

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, March 16, 2021
8:30 AM

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 430

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1313, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO SPORT FISH

Senate Bill 1313, Senate Draft 2 proposes to require the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to engage in a review of whether northern largemouth bass should be placed on the list of conditionally approved animals. Additionally, Senate Bill 1313, Senate Draft 2 proposes to require the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to establish a pilot project to restock northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass in the Wahiawā public fishing area and apply for a permit to import them once they have been placed on the list of conditionally approved animals. **The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.**

Wahiawā public fishing area is an important sport fishery. The Department has supported and will continue to support responsible freshwater recreational fishing for introduced target species including the northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass. Wahiawā is also an artificial reservoir, thus the Department approaches management differently at this reservoir compared to natural water bodies. Fishing opportunities have declined in recent years at Wahiawā and stakeholders, scientist, and managers have identified several factors that may have contributed to this decline. These factors include lowering of the reservoir due to safety reasons, loss of shoreline habitat, undesirable introduced species preying on target species, limited prey or food for target species, poor genetics, limited stocking, and the uncertain future status of the Wahiawā reservoir due to private ownership. The Department is committed to working with stakeholders and partners to improve and enhance sport fishing opportunities at Wahiawā reservoir.

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

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FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Comments regarding importation

In natural freshwater settings, the Department prioritizes management activities toward the conservation of indigenous species and habitats. Non-native species are one of the primary threats to indigenous species and the Department is committed to the prevention of non-native species introduction. Northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass are considered invasive in natural water bodies due to their predatory nature, and both species have the potential to adversely impact Hawaii's native stream species such as the 'o'opu and 'ōpae. Given that these species already occur in Wahiawā reservoir, we see little threat in importing northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass solely to be stocked in Wahiawā reservoir, assuming best management practices are followed to prevent disease and parasite transmission.

The Department notes that butterfly peacock bass is already on HDOA's conditionally approved import list, which means it may be imported with an appropriate HDOA permit. Largemouth bass is currently not on the HDOA approved list for importation and thus is prohibited from import without permit. The Department is concerned that reducing import restrictions would increase the likelihood of these species being introduced into natural freshwater settings inhabited by indigenous species in Hawai'i.

Release of the northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass should only occur under the supervision of the Department. State law currently prohibits the "release [of] any live non-native fish or other live non-native aquatic life being held in an aquarium or other confinement for scientific study, exhibition, display, sale, or for any other purpose, into any waters of the State."¹

Comments regarding establishment of a pilot project

In principle, the Department appreciates the opportunity to engage the Legislature and other stakeholders to address any of the perceived detrimental factors mentioned above, including an activity to establish a pilot project to restock the Wahiawā public fishing area with northern largemouth bass, butterfly peacock bass, or both.

However, the Department simply does not have the resources to do this. With COVID-19 related budget reductions and an inability to fill vacancies, administrative staff are already stretched thin. Additionally, the biologist that managed Wahiawā reservoir activities has recently retired, and the position has been frozen due to budget restrictions. With no appropriations, we simply lack the capacity to expand operations at the reservoir.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

¹ Hawaii Revised Statutes §187A-6.5

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021

8:30 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 430 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. 1313, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO SPORT FISH

Chairpersons Rhoades and Dela Cruz and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1313, Senate Draft 2, relating to sport fish. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture (“Department”) to engage in a review of whether northern largemouth bass should be placed on the list of conditionally approved animals. It also requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources (“DLNR”) Division of Aquatic Resources to establish a pilot program to restock northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass in the Wahiawa public fishing area and apply for a permit to import them once they have been placed on the list of conditionally approved animals. The Department offers the following comments.

The Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) Chapter 150A and Hawaii Administrative Rules (“HAR”) §4-71 establishes the framework and permit conditions for allowing the importation of non-domestic animals, including the northern largemouth bass, *Micropterus salmoides salmoides*, and the butterfly peacock bass, *Cichla ocellaris*. The process includes a science-based review designed to assess and manage the risk of importing any non-domestic animal and requires Hawaii Board of Agriculture (“Board”) approval. Currently, the northern largemouth bass, is not on any of the lists maintained



by the Board, including the List of Conditionally Approved Animals (“CA List”) and as a result is currently prohibited from importation into the State. The butterfly peacock bass, however, is already on the CA List and is eligible for importation with Board approval, subject to appropriate permit conditions as determined by the Board.

The Department is appreciative that the bill recognizes the need to utilize the existing review process for appropriate list placement and establishment of permit conditions for stocking the northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass into the Wahiawa Public Fishing Area. The existing regulatory process for importation of new species has improved significantly over the years, and barring any significant known or suspected adverse impacts, can be completed in a relatively timely manner through compliance with existing safeguards and review.

The Department would like to note that placement on the “CA List” is not a prerequisite for projects involving stocking of fish. During the review process, should the northern largemouth bass be placed on the Restricted Animal List, Part B (“RB List”), the Board could still allow DLNR the ability to import and subsequently stock the northern largemouth bass into Wahiawa Public Fishing Area, yet placement on the RB List would prevent private individuals or pet stores from importing, possessing or selling it as a pet in the state, minimizing risk of movement to other bodies of water. Based on the existing RB List, the Florida largemouth bass, *M. salmoides floridanus* is currently placed there and after review, a similar placement for the northern largemouth bass would also likely be appropriate and this would not be an impediment to stocking of the animal for fishing. Additionally, there is already precedent for DLNR to import and stock organisms on the RB List as rainbow trout are currently on this list.

The Department is aware that both species of bass are present in the Wahiawa Public Fishing Area. The presence or establishment of a species within the State is not a reasonable justification for further importation without proper review and assessment of their impacts on the environment. The review process is designed to manage those risks. Additionally, if the notion that the presence or establishment of a species in the

state could potentially lessen restrictions or increase the likelihood that importation or possession may be allowed, this could result in an increase in illegal importation, unwanted movement between areas within the state, and illegal release of prohibited animals.

In recognition of the potential economic, recreational, and aquacultural benefits sought by this measure, modifications or enhancements to the review and approval process for new species could be considered. While maintaining the rigorous standards of review under HRS Chapter 343, the criteria for assessing impacts could be clarified to allow a track record over a significant period that demonstrates no significant impacts have occurred or is likely to occur from the presence of a previously established but currently unlisted species, and can be a basis for eligibility under a categorical exemption. Such eligibility could be further conditioned upon appropriate precautionary conditions being imposed on the proposed activity to mitigate any potential for harm, which the Board is already authorized to do. Additionally, the Board could also adopt additional controls to disincentivize the illicit importation of potentially invasive animals by allowing the application of these provisions to actions initiated and performed by governmental agencies only.

Provided DLNR has the resources and capability to manage the risks for introduction of the two species of bass, the Department will continue to collaborate and work with DLNR to implement the purpose of this measure, such as with rainbow trout for Kauai.

The Department recognizes the need for aquaculture for food and other activities such as sport fishing, and supports these efforts, however, the Department believes that the processes that are already in place can adequately achieve those important objectives without compromising the State's efforts to keep out harmful invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



WAHIAWA

Community Based Development Organization (WCBDO)

PO Box 861191, Wahiawa HI 96786 wahiawacbdo.org

March 15, 2021

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Representative David Tarnas, Chair
Water and Land Committee

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1313 RELATED TO SPORT FISH

Aloha Chair Tarnas and members of the Water and Land Committee:

Thank you for your further consideration of SB1313, relating to sport fish. The **Wahiawa Community Based Development Organization dba Wahiawa Fresh!**, continues its strong support of this initiative, which would help restock Lake Wilson with imported sport fish to improve the existing population that has existed in the lake for decades.

This bill has important implications for our Wahiawa community, and specifically, we feel it can have an important economic impact for our historic plantation town. Like many towns that have had to pivot from their historic industries, we are seeking new diverse opportunities. Sport fishing, enhanced recreation, and the improvement of a real, natural gem (Lake Wilson) on the island will bring positive changes, including new business ventures and increased traffic to existing businesses.

Further, freshwater sports fishing will attract enthusiasts from around the world, and it will introduce the sport to residents, particularly our youth and seniors. It would have ecological benefits as well—diversifying the fish population, improving lake quality, and perhaps easing fishing activity from our ocean shores.

I know there are reservations about the importation of these species, but these fishes have been in the lake for decades. A larger gene pool will support a stronger population into the future. In addressing budgetary and logistical concerns of this proposal, please know that there are current hatchery resources at the lake, and that groups like ours stand ready to help with volunteer conservation and to support management of any restocking program.

Please note that we support the amendments asking: that involved departments work together and begin a pilot program by January 2022; that relevant boards and divisions cooperate until a permitting process and pilot program are established; and that the Division of Aquatic Resources not be required to fund this program with its own resources, but could instead seek assistance from public or private entities.

I urge you to support this important initiative for Wahiawa, and I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darin Uesugi
Board Vice President

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Support for S.B. 1313, Relating to Sport Fishing

Aloha Chairs Senator Gabbard, Senator Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kevin Hirokane, I am a resident of Wahiawa, avid fisherman, member of Hawaii Freshwater Fishing Association, and a registered voter. I am testifying in support of SB1313.

I've been fishing Lake Wilson/Wahiawa reservoir for over 35 years. I started fishing as a young kid with friends walking along the banks of Lake Wilson. Nowadays, I fish a few times a week for recreation with my own children and competitively with my Bass Fishing Club (HFFA) on bass fishing boats. I have seen a drastic decline in catch rates throughout the years, especially for largemouth bass. These days it's so rare to catch a largemouth bass, even after multiple outings, we are lucky to even catch one. Sport fish like the northern largemouth bass have been in Hawaii and fished here for over a century. Many generations of inbreeding and lack of genetic diversity, I feel, has been a detriment to the species, resulting in less fish.

I believe this bill is important for the sustainability of the present and future populations of largemouth bass and sport fishing in general. This bill will address one important component needed to improve bass population. Allowing the restocking of the Northern Strain Largemouth Bass with a different genetic pool, will have a vital role in improving and maintaining the quality of fishing in Lake Wilson/Wahiawa reservoir.

Furthermore, improving bass fishing would have great economic value for the Wahiawa community and the State. This could potentially create opportunities for fishing stores, boat sales, retail shops, food establishments, and could create additional jobs. The state would have an opportunity to generate revenue through the sale of fishing licenses, boat registration, ramp fees, tourism, etc. There are many communities in the U.S near public fisheries that are driven economically by recreational and sport bass fishing.

As a Father of two boys, I like to share the pastime of fishing with them. Having my sons off their electronics, and just experiencing this great activity. Moreover, I am happy to have my kids spend time outdoors experiencing nature, learning the sport of fishing, and making everlasting memories. I feel this is a great thing for them, and they love it.

I ask that you please consider supporting SB1313 so myself, my children, and many others can share the love for bass fishing for generations to come. Thank you for your time and effort. Mahalo and Aloha.

Sincerely,
Kevin Hirokane
176 Rose Street
Wahiawa, Hi 97686

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 2:52:35 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
brent young	Tropo LLC	Support	No

Comments:

Please, Support, Pass SB1313 SD2.

As a registered voter, I ask you to please pass SB1313 Relating to Sport Fish, which would help improve the pre-existing population of fresh-water sport fish.

I have only been fishing the lake for over 20 years now, the memories i have had with my father on the lake are memories i hope to give my family. I have many friends that fish the lake with their families and enjoy grappling with the bass. Businesses island wide will benefit from this as fisherman need tackle to fish, food, drink, apparel etc.

This could possibly give our military service men and women a bit of "home" as most have fished for bass in their hometown. Stocking the lake with a new gene pool of bass would help improve the existing gene pool as it is very old and inbred.

Thank you for your time

Brent Young

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 4:44:43 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Arthur Hamabata	Hawaii Freshwater Fishing Association	Support	No

Comments:

Representatives,

As a avid bass fishermen, and a member of the Hawaii Freshwater Fishing Association, I would like you to please consider scheduling a hearing for SB 1313. Also please consider helping out the lake and those who enjoy freshwater fishing.

I know you got calls and emails from my colleagues with their testimonies.

Please consider SB1313.

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 3:25:53 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Matthew Wong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Matthew “Matty” Wong. I grew up on the island of Oahu. Fishing Lake Wilson with my Dad is seriously some of my favorite childhood memories. I started fishing Lake Wilson at the early age of 2 and have fished it ever since. 31 years later I’m still a bass fisherman. I moved away to California back in 2013 to pursue a career in “show biz” but eventually got lead back to my roots, fishing. I return home to Oahu annually multiple times a year, every time I’m home I fish my home lake.

After spending 8 years in California, seeing the amount of bass fishermen / and women that are interested in fishing Lake Wilson is overwhelming! “You’re telling me I can catch bass in paradise!?” “Where do I sign” is the normal response. I’ve lead a few fellow anglers to Wilson and they all came back with pleasant experiences except for the lack of bass fish catches.

Lake Wilson has only had a single strain of Largemouth Bass in it for decades. Inbreeding with their close relatives, the species doesn’t thrive well compared to other types of fish that live in the body of water. By giving Lake Wilson the attention it needs, it could easily become an incredible bass fishery. I would love to see the state put some resources into the Lake and I promise it would pay dividends for years to come. Inspiring a younger generation to go out and enjoy some clean fun of freshwater fishing, also luring mainland anglers a trip of a lifetime.

I would love to see Lake Wilson become an amazing fishery, but if it stays on course now its going in a direction of negative inevitability. I want to share this body of water with my children some day and I would love to get them hooked on bass fishing on the same body of water that sparked the love that holds strong in my life today.

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 4:06:42 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Glenn Yoshida	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha to the Honorable Legislators concernd,

I am in favor of SB1313S D2.

I have been a lifelong resident of Hawaii and a fisher for most of those years. For most of us we started fishing in the ocean and for the most part continue to do so as a family tradition. We also are teaching the children the skill of fishing and their part in making sure that there is a balance of taking what you eat and releasing the rest. The Caring for the land we have access to and making sure it will be available for return visits are also part of this.

In the late 70's I was introduced to freshwater fishing at Nuuanu. It was a bi annual fishing trip that I looked forward to with my Father and friends. When it was shut down I learned that Lake Wilson in Wahiawa had Largemouth Bass and Peacock Bass. Imagine that, a fishery existed that enabled us to fish as the mainlanders do. My ESPN shows can be LIVED!

When catch and release was passed, I thought the fishery would thrive, but like the mainland lakes new stocks of the species were needed to ensure the survival of the game fish. I am glad to see that introducing new gene pools into the fisheries will help to sustain it.

I strongly urge you to proceed with this Bill so that the State can say that there is a Freshwater Fisheries here that produces arguably the most sought after game fish in the US.

THE LARGEMOUTH BASS

Mahalo for your Consideration,

Glenn Yoshida

Lifelong Fisher

BSA Certified Angling Instructor

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 4:23:23 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
lance marugame	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of SB1313. I am a member of Hawaii Freshwater Fishing Association. Our organization has been in existence since th 1950s. Please allow our club to nurture the Bass population that exist in Lake Wilson presently. Thank you Lance Marugame

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 4:55:37 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alexander James	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Alexander James, I am a fisherman and a military resident.

I respectfully request your support of SB1313.

I believe this bill is important for many reasons. I have been fishing at Lake Wilson since my first tour started in Hawaii in 2004. While the Butterfly Peacock Bass population has been in fairly decent shape, the same can not be said for the largemouth population. I feel genetic diversity SB1313 would enable for largemouth would greatly improved the long term health for this fishery.

Lake Wilson may not be one of Hawaii's main attractions, but I truly believe it is one of Hawaii's best kept secrets. I have spent countless days with family and friends on the lake. During this time however, I've seen the fishery decline, each and every year. While living in Hawaii I have always been a member of the Hawaii Freshwater Fishing Association (HFFA), the HFFA has done a lot of good for this lake, but are limited due to the genetic stock and resources currently available. My wife, son, and daughter all caught their first fish at Lake Wilson, but with the decline in the bass population, this may not be something they can pass on to their kids.

I recently just moved back to Oahu, and during our house search my family was able to find a house with shoreline access to Lake Wilson. Had it not been for the lake, I can't imagine that we would have purchased a home at all.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Alexander James

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 5:18:21 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tony Waldo II	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing requesting your support of SB1313. Recreational fishing is a BIG part of my ohana's life, and this would ensure recreations for generations to come.

Thanks,

Tony Waldo

1373 Kupau street

Kailua, HI

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 5:25:07 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Heidi Waldo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing to ask for your support of SB1313. This will help ensure the future of recreational fishing on lake Wilson. This is a great family activity, which is a big part of my family.

Heidi Waldo

1373 Kupau st

Kailua, Hi

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 6:16:39 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Albert Gomes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha all! I'm writing my testimonial here again in support of bill SB1313. It seems like we're heading in the right direction on this bill. Let's keep the momentum going and get that final push we need to pass the bill. Like I've stated before, this will be something good for a lot of people. Tourists, locals, keiki etc..... Nothing but positivity is being promoted here. Fishing isn't just a sport or pass time. It teaches kids life lessons! Humility, confidence, and how to be responsible and good stewards of the land they live on. I think we can all agree that being outside and active is a whole lot better than having the kids stuck on electronics all day. But, it's hard to have a good time and keep them intrigued with fishing if nothing is biting and the fishing is so tough because there simply isn't a lot of fish in the lake like when we were kids. We can fix that!!! Just look at the evidence in lakes across the states with restocking programs. They are world class fisheries. People come from all over the world to catch these fish. Let's get our lake up to par so we too can also enjoy it and bring more money into the state with our own world class fisherie!!! Thank you all for your dedication and hard work as it is truly appreciated!! MAHALO!!! Please feel free to contact me if needed.

Aloha!!

Albert Gomes

808 223-8035

alenboygomes@yahoo.com

SB-1313-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 8:47:51 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stan Wright	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support this bill. We need to improve the quality of our existing fish stocks.

Thank you.