

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Friday, March 13, 2020
1:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2036, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO CORAL RESTORATION

House Bill 2036, House Draft 1 proposes to establish a pilot project to plan and design an expansion of the Hawaii Coral Restoration Nursery, including improvements to the sea urchin hatchery; requires a report to the Legislature; and appropriates funds. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget Request.**

Hawaii's coral reefs provide habitat for nearshore marine life, protect our coastal areas from waves and storms, and support tourism and fishing industries—ecosystem services worth billions of dollars. Coral reefs are also fundamental to the fabric of our local communities, providing a source of food, materials, and traditional activities.

Hawaii's coral reefs are under great threat from repeated coral bleaching events over the past six years, which have resulted in significant coral loss. In addition, invasive seaweed smothers and kills corals, adding further stressors to the reef. As a result, we are losing corals faster than they are naturally being replaced. The Department has created a unique land-based coral restoration nursery to fast-grow Hawaiian corals and a sea urchin hatchery to raise sea urchins to control invasive algae and restore coral reefs.

The coral nursery provides large, healthy native corals for transplantation onto impacted coral reefs in Hawaii to help recover the ecosystem services and functions lost to vessel groundings, anchor damage, coral bleaching mortality, and other impacts. The coral nursery is currently limited in its ability to produce enough large corals for out-planting due to facility size and

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
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

staffing. With expansion, the nursery could go from producing a couple hundred large coral colonies a year to out-planting over a thousand a year, a level where reef restoration is realistic and which could begin to keep up with expected levels of climate change affecting our reefs. Large colonies have greater levels of survival against environmental change, produce greater reproductive output, protect our shorelines, and provide shelter and habitat for a wide variety of fish and invertebrates important to both our residents and visitors alike. In addition, facility improvements are needed for the sea urchin hatchery to continue raising sea urchins to control invasive seaweed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Friday, March 13, 2020 at 1:15 p.m.

By

Judith Lemus, Director
Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology

And

Michael Bruno

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2036 HD1 – RELATING TO CORAL RESTORATION

Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee:

Thank for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2036 HD1, which would establish a pilot project to plan and design an expansion of the Hawai'i Coral Restoration Nursery, including improvements to the sea urchin hatchery.

As a research institute heavily involved in coral cultivation and restoration, and a collaborative partner with the state coral nursery facilities, the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology wishes to express its support of efforts aimed at increasing the state's capacity to cultivate corals and other invertebrates in nurseries that will help recover our reef ecosystems.

HB-2036-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 10:08:58 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/13/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Bishop	Testifying for Friends of Hanauma Bay	Support	No

Comments:

Friends of Hanauma Bay strongly supports this bill!

Lisa Bishop

President

HB-2036-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2020 10:59:20 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/13/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
HIROC 2020	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	No

Comments:



March 12, 2020

March 12,2020

To: The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair,
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith Agaran, Vice Chair, and Members
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Re: HB 2036, H.D.1– relating to coral restoration
Hearing: March 13, 2020 1:15 pm, Room 229
Position: **Strong Support!**

The HAWAI'I REEF AND OCEAN COALITION – HIROC – was formed in 2017 by coral reef scientists, educators, local Hawaii environmental organizations, elected officials, and others to address a crisis facing Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean that is literally killing our marine life and jeopardizing our reef shoreline protection. We are currently asking the Legislature to pass a handful of very important bills to save our coral reefs from this crisis.

This bill would fund a pilot program at the coral restoration nursery, including improvements for the sea urchin hatchery. It is essential to protect the State's reef ecosystems and help them recover. Urchins contribute to reef resilience by grazing algae and providing settlement space for corals, thereby helping to maintain conditions necessary for coral communities to recover after acute disturbances such as storms or bleaching events.

HIROC asks you to pass this bill with an adequate specific dollar appropriation, to provide additional funding for the coral reef restoration nursery, and to give the bill an early effective date. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill for the restoration of our coral reefs. Mahalo!

HB-2036-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 6:35:11 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/13/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: