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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER, LAND, & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, January 30, 2019
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 446
RELATING TO FISHING

House Bill 446 proposes to establish a near shore fishing tour guide license requirement, and expands permitted fishing areas for near shore fishing tour guides. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this bill, and offers the following comments.**

Section 189-2(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes, already requires “any person providing vessel charter services in the State for the taking of marine life” to obtain a commercial marine license (CML) from the Department. These charter vessels submit monthly fishing reports to the Department, which provide valuable data for fisheries management. As written, the proposed bill would impose an additional license requirement on “near shore fishing tour guides,” which would include many fishing charter vessels. It is unclear what management benefit this license would confer.

The bill establishes a cost structure for the fishing guide license, but does not specify where the new license revenues would be deposited. The Department’s Division of Boating and Ocean Resources (DOBOR) currently administers the commercial use permit, which charges three per cent of monthly gross revenues or \$200 per month, whichever is greater. Vessel-based fishing guides are currently subject to this commercial use permit. Exempting near shore fishing tour guides from DOBOR’s commercial use permit would take away revenues from DOBOR that are used to maintain boating facilities throughout the state. Further, transferring this new license responsibility to the Department’s Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) would create an administrative burden on DAR, which lacks the accounting staff necessary to administer such a fee.

SUZANNE D. CASE
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AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
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LAND
STATE PARKS

The proposed bill would require shore-based fishing guide services to obtain a license. Shore-based fishing guides are currently exempt from any license requirements from DAR or DOBOR. DAR is currently proposing two companion measures (House Bill 1023 and Senate Bill 1249) to require shore-based fishing guides to obtain a CML from the Department. This approach would allow DAR to collect important information about guided shore-based fishing activities, which in turn will inform fisheries management. DAR already has a system in place to issue CMLs and collect fishing reports, so there would be no additional administrative burden on the Department.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.