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

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Wednesday, February 18, 2026
1:01 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2973
RELATING TO FISHING

Senate Bill 2973 proposes to prohibit in, on, or near State waters the use of any device or rig that makes use of buoyant jugs, bottles, or other buoyant flotation devices to suspend a fishing line, hook, and weight. Possession of any of these devices in, on, or near State waters or aboard any fishing vessel or boat would constitute prima facie evidence of a violation. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

The Department recognizes the growing concern regarding the use of so-called "jug rig" variants and their threats to marine life and ocean users. Because there remain some public misconceptions about what this type of fishing entails, the Department notes that it is specifically the use of such fishing gears while paddling out, swimming out, or (now illegally) droning out fishing lines from shore that is especially problematic in nearshore waters and likely the cause of death for the Hawaiian monk seal Moana in September 2025. By itself, the use of a buoyant device, typically an empty jug, to keep a baited hook above the ocean floor presents certain unwanted risks. However, it is the great distances from shore that these rigs are deployed, and the excessively heavy pound test braided lines used that perhaps present the greatest risks of environmental harm and ocean user conflict. In short, while removing the buoyant device element from the rig may deter use and alleviate some risks, it would not address all of them.

The Department recommends clearly defining not only the targeted gear, but also the specific method in which it is used. There are multiple legal gears and methods that employ the use

of “flotation devices with the primary purpose of suspending a fishing line, hook, and weight” that are different from the jug fishing rigs that this measure seeks to address. Narrowing the definition would remove unintended impacts on gears and methods with lower risk or that may not be the object of this bill’s focus, such as casting with a floater or bobber.

Accordingly, the Department recommends that the bill be amended to read as follows (revised language highlighted):

"§188- Jug line fishing; prohibited. (a) [It] Except as provided in subsection (b), it is unlawful to [possess or use on, in, or near] deploy from shore or lands of the state into state marine waters any fishing device or rig that makes use of buoyant jugs, bottles, or other flotation devices with the primary purpose of suspending a fishing line, hook, and weight.

(b) The possession or use of any of these devices on, in, or near the water where aquatic life can be taken[, or aboard any fishing vessel or boat] is prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

(c) This section shall not apply to the use of store-bought or home-made fishing floats or bobbers that are cast with rod and reel or used while hand-pole fishing."

Lastly, given the challenges associated with clearly defining jug fishing gear and practices in statute, the Department recommends that this bill include a sunset provision once administrative rules are adopted. This approach would provide flexibility to refine the regulatory framework and address any unintended impacts to other lawful fishing methods.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:47:58 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Nakachi	Testifying for Moana Ohana	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Mai kakou, My Name is Mike Nakachi of Moana Ohana, On Moku O keawe,

I am in strong suport of SB2973. A lawia'a pono fishermen is always responsible for his hook. Is 300000 hooks of long line fishing, Pono? Is the Uncle who fishes in Kekehawai'ole who drops his hooks down with maybe a maximun of 4 hooks and has Aloha for his practice and his i'a and eventually his catch to feed others of aina is very pono and Maika'i.

Jug line fishing is lazy, NOT pono and should not be done because it is simply a indisriminate hook floating that cannot be managed if a monk seal, mano, hahalua, Hihimanu or something other then what that fihermen was trying for, Ultimately the indiscriminate kill is wrapped up, drowns and is left to die and waste away with line, platic jugs or buoys and is simply not a good fishing practice.

Please move SB2973 on, we have witnessed far too much death because of this in our waters. Mahalo nui, Mike

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:49:08 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayleigh Grant	Testifying for Kaimana Ocean safari	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! As a Hawai‘i-based ocean tourism business owner (KaimanaOceanSafari.com), the health of our marine ecosystem is directly tied to my livelihood and our community. I have personally encountered jug lines in our waters and have cut them off endangered oceanic whitetip sharks to prevent further harm. I also know others who have found sharks already dead due to entanglement and hooking from this gear. Jug line fishing poses a serious and preventable threat to Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and sharks, while lost gear continues to litter and damage our reefs. I strongly support this bill to prohibit jug line fishing and protect Hawai‘i’s waters for future generations, in alignment with the conservation priorities outlined by [NOAA](#).

-Kayleigh Grant

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:42:42 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inga Gibson	Testifying for For the Fishes	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 18, 2026

Re: SUPPORT SB2973 - RELATING TO FISHING

Dear Chair Lee and Committee Members,

For the Fishes appreciates the opportunity to provide strong support for SB2973, to prohibit the cruel and indiscriminate practice of tying empty plastic jugs (or similar) to fishing line.

This unethical and unsportsmanlike fishing practice captures sharks, turtles, monk seals and other protected species, leading to prolonged suffering, injury and often death, given the jug acts as a buoy, preventing the animal from diving and engaging in necessary behaviors such as feeding, swimming and breeding. No ethical fisher would ever use such an inhumane method to capture or control animals who may be in the same area when they are fishing for other species.

We urge your passage of this measure to protect our important marine wildlife.

Inga Gibson

Policy Director, For the Fishes

808.922.9910



February 16, 2026

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 15, 2026

TIME: 1:01 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

REGARDING SB2973 Jug Line Fishing; Jug Rig Variant Fishing Methods; Nonselective Fishing; Prohibition

Strong Opposition

HFACT STRONGLY OPPOSES SB2973

HFACT is a not-for-profit, IRS 501c(5) organization, that advocates for small boat commercial, non-commercial, and recreational fishermen throughout Hawaii. HFACT board members sit on a number of federal fisheries management and endangered species advisory committees as well as state marine and coastal zone advisory committees; and, HFACT is thoroughly familiar with and participates in ocean and marine resource management in Hawaii and the central Pacific.

HFACT works actively with the Division of Aquatic Resources, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, and the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology of the University of Hawaii on matters related to sharks.

The problem of depredation of fish by sharks has reached crisis levels. The DLNR reports that as much as 33% of fish in the uku (grey snapper) fishery are being depredated by sharks. Hawaii's Deep 7 fishery (deep water snappers such as opakapaka, onaga, ehu, gindai, etc.) are also showing severe depredation - up to 20%. Recent studies show that the ahi fishery is starting to show significant depredation (Source: Hawaii Community Shark Tagging Project (HCTP), data 2016 to present, and DLNR Commercial Marine License Catch Report System).

Jug line fishing is a recent development in reaction to the healthy population of sharks and the resultant depredation. This method is a way to distract sharks from feeding on fishermen's target fish by using fish carcasses or other bait. The jug line is placed near but away from where fishermen are fishing. Eventually the shark is hooked and is kept distracted on the jug line.

To maximise survival of jug line hooked fish, fishermen use weak lines or barbless hooks. Furthermore, corrodible links (magnesium-based) that corrode in salt water have been developed. These corrodible links break in about 4 hours of exposure to sea water. Additional new corrodible methods are in development.

A study by the HCTP has shown that the use of galvanic corrodible links result in 90% survival of sharks.



Galvanic link jug rigs

- Galvanic Timed Release (GTR | Neptune Marine Products)
- Magnesium, 4 hr corrosion time (4.2 – 4.85 hours @ 84.2 F)



HFACT asks the committee to oppose this bill. Fisheries managers, scientists, and fishermen are working toward acceptable solutions. Inability of the fishermen to distract sharks in a manner that allows for high survivorship could lead to other methods of distraction that may not have good survival of sharks.

We thank Chair Chris Lee, Vice-Chair Inouye and the committee members for the opportunity to provide testimony to this important bill.

Mahalo and Aloha,



Phil Fernandez
Past-President
philferna@gmail.com

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:14:25 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Yagodich	Testifying for Malama Pūpūkea-Waimea	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea is the community-based nonprofit that cares for, educates about, and protects the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District on the North Shore of O‘ahu. Although this is a protected area, pole fishing is still permitted from the shore at Waimea Bay, and we have unfortunately observed the illegal use of jug fishing there at night.

SB2973 would prohibit jug line fishing and other jug rig variants in Hawai‘i’s waters. The bill’s intent to reduce marine debris and protect endangered and non-target species is important and aligns with our conservation goals, however, as currently written, the definition of “buoyant jugs, bottles, or other flotation devices” may unintentionally capture small, commonly used safety or marker devices, such as small bobbers or flotation aids used by children and shoreline fishers. Without a clear size limit, the prohibition could extend to items that do not appear to be the intent of this legislation.

To ensure the bill targets only larger jug-style fishing devices that pose a significant risk to marine life and contribute to marine debris, we respectfully suggest the following amendments:

- Clarify that the prohibition applies only to single buoyant devices used for fishing lines that are larger than ½ gallon (1.8 liters) in volume.
- Explicitly exclude small personal flotation or marker devices under this size threshold.
- Specify that the prohibition applies to single devices, to prevent the use of multiple smaller jugs in combination to circumvent the size limit.

With these clarifications, the bill can effectively address the harmful fishing practices it is intended to eliminate, without unintentionally restricting small, commonly used flotation equipment.

Mahalo nui,

Jenny Yagodich, Director of Educational Programs & Makai Watch Coordinator, Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea



February 17, 2026

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

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members,

My name is Jonnetta Peters, Executive Director of Conservation Council for Hawai'i (CCH), a non-profit environmental and conservation organization who serves to protect and save native species and their habitats. CCH is also the Hawai'i affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. **CCH STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2973.**

Addressing the lethal threat to endangered species, such as the Hawaiian monk seal, green sea turtle, and oceanic whitetip shark. Sadly, we lost Moana, a Hawaiian Monk Seal # RS34, to a jug rig. This measure would prevent hooking and entanglement.

Reducing marine debris will help eliminate non-selective gear that often persists in the ocean long after use and protect and safeguard coral reefs from heavy-test lines and abandoned flotation devices. **Therefore, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2973.**

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

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

Treasurer: Mashuri Waite, PhD |

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

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

National Wildlife Federation Region 12 Director: Rachel Sprague

National Wildlife Federation Pacific Region Associate Director: Emily Martin

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

LATE

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:57:47 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Blake McNaughton	Testifying for Makahanaloa Fishing Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

Makahalanaloa Fishing Association strongly opposes this measure. We represent over 140 fishing families from north hilo. Our fishers effectively use jug line fishing to catch a variety of species. This method of fishing is very targeted and is not used to harvest large numbers of fish and does not result in any bycatch. This method is based off of a traditional Hawaiian fishing method. A blanket ban in all state waters is not appropriate and will significantly impact our fishing ‘ohana’s ability to feed themselves.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:22:25 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Zoller	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Prohibiting jug fishing (kaka lines) is of utmost importance for our seals and for our seabirds and reefs. I have personally seen jug lines damage reefs, ensnare birds and pose a danger to Hawai'i Monk Seals. They are often abandoned which make them catch on reefs. Pono fisherman complain about them too

Link below is one example

<https://share.icloud.com/photos/05bJbBJH28VLW2yN04g1h7b6w>

Mahalo for your time-

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference, State Capitol

BILL: SB2973

TITLE: Relating to Fishing

TESTIMONY OF: Jared Levitt

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

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

I am testifying in **strong support** of SB2973. The following images, compiled from publicly accessible Facebook posts, serve as documented examples of jug rig activity within Hawai'i's waters and provide visual evidence of the concerns addressed in this bill and the need for a ban on jug line fishing.

My concerns are echoed by state enforcement experts. As noted in a **DLNR news release** (9/19/2025) titled "*DEATH OF MONK SEAL UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF RESPONSIBLE FISHING PRACTICES,*" these rigs endanger our protected marine wildlife.

"The recent death of RS34, a two-year-old female Hawaiian monk seal known as Moana, was the result of paddle-out or drone-out fishing **using a 'jug rig' variant**, according to wildlife officials. Her death, discovered earlier this month on Mānana Island, emphasizes **the dangers these practices pose to endangered Hawaiian monk seals and other non-target marine life.**

While the gear used in these methods is generally similar in form to bait casting and slide baiting, **there are some key differences that present elevated risk of gear loss and entanglement.** Without the limitation of casting from shore, drone-out and paddle-out rigs are often composed of extremely heavy pound-test line and **often include an empty household jug** to float the baited hook above the bottom. When a line breaks during a fight, a fish, marine mammal, or turtle can end up dragging an excessive amount of gear **including a buoyant jug.**

Without intervention or the hook pulling free on its own, an animal trailing potentially hundreds of yards of fishing line will likely wind up entangled, snagged on the ocean floor, or exhausted beyond recovery. **'Jug fishing is an extremely unsustainable and undiscerning fishing method,' said John Silberstein, O'ahu Branch Chief of the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE).'**"

This expert testimony confirms that jug fishing is not just a nuisance — it poses a real and ongoing threat to the survival of Hawai'i's marine wildlife. To prevent further suffering, loss of life, and harm to our fragile ocean ecosystems, I strongly urge the committee to pass this bill and end the use of destructive jug rigs in our waters.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. **Please find the twelve enclosed photos and captions for your review.**

Sincerely,
Jared Levitt



Hawaii News Now · [Join](#)

Anonymous participant · September 25, 2025 · 🌐

Fishermen is leaving thousands of yards of fishing lines all over out there..."jug rig" should be illegal amd banned!

It's completely wrong and irresponsible to do that.

Any propeller or jet engine that goes over it will get stuck amd stranded. Not safe!

Boaters are having this problem often all over the island.— 😡 feeling annoyed in Ewa Beach, HI.





Endangered Hawaiian monk seal RS34 was found deceased on Mānana Island. Credit: NOAA Fisheries (Permit #24359)



Fish and Dive Hawaii · Follow

April 22, 2023 · 🌐



Awesome job!!!

Repost: @hawaii.jon On Easter 2023, I crossed paths with a turtle tangled on the braid mainline of a jug set up. I felt like I did the right thing by separating as much line as possible around the fins and neck before cutting the mainline which held the turtle in an area which I can work. After that, there was a moment of stillness where I wonder if it knew that I was trying to help it. What would you have done ? Thank you @dinewith.diana for condensing the video

[#hawaiispearfishing](#) [#spearfishing](#) [#spearfishinghawaii](#) [#hawaii](#) [#turtlerescue](#)





Kayleigh Nicole Grant · Follow

August 21, 2022 · 🌐

Jugging is a cruel practice SOME fishermen here in Hawaii use as a way to slow down & eventually kill sharks so that they don't interrupt their ability to catch fish. T... [See more](#)



Oahu Kayak Fishing Club

Terry Shimabukuro · July 29, 2024 · 🌐

My friend and I were kayaking off the leeward coast yesterday and she ran over a fishing line. We didn't see anyone fishing from shore at the time so we hauled in the line. After over 30 minutes of work here's the mess we recovered. Plastic jug had heavy mono and a huge circle hook attached. Luckily, no critters were found entangled in the line.

I've never done this type of shore fishing and don't know anyone who does. I hope that losing this much line is a very rare occurrence. The float was recovered about a half mile offshore.





MOC Marine Institute · Follow

July 29, 2021 · 🌐

...

Interactions with nearshore coastal fisheries are the primary threat to sea turtles in Hawai'i. ...
See more





Ulua Fishing Hawaii

Ty Lum · July 8, 2024 · 🌐

...

4th of July weekend 🥳🥳. Took me 23 minutes to wind up da one on the right. Da one on the left took me half an hour cuz da braid was ALL tangled up in da coral heads.

This needs to stop!



Ellen Moshein Federoff

May 13, 2023 · 🌐

...

Evil fishing setup at the Cove this morning. We had to rescue a honu that got hooked and tangled in it. We reported it to DLNR. There are more of these nearby!





Jason Lafferty

July 19, 2021 · 🌐



"Jugged to Death"

After cutting a oceanic shark free just a couple days earlier with [Deron Verbeck](#), was out with [Seth Conae](#) and we found another jugged oceanic Shark , I had high believes were gonna cut another shark free!! This was something that was a first for me! We didnt make it in time. Shark was dead! Emotion's to the full extent \, Just another reminder to TEACH & Express Knowledge Instead



Jason Lafferty



Jason Lafferty



+3

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 5:15:35 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

I fully support the intent of SB2973. The language may need some refinement to make clear that it does not apply to small floats used with small hooks, where the float is primarily to signal that a fish has been caught. Large hooks attached to jugs not only kill marine mammals and sharks as bycatch - they are often used to deliberately kill sharks in an extremely cruel manner to eliminate the sharks as competition for hooked fish. This practice is inhumane, incompatible with Hawaiian cultural values, and incompatible with our laws protecting sharks, and should absolutely be banned. Mahalo for your consideration to this matter.

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

My name is Tiffany Bruno, and I am writing in strong support of SB2973 to prohibit jug line fishing in Hawai'i.

I am a longtime freediver and reef cleaner. Over the years, I have personally recovered countless fishing lines from our reefs. I have also encountered marine animals — including fish, turtles, and other wildlife — dead, injured, or suffering after becoming entangled in discarded or unattended fishing lines.

Jug line fishing is particularly harmful because it leaves multiple baited hooks suspended in the water column without active supervision. These lines do not discriminate. They entangle protected species, reef fish, monk seals, turtles, and seabirds. Even when not actively fishing, lost or abandoned lines continue to “ghost fish,” trapping and killing marine life unnecessarily.

Hawai'i's reefs are already under stress from warming oceans, pollution, and habitat loss. We should not allow a fishing method that increases preventable harm, bycatch, and marine debris. As someone who regularly removes fishing line from coral and witnesses firsthand the damage caused, I can attest that this is not a minor issue — it is ongoing and widespread.

Banning jug line fishing is a reasonable and responsible step toward protecting our reefs, marine wildlife, and the cultural and ecological integrity of Hawai'i's waters.

Please pass SB2973.

Mahalo for your time and for your commitment to protecting our ocean.

Respectfully,

Tiffany Bruno





SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 1:41:37 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alannah B Farrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have lost far too many precious endangered marine mammals to cruel deaths due to jug lines. I submit my testimony in support of this bill to protect the monk seals, sea turtles and other precious marine wildlife. We can do better.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:31:05 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheldon Plentovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and the wildlife it protects. Jug lines kill protected species like Honu and Monk Seals and other species. This method of fishing is irresponsible and should not be legal. The main cause of death of adult honu around the main islands is entanglement in fishing gear including jug lines. Do the right thing and make this illegal.

Aloha Chair Lee and members of the WLA committee

I am writing in strong support of SB 2973 banning dangerous “jug line” fishing.

I swim 4-5 days a week all around O`ahu and have encountered these jug lines way off shore along nearly all our coasts, from Waimanalo, to Electric Beach, to Makapuu.

Here is just one of a countless number of abandoned jug lines we’ve untangled from the reef and brought to shore. Yes, that’s my hand holding that insanely large hook



Worse, way too often we have found our gentle green sea turtles entangled, slowly being strangled by these heavy lines wrapped around their necks, or with limbs severed or immobilized. Or you may know the story of one of our critically endangered monk seals, Moana, who died after swallowing one of these hooks and lines. It’s heartbreaking.

This is not responsible fishing, as these jugs typically drift way off shore in our high winds, unattended or abandoned. It’s time to end this practice, with fines significant enough to deter those employing this lazy man’s fishing strategy. Our marine life face so many challenges that are hard to get ahead of. This is one problem we can easily solve by enacting this ban.

Please vote to support this bill!

Thanks,

Beth McDermott
Oahu resident since 1969
Water woman

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:27:40 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joyce Hsieh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am supporting the BAN on the jug line fishing.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:18:37 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GWEN YOUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha honorable congress,

I strongly support SB2973 as a resident and 'aina conservation volunteer. I actively treat and support animals harmed/killed by jug line fishing and spend numerous hours educating the public regarding protection and appropriate behavior to successfully coexist and assist these culturally important animals to thrive. Our federally and Hawaii protected and critically endangered species such as honu and monk seals drown in 20 minutes and jug line fishing has caused deaths and severe injuries in both of these endemic species. Our sharks and pelagic sea birds are also critically impacted.

Please support this bill that prohibits the use of jug line fishing and other jug rig variant fishing methods in state waters.

Mahalo nui,

Gwen Young - volunteer for NOAA, HMAR, Surfrider, Sustainable Coastlines, and UH as a citizen scientist

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:23:29 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melina Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of bill SB2973. This style of fishing has been known and documented to cause suffering and death to Hawaii's marine animals. People can easily get away with it as they leave their jugs/line unattended for days on end, resulting in injury and death. It was documented in Sept. 2025 a 2 year old female and highly endangered Hawaiian monk seal (ID: RS34 Moana) suffered a horrific death out at her very own remote birth area around Manana Island. These seals aren't even safe to stay in remote areas, subjected to neglectful and harmful fishing practices. Not only did jug line fishing kill one seal, it ended all future pups that female would have had. On average, that is a loss of 10 to 15 pups to contribute to this highly endangered species. This is a huge loss to the health of the ocean.

On Jan. 20th and several times within 10 day time frame, I used the DLNR tipApp and hotline number to report a jug that appeared to be caught by something 50 yards out from the Pokai Bay Heiau in west Oahu. I waited for a response by DLNR and nobody arrived. The jug was in the same place for minimum 10 days. My concern was a monk seal or turtle or any other marine animals or human had been caught and drowned. My calls and tip got no response as the jug stayed there.

The lack of response and enforcement for this style of fishing will most likely lead to more harm and deaths, some we will never know about.

Here is a snippet from the news story and DLNR explaining about jug fishing. For the full story. Please use this link: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2025/09/19/nr25-117/>

Without the limitation of casting from shore, drone-out and paddle-out rigs are often composed of extremely heavy pound-test line and often include an empty household jug to float the baited hook above the bottom. When a line breaks during a fight, a fish, marine mammal, or turtle can end up dragging an excessive amount of gear including a buoyant jug.

Without intervention or the hook pulling free on its own, an animal trailing potentially hundreds of yards of fishing line will likely wind up entangled, snagged on the ocean floor, or exhausted beyond recovery. “Jug fishing is an extremely unsustainable and undiscerning fishing method,” said John Silberstein, O‘ahu Branch Chief of the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE). “This incident is a reminder that the choices we make on the water affect more than just fish.”

Please ban jug line fishing and enforce the laws on each and every violation.

Thank you.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:37:10 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krista Jaspers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2973, which would prohibit jug line and jug rig variant fishing methods in Hawai‘i’s state waters.

I am submitting this testimony not only out of concern for our marine ecosystems, but from direct personal experience. I spend time both offshore and inshore in Hawai‘i’s waters, and I have repeatedly encountered abandoned jug lines drifting at sea and tangled in nearshore reefs. On multiple occasions, I have taken it upon myself to remove these lines. What I have found is alarming: long lengths of heavy monofilament, multiple leaders and hooks, plastic bottles and jugs used as floats, and additional debris tangled together into a sprawling mass of waste.

The sheer amount of line generated by a single jug rig is substantial. When these systems are lost or cut loose, they do not simply disappear. They continue fishing unattended, snagging coral heads, wrapping around reef structure, and creating hazards for fish, turtles, sharks, and marine mammals. Removing them is labor-intensive and often dangerous. Lines are embedded deep into coral or stretched across multiple colonies, causing visible abrasion and breakage.

Inshore, I have found jug lines lodged directly into coral formations where wave action drags the line back and forth, slowly sawing through living reef tissue. Offshore, I have seen floating jug setups that can drift for miles, expanding their impact far beyond where they were originally set. Each abandoned rig represents not just a single piece of gear, but yards upon yards of plastic and monofilament that will persist in the ocean for years.

These methods are non-selective and contribute significantly to marine debris. They increase the likelihood of entanglement and injury to protected species, including the endangered Hawaiian monk seal and green sea turtles. Our reefs are already under immense stress from climate change, pollution, and overuse. We should not allow fishing practices that amplify that damage.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are the foundation of our coastal ecosystems, food systems, and cultural heritage. Allowing destructive, high-waste gear to continue operating undermines the health of our ocean and the responsibility we carry as stewards of these waters.

For these reasons, and based on what I have personally witnessed and removed from our ocean, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2973 with a favorable recommendation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:42:23 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Oba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Hearing: Feb 18, 2026 1:01 PM

Re: Support of SB 2973

I am writing in support of SB 2973, banning jug line fishing. My name is Kyle Oba and I am a member of the diving community in O‘ahu. I have personally found abandoned jug line fishing gear in Hawai‘i and know of the dangers this method of fishing poses to people and wildlife. Jug line fishing equipment is often abandoned and is difficult for authorities or responsible anglers to remove all discarded lines, leading to a accumulation of debris. This method of fishing poses a lethal threat to Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and sharks through entanglement and hooking, while lost gear litters and damages reefs. In my view, this is not a necessary or responsible way of fishing.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of the ban on jug line fishing.

Thank you Chair Lee and Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee on Water, Land Culture and the Arts for this opportunity to testify on this important bill.

SB-2973

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:29:20 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/18/2026 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JULIO C LEMUS	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose the use of jug fishing in Hawai‘i due to the documented damage it causes to our fragile reef ecosystems. I have personally observed hundreds of yards of braided fishing line tangled across reef structures near Mānana Island on multiple occasions. This abandoned gear continues to entangle corals, fish, and other marine life long after it has been lost or discarded.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are already under stress from climate change, pollution, and invasive species. Adding preventable damage from unmanaged fishing gear only accelerates reef degradation. Lost braid does not quickly break down in the marine environment and can persist for years, causing ongoing harm.

I urge decision-makers to reconsider or further regulate jug fishing practices to protect our nearshore reef ecosystems for future generations.