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

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

**Before the Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3014
RELATING TO WILDLIFE**

Senate Bill 3014 proposes to increase the fines for taking or harassing protected turtles in the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill and offers the following comments.**

Sea turtles are protected under state and federal law, yet incidents of harassment continue to occur, placing these animals at risk and undermining conservation and recovery efforts. Stronger penalties are an important deterrent and emphasize the seriousness of these violations.

In recent years, there has been an increase in sea turtle harassment associated with social media and tourism, including approaching turtles for photographs, touching or chasing them, and interfering with their ability to rest or return to the ocean. These behaviors cause stress and can result in injury or habitat displacement. This measure strengthens enforcement and supports responsible wildlife viewing, helping to protect Hawai'i's sea turtles for future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:25:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a wildlife biologist, I am shocked by how frequently tourists, tour operators and locals approach, touch or otherwise harass basking turtles and those swimming in the ocean. Increasing fines to protect our ESA Threatened, culturally important and amazing honu is a way to potentially decrease some of the constant harassment and it would be even better if those fines could be put toward enforcement efforts. Mahalo for accepting my testimony.

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:13:07 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!!

February 9, 2026

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to share my support for SB 3014, which is about protecting Hawaiian sea turtles. Back in October 2021, a DLNR enforcement officer on Maui saw two men pulling a fishing net off the rocks and found a **dead green sea turtle tangled in it**. The men were charged for illegally taking and possessing a protected species, and this was reported by DLNR and local news.

I researched the public court records from the Environmental Court, both men later took no contest pleas and were **each fined only \$250**, along with required court fees.

It's troubling that the penalty for the death of a protected honu came out to \$250 per person. To me, that doesn't match how important these animals are to Hawai'i or how serious the harm was. I believe SB 3014 would help make sure sea turtles are better protected and that there are stronger consequences when they're harmed. For these reasons, please pass SB 3014.

Mahalo for taking the time to read this.

Pat Joyce

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 6:43:18 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha honorable legislators,I strongly support SB3014, as strengthening the penalties for harassment of our honu will directly reduce the incidence of these takes. As a volunteer and concerned resident, I see plenty incidents of humans harassing, feeding, disrupting the natural behavior of, impeding the progress into or out of the ocean, directly handling, and pouring water on our sea turtles. Our honu are injured and impacted enough by other human causes. It's our kuleana to reduce the preventable human interactions / harassments and this bill will help! Thank you

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:24:00 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian Kaakua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Christian, and I am a high school student from Oahu, testifying in support of SB3014, advocating that fines for taking or harassing protected turtles in the State ought to be increased.

Protecting our native wildlife should be one of the key priorities of the State, and I really think there is no excuse for those who endanger turtles. I hope the increased revenue from these finds can be used to protect local habitats or help educate the public about how to properly interact with the other life on this island with us.

For these reasons, this bill, SB3014, ought to be passed.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:47:18 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I fully support bill SB3014. The incidents involving tourists and locals harassing, harming and disturbing Hawaii's sea turtle population is out of control. The penalties and consequences for these violations are not enough to deter the majority of people from violating the laws and hurting the sea turtles. Tourists have posted online with captions "We just got away with (\$10,000/\$50,000 thousand dollar fines." Fortunately those posts go viral and law enforcement can do their investigations, however, the fines/penalties aren't enough to stop people.

Examples of what I and others have witnessed in person and through online posts includes people grabbing turtles, jumping on them, sitting on them on land and in water, picking them up on land or in the ocean and throwing/slamming them, petting them which breaks the barrier on the shell and leads to bacteria and disease to the turtle. For the incidents when DLNR officers or HPD officers arrive, it is rare anyone gets a citation for the unlawful crime against these sea turtles. I urge you to do a simple search online "sea turtle gets harassed in Hawaii" or something similar and you will find countless reports online and in the news as to the ongoing disturbing behaviors toward these protected animals.

Raising the minimum fines for first time offenders and repeat offenders and including jail time depending on the incident will help get the message across Hawaii is not a free-for-all to abuse sea turtles. We need to take it serious.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 1:40:32 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

3014 SB RELATING TO WILDLIFE.

SB-3014

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:15:28 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/11/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill, to increase protection of our honu.