lauipala (yellow tang) and kole (goldring surgeonfish). Please do not support advocacy science that misleads policy makers on the real marine resource issues facing the State of Hawai'i.

Thanks for your time

Jason Helyer

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:16:42 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Metcalf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Hawaii State Legislators,

I strongly support HB2101 and urge you to pass this bill this session.

I live in Kailua Kona and have witnessed first hand the destruction of Hawaii's coral reefs and the steep decline in reef fish over the past 38 years of snorkeling these reefs. Even the State DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources on their Holomua website shares that: "A recent scientific analysis showed population declines of some of our favorite reef fish by as much as 75%, and the mass bleaching event in 2015 resulted in up to 50% coral mortality on some of our world-famous coral reefs."

The vast majority of Hawaii residents and especially Hawaiian kanaka want the commercial collection of reef fish for the pet trade and ornamental display to end. Please listen to those you represent, not the few special interests who profit off this inhumane trade.

The existing law that allows this practice was built on a faulty premise, which the introduction of this bill brings to light. The costs to the state to regulate the commercial aquarium collection trade far outweighs the minimal benefits it provides to a select few. I do not want the tax dollars I pay supporting the destruction of Hawaii's coral reefs and decline in reef fish.

The time is now is stop the commercial aquarium fish collection in Hawaii. Please listen to the vast majority of the people you represent and support and pass HB2101.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Metcalf, Kailua Kona

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:05:36 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenichi Yabusaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kenichi Yabusaki. I live in Ahuimanu. I support the ban on commercial fishing of reef fish for aquariums. Reefs are important ecosystems that require the fish that live in these reefs to maintain a healthy reef system. I support HB2101

Kenichi Yabusaki, Ph.D.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:45:02 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Sawyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee members:

I am a resident of California, with a son at UH Hilo. My family visits often and we are avid fishermen and scuba divers. We have traveled many places for these activities, and we also work with and support many marine and fishery conservation organizations. Hawaii has always stood out for us as a leader in responsible conservation. We have been so impressed by how active the state legislature has been in preserving turtles, seals and so many other marine animals.

To allow continued degradation of the precious reefs would be a betrayal of the leadership, vision and commitment that the Hawaiian legislature has always shown.

It would also be a betrayal of the will of voters, who have overwhelmingly expressed their support for reef protection.

I am confident that your authentic Hawaiian spirit, which protects all living creatures, will lead you to make the truly just decision.

Mahalo,

Lisa Sawyer

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:48:01 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Merritt Robinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support banning aquarium fishing in Hawaiian waters

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 1:52:51 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Misajon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Debbie Misajon and I live in Papaikou on the Big Island.

I strongly support this bill. As climate change intensifies, the State must prioritize keeping abundant populations of native reef fish in our waters. Herbivorous species help control algae that can overtake coral following marine heat waves and ocean acidification, strengthening reef resilience when it is needed most.

Healthy reefs also protect our shorelines by reducing wave energy and erosion, safeguarding coastal communities and infrastructure. In addition, vibrant reefs are essential to Hawai‘i’s local community and nature-based tourism economy, supporting snorkeling, diving, and local livelihoods.

Protecting native reef fish is a practical, science-based investment in our environment, our economy, and our future. Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha Chair Lowen and Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the committee.

I strongly support Hhb2101

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!* The Aquarium trade must shift into a growing/farming operations from a hunting/extraction operation.
I urge banning commercial Aquarium Fish taking in Hawaiian waters.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Neal
Waimea

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:30:14 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kapulani Antonio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kapulani Antonio

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:30:55 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ahia Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died 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 vast majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a complete 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) recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the Legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:36:01 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yuuko Arikawa-Cross	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I support HB2101.

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity.

A statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection preserves Hawai‘i’s marine resources for future generations by ensuring species that support reef health remain on the reef.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Wahiawā, O'ahu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:51:51 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of HB2101, which would establish a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection and maintain protections in place for West Hawai‘i and other sensitive regions.

Hawai‘i’s coral reefs are central to our culture, economy, and environment. The collection of reef species for the aquarium trade has reduced populations of key species, including culturally significant fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang). Research shows that many collected species do not survive long in captivity, while in their natural habitats, these fish can live for decades.

Healthy reefs contribute over $1.2 billion to our state’s economy each year, support food security, and shield our coastlines. A clear, statewide ban will strengthen enforcement, reduce regulatory costs, and ensure our marine resources remain healthy for future generations.

Thank you for considering this important measure.

Mahalo,
Ezgi Green
Waialua/O'ahu

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.
February 15, 2025

Subj: Testimony - HB2101 to Ban Commercial Aquarium Collection

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘īpala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai’i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101 based on the reasons above..

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Anita Naone
Kailua, Oahu 96734

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:00:46 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Treas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Daniel Treas

Honolulu, HI 96813

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:08:29 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Niki Roderick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

Profiting from the decorative use of native fish diminishes both our environmental integrity and our responsibility as stewards of these shared resources. I respectfully urge you to enact protections that keep our native fish where they belong, thriving in the wild and sustaining the health of our reefs and our communities for future generations.

Niki Roderick

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:11:54 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Gurewitsch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I've been a full-time resident on Maui for 15 years. Conditions permitting, I'm in the water every day, snorkeling for at least and hour and often for two. It's been heart-breaking to watch the decline of fish stocks over this period. My wife and I can well remember the days when we came as visitors, starting in 1991. There were CLOUDS of yellow tang, Moorish idols, all sorts of beautiful, brightly colored fish! "Like an aquarium!" people would say. They're not saying that any more. It's imperative that our wildlikfe be protected--not least because the local economy depends heavily on visitors hoping to see an underwater wonderland! Also, it's the pono thing to do. Mālama ʻĀina! Decimating our common good for the short-term financial benefit of the few is irresponsible. Let's put an end to it once and for all. The endless drip drip drip of partial solutions has gotten us nowhere fast. Let's get serious.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:18:52 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Richardson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Patricia Richardson, a resident of Hilo, Hawaii.I urge you to pass HB2101 to protect our reefs from commercial aquarium fishing. We need to maintain the health of our reef environment and keep our reef fish alive and on the reef where they belong.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:19:27 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Symonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale.

Our reefs are already struggling, and their decline in health is visible and obvious to even a resident like me who only goes diving once every couple of months. It's heartbreaking to see this degradation and feel powerless against it.

Our oceans are already under too much pressure without the additional and unnecessary strain of kidnapping wild creatures into limited captive lives for the mild amusement of those who would pay for it.

While we may have limited options as a state to fight warming oceans and climate change, we can certainly protect our local waters from an industry that is predatory and unnecessary - commercial aquarium collection.

This industry is also cruel and wasteful. About half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lauʻī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Allowing commercial aquarium collection in our waters is simply not pono.

Our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) officers should be focused on enforcing this statutory ban on commercial aquarium collection - not enabling further degradation of our ocean ecosystems by a few "allowed" collectors.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Anna Symonds

Honaunau, HI (Hawai'i Island)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:30:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

My ancestors were lawai‘a (fishermen and women) and kālai wa‘a (canoe-builders) from Kapālilua (Kona Hema) since 1777. My father was a lawai‘a from Miloli‘i and I spent many summers growing up there. The beauty of the fish and reefs near Miloli‘i were incomparable then. Many in my ‘ohana still live a life deeply connected to the land and sea and believe we should protect our ocean resources. It's my understanding that the aquarium fish collectors have caused significant reductions in the abundance of fish and their destructive fishing practices destroyed reefs all along the Kona coast. Hawaiians have a saying, “Ke ike a ka lawai‘a he na ka ‘upena.” (The knowledge of the fisherman is absorbed by the net.) Just like the ‘upena (fish net) which the Hawaiian people meticulously maintained to flourish and prosper, we need protect our coral reefs and ecosystems that support our cultural and subsistence practices. Allowing commercial aquarium fishing diminishes the ecological and cultural integrity of our reef system and flies in the face of Hawai‘i’s constitutional public trust doctrine which requires that our natural and cultural resources be used and conserved for the public good rather than private gain. In addition, the aquarium collection industry has extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life, the vast majority of which die within a year after collection, for private primarily out of state profit.

E ola ke kai, e ola kākou (as the ocean thrives, so do we.) No laila, please kōkua and help protect and preserve the valuable ocean resources we have left so that our keiki and mo‘opuna will be able to fish like our kūpuna and support HB2101 too. Mahalo.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 4:00:53 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert B. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A ban on allowing commercial interests to take Fish from our reefs is so obvious, it's hard to believe one has to testify in support of it. The fish that swim in our reefs are an essential component of the tourism industry. To diminish the amount of fish is absurd, and as a snorkeler, I always wish we had more fish. Would you allow a Mainland Nursery to come into our state and harvest landscaping plants from around government buildings and then re-sell them for a profit?

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 4:23:51 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because:

- The negative impact of commercial aquarium collection on our reef ecosystems has adversely affected our community for decades.
- Maui, Kauaʻi, and Hawaiʻi counties have all enacted resolutions limiting commercial aquarium collection or calling for an outright ban.
- Communities in areas where the industry targets its collections have also called for a ban of the practice, which has highly localized impacts and impairs subsistence uses of reef resources in the targeted areas, including Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.
- In 2017, the Hawaiʻi Supreme Court halted collection until the industry completed an environmental review as required by the Hawaiʻi Environmental Policy Act (HEPA).
- After nearly a decade without commercial collection, the state is now proposing rules to reopen West Hawaiʻi to the seven businesses who participated in the HEPA process.
- Under the quota system established by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to support its finding that the industry is "sustainable," collection would essentially be closed to newcomers and would require intensive Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) resources to enforce and police.
- There are Native Hawaiian communities across kō Hawaiʻi pae ʻāina waiting for DAR's support to co-manage their marine resources and address other urgent threats.
- Banning aquarium collection would not only protect critical natural resources and Native Hawaiian communities but also enable DAR to focus its attention where it is critically needed.

Thank you

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 4:46:22 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Delbert Freitas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 4:48:33 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hugh Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY support HB 2101. Collecting fish for commerical sale to acquarium collectors is morally and ethically wrong. And if that isnt enough for you, consider that for a pittance, a fish collector gets to take a resource that belongs to all of the citizens of Hawaii. If fish collecting is going to be allowed at all - and it should not be - then the cost of license should be MUCH higher to reflect fair compensation to taxpayers for the taking of their resource and to include enough money for specific enforcemenet of the rules. Passing this bill is a no brainer. Just do it.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:37:45 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelle C Pahinui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2101.

As a community member rooted in Hawai‘i’s cultural and environmental stewardship work, I support this bill because it restores balance between private commercial extraction and the public trust responsibility we all share to protect our marine ecosystems for future generations.

For decades, commercial aquarium collection has targeted specific reef areas, creating localized depletion that directly impacts subsistence practitioners, families, and Native Hawaiian cultural users who rely on healthy reefs. Species such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) are not merely commodities; they are part of our living ecosystem and cultural identity. Removing reef fish for commercial export undermines food security, ecological resilience, and the integrity of traditional and customary practices that HB2101 rightly preserves.

Importantly, this bill does not prohibit traditional gathering, scientific research, education programs, aquaculture, or personal use. Instead, it draws a clear line between public trust resources and private commercial exploitation.

For nearly a decade, commercial aquarium collection has not operated in West Hawai‘i. During this time, communities have experienced recovery and relief. Reopening the fishery under a quota system limited to a small number of businesses would require significant enforcement resources from DOCARE, diverting attention away from urgent threats such as illegal fishing, reef damage, climate impacts, and support for community-based co-management efforts across the pae ‘āina.

There are Native Hawaiian communities waiting for assistance to steward their marine resources. Passing HB2101 would allow DAR to focus on these collaborative, future-oriented efforts rather than policing a narrow commercial industry.

Healthy reefs are foundational to Hawai‘i’s food systems, shoreline protection, tourism economy, and cultural continuity. Protecting them is not only an environmental decision—it is a moral and generational one.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2101.

Mahalo nui for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify.

Chelle Pahinui
Captain Cook
Na'alehu Theatre

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:22:47 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Withington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2012 relating to the commercila taking of our precious marine wildlife. All marine creatures depend on a balanced ecosystem. Any human change throws that off. I know this because I have lived all my life on, in and around the waters of Hawaii.

Please vote in favor of this bill.

Toni Withington -- Hawi, Hawaii

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:31:44 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge support of HB2101. I have been appalled by DLNR moving to continue this practice of harvesting fish out of State waters in clear violation of the Public Trust Doctrine in our Hawaii Constitution. This needs to end.

Mahalo!

Steve Holmes

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:38:45 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
noriko donna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:04:21 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs face mounting stress from climate change, overfishing, and over-extraction. Enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Victoria Anderson

Palolo

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:09:21 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Swinney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I feel this bil needs to be implemented for the safety and protection of all the beautiful reef fish here in the Islands.. I have over my 38 years here enjoyed snorkling and Scuba diving around the Islands ... over the years I have witnessed many species declining or just " gone " all together. I have also witnessed folks completely depleteing entire schools of beautiful fish..I know for a fact. that aquarium fish do not breed in captivity so removing fish by collectors is very short sighted indeed.. We need to ban this unnecessary collection of aquarium fish .. for us the aquarium is our beloved ocaen which needs our protection for us and future generations

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:37:34 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Thank you.

Tanya Yamanaka Aynessazian, Hawai‘i Island

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:17:45 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Ing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 15, 2026

Aloha House Chair and Committee Members,

SUBJECT: **In strong support of HB 2101**

I am testifying in **strong support of HB 2101** because it will preserve the number of Native species of fish in our kai, and add a measure of protection of our fish, reefs, and kai. Our kūpuna used a kapu system to ensure that there was always enough fish. The illegal harvesting of fishes in our oceans by aquariums to sale these fish harms our ecosystem and fails to preserve sustainability. We only have to look to our innovative, dedicated, and brilliant neighbors in Kaʻūpūlehu and Kūkiʻo to see how they are properly and sustainably preserving marine life through their Trywait program. They have sacrificed so much for the longevity of their ahupuaʻa and kai. HB 2101 is the right step in a similar direction.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 2101**,

Tiffany Ing

Mānoa, Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:43:04 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Meyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

David E Meyer 431 Nahua Street Honolulu, Hi. 96815

Re: Testimony supporting HB 2101 – the proposed ban permananetly prohibiting the capture and sale of Hawai'I native reef wildlife for ornamental display and commercial profit …

To the legislature:

I strongly support HB 2101.

I have snorkeled in Hanauma Bay over 800 times since mid-2004 when I began visiting my brother, a prominent physician who has lived in O'ahu since the late 1960's. (My first time snorkeling in Hanauma Bay was December, 1970.)

I also do surveys of reef fish for Reef.org – a non-profit environmental research and protection group based in Key Largo Florida. Though only a "citizen scientist" I have done a few hundred surveys for Reef.org in the mid-Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and Hawai'i.

Part of surveying is identifying species and marking the numbers observed as "single," "few" (two to ten), "many" (11 to 100) and "abundant" (over 100).

In the early parts of the 21st century, I would often see large schools of yellow tangs in abundant numbers at Hanauma Bay. Now if I see a school of twenty-five I feel fortunate.

I can attest that not once since I moved to O'ahu permanently in November, 2024 I have not been able to mark Yellow Tangs as "abundant" on a survey.

The Yellow Tangs, I think, are the "canaries in the coal mine" (please forgive the mixing of metaphors) when it comes to the health of reef animals. Though the tangs maybe the most obvious, I have noticed declines in other species, too.

I used to see flying gurnards and flounders on the sandy between the reefs at Hanauma Bay at least once every seven or eight snorkels. I have only seen one flying gurnard and two flounders at Hanauma Bay since I moved to O'ahu in November, 2024. Spotting nudibranchs was not uncommon. So far since November, 2024, I have spotted two in Hanuama Bay.

This is the experience of one snorkeler and may be easy to dismiss, I understand.

I have begun volunteering for the Sea Grant program at the bay. It is not uncommon every day to have three or four visitors telling me when they last visited (usually over a decade before), there were more reef fish. I and my fellow snorkelers have compared notes and agree.

Though the commercial aquarium trade is not legally allowed in the bay, the injury of the reef populations of other parts of Hawai'I effect all habitats.

HB2101 rightly states that fish like the Yellow Tang and the Goldring surgeonfish) may have "little or no value as food fish," but are essential for the health of the reef.

As the bill indicates, Hawaii's coral reefs are in danger from climate change and other stress that we cannot control or easily regulate.

Collection of reef creatures by the commercial trade is one matter we can control. We should follow HB2101 and abolish it.

The commercial aquarium trade seems not to care a wit about the significance of reef fish in Hawai'ian culture. I maintain the commercial trade is only interested in profits. Once the reefs of Hawai'i are damaged and cannot provide the reef fish it needs, it will move somewhere else.

In addition, DNLR 's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has cut its former programs of reef fish monitoring. I understand that the West Hawaii aquarium fish monitoring was cut from four to six rounds a year to one round.

Without adequate scientific monitoring, how can Hawaii track the effect of the commercial aquarium trade? Citizen scientist surveys such as mine may be considered as insubstantial and colloquial but without robust surveys from your own groups, where can you get information that is trustworthy.

I hope you will vote in favor of HB 2101,

Thank you for accepting my testimony

Best regards

David E Meyer

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:45:02 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Roney deYoung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB210. We are well past the time when commercial collection for aquariums should be banned. In my lifetime, as a 64 year lifetime snorkeler on Hawaii reefs, I have seen the changes and the profound effects.

The bill protects legitimate cultural and scientific limited use, but enables protection of our ecosystems for the health of the reef and protection of our islands and the erosion the reefs prevent.

Vote yes to eliminate commercial harvesting of reef fish. It's way past due for a sustainable future.

Mahalo,

Beth Roney Deyoung

401 Wainaku's street, hilo, Hawaii Island

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:50:09 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tricia-Lee Lum Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died 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 vast majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a complete 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) recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the Legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tricia-Lee Lum Ho

Wailuku/Maui

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:51:44 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roberts "Bob" Leinau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB2101. Our aquatic resources need more protection. Please ban the aquarium harvesting..

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:54:22 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Morris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Aloha, Monica Morris

Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:07:06 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noa LIncoln	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:26:08 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Michael Thomas

Kamuela, Hawaii

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:51:49 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

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resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:15:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Bruno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Tiffany Bruno, and I am writing in strong support of HB2101 to prohibit aquarium collection in Hawai‘i.

Our reefs are already under immense stress from climate change, coral bleaching, pollution, coastal development, and overuse. Removing reef fish for the aquarium trade adds yet another layer of pressure to ecosystems that are struggling to recover and survive.

Reef fish are not decorations. They are essential workers in a fragile system. Many species targeted for aquarium collection play critical roles in maintaining reef health by grazing algae, cycling nutrients, and supporting coral resilience. When these fish are removed, the balance of the reef shifts — often in ways that are difficult or impossible to reverse.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are not just economic assets; they are living ecosystems, cultural treasures, and sources of food security. They protect our shorelines, support tourism, and sustain marine life found nowhere else on Earth. Allowing continued extraction of reef fish for private tanks undermines long-term ecological stability for short-term commercial gain.

We should be prioritizing reef restoration, protection, and resilience — not further depletion.

As someone who spends time in the ocean and witnesses firsthand the changes happening below the surface, I can say with certainty that our reefs need relief, not additional stressors. Passing HB2101 is a necessary step toward safeguarding Hawai‘i’s marine ecosystems for future generations.

I respectfully urge you to support HB2101.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Tiffany Bruno

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:46:58 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died 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 vast majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a complete 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) recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the Legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Julia Estigoy-Kahoʻonei

Moku o Keawe

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:12:38 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
McMichael Simmy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Commissioners,

I'm writing in hopes you will support SB2078 to prohibit once and for all commercial aquarium collection, regardless of the method of collection.

Born and raised in the Territory of Hawaii, this is not sustainable nor is it tradition.

Watching and listening to the numerous hearings of Banning this trade, there are more people in favor of a ban. This includes our County Council Commissioners! Many people came forward to testify to protect our fishes. As one former wholesaler and trader testified how horrible this industry is needs to be stopped once and for all.

I live in Kailua Kona and we are concerned of our connection to the Ocean. We need to Protect and Preserve our Cultural and Natural Resources for the now and future generation. Malama and Care!! Taking and not giving back is not PONO.

Please support this Bill to Ban Aquarium Fishing for Commercial, we will be at lost in the thousands for reef fishes, this makes me Sad.

Mahalo,

Simmy McMichael

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:30:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marc Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Marc Kinoshita from Kohala, Hawai'i island.

I support HB2101 which permanently bans commercial aquarium fish collecting. After allowing 20 years of fish collecting, I feel that the overwhelming evidence of it not being a good practice speaks for itself. Hawai'i island County Council has unanimously supported a complete ban.

For this reasons I support a permanent ban on Aquarium Fish Collecting.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:34:56 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The best is to just make it illegal.

They can breed aquarium fish in hatcheries and leave our beautiful fish for us to enjoy.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:38:10 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theodora Furtado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died 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. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a complete 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) recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the Legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Theodora Furtado

Honolulu, Oahu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:27:04 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernon Kapuaala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died within a year after collection.

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Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Vernon Kapua‘ala

Waikapū, Maui

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:39:20 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sydney Wiecking	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Sydney Wiecking and I live in Kamuela on the Big Island. I spend a lot of time paddling my OC1, snorkeling and just enjoying our incredible ocean. I urge the passing of this Bill as I continually see the impact overuse of our ocean resources is having.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:43:12 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Marrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

A ban on collecting fish for aquariums is crucial to protect fragile marine ecosystems from overfishing and environmental destruction. It prevents the collapse of fish populations, and stops destructive practices like damaging coral reefs during collection. This ban will ensure biodiversity, support reef resilience against climate change, and protect the overall ecological health of the ocean.

Please vote yes on HB2101.

Mahalo,

Julia Marrack 96743

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:54:57 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Grutter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please ban the aquarium fish collecting trade. This is supported by the vast majority of your consituents, so please listen to us. We are all opposed to this bill for many reasons that are deeply important to us. Your voters deserve to be listened to by you. That is why we voted for you.

Sincerely, Lexa .

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:00:42 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diana B. Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I very strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, across the globe about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years. Wildlife is disappearing at alarming rates and we all need to do to preserve what wildlife remains.

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.

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101.**

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:28:46 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

I am testifying in strong support of HB2101.

I am a scuba diver all along the Kona coast and appreciate being able to see all of our fishes in the water. I have heard stories of how many yellow tang there were in the past, and I hope we can get back to calling the Kona Coast the Gold Coast.

Please take action to prohibit the harvest of wildlife from our waters for the aquarium trade. We cannot wait for another department to say nothing can be done.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.
Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:48:06 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i was shocked to find out that the taking of our reef resources was actual legal! shame on all those who are profiting off it. i strongly SUPPORT A BAN on those activities. for too long folks have used our ʻāina, kai, and good will to the detriment of our HOME - and US .... people using the beach for surf lessons, kayak rental etc - which displaces local from using it..but thatʻs another tissue we can ban later Mahalo :)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:01:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Worchel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Honokaa, Hawaii. I strongly urge the passage of this bill. Our marine environment is a sacred heritage that we have a duty to protect for future generations, as they protected it for us. Harvesting fish for the aquarium trade degrades the already endangered marine ecology. It benefits only a few individuals at the expense of our entire community. It harms one of the reasons tourists visit our island. Poaching continues and will continue due to the limited resources available to stop these criminals. It is inconceivable that we would permit additional degradation.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:03:51 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary True	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs face mounting stress, enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is not responsible management. Please support this bill.

I'm not sure why I have to keep testifying on this. There must be some really strong lobbying going on because among my many and various aquaintances I know absolutely no one who wants our tropical fish stolen from our reefs to be sold on the mainland. The mortality rate is heart breaking and it only benefits a small number of people while hurting the rest of us who love to snorkel.

Thanks for your attention! Aloha and mahalo!

Mary True, Pepeekeo, 96783

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:19:49 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susie Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feb 16, 2026

Dear Committe Member,

As a resident of Kapaau, Hawai‘i Island, and an ardent supporter of Hawaii having healthy oceans, coral, and fisheries, I strongly encourage you to end the aquarium trade in Hawaii.

Our oceans and fisheries are already in peril due to warming, acidification, overfishing and pollution. We have not seen a full recovery of our corals from the 2013-2014 bleaching event, and the most recent NOAA study on coral health states that coral cover is still about 30% lower than before the bleaching. 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. 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.

In Kohala, Big Island, where I reside, subsistence fishing is an integral part of Native Hawaiian culture. The Aquarium industry serves markets outside of Hawai‘i where huge profits are being made from Hawai‘i’s precious natural resources with no reciprocation to the many residents, in particular Native Hawaiians. Extracting reef fish for the pet trade industry is not consistent with Native Hawaiian subsistence, cultural, or religious practices, nor is it consistent with being protectors of our precious marine environment.

At this pivotal turning point in the history of coral reefs we must all learn to live sustainably and support strategic management to secure our future and protect our resources. I strongly object to any further compromise or negotiation that enables a trade that is a direct threat to our marine environment and our indigenous culture.

Sincerely,

Susie Davis

Kapaau, HI 96755

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:17:20 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 17, 2026

Subject: Strong Support of HB 2101

Aloha Chairs and Co-chairs and committee members

I strongly support HB 2101, which would prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the collection method.

This issue goes beyond resource management; it directly affects Native Hawaiian cultural values, ecosystem health, and our collective ability to prepare for accelerating threats such as ocean acidification and climate change.

In Hawaiian culture, the ocean is not a commodity—it is a living ancestor and source of sustenance, knowledge, and identity. Pono Practices such as kilo (careful observation), mālama (to care for), and kuleana (responsibility) guide how we interact with marine resources. Reef fish are not merely decorative species; they are integral members of a balanced ecosystem that feeds our people, supports subsistence practices, and maintains the health of coral reefs.

Banning aquarium fishing affirms the cultural principle that some resources are too important to remove, especially when their loss affects the entire ecosystem and future generations.

I ask you humbly to please support HB 2101.

Mahalo

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

Kalaoa, North Kona, Hawai‘i Island

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:20:14 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark A Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the passage of bill HB2101, the total ban of fish capture and sale for the commercial aquarium trade. This trade benefits a very small group of people, degrades the health and diversity of our coral reefs, and to cap it off, most collectied fish die before even reaching the aquaria they are desitned for. It's a total waste of our precious and increasingly endangered ecosystem.

Please pass this bill!

Thank you,

Mark Johnson

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:35:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard K Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To our representatives of the people.

I am a US citizen and a resident of North Kohala on the Big Island and ask for your vote to ban all reef harvesting in the State of Hawai‘i.You are deciding on bill HB2101 that has the ability to protect Hawai‘i's already stressed reef system with the complete and total ban on aquarium harvesting. It is the responsibilty of us all to maintain a clean and safe environment, **however, it is you, our elected representatives, that has the power to make a lasting difference with your very powerful vote.**

Your vote to implement this ban is crucial. Please consider it carefully.

With all due respect.

Richard Kirwin Johnson

Resident North Kohala Hawai‘i Island

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:49:13 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Riccio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I feel opening up Aquarium collection of reef fish will devastate Hawai'i's reefs which are already suffering greatly due to climate change killing coral. There is science behind that statement. And the repercussions of loss of reef are huge, including declining tourist activity and dollars, hurting Hawaiian culture, and causing more shore erosion and losing reef protection from wave action. Previous public input has repeatedly been overwhelmingly against aquarium collection of fish. Please pass HB2101 out of committee. Thank you for your time. Aloha, Carol Riccio Kihei, Maui, HI

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:02:19 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:05:13 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mel levine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101

And SB 2078

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:33:16 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ihilani Buffett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a Native Hawaiian, I offer my strong support for HB2101.

Our kūpuna established the konohiki system to carefully manage nearshore resources so that fish populations would remain abundant for future generations. Harvest was regulated with deep knowledge, seasonal awareness, and spritual responsibility. The commercial removal of reef fish for aquarium trade is inconsistent with this ʻike kūpuna and disrupts the natural balance that our ancestors worked to protect.

Our nearshore waters are part of our ancestral inheritance. The fish of our reefs are kinolau of our akua and essential to the health of the ecosystem and to our cultural practices. Practicing mālama ʻāina means ensuring that our resources are sustained, not exploited for private gain.

HB2101 honors our kuleana to protect Hawaiʻis marine life and aligns with the principles of traditional Hawaiian resource management.

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

ʻIhilani Buffett

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:55:51 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Whitmarsh II	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Collecting fish for commercial use disrupts fragile ecosystems and I am in full support of permanently banning commercial aquarium collection. Mahalo! Scott

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:57:50 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Acasio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB2101
Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection & House Committee on Water & Land

Aloha Chair Lowen, Chair Hashem, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

I write in **strong support of HB2101**, which would permanently prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes in Hawai‘i. This measure represents an important step in protecting Hawai‘i’s fragile reef ecosystems, cultural practices, and long-term economic sustainability.

For nearly a decade, commercial aquarium fishing has been largely halted following court decisions requiring environmental review and recognizing the significant impacts that large-scale extraction of reef species can have on marine ecosystems. Recent legal developments have reopened the possibility of renewed commercial collection, underscoring the need for clear legislative direction to ensure consistent protection of Hawai‘i’s nearshore resources.

Removing reef fish for the aquarium trade can disrupt ecological balance, reduce biodiversity, and affect subsistence fishing, cultural practices, and reef-based tourism economies that depend on healthy marine ecosystems. Many community members, cultural practitioners, scientists, and local governments, including the Hawai‘i County Council in a recent resolution, have expressed support for permanently ending commercial aquarium collection to safeguard these shared resources for future generations.

HB2101 appropriately preserves collection for traditional and customary practices, scientific research, education, and aquaculture, while ending commercial extraction for ornamental trade. This balanced approach honors both conservation priorities and cultural stewardship responsibilities.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are foundational to our island ecosystems, food systems, culture, and economy. Establishing a permanent prohibition on commercial aquarium collection reflects the precautionary stewardship needed to protect these resources for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2101.

Sincerely,

Laura Acasio, Hilo

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:13:40 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
S.A. Marek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Submitting testimony on this issue reminds one of: “It’s deja vu all over again.” -Yogi Berra

Who thinks it would be appropriate to issue permits to collect Pueo owlets or any other winged wildlife on Hawaii Island to be shipped off and sold as “pets”?

Let’s protect wildlife in the ocean, Hawaii’s reef fish, where they can live for 20+ years. These fish are not “pets” to be kept in aquarium tanks next to 8-track cassette tapes and an avocado-green fondue pot.

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek (Big Island resident)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:14:47 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Buck Joiner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to eliminate the collection and sale of aquarium fish taken from our reefs.

Buck Joiner Kihei Maui

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:16:46 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james ward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing to voice my support for HB. 2101 "permanent ban on Commercial aquarium collecting" As a resident and diver in south Kona I have seen the effects of aquarium collection in the local waters first hand. Aside from the negative impact on the ecosystem , the negative impact on tourism should also be considered. The result of aquarium collection is profit for the few to the detriment of many.

Mahalo,

James Ward 808-895-9656

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:55:02 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maureen Garry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern:

I stongly urge you to support HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection in the state.

You are responsibie to protect the resources of the state and livlihood of Hawaiian residents, not commercial enterprises that destroy our natural resources.

Mahalo,

Maureen Garry, Waikoloa Village

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:38:31 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GinnyJo Minamishin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I, GinnyJo Minamishin strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to **pass HB2101.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

GinnyJo Minamishin

kailua-Kona, Hawaii

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:12:07 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nina Monasevitch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101.

Alarmingly, a recent **independent expert scientific analysis** of DAR's own data confirms that following the 2017 court-ordered shutdown of the aquarium collectiong, **yellow tang populations failed to recover as biologically and historically expected.**

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 ʻāina** 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! Pass HB2101. The ocean is our life support system.

Malama Pono,

Nina Monasevitch

Lihue, Kauai

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:32:08 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Enos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Peruso, Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Morikawa, and members of their committees,

My name is Kanani Enos. I am the Director of Cultural and Community Affairs at Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (HKN). I am a lineal descendant to the South Kona area (also known as Kapalilua), spanning from Miloliʻi to Kealakekua. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT for HB2101 which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

Prohibiting commercial aquarium fishing will provide the highest form of protection to our reef biodiversity and health, promote long-term sustainability, and align with responsible stewardship of our ocean and marine environment. Our reefs are not commodities. They are living ecosystems, cultural resources, sources of life and abundance for our future generations, and in our cultural view, the foundation for all of life, deserving protection. XI, Section 1 of the Hawaiʻi Constitution establishes that all public natural resources are held in trust by the state for the benefit of present and future generations. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs adopted resolution No. 2025-40 calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection in the State of Hawaiʻiʻs waters.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued efforts to protect Hawaiʻiʻs marine environment for the generations to come.

Aloha nui,

Kanani Enos

Restore the Commons

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

House Committees on Agriculture and Food Systems and on Water and Land

HOUSE BILL 2101 – RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chairs Chun and Hashem, Vice Chairs Kusch and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Food Systems and on Water and Land:

HB2101 Prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes.

This is responsive to native Hawaiian values and priorities, and is a part of the legislative priority package of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Hawaii is a fresh water oasis in a salt water desert, and its complex aquatic habitats are a crucial foundation to sustainable life in Hawaii. Too many generations have seen our fisheries as commercial opportunity at the expense of healthy habitat. But Hawaii's small scale must be tended with far more circumspect management, as Hawaiians dependent on it for their livelihoods understood and appropriately managed. Hawaii was famous, among early entrepreneurs, for its healthy villages and robust workers.

Unfortunately, most of Hawaii's commercial colonial history has been deleterious to our nearshore fisheries, and continues to be, from agricultural runoff to cesspools. We are grateful that legislators have responded as well as they have against commercial priorities over sustainable habitat, and this bill is an important step forward. The Environmental Legislative Network has made this campaign a priority.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this issue,

/s/ Charley Ice, Hoa'āina, Waimalu, O'ahu;
retired Hydrologist, Commission on Water Resource Management (25 years) and Planner at DHHL (10 years);
former Chair of O'ahu Democratic Party Region 5 ('Aiea-Pearl City);

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:01:08 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Haake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, My name is David Haake . I live in Kihei,Maui . I have been snorkeling on the reefs of maui for over forty years . I have seen first hand the degradation of our precious reefs over the years. The reduction of the fish population on the reefs is beyond sad. It is overwhelming. If you allow the collection/ aquarium industry to resume the taking of fish from our reefs it will be the last nail in the coffin. PLEASE , do not let this happen. We need to work towards restoring the reefs of Hawaii for the health of our ocean and for future generations to enjoy. Do not let profits for a few condemn our reefs to ruin. Be Pono and let aloha guide your decision on this matter. Mahalo
Sent from my iPhon

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:04:17 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keli'i Ioane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Keli‘i Ioane. I currently live in Hilo on the Islan of Hawaii.

I strongly support HB2101, which permanently prohibits the commercial collection of aquarium fish. This bill is grounded in science, cultural values, and our responsibility to future generations.

Healthy reefs depend on fish abundance. Herbivorous reef fish like surgeonfish and tangs are not decorative extras—they are essential reef caretakers. They graze algae that would otherwise smother coral, especially after heat stress and bleaching events. Scientific studies consistently show that reefs with higher herbivore populations recover faster, resist invasive algae, and are far more resilient to climate change.

When fish are removed for the aquarium trade, reefs lose this natural defense system. Fewer fish means more algae, weaker coral, less biodiversity, and ultimately, reef collapse. No amount of "managed take" can replace the ecological role of fish that evolved to live and work on the reef.

Mahalo,

Keli‘i Ioane

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:07:03 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josephine Keliipio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our reefs are essential to food security, cultural practice, shoreline protection, and our island economy.

Please stop commercial aquarium collection and penalize the violators. Mahalo.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:17:22 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Akeo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Melanie Akeo

Makakilo, Haswaii

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:21:41 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Sturz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in Kapa‘au, in North Kohala, on Hawai‘i Island. I‘m a divemaster, a free diver, and a novelist and journalist. I write extensively about the ocean, including for The New York Times and The New York Times Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, Outside, Men‘s Journal, National Geographic, Scuba Diving and Sport Diver, among many more. I‘m also the author of the novel “Underjungle,” set entirely underwater, which I researched here in Hawai‘i.

For the life of me, I can‘t understand why we're still discussing whether to permit aquarium fishing in Hawai‘i. It so obviously gives a select few the right to profit from the state's natural resources, while endangering our coastal communities, degrading our coral, stressing already weakened fish populations, and reducing the appeal of the state to snorkelers and divers who can‘t miss the fact that the fish no longer are plentiful in the state, which further hurts tourism in general. On top of this, regulation and enforcement of aquarium fishing rules will introduce new taxpayer costs, at a time when our waters need increased protection in the face of bleaching, warming seas, and declining resilience.

Please permanently ban commercial aquarium fishing in the state.

Mahalo,

James Sturz

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:13:54 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rick Warshauer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Water and Land:

My name is Rick Warshauer, from Volcano on the Big Island. I write to ask you to pass HB2101 to ban commercial aquarium collection statewide. This ban reflects majority public sentiment on the issue. Passing this bill also will eliminate provisions that have caused regulatory confusion, inaction and conflict at the affected agencies.

Please do it today—no more studies, no more mitigation measures, no more ignoring this addressable issue, one of several major threats to the health and abundance of our declining reef life. You cannot act to reduce ocean water warming, you cannot act to eliminate pollutants to reefs that are regulated by other agencies, you cannot act to readily eliminate harmful invasive reef species, but you can, as many here request, act to end the mining of our reefs and near shore water of its wildlife for the pet aquarium trade. Please begin the process today.

Since the mid to late 1970's I have watched the diversity and quality of reef life diminish sharply due to the growing impacts of the aquarium collecting trade. This exploitation expanded to leave O'ahu's reefs a shadow of what they once were; then it spread to the once-bountiful resources of the neighbor islands, with similar consequences. The various species of angel fish, butterfly fish and tangs that I used to enjoy seeing are gone from view and are at risk of regional extirpation. Temporary closures and prohibited take zones have demonstrated the rapid positive effects of excluding the aquarium trade, but these require careful monitoring by overworked staff to reduce continued take by the brazen scofflaws.

A complete prohibition coupled with public reporting is what is required and expected. The public is engaged and widespread on Hawai‘i reefs and willing to report violations. Thus, DOCARE should be able to act directly from the public-provided reports and videos, saving time for other DOCARE duties. Currently there is no authorized commercial collecting, only outlaw activities, indicating that any commercial reef life collecting and/or sales are illegal. To allow any exceptions to the law, by allowing any commercial collecting permits as desired by DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources, would necessitate far more time for investigations, complicating enforcement and incurring more cost. Mahalo.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:16:24 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisette Akamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which cultural practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years.

Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years. This is not just wasteful, but cruel.

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. Our coral reefs are already at risk from climate change - the aquarium pet industry only exacerbates the existential harm to our coral reefs.

Thus, 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 prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state.

To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Lisette Puanani Akamine

Kahaluʻu, Oʻahu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:29:35 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB2101

My name is Bob Douglas and I live in Pana'ewa on the Big Island and I have kānaka relatives that live in the fishing village of Miloli'i

Our coral reefs and its entire associated ecosystem have been attacked with impunity for centuries mostly for the financial benefit of a few people.

Its health is directly tied to the kama'aina health, waters safe to swim in, to sustainability harvest food, to maintain an eco friendly lifestyle and tourism.

Our knowledge of this ecosystem is vastly incomplete and the potential for losing indigenous life forms is enormous. The impact on human health has been enormous and continues on a daily basis.

1. Antiviral compounds

- Sulfated polysaccharides (from red & brown seaweeds) block viruses from attaching to human cells
- Shown activity against HIV, herpes, influenza, and coronaviruses
- These inspired antiviral gels, sprays, and drug candidates

Impact: New strategies for virus prevention, not just treatment.

2. Cancer-fighting molecules

- Seaweeds produce fucoidan, laminarin, and phlorotannins
- These compounds:
- Trigger cancer cell death (apoptosis)
- Reduce tumor growth
- Enhance immune response

Impact: Basis for adjunct cancer therapies and ongoing drug trials.

3. Blood thinners & anti-clot drugs

- Fucoidan behaves similarly to heparin (a major anticoagulant)
- Lower bleeding risk than traditional blood thinners

Impact: Safer treatments for heart disease, stroke, and thrombosis.

4. Gut health & metabolic medicine

- Seaweed fibers act as powerful prebiotics
- Improve insulin sensitivity and reduce inflammation

Impact: Treatments for diabetes, obesity, and autoimmune disorders.

5. Agar & alginate (medical workhorses)

- Extracted from red and brown seaweeds
- Used in:
- Drug capsules
- Wound dressings
- Tissue scaffolds
- Microbiology labs (agar plates!)

Powerful anticancer drugs

- Soft corals produce terpenoids and alkaloids
- Some halt cancer cell division entirely

Example:

Trabectedin, a marine-derived cancer drug, originated from reef organisms.

Impact: New classes of chemotherapy drugs.

6. Painkillers stronger than morphine

- Cone snails (reef dwellers) produce neurotoxins
- Led to ziconotide, a painkiller:
- 1,000× stronger than morphine
- Non-addictive

Impact: Breakthrough treatment for chronic pain without opioid risks.

7. Antibiotic alternatives

- Corals live with dense microbial communities
- They evolved novel antimicrobial compounds to survive

Impact: New hope against antibiotic-resistant superbugs.

8. Bone grafts & regenerative medicine

- Coral skeletons are made of calcium carbonate
- Structurally similar to human bone

Used for:

- Bone grafts
- Dental implants
- Tissue engineering

Impact: Faster bone regeneration with fewer rejections.

9. Anti-inflammatory & immune drugs

- Coral compounds regulate immune responses
- Being explored for:
- Arthritis
- Asthma

- Multiple sclerosis

Why This Matters (Big Picture)

- Over 50% of modern medicines are derived from natural products
- Oceans cover 70% of Earth, yet <5% is medically explored
- Coral reef loss = lost cures we never discovered

Translation: Protecting reefs and seaweed forests isn't just environmental—it's medical survival.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:49:47 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill. this bill will help to promote healthy reefs, which are very important for our fish for our environment and for our tourism and for cultural respect. I live on Oahu and I have been swimming in our ocean for several decades. I have seen the decline in fish over the years.
I sincerely hope that you will support this bill.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT FOR
HB2101
House Committees on:
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS and WATER & LAND
February 18, 2026 | 8:45 a.m. | Room 411

Aloha e Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Perruso, Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Morikawa, and all committee members,

My name is Kainalu Keliʻikuli-Grace and I am a lineal descendant of Kapalilua (South Kona) as well as a Hoaʻāina for Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui, Inc. (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 Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs Annual Convention held inKeauhou, Kona where the delegation adopted Resolution 2025-40 which mentioned, "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 stated, "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)." Furthermore, 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 Lauʻīpala (Yellow Tang), Pākuʻikuʻi (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 local reef ecosystems.

For these reasons, **I AM IN FULL SUPPORT OF HB2101.** Mahalo piha e Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Perruso, Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Morikawa, and all committee members for taking my testimony into consideration.

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

Kainalu Keliʻikuli-Grace
Hoaʻāina - Marine Coordinator
Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui, Inc.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:56:26 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support of. Thank you.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:24:21 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT
How many times do we have to keep saying ~ Leave the fish alone?

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:03:03 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Claire Tonry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a common sense bill to protect our imperiled fish stocks from decimation by the very few who profit from the aquarium trade. Fish are far more valuable to everyone (and to the tourism industry) when they live, grow, and reproduce in their native habitat.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:12:24 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha~

I am writing today to offer full support of and sincere urging for rule change regarding the aquarium gathering business here in our islands, preferably a full and complete ban. 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 still FAR from back to a fully healthy, balanced state, especially with the added stressor of coral bleaching we have experienced, but the improvement is obvious and a welcome change. We desperately need to keep Hawaii's fish in our waters for the continued health and restoration of the reef, and for all those locals and tourists who enjoy and derive benefit on many levels from their presence and corresponding healthy reef; NOT be taken for the relatively very few who want to capitalize on their removal for monetary gains with no regard for the negative impact they generate and short-sighted damage they leave behind.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lon Wallace, PhD.

Kamuela, Hawaii

Mauli, Kaulua – 16th, Pepeluali 2026

SUBJECT: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB2101 - Prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection**

Aloha members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection and Committee on Water & Land,

My name is Kēhau Springer, and I am a kanaka ʻōiwi practitioner and researcher residing in Keaʻau, Moku o Keawe. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB2101.**

HB2101 is timely, necessary and long overdue. It addresses a fundamental policy question that has been deferred for decades: whether Hawaiʻi'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.

Protecting Public Trust Resources and Community Stewardship:
Commercial aquarium collection is a for-profit, export-oriented industry that commodifies Hawaiʻi'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 ʻŌiwi 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 lawaiʻa 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 Hawaiʻi's constitutional obligations. Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawaiʻi 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 Paʻakai o ka ʻĀina (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 lawaiʻa 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 Action Matters
HB2101 preserves scientific research, education, aquaculture, and captive breeding activities, while removing the legal ambiguity that has allowed agencies to claim they are required to permit commercial aquarium collection. Agency rulemaking can regulate how an activity operates, but only the Legislature can determine whether the activity should be allowed at all. This bill provides that clarity and prevents further depletion of our reef fish on a costly and divisive permitting regime.

For nearly a decade, commercial aquarium collection has been effectively shut down due to litigation, while surveys consistently show strong public support for a ban. Meanwhile, Kanaka ʻŌiwi communities across the pae ʻāina continue to seek state support for community-based stewardship and co-management of nearshore resources. HB2101 allows the State to refocus its limited capacity where it is most urgently needed, rather than propping up an industry with negligible public benefit.

A Call for Pono Governance:
Since the passage of Act 306 in 1998, which established the West Hawaiʻi Regional Fishery Management Area and effectively institutionalized the commercial aquarium trade, Hawaiʻi'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 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 ʻŌiwi. Mahalo nui loa to this committee for advancing HB2101 and for standing in support of Hawaiʻi's people, moana, ʻāina, culture and lāhui. I respectfully urge your full support of this measure.

Mahalo nui for your consideration!

Naʻu

Shauna Kēhaunani Springer

na Shauna Kēhaunani Springer
Kea'au, Moku o Keawe, Hawai'i
Founder & Executive Director, Ka Paʻakai Consulting
Member of Nā Kai ʻEwalu
PhD Candidate, Te Whare Wānaga o Waikato (The University of Waikato)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:39:41 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Alisha : please pass this bill so important to health of our reefs/fishes! Mahalo, JW

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:59:00 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Our nearshore waters and coral reef ecosystems are a **public trust resource** and, for Native Hawaiians, a living ancestor. Our relationship with iʻa is grounded in **kuleana, mālama ʻāina, and aloha ʻāina**. Healthy reefs feed our families, sustain cultural practices, protect our shorelines, and support the long-term ecological and economic well-being of Hawaiʻi. For these reasons, I agree that large-scale commercial extraction of reef life is inconsistent with the stewardship values of our islands”

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:22:15 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Kart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii is not doing enought to protect reef fish from commercial collection.
They make loads of money and do ZERO other than MAKE MONEY

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:40:11 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We agree with HH that 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. – this is outrageous.

We had no idea that 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.

Our members have previously been very concerned about the reef fishes and wrote to your governor as long ago as 2017 against this capture. We understood that the trade was discontinued which was a great relief – then we had to complain again in 2024 as it was allowed to resume.

We must say we are somewhat concerned about the Bill, as exemptions for captive-breeding, capture of aquatic life for scientific, educational, management, or propagation can mask commercial aims.

We would support the Bill with those reservations.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:41:46 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehau Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of the Hawaiian Humane Society stance on this bill.

Kenai Lee

Honolulu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:35:05 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
melissa tomlinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aquarium fishing needs a full ban/ full stop!

truly an awful, entitled and violent practice. Every life in the Sea has its relationship with its home and ecosystem. Protect Hawai‘i by protecting its life and lifeways. The time to end harmful practices is now. Please Support HB2101.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:23:26 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Christy Shaver and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Christy Shaver

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:17:54 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joanna p milo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i support HB2101

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:11:02 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments: Bills supports the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection. It provides exemptions for captive-breeding, capture of aquatic life for scientific, educational, management, or propagation; exercise of traditional and customary practices; taking for consumption or bait; or lawful taking from fishponds.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:22:40 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Klein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge support of this bill HB2101 as a resident of Puako on the Big Island of Hawaii. This is a natural resource that has taken thousands of years to create and is already under severe stress due to climate change. Fish populations are NOT recovering and many scientific studies from the Seattle Aquarium and others support this. There is no level of commercial fish harvesting that is justified in this case. The reef and the fish that are there make money for the state from the hotels, boats and restaurants that support the tourists, divers and snorkelers that come to see these wonders and do no harm. This money would go right out of the state if the fish continue to decline. Do not kill the golden goose or fish in this case. Support the total ban on commercial aquarium collection HB2101

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:30:33 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
P Hauoli'ipo Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died 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 vast majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a complete 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) recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the Legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

- P. Hau'oli ipo Wright (Kea'au/Moku o Keawe)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:32:13 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kealii Pang, Ph.D. I am a resident of Kaimukī, Oʻahu, and the President of a nonprofit that holds a long-term lease on State land dedicated to the cultural education of Native Hawaiian ʻōpio in Waiʻanae.

As a retired federal biologist, I have spent my career witnessing the delicate balance of our coastal ecosystems. I have seen how commercial interests frequently prioritize profit over the habitats of our Hawaiian seabirds, endangered honu, and ʻilioholoikauaua. It is from this professional and cultural perspective that I write to you today: I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

The Ecological Necessity of Reef Fish

After years of concern from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities, the aquarium collection industry was shut down by court order in 2017. We must now codify this status quo into law.

From a biological standpoint, the species targeted by aquarium collectors—particularly herbivorous fish—are the "engine room" of a healthy reef.

- Algae Regulation: These fish graze on algae that would otherwise smother coral polyps.
- Coastal Protection: Healthy reefs are our primary defense against rising seas and coastal erosion. To remove the fish is to weaken the reef, which in turn threatens our shorelines.
- Biodiversity: As a biologist, I can attest that the removal of hundreds of thousands of reef fish per year for ornamental trade undermines the complex ecological functions that support our entire nearshore food web.

Prioritizing Public Trust Over Corporate Profit

The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently moving to reopen these waters, claiming a mandate that contradicts the clear desires of the public and the health of the environment. In my work with ʻōpio in Waiʻanae, we teach that these resources are a public trust, not a commodity for corporate exploitation.

It is incumbent on the legislature to clarify that DAR must focus its limited resources on pressing marine management needs—such as habitat restoration and climate change adaptation—rather than reviving a defunct industry that benefits a few at the expense of our natural heritage.

For the protection of our reefs, our cultural practices, and the endangered species that depend on a vibrant ocean ecosystem, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Kealii Pang, Ph.D. Kaimukī, Oʻahu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:46:45 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Lowen, Vice Chair Representative Perruso and Members of the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection, Chair Representative Hashem, Vice Chair Representative Morikawa and Members of the Committee on Water and Land.

Please support HB 2101 to preserve aquatic wildlife and protect them from capture and sale for commercial aquarium purposes. My understanding is that capture methods include cruel practices, and many fish die before they reach pet stores.

Again, please support HB 2101.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:18:56 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

protect reef fish from commercial aquarium collection

Hawaii Kai voter

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:33:21 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin OFriel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed.

Reefs are public trust resources that generate far greater long-term economic and social value than short-term commercial extraction for private aquariums.

Anyone who has spent time enjoying the reefs in West Hawai‘i over past decades can personally attest that areas once characterized by dense coral cover and abundant schools of reef fish now exhibit unmistakable signs of stress and decline.

Passing HB2101 is a meaningful step toward safeguarding reef biodiversity, ecosystem stability, and the public interest.

I respectfully urge you to support HB2101.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kristin OFriel
Resident of West Hawai‘i

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:38:03 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Stowell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am wrting in support of HB2101.

mahalo,

Julie Stowell

Laupahoehoe, Hawaii

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:04:31 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Scott Gorrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill HB2101. Our public reefs are not the private suppliers to the commercial aquarium industry. Thank you.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:22:20 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carrie Ostroski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

I respectfully submit my support of HB2101, prohibiting the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. I've seen the swift decline of fish and reef habitat in the last decade from a number of factors, and this one is one of the easiest factors of depletion to tackle and eliminate in terms of legislation. It's the combination of risks to our nearshore reef habitat that is driving low fish populations, but capture and sale of aquatic life, most of which perishes, is extremely wasteful and is not a way to malama aina. It's a short-term gain with long-term consequences. It‘s a dark industry with dark consequences. There are many ways for local fishers to continue to thrive through sustainable fishing practices that do not deplete resources. With no fish, there is no fishing economy. With no fish, there is no tourism economy. With no fish, there is no biodiversity.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering support for HB2101 and the long vision for a healthy, thriving reef system in Hawai‘i.

Carrie Ostroski, Waikoloa, 96738, 480-290-1961

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:25:45 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill HB2101.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:31:06 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brieanah Gouveia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brieanah Gouveia

Honolulu, O‘ahu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:37:02 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Committees,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101**.

After years of controversy and sustained concern—particularly from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities—the commercial aquarium collection industry was finally shut down by court order in 2017 and has remained effectively closed for nearly a decade. HB2101 would codify this longstanding status quo into law and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters must not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

Reef fish—especially the herbivorous species disproportionately targeted by aquarium collectors—are critical to healthy nearshore ecosystems. They play an essential role in maintaining coral reef resilience, which in turn protects our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion. These species are also integral to traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, hold cultural and spiritual significance, and are a shared public trust resource for residents and visitors alike.

When the aquarium collection industry was active, its commercial scale—driven by the high profits associated with exporting reef species for purely ornamental purposes—caused disproportionate and lasting harm to Hawai‘i’s nearshore waters. The removal of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of reef fish annually degraded coral reef biodiversity and ecological function, undermined cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices, and reinforced the harmful notion that public trust resources exist primarily for corporate exploitation. In response, the majority of Hawai‘i residents, along with the Board of Land and Natural Resources, have expressed support for a permanent ban on commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i’s waters.

Despite this clear public sentiment and ecological reality, DAR is now advancing rules that would immediately reopen West Hawai‘i Island’s waters to commercial aquarium collection and establish a framework to expand the practice statewide. DAR claims that state law requires it to pursue this path. It is therefore incumbent upon the Legislature to state unequivocally that DAR should not—and must not—continue expending limited public resources attempting to revive an already defunct industry, particularly at the expense of far more urgent marine resource management needs.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS HB2101**.

me ke aloha ʻāina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawaiʻi Member

Hawaiʻi Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawaiʻi Member

Carbon Cashback Hawaiʻi Member

Hawaiʻi Tax Fairness Coalition Member

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:39:08 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janine Dumaguin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I’m a Hawai‘i resident writing in strong support of HB2101 to permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs face mounting stress; enforcement is weak, and reopening commercial extraction is irresponsible management. Please support this bill. Mahalo.

KAHELE

Testimony of Support
HB2101
February 17th, 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 today in the form of this testimony standing in both solidarity and strong unwavering support of HB2101.** For many years Aquarium Fishing has been contributing to the decline in health of our marine ecosystems. With science constantly showing fish populations decreasing in large numbers and coral reefs on the decline. This should already have been a sign of the aquarium fisheries unsustainable practices.

With Hawaii's reefs already incapacitated and the thought of allowing aquarium trade back into our waters will only cause further damage to our already ailing ecosystem. With a recent article providing substantial evidence on how AQ fisheries and its claims to it being a sustainable practice is a contradiction. Furthermore with the Ocean Institute of the Hawai'i Pacific University and their cultivation efforts of several species targeted by AQ. I see no reason to result in the wild harvest of these species.

The Aquarium Fisheries Trade does not understand how important these marine ecosystems are to the Hawaiian people *(Kanaka Oiwi)* and instead insist on contributing to the decline of a major lifeline that plays a crucial role in the sustainability of the native Hawaiian way of life. For many years our *kupuna* (ancestors) have seen the change in our waters from less fish to dying reefs to sea level rising. This isn't just a problem that didn't happen overnight; it's a result of years of harmful unsustainable fisheries practices like the aquarium trade.

With many of our reefs already surpassing the "point of no return" , what logic permits a highly unsustainable trade such as the aquarium fisheries back to our state waters, even inviting them to the table is unorthodox. The irony to disregard the AQ trade as not being a big contributor to the decline of reefs and fish is utter insanity and goes against one's conscience. Knowing the full ramifications of allowing the trade to continue.

When will we realize that what we are as humans in whatever we do, whether it be good or bad, leaves an imprint on the ecosystem that surrounds us. We as humans have the ability to be more cautious of our environment. We just tend to pick and choose when we want to be cautious. We pick what bill benefits us the most rather than seeing what benefits our communities as a whole. We as humans have a predescended nature to be selfish and greedy. Leading the collapse of a resource that is meant to be stewarded not commercialized.

KAHELE

Growing up I was fortunate to be raised in Hawai'i and its environment. Listening to the stories of my grandparents telling me of how our seas were abundant with life, picturesque with the vibrancy of coral. Sustaining our people with an ever-abundated food resource. Gifting our people a way of life that was meant to last generations of *Kanaka*. Sadly the ocean our *kupuna* grew up in and saw in those days are very different to the oceans we see today. The difference from living in the change in our environment to trying to tell people about it is more complex than experiencing it first hand.

So I urge the committee today to consider passing this bill to allow our reefs and our *wahipana* to recover from this, with our conservation efforts steadily improving the conditions of these marine ecosystems. We realize that they will never be the same as how my grandparents described it. We can only hope to preserve what's left for the next generation. Help us to contribute to preserving a pristine resource for generations to come.

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).

Let this testimony be a voice for the fishes, a mouthpiece for the seas. A proclamation for the *Moananuiakea*.

Mahalo for allowing me to present this testimony,

Me ka pomaikai a me ke aloha,

Taha'a H. Kahele

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:40:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasmine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB2101

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:41:06 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liz Lees	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a full time resident of West Hawaii and and active daily ocean swimmer. A healthy vibrant reef is important to all. I have observed first hand how the ban has allowed our local fish population to increase and thrive. Please continue the ban on aquarium collection. Aquairium collection harms many and only benefits a few who are taking a vital public resource.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:46:15 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DIANE CHOY FUJIMURA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

/Cmd+V

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

My name is Diane Choy Fujimura and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Diane Choy Fujimura

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:47:30 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Diane Ware, and a large majority of the residents of this island Moku 'O Keawe have supported a ban on the destructive extraction of our aquatic life from the fragile reef ecosystem for decades.I have been testifying on this issue since 2008 before our County Council, most recently January 2026 with overwhelming success and support from council members and communities around the island. One of the most compelling in person testimonies in strong support of a ban on 1/23/26 (1hr 22 minutes) was from Tim Stewart a former collector and wholesaler of reef fishes for the commercial trade. He testified about coral bashing in anchoring and in order to access and net the fishes. He also spoke about the injuries and deaths of fishes during capture and shipping off island. None of these practices are pono.

A recent **independent expert scientific analysis** of DAR's own data confirms that following the 2017 court-ordered shutdown of the aquarium collectiong, **yellow tang populations failed to recover as biologically and historically expected**.

The trade's fundamental conflict with **local culture and Native Hawaiian values as described in the state constitution Article XII Section 7** including pono fishing practices that limit take to what is truly needed. Many Hawaiians and groups like Aha Moku, Miloli'i Community, Kiholo and Ka'upulehu, Ho'okena and Kealia, and Kona Paradise oppose AQ fish collection permits benefiting the Pet Trade rather than local communities.

The inconsistency with **mālama ʻāina** and the State's **constitutional public-trust obligation** to protect natural resources for present and future generations is evidenced by the HAWAIIAN community testimony which as been ignored or dismissed in the EIS process (CIA), and the more recent petition in 2023 (BLNR and DAR).

Furthermore published cost-benefit analyses showing residents receive **no public benefit** from the aquarium trade while bearing **all environmental and enforcement costs.**

I urge you to support local communities, traditional customs and our reef ecosystems by passing bill HB 2101.

Mahalo for " listening " once again to the pleas of the people for the fishes,

Diane Ware Keauhou -Volcano 96785

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:55:47 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Lorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso am e Morikawa, am e Committee Members,

My name is Anne M. Lorenzo and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Anne M. Lorenzo

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2101

Before the House Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Water & Land (EEP/WAL)

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Committees,

I strongly **support HB2101.**

Hawai‘i’s reef wildlife are public trust resources. Under Article XI of the Hawai‘i Constitution, the State has an affirmative obligation to conserve and protect these resources for present and future generations. Whether public trust resources, such as reef wildlife, should be managed as export commodities is a policy determination that rests with the Legislature, not with agency rulemaking. HB2101 resolves that question clearly and permanently.

Hawai‘i’s reefs today are under significantly greater stress than when the aquarium trade was halted. Repeated marine heat waves, coral bleaching, and accelerating climate impacts have reduced reef resilience. Many herbivorous fish populations have not recovered to previous levels. Under these conditions, reopening commercial extraction of species that play essential roles in algal control and coral recovery would move Hawai‘i in the wrong direction.

Finally, the current $100 annual aquarium permit fee does not begin to cover the public costs of administration, monitoring, and enforcement. DAR and DOCARE already face significant staffing and capacity constraints. Hawai‘i taxpayers should not subsidize an export industry that provides minimal public benefit while increasing ecological and enforcement risk.

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

Mahalo for your consideration.

Frederick Smith

82-5996 Napo‘opo‘o Road
Captain Cook, HI 96704

Testimony in Support of HB2101 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection.

This bill prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection. It provides exemptions for captive-breeding, capture of aquatic life for scientific, educational, management, or propagation; exercise of traditional and customary practices; taking for consumption or bait; or lawful taking from fishponds.

Judith Aikawa, MD
37 Apali Way
Kula, HI 96790

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:24:13 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

I am in strong support of protecting our marine life. Please pass this important measure.

Mahalo,

Shannon Matson

Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:27:35 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2101 — Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Michele Moore, a Hawai‘i resident and animal welfare advocate, submitting testimony in strong support of HB2101.

This important measure protects Hawai‘i’s reef fish and nearshore ecosystems by prohibiting the capture and sale of aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade. While I support responsible pet ownership and understand the joy that animals bring into our homes, the capture of wild reef fish for ornamental purposes is neither sustainable nor humane.

More than 40 percent of wild-caught aquarium fish die before ever reaching a pet store. The methods used to collect and transport them are inhumane. Puncturing swim bladders so fish can be brought to the surface faster or cutting fins and spines to fit them into smaller bags, cause pain and often fatal injury. These practices not only harm individual animals but also damage our reef ecosystems, which are already under stress from climate change, pollution, and overuse.

Hawai‘i’s coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world and play an essential role in our culture, economy, and coastal protection. Allowing the continued commercial exploitation of these species for the pet trade undermines our broader conservation goals and depletes the natural heritage we should be safeguarding for future generations.

HB2101 strikes an appropriate balance by prohibiting destructive commercial aquarium collection while allowing for scientific research, education, cultural practices, and sustainable fishing for food or bait. This is thoughtful legislation that prioritizes ecological responsibility and compassion.

I respectfully urge the committees to pass HB2101 and protect Hawai‘i’s native reef fish from unnecessary exploitation.

Mahalo for your commitment to preserving the beauty and integrity of our marine ecosystems.

Sincerely,
Michele Moore

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:28:59 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donelle Sawyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Donelle Sawyer and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Donelle Sawyer

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:36:41 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Kēhau Lucas and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB2101.

HB2101 is necessary to codify into statute what has been the legal and practical reality for nearly a decade: Hawai‘i’s commercial aquarium collection industry has been non-operational since 2017 due to court rulings requiring compliance with Hawai‘i’s environmental review laws. The Legislature now has the opportunity to affirm this longstanding status quo and prevent the reopening of an industry that has repeatedly failed to meet statutory and constitutional requirements.

1. The commercial aquarium industry has been closed since 2017 due to legal noncompliance.

In *Umberger v. DLNR* (2017), the First Circuit Court ruled that commercial aquarium collection using fine-mesh nets constitutes an “action” under Hawai‘i’s environmental review statute (HRS Chapter 343), requiring an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before permits may be issued. Because no valid environmental review has been completed, the industry has remained closed for nearly a decade.

This closure is not a policy choice—it is the result of a judicial determination that the industry cannot operate legally without meeting statutory environmental review requirements.

2. Reef fish targeted by the aquarium trade are essential to ecosystem function and climate resilience.

Peer-reviewed research and DAR’s own scientific findings consistently show that herbivorous reef fish—particularly surgeonfish and other species heavily targeted by aquarium collectors—play a critical role in:

- controlling algal overgrowth,
- maintaining coral reef health and biodiversity, and

- supporting shoreline protection by sustaining reef structures that buffer wave energy.

These ecological functions are foundational to Hawai‘i’s climate adaptation strategies and are recognized in state policy, including the Hawai‘i Coral Reef Strategy and the State’s climate resilience planning documents.

3. These species are integral to Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.

Herbivorous reef fish are not merely ecological resources; they are protected cultural resources. Under Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution and the *PASH* and *Ka Pa‘akai* line of cases, the State has an affirmative duty to protect Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, including subsistence fishing.

The removal of large quantities of reef fish for ornamental export directly affects the availability of species relied upon for cultural, subsistence, and community practices. The State cannot authorize such extraction without demonstrating that these constitutionally protected rights will be safeguarded—something the industry has never been able to show.

4. Prior commercial aquarium collection had documented, disproportionate impacts.

Before the 2017 shutdown, commercial aquarium collectors removed hundreds of thousands—at times exceeding one million—reef fish annually from West Hawai‘i alone. DAR’s own reports documented:

- significant declines in targeted species in heavily collected areas,
- altered age structures and population dynamics, and
- measurable ecological impacts on reef function.

These impacts were driven by extraction for non-essential, purely ornamental purposes, with no demonstrated public benefit and no alignment with the State’s public trust obligations.

5. Public trust doctrine requires the State to prioritize public benefit, not private commercial extraction.

Under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i Constitution and Hawai‘i Supreme Court precedent (*Waiahole*, *NED v. DLNR*, *PASH*), the State must:

- protect and maintain natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations,
- avoid actions that substantially impair public trust resources, and
- apply a presumption in favor of resource protection and public use.

Reopening the aquarium trade—an industry that exports public trust resources for private profit—would conflict with these constitutional duties.

6. DAR's current rulemaking is not mandated by law and diverts limited resources.

DAR has asserted that it must pursue rulemaking to reopen the industry. However, no statute requires DAR to reestablish a commercial aquarium fishery. The agency retains full discretion to prioritize resource protection, especially when the industry has been non-operational for nearly a decade and when Hawai‘i faces far more urgent marine management challenges, including coral bleaching, climate impacts, and declining nearshore fisheries.

HB2101 provides needed legislative clarity that DAR should not expend additional resources attempting to revive an industry that has been legally and practically defunct since 2017.

Conclusion

HB2101 aligns with constitutional mandates, judicial rulings, ecological science, and the expressed preferences of Hawai‘i residents. It protects public trust resources, upholds Native Hawaiian rights, and ensures that state agencies focus on pressing marine management needs rather than reviving an industry that has repeatedly failed to meet legal requirements.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to PASS HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.
Aloha ‘āina,

J. Kēhau Lucas

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:39:47 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live Sunset Beach, Oahu.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:48:49 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Reese Liggett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is William Reese Liggett and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
William Reese Liggett

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:06:25 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janet Matlock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a full-time resident of Kailua Kona in West Hawaii Island, I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

Since 2017, we have seen the positive effect of shutting down the aquarium collection industry on our reefs. It is time to enact this now longstanding status quo into law, making it clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, not now, not ever.

Mahalo for passing HB2101.

janet Matlock, Kailua Kona

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:13:52 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to ask that you support HB2101 which would prohibit the commercial collection of marine life for the aquarium trade and prevent the Divsion of Aquatic Resources from re-opening the aquarium collection industry.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:19:35 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Umiamaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: Strong Support for HB2101 – Relating to the Protection of Hawai‘i’s Marine Life

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

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2101, which would permanently end the commercial collection of Hawai‘i’s marine life for the aquarium trade while preserving non-commercial, traditional, cultural, scientific, and educational uses.

For decades, commercial extraction for the aquarium industry has removed large numbers of reef fish and invertebrates from our nearshore waters, concentrating private profit from a public trust resource and leaving long-term costs with our communities. Healthy reef ecosystems are essential to Hawai‘i’s food security, cultural practices, local fisheries, coastal protection, and visitor economy. When reef life is depleted for export, we lose not only biodiversity but also the foundation of sustainable livelihoods and cultural continuity in our islands.

HB2101 corrects this imbalance by closing loopholes that have prevented a durable end to commercial aquarium collection and by ensuring that the State can fully exercise its public trust responsibilities. At the same time, the bill carefully protects and affirms non-commercial collection for traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, subsistence uses, scientific research, and education. This approach appropriately prioritizes local communities, cultural practitioners, and researchers over commercial exploitation of a finite, fragile resource.

Protecting our marine life is also an act of climate resilience. As sea levels rise and storms intensify, intact coral reef ecosystems play a critical role in buffering shorelines, supporting fisheries, and maintaining the overall health of our nearshore environment. Limiting extractive commercial pressure is a prudent, forward-looking policy choice that will reduce future costs and help safeguard Hawai‘i’s residents, especially coastal and Native Hawaiian communities who are most reliant on these resources.

Public sentiment has consistently favored stronger protections for our reefs and reef fish, reflecting the understanding that these resources are part of our collective heritage and must be managed for the benefit of present and future generations. HB2101 is a measured,

reasonable, and overdue step toward aligning statutory language with these values and with the State's constitutional public trust duties.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2101 and support its passage into law. Mahalo for your consideration of this important measure and for your continued work to uphold the health of Hawai‘i's marine ecosystems and the rights of our communities.

Sincerely,

Deborah Umiamaka

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:21:59 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Asia Leong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,Asia Leong

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:25:38 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am requesting that you support HB2101.

Jane Arnold

1763 Iwi Way

Honolulu HI. 96816

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:33:45 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucienne de Naie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this measure. Thousands of ocean lovers were grateful when the 2017 court order shut down the aquarium collection industry. The industry has remained shut down for most of the last decade.

Now its time to make it clear, through ther passage of this bill, that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing. We need our reef fish to stay on our reefs, where they provide food for local families and help keep our nearshore ecosystems healthy. Our reef fish also are part of the web of life that support the coral reefs themselves and protect our shorelines from rising seas and coastal erosion.

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 in Hawai‘i’s waters.

I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for your consideration

Lucienne de Naie, Huelo, Maui

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:40:20 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Luke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We live in a giant aquarium called the Pacific Ocean. We set limits to confinement of chickens, dogs, cats...but have failed our fish. Too many die because the keeping of salt-water fish is unregulated; therefore, we should not support this trade.

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.

Please continue to support our waters and her inhabitants.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:43:08 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mina Elison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

As you know, when the 'aina and ocean thrive, so do the people. Mahalo for passing this legislation which protects the life of the land and our beloved people.

Protecting Targeted Communities

Commercial aquarium collection removes vital species from our reef ecosystems for commercial sale and captivity. Historically, commercial aquarium collectors have focused their efforts on specific geographic areas—with measurable negative effects on the density of fish and other species in these areas.

Species targeted for collection include culturally valuable fish such as lau‘ī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) which practitioners have observed declining in abundance over the years. Worse, about half of the targeted species die during collection and transport, and of those that survive, about 80% die within a year of captivity. In the wild, targeted species like lau‘ī pala and umaumalei can live for more than 25 years.

Ensuring Reef Health

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

Reducing Regulatory Costs

A clear prohibition would also simplify enforcement and reduce the cost that this industry poses to the state. To support its recent conclusion that commercial aquarium extraction in West

Hawai‘i is sustainable, the Division of Aquatic Resources(DAR) 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 requires intense policing that takes away from other vital duties of our Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE officers). This means that state resources that should be directed elsewhere would be used to manage and oversee the small number of industry participants.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mina Elison

Ke'ei, Hawai'i

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:48:53 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Cox	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Chelsea and I live in Ka'u.

I oppose the bill HB2101. There have been numerous scientific studies and hours of research proving there are sustainable ways to keep the fishery open without harming the reefs, fish numbers or ecosystems.

The only thing this bill will harm and bring hardship to is the livelihood of permitted fishers, their families, and the economy. Please follow the facts and the science that has been presented to you over and over.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:01:47 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose the banning of aquarium fishing. I've read the scientific studies proving no threat to the local fish population. I live on Big Island and know that the banning of aquarium fishing will cause economic hardship on families. I oppose bill HB2101

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:13:24 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Plowman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:28:21 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krista Jaspers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB2101**, a bill that would prohibit the commercial collection of marine life for the aquarium trade in Hawai‘i.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are irreplaceable treasures — culturally, ecologically, and economically. They sustain native traditions, provide habitat for thousands of marine species found nowhere else on earth, and support vibrant tourism and fishing industries that our communities depend on. Despite their importance, these reefs are under escalating stress from climate change, coral bleaching, pollution, invasive species, and overcollection.

The current aquarium fish collection in Hawai‘i has allowed for the removal of hundreds of thousands of reef fish and other marine species annually. While often impacting small pockets of reef habitat, this cumulative removal affects reef ecosystem balance, predator–prey dynamics, and long-term resilience — particularly in areas already stressed by warming waters. Scientific studies demonstrate that even localized extraction of certain species can alter reef health and compromise natural ecological processes.

Banning aquarium collection:

1. **Protects Reef Ecosystem Health:**
   Wild reef fish play essential roles in controlling algae, assisting coral health, and maintaining biodiversity. Protecting these species from removal helps strengthen reef resilience in the face of climate stressors.
2. **Supports Indigenous and Community Stewardship:**
   Native Hawaiian traditions recognize the interconnectedness of all life. Preserving ‘āina and kai resources aligns with mālama ‘āina values and supports long-term stewardship rather than short-term commercial exploitation.
3. **Aligns with Global Conservation Trends:**
   Around the world, communities and governments are shifting away from wild collection toward sustainable alternatives such as aquaculture and captive propagation. Hawai‘i can lead by example in protecting reef species and promoting responsible sources of ornamental fish that do not rely on wild harvest.
4. **Promotes Long-Term Economic Sustainability:**
   Healthy reefs support eco-tourism, dive tourism, and shore-based recreation — far more sustainably and broadly than a niche extractive industry. Reducing pressure on wild fish populations ensures these reefs remain vibrant attractions for future generations.

Some may argue that collection is minimal or well regulated, but **minimal impact now does not guarantee minimal impact in the future**, especially as climate pressures intensify. Proactive protection is far more effective and cost-efficient than attempting restoration after irreversible declines.

I urge you to **pass HB2101** and take a meaningful step toward protecting Hawai‘i’s marine ecosystems, honoring cultural connections to the ocean, and promoting sustainable futures for our communities and reefs.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:48:26 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice K T Shiira	Shimanchu Mamuyaa	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:59:14 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pua'ala Pascua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I write this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2101. 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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Pua‘ala Pascua

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:08:18 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherri Thal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB2101! We need to maintain and preserve our natural treasure: our Ocean, it's reefs, and its fish populations! It amazes me that Hawaii State spends millions of dollars propping up its tourist industry yet wants to allow commercial aquarium collection here. These two things cannot coexist!!! We must STOP the stealing of fish from our ecosystems!

Mahalo for your time and consideration of supporting HB2101

Aloha,

Sherri Thal, Kea'au 96749

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:12:21 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Small	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 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 all commercial aquarium collection within the state of Hawaii. We have been in a yo-yo situation concerning commercial aquarium collection for over a decade and it is time to put a stop to the exploitation of our precious coral reefs and aquatic life for good.

As a scuba diver and boater, I have been watching the quality of Hawaii's coral reefs deteriorate since I was young. The number of reef fish has been horribly depleted by, and for, the profit of a few local collectors and aquarium keepers on the mainland. There are entire dive sites and portions of the coast that riddled with algae that the herbivore fish would have eaten if they were still in the ocean in large numbers. Yellow Tang, once a prolific herbivore in Hawaii waters, are so depleted that I sometimes only see two or three on a dive when I used to swim among a beautiful sea of yellow.

With ongoing climate change causing stronger storms, algae blooms, and rising ocean temperatures, the health of the sea has never been more important. A healthy ocean equals a healthier planet. All species in the sea work symbiotically. Remove or deplete one key species and the entire ecosystem suffers or collapses.

The ocean is Hawaii's most precious resource. Surfing, canoeing, paddle boarding, diving, snorkeling, boating, and fishing are cornerstones of Hawaiian life and culture. The state has a public trust obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations. This is your opportunity to honor that obligation by supporting and passing SB2996.

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, as the county council, 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 SB2996.

Mahalo,

Pamela Small

Kawaihae, HI

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:18:17 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheldon Plentovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please don't let our dwindling biodiversity be captured and sold in the aquarium trade. These species should be left as part of our native ecosystems that sustain the planet not squandered so a few people can make money.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:23:27 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brenten Kanoa Yamane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land.

I strongly support HB2101 which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other areas targeted by the industry remain closed as they have been for nearly 10 years.

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. Prior to 2017, the aquarium collection industry extracted and exported millions of specimens of public trust marine life for commercial sale, the vast majority of which reportedly died 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 vast majority of Hawai‘i residents, and Native Hawaiian subsistence communities in particular, support a complete 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) recently proposed rules that would reopen West Hawai‘i waters to commercial aquarium collection, claiming that they are mandated to do so under state law. Yet as DAR has recognized, agency rulemaking regulates how an activity operates, not whether the activity should be allowed. Accordingly, the Legislature has the authority—and responsibility—to decide whether this activity should be permitted at all.

Healthy coral reefs support food security, cultural and subsistence practices, and shoreline protection; on-reef tourism activities generate approximately $1.2 billion annually in economic benefits. Therefore, because of the ever-increasing stressors placed on our precious marine environment, a statutory ban is critical to protect this major economic engine and cornerstone of resilience for present and future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass HB2101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brenten Kanoa Yamane

Kapolei / O'ahu

brentenyamane@gmail.com

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:29:49 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Herrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Janice Herrick. I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it 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 more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Janice Herrick

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:30:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Cates	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I respectfully oppose HB2101.

While protecting Hawai‘i’s marine resources is a shared priority, this bill would permanently ban a fishery that state agencies, fishery management, and Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) scientists have repeatedly concluded can be sustainable.

DAR has provided sworn testimony and published multiple scientific analyses that the commercial aquarium fishery is sustainably managed. In their most recent submittal to the Small Business Review Board in October 2025, scientists and fisheries management stated all data supports re-opening of the aquarium fishery (under their rules package proposal for a new aquarium regulatory framework), and according to their extensive assessments of the fishery, the risk of the aquarium fishery causing widespread population decline is ***low.***

Scientific studies support reopening the aquarium fishery under a regulated framework, and include long-term catch data, underwater visual surveys, and biomass comparisons inside and outside closed areas. In West Hawai‘i, key aquarium species remain stable or are increasing under managed conditions.

This fishery is already one of the most regulated in the State. It operates under HEPA compliance, mandatory reporting, gear restrictions, area closures, species limits, limited permit issuance, and catch quotas. It is the only fishery in Hawai‘i subjected to environmental review prior to permit issuance.

Importantly, DLNR already has broad statutory authority to manage fisheries adaptively. If future data showed concern, the agency could act quickly and surgically through immediate administrative actions pursuant to Act 49 (2021) including closures, moratoria, and permit or catch quota limits, or through supplemental environmental review under HEPA.

A permanent statutory ban overrides the regulatory tools the Legislature has already empowered DLNR to use.

Since 2017, the closure has caused significant hardship for small, family-run businesses—many of whom are Native Hawaiian fishers with generational ties to the fishery and deep knowledge of reef stewardship.

HB2101 is a policy choice—not a scientific necessity.

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

Mahalo for your time.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:32:58 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of **HB2101.**

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:33:09 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Christa SMith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my support of HB2101. Please continue to ban all commericial aquarium fishing,

The negative impact of commercial aquarium collection on our reef ecosystems has adversely affected our community for decades.

• Maui, Kauaʻi, and Hawaiʻi counties have all enacted resolutions limiting commercial aquarium collection or calling for an outright ban.

• Communities in areas where the industry targets its collections have also called for a ban of the practice, which has highly localized impacts and impairs subsistence uses of reef resources in the targeted areas, including Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.

• In 2017, the Hawaiʻi Supreme Court halted collection until the industry completed an environmental review as required by the Hawaiʻi Environmental Policy Act (HEPA).

• After nearly a decade without commercial collection, the state is now proposing rules to reopen West Hawaiʻi to the seven businesses who participated in the HEPA process.

• Under the quota system established by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to support its finding that the industry is "sustainable," collection would essentially be closed to newcomers and would require intensive Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) resources to enforce and police.

• There are Native Hawaiian communities across ka pae ʻāina waiting for DAR's support to co-manage their marine resources and address other urgent threats.

• Banning aquarium collection would not only protect critical natural resources and Native Hawaiian communities but also enable DAR to focus its attention where it is critically needed.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:34:46 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,
I am a lifelong snorkeler, a scuba diver and lover of the ocean. What makes Hawaii special is our beautiful oceanlife. I ask that you please support HB2101 to prohibit the capture and sales of Hawaii's aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes. Not only does it rob our special environment, it endangers and kills many fish needlessly in the process of trying to capture and sell them. There is NO REASON our ocean species should die or become trapped in an aquarium for a small group of people to see.
Please keep Hawaii the special place it is by protecting our environment and our fish for all to see in the ocean where they belong.
Mahalo,

Jennifer Wood
Kalaheo, HI
808-221-7229

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:54:27 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass and help protect our reef fish

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:55:34 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Guy Kudo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Committee Members,
I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

Please PASS HB2102!!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:15:57 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

Please PASS HB2101.

Aloha nui ʻoukou,

My name is Kainalu Steward, and I am a kupa of Lahaina, Maui, testifying in strong support of HB2101, which would establish a statewide ban on the collection of reef resources for commercial aquarium sale. The ʻākoʻakoʻa, or coral reefs, are key ecosystems that are the foundational structure for all living organisms in the ocean. In a Hawaiian worldview, the coral polyp is the firstborn ancestor and our eldest sibling from whom life descends. It is our responsibility as descendants to ensure the protection of reef ecosystems, which includes the targeted fish species such as lauʻī pala (Yellow Tang) and umaumalei (Clown Tang) from any extractive commercial activity. Beyond its cultural significance, these fish species are active grazers that feed on limu or microalgae that grow on the reef, maintaining its ecological health and function so that coral doesn't become overgrown by limu. This grazing is important so that future generations of coral larvae may settle, rejuvenate, and also rehabilitate after disturbances such as storms or bleaching events. It's this reciprocal relationship among fish, coral, and limu that the commercial aquarium trade disregards and disrespects when it removes vital species from our reef ecosystems. We have to think critically about the connection between each ecological system and all living organisms, and the consequences of our actions. Moreover, reefs support our coastal communities, whether it be for food security, cultural and subsistence practices, coastal protection, or economic benefits.

As a Kānaka ʻŌiwi, coastal geoscientist, and beneficiary of the ocean, I humbly urge the committees to act pono (morally righteous) and **pass HB2101.** Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to share my manaʻo.

Me ka haʻahaʻa,
Kainalu

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:36:32 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brittany Penaroza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members, my name is Brittany Penaroza, and I strongly support HB2101. This bill would permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection and keep Hawai‘i’s reef wildlife in the ocean—where it belongs—rather than treating public trust marine life as products for ornamental profit.

Commercial aquarium collection disproportionately targets reef species that play key roles in healthy nearshore ecosystems, including herbivores that support reef balance. Hawai‘i’s aquarium collection industry has largely been shut down since 2017, and HB2101 would make that protective status quo clear in law—so DLNR/DAR can focus limited capacity on urgent marine resource management needs instead of rebuilding an industry that removes reef life for purely decorative purposes.

Please PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for your time and for protecting our ocean resources for current and future generations.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:37:14 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina ZaZueta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kristina ZaZueta and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kristina ZaZueta

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:48:16 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Aloha , I'm a Hawaii Island resident. My name is Jennifer Mitchell and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

The aquarium collection industry has been shut down since 2017-and has remained shut down for almost the last decade, Our fishes are slowly coming back. Reef fish are beautiful and a lot of island people like to eat it too. You should only catch what you're going to eat. Life is hard here in Hawaii with increasing prices in everything. Fish should be swimming in the ocean for you to catch and eat, not swimming in an aquarium waiting for their next meal. Every living being has a part in the circle of life. Permanently ban commercial aquarium collection..

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jennifer Mitchell

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:48:45 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Peckham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Anthony Peckham. I live in Waimea. I surf, paddle, snorkel, swim in the West Hawaii ocean daily. Our reef fish population is already in peril. Exploiting this fragile public treasure for private gain is unacceptable. Please support HB2101. Mahalo.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:59:14 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle Rochon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Gabrielle Rochon and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

Many studies have shown the importance of reef fish in ecosystems. 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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an

already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Gabrielle Rochon

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:18:37 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
malcolm mackey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Malcolm Mackey, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Malcolm Mackey

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:24:51 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri Zacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Keri Zacher and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to

testify.
Sincerely, Keri Zacher

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:33:13 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:39:43 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arika Hultquist	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Arika Hultquist, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Arika Hultquist

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:40:56 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade. Please PASS this measure.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:26:19 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerri Fischer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Waters should not be reopened, and wild life should be protected.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:36:27 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin fischer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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 resource for residents and visitors alike. Leave nature alone!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:05:56 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Alcain	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB2101 – Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection

Submitted by: Malia Alohalani Alcain-Galiza

Position: Support

“E mālama i ke kai, a e mālama ke kai iā ‘oe.”

Care for the ocean, and the ocean will care for you.

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Malia Alohalani Alcain-Galiza, and I submit this testimony in strong support of HB2101.

Hawai‘i’s nearshore reefs are not ornamental resources. They are legally protected public trust assets. Under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution, the State has an affirmative duty to conserve and protect Hawai‘i’s natural resources, including marine life, for the benefit of present and future generations. The commercial removal of reef fish for aquarium purposes conflicts with that constitutional mandate when such removal diminishes ecosystem resilience and long-term public benefit.

Herbivorous reef fish species targeted by the aquarium trade, including the yellow tang (Zebrasoma flavescens), serve critical ecological functions by controlling macroalgae growth. Scientific research demonstrates that adequate herbivore biomass is directly linked to coral reef resilience and recovery following disturbance. (NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center; Williams et al., 2016, Nature Communications). Reduced herbivore populations increase the risk of algal phase shifts, which suppress coral recruitment and compromise reef structure.

Coral reefs support approximately 25% of marine species at some stage of their life cycle while covering less than 1% of the ocean floor. (NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program). In Hawai‘i, roughly 25% of nearshore reef fish species are endemic, meaning they exist nowhere else on Earth. (Randall, 2007; NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office). Local depletion is permanent loss.

Economic valuation further supports prohibition. NOAA estimates that Hawai‘i’s coral reefs generate more than $800 million annually through fisheries, tourism, shoreline protection, and recreational use. (NOAA Economics of Coral Reefs; DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources). Reef systems provide storm surge buffering, coastal erosion mitigation, and food security benefits that far exceed the private commercial value of aquarium export.

Prior DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources reports document that hundreds of thousands of reef fish were collected annually from West Hawai‘i before permitting was halted in 2017 following the Hawai‘i Supreme Court’s ruling requiring environmental review under HRS Chapter 343. The Court affirmed that commercial aquarium collection constitutes an action requiring environmental assessment due to its potential impact on public trust resources.

The precautionary principle is well established in environmental governance: when an activity poses risk to ecosystem integrity, the absence of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing protective measures. Coral reefs in Hawai‘i already face cumulative stressors including marine heatwaves, coral bleaching events documented by NOAA Coral Reef Watch, land-based pollution, and ocean acidification (IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, 2022). Removing functionally important herbivores compounds vulnerability.

Commercial aquarium collection is not a subsistence fishery. It is not essential to food security. It is a discretionary extractive industry operating on finite and ecologically interdependent reef systems.

“He aliʻi ka ʻāina; he kauwā ke kanaka.”

The land is chief; we are its servants.

The State’s fiduciary duty under the public trust doctrine requires prioritizing long-term ecological stability over short-term commercial gain. HB2101 advances ecosystem-based management, aligns with constitutional conservation obligations, and protects resources that belong to all people of Hawaiʻi.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge passage of HB2101.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:13:33 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Pettigrew	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is unthinkable that Hawaii is going backward and allowing theft of our fish. There is no justification for supporting this commercial market. What is the reasoning behind this attempt?? Is a payoff to certain legislators? Who introduced this bill and why? Do not let the big money take over!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:15:43 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB2101.

This bill prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection. This bill would help protect our reefs from exploitation for future generations.

Please pass HB2101.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

voter and resident

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:16:00 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Takayama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A good and important bill for marine life.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:20:47 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Lorraine Waianuhea and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Lorraine Waianuhea

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:34:34 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Princeton Yamaguchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Princeton Yamaguchi and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Princeton Yamaguchi

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:19:37 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaylene Sheldon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection, Committee On Water And Land,

My name is Kauwila Sheldon and I support HB 2101. This bill aims to prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection. This bill is part of an ongoing effort to protect Hawaii's marine ecosystem and coral reefs from the impacts of the aquarium trade. Commercial aquarium collection has significant environmental and cultural impacts, including reducing species diversity, abundance, and biomass, and compromising subsistence and recreational fishing practices. The Division of Aquatic Resources has estimated that managing the aquarium pet trade costs taxpayers upwards of $500,000 annually, while generating less than $25,000 in revenue. Therefore as a Kū Kia'i Moananuiākea or Ocean Guardian I kāko'o, support HB 2101.

Me kealoha pumehana,

Kauwila Sheldon

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:34:15 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Bambara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to you today to let you know that I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

As you know, 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.

Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

As more erudite minds than mine have pointed out to you, 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 resource for residents and visitors alike.

As has been demonstrated and explained, 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. 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, myself included, as well as the Board of Land and Natural Resources itself has voiced support for the permanent banof commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i’s waters.

Despite heavy opposition, 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 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.

That all stated, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Susan Bambara
Kurtistown

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:49:28 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

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

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony

I am a coral reef scientist, and conservation scientist, and work mostly in the West Pacific with indigenous communities who have agency and sovereignty over their reefs. So I work in the space of combining Western science with indigenous knowledge to manage reef ecosystems. My Testimony (and many others) highlights concerns about the Aquarium take impact on public natural resources, the lack of traditional use of the fish collected (and therefore the overall benefit to Hawai‘i and Hawaiians more broadly), and importantly the lack of evidence for the species to thrive given current and projected scenarios for reef degradation due to multiple stressors. It is well documented that Hawai‘i’s reefs, and the majority of others in the world, are under extreme stress. This is a lined system, and more than ever it needs us to manage it as a whole system (including its important fish) if it is to adapt, survive and thrive. Hawai‘i’s reefs are of course among its most important and treasured natural systems, by native peoples, nonnative residents and visitors alike. In addition, I would like to emphasize the need for a balance between cultural values and scientific evidence, especially in the context of climate change and its effects on reefs.

Ecological roles of specific fish, like the yellow Tang, are crucial for maintaining reef health. Herbivorous are important to reefs, but is often not discussed is that different species have different roles, and all are needed to maintain reef health. The yellow tang, *Zebrasoma flavescens*, is a turf and detritus grazer – preferring the fast growing, less noxious algae (the algae that produce fewer chemicals to deter grazers. This means they eat the faster growing algae and keep it from covering reefs, which allows for more coral settlement and settlement of Crustose Coralline Algae – both critical for reef health and recovery. This is a very different role than say the Naso (unicorn fish) which graze on larger more mature algae. So both these fish, and many other herbivores play distinct roles on the reef (along with the Kole which eat the detritus and bacteria that collects on the reef.

I would also lie to address the concept of population doubling time. This is a theoretical parameter of a population’s resilience. It relies on good data about the life history of the fish. We have little data for the Yellow tang. We know it is long lived (usually associated with lower

resilience), and that is mass spawns (associated with higher resilience) but also reproduces in pairs (often associated with lower resilience). So it exhibits traits for both.

The lack of data, coupled with DARs lack of current and projected monitoring, leave us data deficient for this species, which is NOT a good way to manage a critical fish, at a critical time for reef degradation.

Finally, the Aquarium fishery appears to ignore indigenous needs, rights, and even sovereignty. It is a fishery that is not for food, the fish are exported (and a very high mortality in that process), and a large part of the economic gain is concentrated. At a time of rapid natural stressors and the very real threat of loss of a key natural asset, it seems an irresponsible extraction to support.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:53:36 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelei Tancayo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Michelei Tancayo and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS**HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Michelei Tancayo

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:04:07 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
WILLIAM MIDDLETON	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i reef fish is a precious resource and it is unacceptable to exploit it for commercial export. Our reefs and inhabitants are critical for the entire health of our ocean and islands and a major source of local food subsistence.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:07:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan K Baldado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I SUPPORT HB 2101.

Mahalo nui.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:45:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

NO AQUARIUM COLLECTION!!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:47:45 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George Michael	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Marine life eco tourism brings in more money than aquariums. We should be passing legislation that improves marine life and not just protects it.

LATE

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:57:39 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Mai Demaline	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop commercial aquarium collection. It's our Kuleana to preserve and protect the ocean and it's habitat. These fish are not invasive that are being collected and used for profit but rather an imperative part of our ecosystem. As far as making money for that state goes, think about what brings tourism here, the ocean / ecotourism. A depleted reef system not only effects economy but also the environment, oxygen production and an optimal food chain for sustainable fishing. Think longterm not greedily or shortsightedly.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:00:08 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Buffy Nakachi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the ban on aquarium fish collection statewide. The reefs in Hawai'i are already stressed with climate impacts, pollution and run-off. We need to limit the impacts of humans on these fragile reefs. I don't want our reefs, waters and fish to just be sustainable; I want them to thrive and flourish. Please ban aquarium fish collection. Thank you.

Buffy Nakachi

Kailua-Kona, HI

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:28:29 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB2101 and the prohibition of commercial collection of marine life for the aquarium trade. Please protect our precious reefs and the organisms that call them home. Mahalo!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:49:49 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Keala Fung and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Keala Fung, Fisherwoman and gatherer of coastal resources

Honolulu Hawaii

LATE

February 17, 2026

Marie Aguilar

P.O. Box 1874

Kailua Kona, Hawai`i 96745

Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair

Rep. Amy A Perruso, Vice Chair

Committee on Water & Land

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

RE: **SUPPORT FOR HB 2101 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection**

Prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

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

I am writing in strong support of HB 2101

I am a long-time resident of Kailua Kona who has been involved in numerous testimonies to the State government to deny permits for the collection of aquatic life on the shores of Hawai`i Island. I have supported the scientific data collected during the Governor Ige administration, which supports banning the collection of aquatic life from sanctuary shores off the west coast of Hawai`i Island.

Third-world countries prohibit the harvesting of their aquatic life and protect their natural resources for future generations. The State of Hawai`i must stand proud when this legislative HB2101 is passed. It will end lobbying efforts to influence the outcome, allowing tropical fish to be sold at low cost and enabling businesses to profit. Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony and for your service to our communities. Please pass HB 2102

Aloha,

Marie Aguilar, Community volunteer advancing Hawai`i tourism.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:47:09 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Oba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kyle Oba and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Kyle Oba

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:48:36 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breanne Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Breanne Fong and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Breanne Fong

LATE

February 17, 2026

Philip Mosher

P.O. Box 1874

Kailua Kona, Hawai`i 96745

Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair

Rep. Amy A Perruso, Vice Chair

Committee on Water & Land

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

RE: **SUPPORT FOR HB 2101 Relating to Commercial Aquarium Collection**

Prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

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

I am writing in strong support of HB 2101. The west coast of Hawai`i Island impressed me when I first snorkeled at a local beach park in Kona. The shore was emersed with golden Yellow Tang, and thus Kona was the Gold Coast of Hawai`i. Today, it's not thriving as it was in 1988, but we are seeing more fish since no permits have been issued. We must prioritize our natural resources. Protecting marine life supports the sustainability of our reefs.

I support your efforts to introduce Bill 2101 to ban the collection of aquatic life. The lau`ipala and kole Yellow Tang play a critical ecological role in maintaining reef balance.

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony and for your service to our communities. Please pass HB 2101.

Aloha

Philip Mosher (long-time resident)

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 3:23:15 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taecia Kukui Akana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

‘O wau nō ‘o Kukui a he kupa ‘ai au no Waimānalo. I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Na‘u mau,

T. Kukui Akana

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 5:37:50 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Davidson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jenny Davidson, I live in Kailua, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

I urge your support of HB2101 to continue to protect Hawaii's coral reefs from the ornamental aquarium trade. Reef fish - 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 resource for residents and visitors alike. HB2101 would help protect these beautiful and ecologically important fishes for all of us.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha e Chairs Lowen and Hashem, Vice Chairs Perruso and Morikawa, and Members of the House Committees on Energy and Environmental Protection and Water and Land,

My name is Dr. Kanoe Morishige. I am a Native Hawaiian scientist and Assistant Professor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where my work focuses on fisheries governance and community-based management. I am testifying today in my personal capacity. I strongly support HB2101, which would establish a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection and ensure that West Hawai‘i and other heavily targeted areas remain closed as they have been for nearly a decade.

Commercial aquarium collection extracts living reef species that are foundational to the health, resilience, and cultural identity of Hawai‘i’s nearshore ecosystems. Ecologically and culturally important fish—such as lau‘īpala and umaumalei—are removed from our reefs for export and private captivity. These species are not ornamental commodities; they are integral to reef biodiversity, food webs, and our relationships to place as was well understood by our kūpuna to cultivate ‘Āina Momona, healthy and thriving communities of people and place. While the fish are shipped out of Hawai‘i, the ecological risks and long-term consequences remain with our communities and with the future generations who will inherit the outcomes of today’s decisions.

The West Hawai‘i Aquarium Project and NOAA surveys provide useful long-term data, and I acknowledge that work. However, these programs were not designed to serve as comprehensive stock assessments capable of determining long-term sustainable extraction levels across habitats, depth zones, and management areas. Monitoring has focused largely on habitats where these species are most abundant, and recruitment patterns are highly variable across space and time. This variability—combined with environmental stressors such as marine heatwaves and coral bleaching—underscores how dynamic reef population processes truly are.

Importantly, archipelago-wide surveys show that densities of these eight species are highest in West Hawai‘i. That raises a precautionary question: could these populations function as source populations seeding other islands? Our coastal ecosystems are interconnected. Reef habitats act as corridors for larval dispersal and movement between inshore and offshore environments. High abundance in one region may reflect ecological importance within a broader network—not surplus for removal.

We do not yet have sufficient data to understand the long-term ecosystem effects of sustained herbivore extraction, nor do we fully understand connectivity and replenishment dynamics across islands. Under the precautionary principle, this uncertainty should counsel restraint. At the same time, the proposed quota system would require a substantial portion of DLNR’s limited programmatic capacity to be directed toward monitoring, management, and DOCARE enforcement for a small number of commercial operators. Those resources would be better invested in supporting Native Hawaiian and local communities actively co-managing their ocean resources for long-term ecosystem health and resilience.

Under Hawai‘i’s public trust doctrine, our ocean resources are held in trust for present and future generations—not for private export. Healthy reefs support our local economy, food security, and cultural practice. HB2101 affirms that Hawai‘i’s reefs are living systems essential to our collective future. I respectfully urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo.

Kanoe Morishige. Ph.D.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 7:37:04 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaua Kama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is E. Kaualilinoe Kama and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to PASS HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

E. Kaualilinoe Kama

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 7:45:26 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
valerie delahaye-ippolito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT TO PERMANENTLY BAN COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION.

We should all support this as we have seen in our lifetime the decline of the fish population. I remeber the feeling of snorkling surrounded by sea life that is aleready no longer here. Please give a chance to our future genration to enjoy this natural, magical Hawai'ian treasure to be preserved.

Permanetly ban the capture nad sell of aquatic life regardless of the method of collection.

best regards,

Valerie

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 7:54:00 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2101.

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:00:06 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support the ban on commercial aquarium gathering in our oceans.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:05:05 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Glazner	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

As a marine biology Ph.D. candidate at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, I strongly support HB2101, which would prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes.

There is robust scientific evidence demonstrating that reef fish are essential to coral reef ecosystem function and resilience, particularly in the face of accelerating climate change. Reef fish play a critical role in coral reef nutrient cycling, and herbivorous reef fish are especially important for suppressing macroalgal growth. By keeping macroalgae cover low, herbivorous fish directly promote coral survival, growth, and recovery. High reef fish density (the number of fish on the reef) and biomass (the size of fish on the reef) are therefore fundamental indicators of coral reef health in Hawai‘i.

The aquarium fishery undermines the stability and resilience of Hawai‘i’s coral reefs by selectively removing these ecologically vital reef fish. While the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has stated that permitted aquarium collection is sustainable, I have serious concerns that there is insufficient data to support this claim.

Historically, West Hawai‘i benefitted from a long-term, robust reef fish monitoring program. Prior to 2022, this program conducted between three and six surveys per year, allowing researchers to capture natural seasonal and interannual variability in fish populations and providing sufficient statistical power to detect meaningful population trends. However, in 2022, DAR reduced monitoring effort to a single survey per year. With only one sampling timepoint annually, statistical power is effectively eliminated—meaning the data cannot reliably detect increases or declines in reef fish populations. As a result, the last three years of monitoring data are scientifically insufficient for assessing population status or informing management decisions. Under these conditions, claims of sustainability cannot be made with confidence.

Additionally, DAR’s own data show that although yellow tang populations initially increased in 2018 following the closure of aquarium collection, these populations have since declined and have failed to recover in the years following the closure. This indicates that yellow tang are experiencing additional stressors and are unable to rebuild population size even in the absence of harvest pressure. This finding underscores the vulnerability of reef fish populations and the inadequacy of current management approaches. Furthermore, with the reduced monitoring efforts the State will not be able to accurately track fish populations if aquarium collection re-opens. This is concerning because declining fish populations may go undetected and delayed management interventions could put our already threatened reefs at greater risk.

Given the ecological importance of reef fish, the lack of scientifically defensible monitoring data, and documented failures of population recovery, a permanent ban on the commercial collection of aquatic life for the aquarium trade is necessary. HB2101 is a critical step to protect Hawai‘i’s native species, preserve coral reef ecosystem function, and ensure the long-term health and resilience of our reefs for future generations.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:15:03 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelcy Durbin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairperson, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 2101, which prohibits the capture and sale of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes, regardless of the method of collection.

The marine ecosystems of our state are invaluable, not only for their ecological contributions but also for their cultural and economic significance. The practice of collecting aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes poses serious risks to the health and sustainability of these ecosystems. Removing fish and other marine organisms disrupts natural balances, threatens vulnerable species, and undermines ongoing conservation efforts.

By enacting HB2101, we take an important step towards preserving our marine habitats for future generations. This bill ensures that aquatic life remains in its natural environment, where it plays a vital role in maintaining biodiversity and supporting the wellbeing of local communities. I urge you to pass HB2101 and protect our precious marine resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelcy Durbin

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:29:18 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika cruz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2101

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:33:06 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mikhail Rudenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a scuba instructor and boat captain who has worked in Hawaiian waters for 20 years and in West Hawai‘i for nearly a decade, I strongly support HB2101, which would prohibit the capture and sale of aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade.

Hawai‘i’s reef fish are far more valuable alive on the reef than they are once removed. Visitors come here to experience healthy coral reefs with abundant fish. A single reef fish provides ongoing economic value over its lifetime, being seen by thousands of snorkelers and divers year after year. Once that fish is taken for the aquarium trade, its value is realized only once. The snorkeling and scuba industry is a cornerstone of Hawai‘i’s tourism economy and one of the primary reasons people visit our state. Any decline in reef quality disproportionately harms non-extractive users, our visitors and local businesses, not aquarium collectors.

I am also deeply concerned about the disconnect between the Aloha I Ke Kai fund and the State’s actions toward reopening aquarium collection. We ask every visitor who participates in an ocean tour to contribute to conservation, yet we simultaneously allow extraction from the very reefs those funds are meant to protect. This undermines our credibility with visitors and sends a conflicting message about Hawai‘i’s commitment to reef stewardship. It is fundamentally unfair that non-extractive businesses and visitors are expected to fund conservation efforts, while extractive use continues to rely on public subsidy.

That concern extends to taxpayers. The management and enforcement costs associated with aquarium collection, estimated between $300,000 and $500,000, will be borne by the public, not collectors. These funds could be far better spent on projects that benefit a much broader segment of our community, such as critical infrastructure upgrades at Kawaihae Harbor, which would support commercial operators, local fishers, and private boat owners alike.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the biological impacts of reopening the aquarium trade. Reef fish are essential to coral reef health, and Hawai‘i’s reefs are already under extreme pressure from climate change, pollution, and coastal development. Allowing additional extraction, benefiting very few, at the expense of reef resilience is not prudent management. Our reefs provide storm protection, food resources, cultural value, and economic stability to coastal communities. We should be doing everything possible to protect them, not adding new stressors.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB2101 and prioritize the long-term health of Hawai‘i’s reefs, economy, and communities.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:38:04 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezekiel Alapaki Bernabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The entire ocean is trashed, waters are warming up, kanaka are doing their best trying to revitalize our coral and limu species. Do more help aiding our ocean instea of trying to fill a fish tank. Aquariums are the same as zoos, haboring creatures to perform and pace from wall to wall. Our i'a are not your show girls. they should be protected out in the ocean where they belong!

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:44:17 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha chairs, vice chairs, and members of the committees,

I support HB2101 and the protection of our marine species.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:09:36 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kauiki Lind	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to testify please on Zoom. I know its late. ALoha from Hana, Maui

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:11:42 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Lory Ono, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 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.

Using pretty fish in pretty aquariums as pets or for decorations is absolutely unnecessary. Why are we continuing this practice of taking precious animals out of their homes and habitats and basically ruining their lives for no legitimate, important purpose? The oceans are already overfished as it is, without removing even more fish for no good reason. This practice should be permanently banned.

I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Lory Ono

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:22:55 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Mau	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition to Item F-2
Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules Updating and Consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations (HAR Chapter 13-77.1)
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai‘i

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board,

I submit this testimony in opposition to the proposed rulemaking under HAR Chapter 13-77.1, which would reauthorize and formalize commercial aquarium collection in West Hawai‘i.

Coral reef health along the west coast of Hawai‘i Island has been in documented decline over the past decade due to cumulative stressors including marine heatwaves, bleaching events, land-based sources of pollution, and localized fishing pressure. Reef recovery depends fundamentally on successful coral recruitment — the settlement and survival of coral larvae onto suitable benthic substrate. Recruitment is highly sensitive to post-settlement competition. Coral larvae require clean, stable surfaces free of excessive detritus, sedimentation, and competing benthic algae such as turf limu.

Herbivorous reef fishes are a keystone functional guild in this context. Species such as lau‘īpala (yellow tang), kole, and other surgeonfishes play a critical ecological role in grazing turf algae and maintaining open substrate necessary for coral settlement. Without sufficient grazing pressure, turf algae proliferate, trapping sediments and inhibiting coral recruitment. This dynamic is well established in coral reef ecology and is directly observable in both controlled and field settings.

We have direct experience with these processes through coral husbandry and nursery work at the Anuenue Fisheries Research Center. In aquarium systems and coral propagation facilities, the presence of herbivorous fishes is essential to maintaining algae control and preventing competitive overgrowth. These observations mirror what is observed in situ on Hawaiian reefs: when herbivore biomass declines, algal dominance increases, and coral recruitment and survivorship decline.

The proposed whitelist under the West Hawai‘i geographical endorsement includes multiple herbivorous species that contribute directly to reef resilience. While the Division’s data brief

concludes that population-level risk to the eight listed species may be “low,” the analysis focuses primarily on stock abundance and harvest percentages. It does not adequately address ecosystem function thresholds, localized depletion effects, or the nonlinear dynamics of reef phase shifts. Ecological resilience is not solely a function of species-level abundance but of maintaining sufficient functional grazing pressure across reef habitats.

Reef management in Hawai‘i prioritizes ecosystem health, environmental protection, subsistence fishing, and cultural practices. Within that framework, extractive practices for the aquarium trade do not provide food security, cultural perpetuation, or subsistence value. By definition, removal of live reef fish for export into private ornamental markets does not align with the core objectives of sustainable fisheries management as applied in Hawai‘i.

A sustainable fishery, in the context of Hawai‘i’s nearshore resources, should support community food systems, intergenerational access, and ecosystem integrity. The commercial aquarium trade is extractive without contributing to those objectives. Even if biologically “low risk” under certain modeling assumptions, it represents an avoidable pressure on already stressed reef systems.

Given the documented decline of coral cover in West Hawai‘i, the increasing frequency of thermal stress events, and the central role of herbivores in reef recovery, precautionary management is warranted. The burden should not be to demonstrate catastrophic collapse before action is taken. Rather, management should err on the side of protecting ecosystem function and resilience.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board not to advance rulemaking that reestablishes commercial aquarium collection in West Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Anthony Mau PhD

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:03:06 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth McDermott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Public opinion is overwhelmingly clear on this one; Hawaii's people do not want our precious, colorful reef fish scooped up by the tens of thousands to be shipped off to fill some dude's restaurant aquarium in Shanghai. Catching fish to feed your family- No problem. For decoration- I don't think so. The vast majority of these fish die en route. Huge losses. And in the meantime our reef ecosytem deteriorates. Toursists arriving here thrilled to get in the ocean and see our reefs full of vibrant fish will find skittish schools hiding away as soon as they enter. Fish KNOW when they are being targeted. They abandon former safe havens. Our oceans and coral reefs are already under unimaginable stress from climate change, offshore pollution and overtourism. DAR has done a poor job enforcing what few protections we had. We need this ban, finally. Please support this bill

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:07:56 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Bo Breda and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Bo Breda

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:09:56 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Mcveigh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I sierra Mcveigh support HB2101 in order to protect our marine life.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:14:01 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Peter Wilson and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter Wilson

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:15:34 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Gillmar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please protect our reef ecosystems by supporting this bill to prohibit the commerical collection of marine life.

Aside from the ecological consequences of skewing the reef ecosystems, the Division of Aquatic Resources has limited time and resources to put toward a tremendous amount of responsibility in managing the state's resources - please don't stretch them thin on a project that is not in the best long-term interest of Hawaii's environment.

LATE

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:32:54 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandy-Alia Serikaku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

‘Auhea ‘oukou e ka fake state of Hawaii,

Kāko‘o au i kēia pila HB2101, no ka mea these fricken people are trafficking our i‘a, stealing them not for food but for greed, for money and ruining our ecosystem. How the hell are we the extinction capital of the world and everyone come here to steal everything? This is a step in protecting us, our ‘ohana i‘a and our kai.

Mahalo.

na Brandy-Alia Serikaku

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:45:09 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Shay Chan Hodges

LATE

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 11:38:59 AM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadia Borg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Nadia Borg, **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101. For the good of our ocean, islands and communities collection of reef fish for the aquarium trade should be fully banned. It is greed-driven and harmful to the ecosystem of these islands.

HB-2101
Submitted on: 2/18/2026 1:21:25 PM
Testimony for EEP on 2/18/2026 8:45:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Harter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Nancy Harter and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2101.

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. Please enact this now longstanding status quo into law, and make clear that Hawai‘i’s waters should not be reopened for the ornamental aquarium trade, as the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is currently proposing.

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 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. 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 in 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 Hawai‘i. DAR’s justification for this costly, time-consuming endeavor is that state law somehow mandates it to do so. It is now incumbent on the legislature to make clear that DAR should not and must not expend more of its limited resources attempting to re-start an already defunct industry, and instead focus on addressing our myriad and much more pressing marine resource management needs.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Committees to **PASS** HB2101. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely, Nancy Harter, Lahaina, HI