

RES26-159

Testimony

MISC. COMM. 314

*ZONING & PLANNING (ZON)

***ZONING & PLANNING (ZON) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Jul 16, 2026 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 117

Oppose: 22

I wish to comment: 3

Name: Wayne Tanaka	Email: hawaii.chapter@sierraclub.org	Zip: 96803
Representing: Sierra Club of Hawai'i	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 03:36 PM

Name: Claudia Kamiyama	Email: c.m.kamiyama@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 04:34 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is [your name] and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Harvey Arkin	Email: harveyarkin9@gmail.com	Zip: 96822-1419
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 04:35 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Harvey Arkin and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

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Name: Stephanie Wagner	Email: everlatchinglove@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 04:37 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee, My name is Stephanie Wagner, and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters. These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all. As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested. Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kane'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kane'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'aina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection. With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands. Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.		
Name: Mahealani Cypher	Email: malamapono744@aol.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Koolau Foundation	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 04:56 PM

Name: Kealii Pang	Email: launahele@yahoo.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 04:58 PM

Name: Esther Shimazu	Email: esthershimazu@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 04:59 PM

Testimony:

Our beautiful islands and waters have been exploited and degraded for centuries already. Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 and one less insult by the takers. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony

Name: Beppie Shapiro	Email: beppie@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 05:11 PM

Testimony:

I frequently stay at a house in Hau`ula which looks directly across the beach to a small reef with tide pools where, late at night, commercial aquarium collectors VACUUM up the baby fish which hatch under the edge of the reef. As we know, most of these fish will die before they reach their destination. Hawaii is losing the fish which used to sustain many local families as well ; which help to maintain our reefs; and which nourish the larger fish which are valuable in the same ways but on a larger scale. A friend in Hau`ula said to me, there aren't any fish anymore when I snorkle - and I have noticed the same thing; so few varieties of fish now.

Please, pass a strongly worded resolution urging BLNR to ban commercial aquarium fishing in Hawaii. It is so important for our oceans and our people.

Mahalo.

Name: Jessica Kuzmier	Email: jessntd@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 05:18 PM

Testimony:

Aloha, my name is Jessica Kuzmier and I strongly support both Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters. Mahalo for your consideration.

Name:

Charles Naumu

Email:

malamapon0744@aol.com

Zip:

96744

Representing:

Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 13, 2026 @ 05:19 PM

Name:

Elsa Dedman

Email:

ekdedman@gmail.com

Zip:

96772

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 13, 2026 @ 06:09 PM

Name:

Bob Douglas

Email:

danhieux18@icloud.com

Zip:

96720

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 13, 2026 @ 06:41 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Bob Douglas and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

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Not surprisingly, the Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; ʻAha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kāhalaʻu, Kāneʻohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kuaʻāina Ulu ʻAuamo; Koʻolau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawaiʻi; Sierra Club of Hawaiʻi; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Kathy Shimata	Email: katshimata@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 07:14 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kiaʻāina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Kathy Shimata and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawaiʻi State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawaiʻi waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawaiʻi Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including Oʻahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawaiʻi State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

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I urge you to support Resolution 26-159.

Mahalo,
Kathy Shimata

Name: Mary Lu Kelley	Email: mkelley323@gmail.com	Zip: 96756
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 08:15 PM

Testimony:

Aloha from Kauai.

I am in strong support of RES26-159 as these resolutions would make clear that every county in Hawai'i stands against the reopening of our waters to the profit-driven aquarium collection industry, as is being considered in draft rules being pushed forward by the BLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources.

Please support RES26-159.

Thank you, Mary Lu Kelley
Koloa, Kauai

Name: Lory Ono	Email: kealelani@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 08:32 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Lory Ono, and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters. This practice is completely unnecessary and should not exist.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Mahalo,
Lory Ono

Name: Mina Elison	Email: minarlison@hotmail.com	Zip: 96704
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 08:36 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Mina Elison and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Nanea Lo	Email: naneaclo@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 09:50 PM

Testimony:

Hello Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo

Name: Ron Tubbs	Email: rtubbs@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Hawaii Sustainable Reef Fisheries	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 11:20 PM

Name: Thomas Jung	Email: Thomas.Jung@vonwussowimporte.de	Zip: 25495
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 11:59 PM

Testimony:

Banning aquarium fish fisheries wich is managed is very stupid because this fishery is the most value adding fishery with the lowest impact on environment

Thomas Jung fisheries biologist

Name: Alyce Dodge	Email: alyce.dodge@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 04:25 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia’aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Alyce Dodge and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai’i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai’i waters.

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Not surprisingly, the Kaua’i, Hawai’i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; ‘Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne’ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu’u, Kāne’ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua’āina Ulu ‘Auamo; Ko’olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai’i; Sierra Club of Hawai’i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: William Robinson	Email: billrob71@hotmail.com	Zip: 19702
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:04 AM
Testimony: I believe harvesting ornamental fish for the aquarium trade as long as not over fished will help the Hawaiian economy it		

would also spread the beautiful live stock the United States has . Our beautiful fish should be shared to the people that unfortunately can not live in Hawaii .

Name: Marilyn Khan	Email: leimomikhan@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:31 AM

Testimony:

I support this measure for the same reasons as expressed in the testimony of Dr Benton Pang and the Sierra Club. While as a child, I enjoyed fish at home in an aquarium, as an adult, I acknowledge the adverse impact commercialism has had on our coral reefs.

Name: Pamela Saunders	Email: pamysaunders@live.com	Zip: 96716
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 07:11 AM

Testimony:

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Ron Tubbs	Email: rtubbs@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Hawaii Sustainable Reef Fisheries	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 07:41 AM

Name: Mike Nakachi	Email: mike@moanaohana.com	Zip: 96745
Representing: Moana Ohana	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 08:26 AM

Testimony:

Full support with oral comments

Name: Andree Paradis	Email: andreeparadis51@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 08:38 AM
Testimony: Please prohibit any marine life collection from what's left in our precious Hawaiian reefs!!!		
Name: Karen Browne	Email: kbearthling@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 08:41 AM
Testimony: Please support the resolution 26-159 for the health and sustainability of our beautiful and beloved Hawaii Ocean life.		
Name: Keith Neal	Email: windrider4002@yahoo.com	Zip: 96743
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 09:25 AM
Testimony: The need is clear for effective and comprehensive reef protection: Our coral reef ecosystems are challenged with ocean acidification and human caused ecological impacts. These conditions necessitate the utmost stewardship for optimum reef vitality. Reef corals and fishes are wild creatures and are a public good. The public good is to end the plunder and exploitation by the commercial Aquarium Fish trade! "Should the reef die, the waves take the land." Mahalo for your consideration. Keith Neal Waimea		
Name: Keynin Kretz	Email: kkretz@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 09:39

		AM
Testimony: I oppose any full closure without over whelming evidence that the business or industry is causing harm to the environment. From scientific testimony on past bills and my own diving experience I do not see evidence aquarium fishing has caused environmental damage.		
Name: Patricia Blair	Email: patriciablair@msn.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 10:18 AM
Testimony: I am urging BLNR to ban commercial aquariums collections.		
Name: Robert Aldrich	Email: bob.pierce75@gmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 11:13 AM
Name: arleen velasco	Email: arleenvelasco402@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 12:16 PM
Testimony: Hawaii's coral reefs and native reef fish are fundamental to our environment, culture, economy, and way of life. Over the years, the decline in native reef fish populations has become increasingly noticeable, accompanied by the continued degradation of our coral reef ecosystems. Reef fish play an essential role in maintaining healthy coral reefs by helping to control algae, support ecological balance, and sustain the diverse marine life that depends on these habitats. Protecting these species is critical to preserving the health and resilience of Hawaii's marine ecosystem. Healthy, vibrant reefs are also vital to Hawaii's economy. They support our fisheries, attract visitors from around the world, and provide opportunities for recreation, education, and cultural practices that have been passed down through generations. A thriving coral reef filled with abundant native fish is not only an environmental necessity but also an invaluable asset to our communities and our visitor industry.		

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to adopt this resolution and take meaningful action to protect Hawaii's native reef fish and the coral reef ecosystems upon which they—and we—depend.

Name: Anne Lorenzo	Email: trjanne@yahoo.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 12:38 PM

Testimony:

Aloha e Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, am e Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Anne M. Lorenzo and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

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Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Glenn Choy	Email: choyhawaii@gmail.com	Zip: 96839
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 01:19 PM
Testimony: I strongly support this resolution.		

Name: Kaimi Kaupiko	Email: kkaupiko@gmail.com	Zip: 96704
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 01:23 PM
Testimony: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-159 Urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to Adopt Rules Prohibiting the Commercial Aquarium Harvest of Aquatic Life Aloha Chair Esther Kia’aina, Vice Chair Tommy Waters, and Honorable Members of the Committee, My name is Kaimi Kaupiko, and I offer my strongest support for Resolution 26-159, urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to direct the Division of Aquatic Resources to adopt rules prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from Hawai’i’s marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes. I was born and raised in Miloli’i, Hawai’i’s last Hawaiian fishing village. My life has been shaped by the ocean, and today I continue to serve my community through the stewardship and co-management of the Miloli’i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA). Every day I witness the importance of healthy reef ecosystems—not only for the fish themselves, but for the cultural identity, food security, and way of life of our people. For Native Hawaiians, reef fish are not commodities. They are an integral part of living ecosystems that have sustained our communities for generations. Herbivorous fish keep reefs healthy by controlling algae, supporting coral growth, and maintaining the ecological balance that allows our nearshore fisheries to thrive. Removing these species for commercial export weakens the very foundation of Hawai’i’s marine ecosystems. Across our islands, communities are working tirelessly to restore abundance through community-based fisheries management, education, traditional ecological knowledge, seasonal closures, habitat restoration, and collaborative partnerships with the Division of Aquatic Resources. These efforts are rooted in the Hawaiian principle of mālama ‘āina—to care for that which feeds us.		

Allowing the continued commercial extraction of reef species for the aquarium trade runs contrary to these restoration efforts. Hawai'i's reefs are already under immense pressure from climate change, coral bleaching, invasive species, coastal development, pollution, and increasing human impacts. We cannot continue treating our native reef species as products for international markets while asking communities to sacrifice and conserve at home.

This resolution represents more than environmental policy. It reflects our collective responsibility to protect Hawai'i's unique marine biodiversity and ensure that future generations inherit thriving reefs rather than depleted ecosystems.

Our kūpuna left us a guiding principle:

“He ali'i ka 'āina; he kauwā ke kanaka.”
The land and sea are chief; we are their servants.

This 'ōlelo no'eau reminds us that our role is not to exploit our natural resources, but to steward them with humility, wisdom, and restraint.

As someone who works every day to restore and protect Hawai'i's nearshore fisheries, I believe this resolution is both timely and necessary. Healthy reefs support subsistence fishing, cultural practices, education, tourism, shoreline protection, and the resilience of our island communities. Once these ecosystems are diminished, they are difficult—and often impossible—to restore to their former abundance.

I respectfully urge the Committee and the Honolulu City Council to adopt Resolution 26-159 and send a clear message that Hawai'i values the long-term health of its marine ecosystems over the commercial harvest of our native reef life.

Mahalo for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to protecting the natural and cultural heritage of Hawai'i.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kaimi Kaupiko
Miloli'i, Hawai'i Island

Name: Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Email: cgpunihaole@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 02:20 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmembers

As a long-time kama'āina of Kona on the island of Hawai'i, I have seen the depletion of our reef fish as a food source for our families. The paku'iku'i is just one of the species that the aquarium collecting industry has severely impacted. It is time we focused on protecting our environment and ensuring food sustainability.

We have made tremendous strides in Marine aquaculture research, and funding should be made available to companies to ensure they develop sustainable, environmentally friendly programs and farms rather than focusing on the aquarium trade.

We are grateful for your consideration of this very important measure and respectfully ask for your strong support of RES 26-159.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

Kalaoa, Kona, Island of Hawaii

Name: Deborah Wallace	Email: 1happygyrl@gmil.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 02:25 PM

Testimony:

I support permanent protection for our marine life. The taking of our fish in aquarium collection has done harm to our fish and our reefs and our ecosystem.

I am amazed that we still allow fish collection for the financial benefit of a very few to the detriment of all Islanders as well as our tourists who come here to see our beautiful Marine life.

When they take fish for aquariums, there is a very massive amount of bicatch which then dies.

Over the decades, I have watched our marine life decline.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill

Thank you

Deborah Wallace

Name: Lois Crozer	Email: lbc@hawaiiantel.net	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:00 PM

Testimony:

I TOTALLY support the measure to ban aquarium fishing. Our reefs are dying fast, and anything we can do to delay this is so beneficial. I see the damage weekly, as I swim to the reef in Lanikai several times a week, and I know the creatures out

there. (SO FEW NOWADAYS!) The night fisherman have been coming and taking whatever is left, and it is getting sparser over the years. Now it's almost become that I just swim for exercise, knowing there isn't much left to see but dead coral. This is HEARTBREAKING! PLEASE stop allowing people to take from our reefs for their short term profit. We all are poorer because of it.

Name: Audrey Higbee	Email: halujazz@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:00 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia’aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is [your name] and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai’i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai’i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai’i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O’ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai’i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua’i, Hawai’i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; ‘Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne’ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu’u, Kāne’ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua’aina Ulu ‘Auamo; Ko’olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai’i; Sierra Club of Hawai’i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai’i’s waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name:

Neil Frazer

Email:

neilfrazer@icloud.com

Zip:

96734

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:02

PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters and Council Members,

I strongly support RES 26-159 because fish such as Yellow/Kole/Chevron Tang, and Orangespine Unicornfish, among others, are an integral part of the reef ecosystem. Forgive the jargon — what I mean to say is that those little guys eat things that need to be eaten and are eaten in turn by larger fish. Hawaii's reefs are now so stressed and depauperate, that we should do all we can to nurture and restore them.

If folks from abroad wish to admire our fish they should come here with snorkel and fins and admire them in their own element. Ever since it was created, Hanauma Bay has been wildly successful. Shouldn't that tell us something?

Name:

Topher Dean

Email:

topherdean1@gmail.com

Zip:

96719

Representing:

Clean the Pacific

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:26

PM

Testimony:

I want to support this bill on behalf of Clean The Pacific, an organization that cleans plastics and commercial fishing tackle from the coastline on North Kohala. I'm the founder of CTP and a surfer and environmental activist. I used to love to snorkel on our reefs when I was a kid, but now I can't bear it, because I remember the way it used to be. It used to be a swirling kaleidoscope of colorful fish swarming all around me. Yellow tang were so abundant, there was always several schools, each one containing hundreds of fish. It was truly one of the greatest blessings of being a citizen of Hawaii. Now, there's so few fish, it's just sad. It's not enough to keep the bare minimum of fish to prevent extinction of that species. A healthy coral reef community needs all of the inhabitants doing their jobs.

I wonder, what right does the commercial aquarium industry have to take my fish away? Why do I have to suffer loss so that a dentist in Iowa can have fish in his waiting room? I wasn't reimbursed in any way, not that there is a monetary figure I would ever except in place of my fish. I'm willing to share my fish with that dentist and the people in his waiting room, but I'm not willing to give them away. They can come here and see them, I'm fine with that, as long as they don't harass them or hurt them or the reef life in anyway. If they come to see my fish, I don't mind if they spend their money eating at locally owned restaurants and hotels. Just don't steal my fish. That's how I see it.

Of course, the people making tons of money taking my fish don't see it that way. They claim that they aren't my fish, they're nobody's fish. Well, if that's true, they aren't their fish either, are they. They don't own these fish. You know who owns these fish? Nobody. They are sentient beings living their lives the way they have for millions of years. These fish have a right to live their lives in freedom, the freedom to move about their environment, the freedom to find a mate and procreate. They don't deserve to be incarcerated for life for a crime they never committed. If these fish belong to anyone, let them belong to the Hawaiian people, ALL the people of Hawaii to enjoy. It used to be a beautiful world. Here's one small thing we can do to make it beautiful again.

Name: MATthew Gurewitsch	Email: matthew@alohaheights.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:30 PM

Testimony:

Aloha!

Mālama i ke kai, a mālama ke kai iā 'oe!

My wife and I moved to Hawaii 15 years ago, and we live here year round. Conditions permitting, we're out snorkeling every day. And we know from what we see in the water that fish stocks are plummeting. It's heart-breaking.

Some of the stressors are beyond the individual's and the community's control. But it's **not** beyond our control to protect our precious wildlife from the poachers of the aquarium trade. Can we stand idly by while millions of our reef animals are shipped off to aquarium hobbyists around the world? Especially when we know how few of these animals even survive the trip or flourish in the tanks of hobbyists unequipped to take proper care of them!

Experts tell me that fewer than 2 percent of Hawai'i residents own a saltwater aquarium, while polling shows overwhelming public support for permanently ending the aquarium trade. Yet poaching and black-market sales continue--at staggering cost to taxpayers. We suffer environmental degradation and bear the expense of management and enforcement, which is seldom effective or sufficient.

The measure before you is no silver bullet, but it's a step in the right direction. I urge you to give it your whole-hearted support, as it has mine. Aloha nui loa!

Name: Alicia Jelenkovic	Email: alicianeylon@gmail.com	Zip: 96778
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:39 PM
Testimony: The coral reefs in Hawaii seemingly have no fish compared to what it once was. We have no fish! We cannot support the harvesting and selling of our precious reef fish when I can hardly count 10 yellow tang on one swim. No more!		
Name: Scott Folsom	Email: sfolsom1@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 03:48 PM
Testimony: Over 20 top Hawaii marine scientists support the aquarium fishery: "As experienced Hawaii marine science researchers with a direct/intimate understanding of this issue, we find the disregard for the science-based management initiatives of DAR and island communities demoralizing and counterproductive. We expect better from DLNR leadership. We want to re-emphasize that the strong support we are expressing for this fishery is due entirely to the survey efforts and results of the DAR research team. There is a large body of data and other evidence showing that the aquarium fishery is sustainably managed and that the system works. This type of science-based management should be a model for other fisheries in Hawaii. The truth is out there; it needs to be embraced." Please do not pass this bill. Thank you Scott Folsom, MS, former researcher at Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology		
Name: Hanna Lilley	Email: hlilley@surfrider.org	Zip: 96816-1731
Representing: Surfrider Foundation	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 04:01 PM
Name: Mel Malinowski	Email: mel@malinowski.com	Zip: 96743
Representing: South Kohala Reef Alliance	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 04:14 PM
Testimony: It is better for us to keep Hawai'i's wild reef fish here for the benefit of our local people, and for the benefit of our visitors. The economic benefits of a ban are clear.		

Banning the export of this vital resource will also eliminate the collateral damage caused by the collectors to the reef. Our reefs are under many stresses now, including coral bleaching due to episodes caused by El Niño ocean warming. We cannot prevent this, but we can at least remove the stress caused by allowing the capture and exporting of our wild reef fish. We encourage you to pass this resolution.

Name: Jackie Moore-Andresen	Email: jackie@fair-wind.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Fair Wind Cruises	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 04:28 PM

Testimony:

On behalf of Fair Wind Cruises, a Big Island Family owned and operated Snorkel Charter Business operating for over 55 years, I am submitting Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT OF RES26-159

- Our reefs face increasing pressures from climate change, pollution, habitat degradation, and overfishing. Removing reef fish for the aquarium trade is an unnecessary additional stressor that our marine ecosystems can no longer afford.
- Fewer than 2 percent of Hawai'i residents own a saltwater aquarium, while polling shows overwhelming public support for permanently ending the trade.
- Illegal poaching and black-market sales of Hawai'i reef fish continue despite multiple criminal prosecutions.
- Taxpayers bear the environmental, management, and enforcement costs of an industry that primarily serves out-of-state and international markets.

Name: Martha Lane	Email: mardielane@gmail.com	Zip: 96785
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 04:33 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Honolulu City Council Members: Please, from the bottom of my heart, I ask that you support RES26-159. Hawaii's reef fish belong at home, in Hawaii, swimming wild and free in the Pacific Ocean. Hawaii's reef fish are sentient beings; they are essential to the health and future of Hawaii's ocean ecosystem. They bring immeasurable joy to residents and visitors who share time with them in their native habitat. It is time to STOP the insanity, the outright cruelty of harvesting them like a commercial commodity for the aquarium trade. Please support RES26-159. It is pono...it is the right thing to do. Mahalo, with aloha, Martha Lane

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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patrick marr	patmarr@me.com	96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 04:41 PM
Testimony: It is time to permanently ban the collection of fish and aquatic life for use in aquariums. In this age of diminishing natural resources and wildlife populations, this type of collection is a slap in the face to Mother Nature and the marine environment. It is time for humans to evolve and to avoid such collection for entertainment purposes. If hobbyists really want these types of creatures, they should figure out how to captivity breed them.		
Name: Dan Sabo	Email: dsabo73@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:00 PM
Testimony: Fish collecting is a luxury the earth can no longer afford. Fish can be bred and raised in captivity. Leave fish and their habitats alone.		
Name: Jeannette Heidrich	Email: jheidrich@mac.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:09 PM
Testimony: Please permanently ban the AQ trade from taking reef fish in Hawaii. We need the reef fish on the reef to keep our corals healthy. We need the reef fish for the local people and the tourist industry to enjoy. We need to be humane to the fish.		
Name: R A Culbertson	Email: dancingcloudrefuge@Gmail.com	Zip: 96776
Representing: Big Island Reef Keepers Hui	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:20 PM
Testimony: We are grateful for your Council's leadership on this issue. Earlier this year, Hawai'i Island County Council passed Resolution 422-25. Add to the list, more recently, Maui County Council and Kauai County Council. Three islands, Three councils. One clear message: keep the commercial aquarium collection banned permanently.		

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, with nearly 4,000 members, has made this a priority for the 2026 Legislative Package. Multiple organizations—including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawaiʻi County Council, Earthjustice, the Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club of Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi Reef and Ocean Coalition, and For the Fishes have all supported legislation to ban aquarium collection.

Most significantly, in April 2026, the Hawaiʻi First Circuit Environmental Court ruled that the BLNR and DLNR have the legal authority to enact a complete, statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection. The legal pathway is clear. The community support is unanimous across the islands. The science is irrefutable.

Resolution 26-159 is your opportunity to join Hawaiʻi Island and other County Councils in calling for permanent protection of our reefs. It honors our constitutional responsibility to safeguard natural resources, uphold the right to a healthy environment, and protect traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices.

Help us show the state that our island chain is linked with strong support for a long overdue reformed and rational marine conservation policy.

Hawaii's reef fish are not expendable ornaments for private fish tanks.

Indeed, reef fish are nature's top tools for reef health and recovery!

Mahalo nui loa!

R A Culbertson,
Member,
Big Island Reef Keepers Hui

Name: Jerome Harris	Email: jerome.harris@sunpet.com	Zip: 30316
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:23 PM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair Kiaʻaina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Jerome and I stand in OPPOSITION TO Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. I am in favor of sustainable, ecologically friendly fisheries which we so greatly need in Hawaii.

These resolutions are biased and prejudiced and form those who gain monetary funding to oppose the fishery from rich

outside influences. The BLNR is poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands, including O'ahu. These resolutions would go against sound science, sustainable fisheries, the EIS Environmental Review process, the 2026 Legislative decisions not to pass a ban: UN law, Federal Laws, State laws and Magnus Stevenson Act laws stating it is constitutional to ban sustainable fisheries. To do so would be biased and prejudicial.

Do not pass these resolutions and allow legal proceedings and lengthy environmental review processes to continue with the BLNR Chapter 91 rules.

DLNR, DAR, BLNR Presentation April 2024 Overview Conclusions:

"DAR does not find clear evidence to suggest that limited commercial aquarium fish harvest, as proposed in the RFEIS' preferred alternative, would adversely impact the long-term viability of target species populations. DAR also does not find clear evidence to suggest that the activity would result in any measurable declines in ecosystem health or resilience. Finally, DAR finds that existing and proposed management measures would most likely mitigate any potential negative effects of the fishery and provide sufficient safeguards against unforeseen changes in population or ecosystem status".

Link to Video of Presentation: <https://youtu.be/djItIsvg7qs?feature=shared>

Some ecology groups gain financially from the backing of billionaires who wish to own Hawaii's ocean and spread misinformation for financial gain. They get their money from unsustainable businesses, and while sustainable fisheries are shut down, they continue a huge misinformation campaign about fisheries and mislead public officials into making unconstitutional, biased, prejudiced, uneducated, anti-science, and anti-ecological, anti-sustainability decisions. Duping the public with one-sided presentations with the lies they have been perpetuating.

Tina Owens, executive director of the LOST FISH Coalition, Ecologist, Sustainable fishing advocate, and Member West Hawaii Fisheries Council says:

"A great deal of the "sky is falling" news you've heard about the reef recently is just plain not true. Clearly if the goal is to get rid of the aquarium fishery and management prevents that goal being reached, then discrediting the benefits and successes of management would seem the only way left to go. And so they have taken that path.

They have held community meetings and displayed a lot of false or twisted data, quoting from papers outdated by more than 15 years, and "re-interpreting" data from scientific papers. They have been telling people that "there are no fish left," which is patently untrue."

Hawaii's top leading marine biologists scientist speak : William Walsh Ph.D., Ivor Williams Ph.D., Brian Tissot Ph.D.; Leon Hallacher Ph.D.; Bruce Carlson Ph.D.; Charles Birkeland Ph.D.; Jeremy Claisse Ph.D.; Mark Christie Ph.D.; Richard Pyle Ph.D.; Leighton Taylor Ph.D.; Randy Kosaki Ph.D.; Cynthia Hunter Ph.D.; Brian Bowen Ph.D.; Brian Zgliczynski Ph.D.; Jeff Ebel Ph.D.; Alan Friedlander Ph.D.; Kosta Stamoulis Ph.D.; Delisse Ortiz Ph.D.; Jan Dierking Ph.D.; Rob Toonen Ph.D.; and Jim Beets Ph.D. Thursday, June 25, 2020,

"As experienced Hawaii marine science researchers with a direct/intimate understanding of this issue, we find the disregard for the science-based management initiatives of DAR and island communities demoralizing and counterproductive. We expect better from DLNR leadership. We want to re-emphasize that the strong support we are

expressing for this fishery is due entirely to the survey efforts and results of the DAR research team. There is a large body of data and other evidence showing that the aquarium fishery is sustainably managed and that the system works. This type of science-based management should be a model for other fisheries in Hawaii. The truth is out there; it needs to be embraced”.

“There were no significant differences in damaged coral between control and collected sites to indicate the presence of destructive fishing practices. In addition, there were no increases in the abundance of macroalgae where the abundance of herbivores was reduced by aquarium collecting”.

Supreme Court Of Hawaii Ruling in Favor of Environmental Review passage to Reopening West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery
Hawaii Attorney General: Unconstitutional to Ban AQ Fishery, BLNR Rules Package Ruling!

BLNR Vote 7-0 in favor of Rules Package to Reopen Fishery Oct. 2025

Governor David Ige, Vetoed 2017 SB1240 Aquarium Fishery Ban

SUZALINE D. CASE 2017 “The data indicate that the aquarium fishery is currently operating at a level that does not show significant population declines or major shifts in species diversity in areas where collecting occurs”.

Please OPPOSE Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Please read and educate yourselves regarding the issue and do the right thing for Hawaii, ecology, sustainability, and valuable peer-reviewed, proven sustainable fisheries!

Thank You & Best Regards,
Jerome H.

Name: Wendy Noritake	Email: wendynoritake@mac.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:33 PM

Testimony:

As an avid and almost daily swimmer/freediver in the waters of North Kohala for the past 11 years, I have seen the devastation and loss of our reef fish through climate change, pollution, and poaching. Even though a ban has been in place since 2017, I have not seen our reef fish replenish, in fact, they are declining. A number of them I no longer see at all. It's against the Hawaiian culture to exploit its natural resources for monetary and personal gain. These fish, many are endemic to Hawaii, cannot be found anywhere else on earth. Our taxpaying dollars should not be spent in trying to enforce the permitting for aquarium fish collecting. It would be better spent to go after poachers. I have never seen a DLNR or DAR boat in the waters of Kapaa Park, Mahukona, or Lapakahi checking permits or fish counts. How can they be effective if permitting is allowed? I just don't see how enforcement could take place.

I have grown to love and respect our reef fish and the marine life in our waters. They should be cherished and allowed to flourish so that visitors and future generations can appreciate and love them for how special they are to our state and part

of the world. Thank you for your consideration. -- Wendy Noritake

Name:

Mark Schacht

Email:

oceandem12@gmail.com

Zip:

94804

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 14, 2026 @ 05:46

PM

Testimony:

Honolulu should adopt the resolution to send a clear message that the most populous area of Hawaii demands effective protection of its reefs. Other jurisdictions, including the State Legislature, should follow suit. No one should profit from the decimation of this precious natural resource.

Name:

Joseph Culbertson

Email:

progreenery@gmail.com

Zip:

96749

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 14, 2026 @ 06:02

PM

Name:

Okyere Abankwah

Email:

kinqui2002@gmail.com

Zip:

60403

Representing:

Abanklaw Aquatics

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Jul 14, 2026 @ 06:44

PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board,

My name is Okyere Abankwah , and I respectfully oppose this measure. I support protecting Hawai'i's reefs, but this proposal is too broad and replaces science-based management with a blanket ban.

A better approach would be stronger oversight, better reporting, species-specific limits, and targeted restrictions where needed. That kind of management protects the marine environment while still allowing responsible, regulated activity.

The aquarium fishery is a complex issue, and the answer should be careful conservation, not an all-or-nothing prohibition. If the state believes changes are needed, those changes should be based on data, monitoring, and enforceable rules—not on shutting down an entire fishery.

Please reject this measure and pursue balanced, science-driven protection for Hawai'i's marine resources.

Mahalo for your time.

Name: Lisa Bishop	Email: lisa.fohb@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Friends of Hanauma Bay	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 06:56 PM
Name: Bonnie `Ohana Bator, Keana`aina, Keli`ikoa, Kai`aokamalie Kai	Email: recallbherenow@hotmail.com	Zip: 96703
Representing: `Ohana	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 07:05 PM

Testimony:

14 July 2026

RE RESOLUTION 26-159

Aloha Honorable Honolulu City Council Members,

We support this Resolution to ban commercial aquarium collection on O`ahu and across Hawai`i Nei.

Since the 1970's - A`ue this not pau . . .

The greed . . .

Please pa`a - make Pono - Mālama nā i`a o nā o nā hāpapa

Ke one o Kākuhihewa with Hawai`i, land of Keawe answers Pi`ilani and help of Manoikalanipō lends support

Adoption of Resolution No. 26-159 to ban Commercial Aquarium Collection; and urging the BLNR / DLNR to finally protect the kinolau of Kanaloa - precious reef fish of Hawai`i Nei.

Our concern: Cultural and Environmental as Hawai`i National, Native Hawaiian Kanaka - practitioners - whom adhere to honor and Mahalo the fish of the reef whom are kinolau of Kanaloa.

Pilau : Commercial Aquarium Collector's of fish; pohō - exploitation of ancestral resources for profit.

Collector's profit to export fish to the continental United States is abhorrent, unacceptable and criminal.

Their greed - regarding losing their profits e.g. form of job: exploitation of reef fish of Hawai'i Nei is pathetic - as it presents self-gain for exploitation during times of great upheaval of reefs under siege - Leave Alone Reef Fish!

The Governor Josh Green, ALL County Council's, Legislators of the Hawaii State Legislature, all Mayors and Council Chairpersons within Hawaii and most especially, the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; please enforcement against this archaic hewa!

Mahalo for protection of the Aquatic Life of O`ahu and Hawai'i Nei from the bane of Commercial Aquarium Purposes for profit.

Please prevent the alarming catastrophic collapse of reef fisheries by
The greedy!!!!

Mahalo Piha !

Sincere Aloha

`Ohana Bator, Keana`aina, Keli`ikoa, Kai`aokamalie, & Kai

Name: Patricia Cadiz	Email: pbc5@mac.com	Zip: 96779
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 07:16 PM

Testimony:

I enthusiastically support PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM STATE OF HAWAI'I MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES.

Did you know that reefs are the main producer of sand? Did you know that reef fish are essential to a healthy reef? Did you know that reefs and beach sand are Nature's way of protecting our shorelines against sea level rise?

Please support this vital resolution!

Name: Mike Rudenko	Email: docinferno@yahoo.com	Zip: 96755
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Jul 14, 2026 @ 07:17 PM
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Testimony:

Aloha City Council,

Please hear the voices of the people and work to stop aquarium collection of reef fishes once and for all! Enough is enough! Numerous scientific studies show the devastating effect of aquarium collection on the reef, this barbaric and outdated practice does not benefit anyone except for a handful of individuals most of whom aren't even Hawaii state residents!!

Please do whatever it takes and STOP it forever!

Regards,

Mike Rudenko

Hawi, Hawaii Island

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Doug Fetterly	fett4paz@gmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Jul 14, 2026 @ 08:08 PM

Testimony:

I find it difficult to fathom that anyone who cares about our reefs would support the aquarium trade. Stop it!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Earl Kim	mothra246@yahoo.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Jul 14, 2026 @ 08:55 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is [your name] and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i

State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Elizabeth Madin	Email: epmadin@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 09:02 PM

Testimony:

I submit these comments in my individual capacity as a private citizen and based on my extensive experience researching marine ecosystems and fish population dynamics in Hawai'i and the Pacific region. I am hopeful that my testimony may help inform consideration of this resolution.

Biomass and ecosystem condition indicate that O'ahu's present day reefs are highly degraded (Friedlander & DeMartini 2002 [e.g., Fig. 3; Table 2]; Williams et al. 2015 [e.g., Fig. 4]) and Specifically, total reef fish biomass has been found to be depleted by 20% to 78% in the main Hawaiian Islands, and O'ahu ranks lowest among all 39 islands and atolls surveyed (i.e., 78% depletion). There is a large gap between actual versus expected reef fish biomass under a no-human scenario, demonstrating how far O'ahu's current baseline has shifted (Williams et al. 2015), a result recently supported specifically for herbivores by Donovan et al. (2023).

The true ecological impact of renewed aquarium fishery extraction on already-struggling ecosystems must be considered when evaluating the likely ecological impacts of removing more fish from our reefs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Name: Kathleen Provazek	Email: proviva22@gmail.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 09:18 PM

Testimony:

I support this bill because it is absolutely the right thing to do, to protect our reef fish from exploitation. I can't imagine anyone in Hawaii wanting to sell off our beautiful reef fish for profit. I'm a long time snorkeler and so appreciate that lawmakers are willing to preserve the reefs and the fellow creatures that inhabit this fragile environment. Thank you for listening.

Name: michelle rainville	Email: rainshell@me.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 14, 2026 @ 09:34 PM

Testimony:

Aloha-

I am in the ocean nearly every day and I would describe the reef areas near me as barren of reef fish. This is not right. Enough is enough. Extraction of Hawai'i natural resources such as reef fish must stop. We need multiple Marine Protection Areas around every island to allow our reef fish to return to normal populations, if they can, with the additional pressures from sea warming and acidification they are facing. No more aquarium fish collecting in Hawai'i. Please make it permanent because the additional pressures mentioned above are not going away in our lifetimes. Thank you

Name: Cyndy Urry	Email: cwurry@yahoo.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:20 AM

Testimony:

AGENDA ITEM: RES26-159 I support this agenda.

Name: Jake Phillips	Email: Jake@thebiotagroup.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: The Biota Group	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 04:12

		AM
Name: Catherine Courtney	Email: kittyc8571@gmail.com	Zip: 96734-3115
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 04:35 AM
Testimony: I strongly support this resolution to tell DLNR to PERMENANTLY maintain the ban on the harvest of aquarium fish and to close this industry down. The resolution accurately lays out the value these herbivorous fish play on Hawaiian reefs and the many harms of this industry to socio-ecological systems.		
Name: M Moran	Email: mmmmahalo2000@aol.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 06:33 AM
Testimony: Please support to protect our natural resources. Mahalo		
Name: Keith Christie	Email: keithc@snorkelbob.com	Zip: 96768
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 06:40 AM
Testimony: I strongly oppose the commercial collection of fish from our reefs for the aquarium trade. The time to end this damaging industry is now. The reefs of Hawaii are disappearing before our own eyes, and the fish that are part of our reefs need to be left on the reefs if we have any hope of saving them. The fish and corals make up an ecosystem that is 'all one', and it is our duty to protect them for the generations to follow us. Close Hawaii to reef fish extraction for the horrible aquarium trade. Keep our fish on our reefs. Keith Christie		
Name: ginger edmunds	Email: ginger@danafoto.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 06:55

		AM
Testimony: I am in support of RES26-159 to keep the reef fish in our oceans. Our reef and oceans are suffering enough and we should be doing all we can to protect the fish and reefs. These tropical fish belong in their natural habitat, not a fish tank! Thank you, Ginger Edmunds		
Name: Jill Zamzow	Email: jzamzow@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 07:20 AM
Name: Charles Young	Email: kealia.mauka@gmail.com	Zip: 96726
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 07:47 AM
Testimony: Aloha Kakou: My name is Charles Young. I reside in Kealia on Hawaii Island. I am a lifelong free diver who gathered reef fish for home consumption. As a subsistence fisher I have stood in opposition to the collection of reef fish in Hawaii for the aquarium fish trade industry. I have submitted testimony and comments in opposition to this practice going as far back as 1998. More recently I have appeared before the BLNR and State Legislature in support of ending any further collection for the Aquarium fish trade. My concern is rooted in my cultural beliefs that such practices are not compatible with and/or erode the gathering practices of Hawaiians as protected in the State Constitution Article XII Section VII. The DLNR continues to minimize the importance of these protections as evidenced by its poor record of completing a proper Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Āina Analysis as required by the Hawaii Supreme Court's ruling in its 2000 Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Āina vs State Land Board decision. Moreover, the 1953 Territory Of Hawaii legislation that legalized Aquarium Fish Collection specifically notes that food fish are not to be targeted. In my experience in West Hawaii the top three fish collected by the Aquarium Trade were all documented food fish and it was not until recently that the DLNR delisted those fish after years of protests from the Hawaiian community. For me this demonstrates that the Aquarium Fish trade has little or no knowledge of Hawaiian gathering practices and that the State has failed in its duty to protect those practices and seems to demonstrate its bias for continuing the practice at a time when our marine resources are in peril and the general public has spoken loudly in support of ending the further collection of fish for the Aquarium Fish trade. In regard to its duties to protect our Public Trust the DLNR is reminded that nearly 100% of the fish collected for Aquarium use is sold out of state and as such very little benefit accrues to our communities. These kinds of extractive practices		

should be discouraged as permitted practices for use of our Public Trust.

I strongly support Reso 26 159 and Reso 26 160.

Name:

Casey Takayama

Email:

jizake@hotmail.com

Zip:

96795

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:01
AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Casey Takayama and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name:

Email:

Zip:

Carol Defazio	loracarol321@gmail.com	96719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:01 AM
Testimony: Please stop all reef collection in Hawaii for commercial use by the aquarium trade.		
Name: Uilani Naipo	Email: uilani.naipo@me.com	Zip: 96720
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:04 AM
Name: Rene Umberger	Email: rene@forthefishes.org	Zip: 96753
Representing: For the Fishes	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:24 AM
Name: linda willaby	Email: lwparisfrance@hotmail.com	Zip: 96778
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:28 AM
Testimony: I support permanently banning commercial aquarium collecting for the health of our reef system. Hawaii's reef fish are valuable to Hawaii in many ways and should stay here on our reef and not shipped away. First, the lives of our fish are important, second, reef fish contribute to a healthy reef ecosystem, third, many tourists come here to snorkel and a healthy ocean with vibrant coral and beautiful fish in the water are what they want to see.		
Name: Elizabeth McDermott	Email: 374hema@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:38 AM
Testimony: I write in strong support of re 26-159 urging BLNR to direct DAR to adopt rules that would prohibit the collection of our aquatic life for the aquarium trade.		

Our coral reefs are suffering enough already from a multitude of assaults from ocean warming and acidification on account of climate change, runoff like we experienced during the recent kona lows. over tourism and more.

The overwhelming majority of Hawaii residents want our reef fish on our reefs, helping to keep our reef system healthy, not shipped off to some overseas hotel lobby as a decoration. Most of the fish die in transport or soon after.

I swim almost every day off shore. It's been a rough recovery since our kona low storms. This is not the time, if ever, to roll out the welcome mat to the commercial kidnapping of our colorful island fish!

One of the main reasons I love ocean swimming is the joy of seeing all of our beautiful tropical fish! We banned this before. Don't know why we would ever consider opening this commercial trade up again, which we would not in any way have the capacity to monitor against unscrupulous collectors

Thanks for your concern and efforts to forward their protection

Beth McDermott

Name: Lynn Allen	Email: maui.acudoc@gmail.com	Zip: 92084
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:50 AM

Testimony:

There is no logical reason not to ban the aquarium trade. The economic toll alone should be enough to ban the trade. However, with the rising pressures of climate change, continued removal of these fish is not warranted and again should be reason enough. We are to be stewards of the land and sea and should act accordingly.

Name: Thomas Lim	Email: thomaslimipad2@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:50 AM

Name: Mary Tubbs	Email: malaioflanikai@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:51 AM

Name: lexa grutter	Email: a.grutter@uq.edu.au	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:55 AM
Testimony: Hello, Please support RES26-159 to ban aquariums fish collecting. Collecting wild fish merely for viewing them in aquariums (where most die quickly) and when most of these fish are at great risk from so many other outside pressures goes against our values and needs in Hawaii where nature is one of its greatest asset. Please protect our wild fish for future generations. They contribute so much to the rest of the reef ecosystem and island. Sincerely, Lexa Grutter		
Name: Deja Ostrowski	Email: dejaos@oha.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: Office of Hawaiian Affairs	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 08:57 AM
Name: Daniel Cottrell	Email: dcotttell@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 09:13 AM
Testimony: I strongly oppose this bill.		
Name: Sherry Marek	Email: alohamarek@outlook.com	Zip: 96719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 09:19 AM
Testimony:		

Aloha,

The majority of residents and registered voters, statewide, want commercial Aquarium collection banned in Hawaii.

In every county. Yes, including the county you live in!

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek

Name: Waltraut Mori	Email: amori@chaminade.edu	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 09:20 AM

Testimony:

Please stop this harmful practice of harvesting fishes from Hawaiian reefs. It is harmful to the environment and harmful to these beautiful creatures. I wonder how many do not survive the harvesting and shipping to distance places. We are better than this.

Name: Caroline Azelski	Email: RES26159@azelski.net	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 09:45 AM

Testimony:

This industry is not in alignment with good ocean stewardship.

It is a detrimental industry on environmental, management, and enforcement fronts.

Most of the removed fish die within a short timeframe therefore most citizens of the state do not benefit from this industry.

Name: Mahesh Cleveland	Email: mcleveland@earthjustice.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Earthjustice	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 09:57 AM

Name: Pauline Fiene	Email: pauline@mikesevernsdiving.com	Zip: 96793
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:22 AM
Testimony: Please stop the extraction of wildlife from our reefs. Surely every resident is aware of the decline of our reefs due to coral bleaching events and pollutants entering the ocean from our activities on land. These fish are needed to perform their many roles for the health of the entire reef. Extracting them for a very few consumers on the mainland screams mis-management. Thank you for your time on this important subject.		
Name: Eric Koch	Email: hawaiianfisherman@proton.me	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:25 AM
Testimony: I strongly oppose the county councils involving themselves in this matter. My family and I rely on this fishery to sustain our families and we were unfairly attacked by international environmental activists in the sierra club and earth justice. They sued the state demanding HEPA 343 to disclose the impact despite the impact being clearly stated by the states own coral reef ecologists. Unfortunately the courts didn't see an issue with disclosure so they ruled in favor of the activists. We went through this multi year process and ultimately we prevailed because the facts are with us. The scientists are right, this fishery has little to no impact, it's highly renewable, and without a doubt it's sustainable. Using resources in a sustainable manner is Akamai and allows for locals to earn a living in a positive way. The Kauai city council should be ashamed of themselves. Mrs Fern gave a presentation from the activists as if that's the expert opinion on the subject matter. She PURPOSEFULLY disregarded what the DAR/DLNR agency has on record stated. She didn't take in to consideration that every credible phd coral reef ecologist has on record stated this is the most well managed fishery in the state! Why is that? How can decision makers disregard the states own experts who manage the resource? Are we to believe that a county council member is more credible and knowledgeable than experts trained in this field? We have a current rules making process that's several years in the making. It further regulates the fishery beyond what's reasonable or necessary yet the fishermen are willing to live with it. These activists cannot. They are refusing MANAGEMENT. Management of an already sustainable fishery. Is this county council going to join the extreme voices in this dialogue, disregard science, seek no input from DAR, go against management and destroy local families lives over nothing? I hope this council can do their due diligence, act more rational and measured in how they conduct the business of the people. Please do not pass this resolution, let the experts handle it, let the process the activists demanded play out. Do not interfere in something you're not fully informed on. Mahalo Eric Ka'ū, HI		

Name: John Fernley	Email: tropdiver1951@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:37 AM
Testimony: Council Members, The small aquarium fishery has proven again and again that it is sustainable through many years of study. Opponents have used deception and misinformation in their quest to shut down the fishery. Please do not allow them to sway your vote on this issue. Randy Fernley / Aiea HI		
Name: Garry Russell	Email: garryscuba@yahoo.com	Zip: 96704
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:41 AM
Testimony: I have been living on the Big Island for over 20 years as a dive master and have witnessed plenty of destruction from people collecting fish for aquariums. I have seen huge nets thrown out that have harmed the coral. There have been several instances where people have been threatened by parties that have exercised the process of collecting fish for aquariums.		
Name: Diane Ware	Email: volcanogetaway@yahoo.com	Zip: 96785
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:44 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee, My name is Diane Ware writing from Moku o Ka'u 96785 and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters. These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a		

process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Todd Shoraki	Email: C2CFishingSupply@gmail.com	Zip: 96750
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:44 AM

Testimony:
Please oppose this ban. The state already is dealing with this fishery. Let the process play out.

Name: Natalie Graham-Wood	Email: ngrahamwood@hotmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 10:58 AM

Testimony:
I support RES26-159. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I reside at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

Name: Kū'ike Kamakea-'Ōhelo	Email: kuike.farmaloha@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:01 AM
Name: Jai Cox	Email: jaicox363@gmail.com	Zip: 96772
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:03 AM
Testimony: Aloha council Members my name is Jai Cox I'm a fisherman on Big Island. And I believe that the state is meant to handle this matter, I ask that the council should be in support of the management and science, not seeking bands on a sustainable resource. I also ask why Kauai city council didn't speak with DAR or consult with the expert scientists. Respect the process, support fishermen support reasonable resource usage like found in this AQ fishery. Mahalo.		
Name: Eric Moennich	Email: eric.moennich@yahoo.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:17 AM
Testimony: I strongly oppose this resolution. Fisheries should be managed and regulated but not closed. Please don't close this fishery.		
Name: Nick Ramirez	Email: surfgood@hotmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:41 AM
Testimony: I oppose the resolution that prohibits commercial aquarium fishing. Honolulu City council is to allow the State to handle the matter of Commercial Aquarium Fishing. The state DLNR and DAR have documented studies proving that Commercial Aquarium Fishing is a sustainable resource with a management plan. Because the Honolulu City Council and Kauai City Council has not discussed this with the experts at DAR first, both councils need to explain what the reason was for this resolution. My suggestion for the Honolulu City Council is to have respect for the work of the DAR and allow DAR to manage the commercial aquarium fishing; also to support responsible and sustainable use of the land resources which		

the Commercial Aquarium Fishery does.

Name:

Dre Kalili

Email:

dreanalee@aohcc.org

Zip:

96813

Representing:

Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:47
AM

Name:

Steven Petranik

Email:

spetranik@gmail.com

Zip:

96734

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:57
AM

Name:

Ann Auman

Email:

auman@hawaii.edu

Zip:

96734

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:58
AM

Name:

Zett Amora

Email:

orderdesk33@gmail.com

Zip:

96743

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 12:09
PM

Testimony:

Our natural resources should be top priority. The ecosystem of our coastal areas has greatly suffered due to the misuse and mismanagement practices of the past decades. PLEASE!!! I urge you to support this measure prohibiting the harvesting of our ocean's wildlife for financial gain and frivolous adornments for a privileged few.

Mahalo, Zettelyss Daily ocean swimmer for over 22 years, along the Kohala Coastline.

Name:

Lon Wallace

Email:

lon_wallace@hotmail.com

Zip:

96743-4684

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 12:15
PM

Testimony:

Aloha~

I am writing today to offer full support of and sincere urging for passing the resolution bill regarding banning the

aquarium gathering business here in our islands. I am a long-time resident of West Hawaii island, and avid waterman. Through the decades, I have personally seen and experienced the grossly imbalanced impact this industry has had on our reef fish, from witnessing the large haul outs at Kawaihae Harbor with their collateral damage to more importantly the intense diminishing of the various populations out on our reefs. It was and is clearly an unsustainable practice that has negatively impacted the health of the waters and reef and clearly disturbed the ecological balance. Since the temporary ban went into effect around 2016, I and many others who use the waters for recreational, health and spiritual benefit have seen a slow but notable come back, even with the poachers still out there. It is FAR from back to a fully healthy, balanced state, especially with the added stressor of coral bleaching we have experienced, but the improvement is obvious and a very and welcomed and needed change. We desperately need to keep Hawaii's fish in our waters for the continued health and restoration of the reef, and for all those locals and tourists who enjoy and derive benefit on many levels from their presence and corresponding healthy reef; not be taken for the relatively very few who want to capitalize on their removal for monetary gains with no regard for the negative impact they generate and short-sighted damage they leave behind.

Mahalo nui loa,
Lon Wallace, PhD.
Kamuela, Hawaii

Name:	Email:	Zip:
James Schulz	jvicschu@gmail.com	96719
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Jul 15, 2026 @ 12:22 PM

Testimony:
Brief fish are a precious natural resource. We should do our best to alleviate threats from their existence.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Catherine Goeggel	oAnghusa@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Animal Rights Hawaii	Support	Jul 15, 2026 @ 12:37 PM

Testimony:
Aloha Members of the Zoning Committee,
Mahalo for considering Resolution S26-159 &160
The health of our reefs is in peril, due to climate change, pollution and the aquarium industry. Our reefs depend upon the herbivorous fishes who groom the corals and protect the shore. The frailty of our ocean is obvious on the north shore and in Lanikai. People come to Hawai'i to enjoy the beauty- Snorkelers of the future may be shocked to see desolate bleached corals- not a pretty sight.
Please do not allow the taking of our fishes -so many do not survive the transport, and that means more and more fish are

crammed into plastic bags to be shipped across the world.

Name:

Elena Bryant

Email:

bryant.elena@gmail.com

Zip:

96744-2730

Representing:

Kaneohe Bay Regional Council

Position:

I wish to comment

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 12:55

PM

Name:

Susan Davis

Email:

sdavismusicgal@icloud.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 12:58

PM

Testimony:

With the coming devastation predicted for Hawaii's coral reefs from this year's mega-El Nino it is absolutely imperative that the Division of Aquatic Resources takes every measure it can to protect Hawaii's precious coral reefs. A critical step in this process is outlawing the collection of aquarium fish.

Severe El Niño-driven ocean heatwaves are predicted to push Hawaii's corals into severe bleaching as early as August, reaching widespread Alert Level 1 by October. The heat is expected to suppress larval fish development, reduce plankton for corals to eat, and cause widespread mortality similar to the catastrophic 2015 event. Hawaii Island's western leeward side is predicted to bear the brunt of the 2026 El Niño heatwave, putting its famous shallow reefs at critical risk.

Nearshore waters across the state have already spiked to an unusual 83°F. Because the "Super" El Niño is forecast to peak in early winter and potentially last into 2027, the long-term impact on Hawaii Island's unique coral ecosystems faces a multi-pronged threat:

On top of this devastating news, NOAA forecasts a 70% chance of an above-normal Pacific hurricane season. Strong swells from passing storms physically fracture fragile corals, while subsequent flash flooding washes lethal freshwater, mud, and land pollutants directly onto nearby reef ecosystems.

Hawaii's reefs are still trying to recover from the massive global bleaching event that stretched from 2023 to 2025. This rapid return of extreme heat completely disrupts the 9-to-12-year window that corals desperately need to heal and regrow.

Please do all that you can to protect Hawaii's reefs and ocean resources and permanently ban aquarium collection from our waters.

Name:

Dan Harrang

Email:

danharrang@yahoo.com

Zip:

96793

Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 01:07 PM
Testimony: Having worked for 17 years as a federal Officer inspecting items conveyed through multiple airports throughout Hawaii I am opposed to the aquarium collection trade. This practice benefits very few at the cost of all. It's bad enough that many specimens arrive to their destination, deceased; even worse that with the removal of species, the entire ecosystem becomes more prone towards collapse. Clearly evaluating the cost:benefit analysis leaves prohibition of collecting tropical fish as the next right step. Thank you.		
Name: David Ramos	Email: hawn.reefdwellers@gmail.com	Zip: 96786
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 01:33 PM
Testimony: Aloha, My name is Dave Ramos and a 30 year veteran of AQ fishing. Do your research first before you try to persuade others that this industry is a very sustainable one		
Name: Malia Mackenzie	Email: MaliaM777@proton.me	Zip: 96778
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 01:38 PM
Testimony: Aloha Council members, I fully support this bill to stop aquarium collecting. For the past two decades I have witnessed first hand the devastating effects of this industry that strips the life from our reefs for profit. Time is running out for our precious fish populations and they need us to make the changes so they can survive for generations to come. I humbly ask on their behalf for your support to protect Hawai'i's native reef fish.		
Name: Malia Mackenzie	Email: MaliaM777@proton.me	Zip: 96778
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 01:46 PM
Testimony:		

Aloha members of the BLNR,

I am asking you to halt aquarium collecting in the Hawaiian Islands. For the last 20 years I have witnessed the devastating effects of this industry first hand on the reefs of Hawai'i Island. The time to put real protections in place is now or our precious native reef fish populations will not survive. It's time to act and I hope I and the fish can count on your support.

Name:

James Hopkins

Email:

jth49@icloud.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 01:54
PM

Testimony:

Aloha Council Members—my wife and I are full time residents in North Kohala on the Big Island. We write to express our strong support for Resolution RES26-159 and RES26-160.

The reasons and need for a state wide ban on the harvesting of reef fish for the aquarium trade are beyond any reasonable dispute. Simply put the aquarium trade:

-Kills, injures and maims reef fish.

-Dooms those that survive capture to a short, unhealthy and miserable life.

-Harms corals and other species with whom reef fish have a beneficial relationship.

-Degrades the marine environment and is wholly contrary to Hawaii's environmental stewardship and care of the 'aina.

-Is a trade with no future that benefits only a very select few and costs far more to regulate than tax or fee revenue it would generate.

Legislation banning the aquarium trade is the solution.

Name:

Mark Johnson

Email:

markajohnson0@gmail.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 01:58
PM

Testimony:

I urge you to ban the collecting of our reef fish for the aquarium trade. All reef fish are critical parts of the reef ecosystems, and our precious coral reefs are under enough stress, without the harvesting of fish to benefit a few

individuals.

Name:

Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe

Email:

esta.asi24@gmail.com

Zip:

96822

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:02

PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony

Sincerely,

Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe		
Name: Suzanne Mankoff	Email: smankoff@yahoo.com	Zip: 96743
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:12 PM
Testimony: How often have we citizens of Hawaii had to write to our leaders to provide testimony in support the prohibition of aquarium fishing from Hawaii's unique and vital waters? Why are we litigating this subject again and again when it is so clear that commercial aquarium fishing does nothing but harm our environment and our state? Who wins from this trade? Certainly not the people of Hawaii and obviously not the wonderful fauna and flora that surround our shores - neither environmentally, nor economically, nor morally, in any way. Please prohibit commercial aquarium fishing in Hawaii!!		
Name: Klaus Radtke	Email: klaus.wh.radtke@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: alohahawaiiionipaa org	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:16 PM
Testimony: Aloahawaiiionipaa strongly supports your vitally needed Resolution 26-159 that urges both the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and the Hawai'i State Legislature to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters. Klaus Radtke, Exec. Secretary Aloahawaiiionipaa org		
Name: Nina Monasevitch	Email: oceanmana@hawaiiintel.net	Zip: 96766
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:22 PM
Testimony: SUPPORT RES26-159 Aloha Honorable Honolulu County Council Members, I am a 48 year Kauai resident who has been actively ocean swimming, SCUBA diving, and snorkeling here since 1978. The		

changes I have seen in the marine environment are nothing short of shocking and heartbreaking. The water used to be blue, clear and full of fish, vibrant corals, a large variety of Nudibranchs and live sea shells. Now there are a fraction of fish, and they are very small, the water is murky green, the few remaining corals are dead, or very unhealthy, and everything is covered in a muck—no doubt from too many hotels, condos, huge vacation rentals, ostentatious homes—all too close to the shore line.

The lack of fish is alarming. Aquarium extraction and overfishing is the cause of fish depletion. Illegal poaching and black-market sales of Hawai'i reef fish continue despite multiple criminal prosecutions.

Please take care of our fragile ocean ecosystem and Island by banning aquarium fishing through supporting RES26-159.

A living reef gives our Islands life. Malama Pono!

Mahalo,
Nina Monasevitch
Lihue

Name: Crista Francis	Email: cristafrancis@gmail.com	Zip: 96719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:31 PM

Testimony:
I wholeheartedly support this measure to restrict the collecting of aquarium fish. I am an avid ocean lover/swimmer and am sickened over the aquarium trade in general. Fish belong in the sea, for the health and beauty of the ocean which sustains ALL life. Please can we stop exploiting its creatures!!
Sincerely,
Crista Francis

Name: Godfrey Akaka	Email: 88akaka@gmail.com	Zip: 96729
Representing: The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:34 PM

Testimony:
We oppose the ban of Aquarium fishing in Hawaii of a resource that has been proven through science that the Aquarium fishery is sustainable. Why did the council not meet with DAR to gather more credible info instead of basing its decision on emotional popular politics? The ban of an entire sustainable fishery is the first step for extreme climate change fanatics to

ban additional sustainable fisheries in the future. We strongly oppose. Mahalo.

Name:

Hannah Eagle

Email:

hannaheagle@gmail.com

Zip:

96719

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:52

PM

Testimony:

Please pass this legislation so to keep our coral reef wildlife here, on our reefs in Hawaii Islands for the benefit of present and future generations. This is vital to our ocean's healthy environment.

Thank you,

Hannah Eagle

Name:

Mo Radke

Email:

moradke@gmail.com

Zip:

96744

Representing:

Kaneohe Neighborhood Board

Position:

I wish to comment

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 02:54

PM

Name:

Sunshine Eckstrom

Email:

silvercanyonequine@gmail.com

Zip:

96712-9417

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 03:11

PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Please support Resolution 26-159 to finally end the threat of aquarium collection. Our waters, reefs and aquatic species must be better protected. Our coral reefs are already damaged and need help, not further destruction. Protect our reef-critical fish species from being stolen from their habitat for profit. Most of them die after being captured and the toll on our aquatic ecosystems is incalculable. We need better management, not more exploitation!

Mahalo

Name:

Gabriela Schneider

Email:

stereogab@gmail.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Jul 15, 2026 @ 03:22

PM

Testimony:

I urge the Council to support the measure to have a permanent end on commercial aquarium collection. This is a common-sense resolution to protect the sanctity of ocean life. Millions of Hawai'i reef animals have been taken from our reefs and shipped to aquarium hobbyists around the world. There has never been greater urgency to keep Hawai'i's coral reef wildlife where it is needed most—on our reefs—for the benefit of present and future generations.

The facts have never been clearer:

- Our reefs face increasing pressures from climate change, pollution, habitat degradation, and overfishing. Removing reef fish for the aquarium trade is an unnecessary additional stressor that our marine ecosystems can no longer afford.
- Fewer than 2 percent of Hawai'i residents own a saltwater aquarium, while polling shows overwhelming public support for permanently ending the trade.
- Illegal poaching and black-market sales of Hawai'i reef fish continue despite multiple criminal prosecutions.
- Taxpayers bear the environmental, management, and enforcement costs of an industry that primarily serves out-of-state and international markets.

Please stand with local communities, Native Hawaiian values, and the long-term protection of Hawai'i's reefs. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Res26-159.

Sincerely,
Gabriela Schneider, North Kohala

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Bohlen	tbohl8@yahoo.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Jul 15, 2026 @ 03:24 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Helena Kim	helenainlight@yahoo.com	96755
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Jul 15, 2026 @ 03:25 PM

Testimony:

Only 1% of all harvested tropical fish makes to its final destination. It's greed that will eventually bring the demise of our beautiful ocean. In the past 25 years of avid swimming I have noticed significant decrease of the tropical fish. So imagine if we continue to allow the harvesting of the fish, what would happen? Please consider the long-term effects we are having on the ocean. It is already too polluted with various "modern" problems including the global warming effects, let's not add any more. Thank you!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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Sharon Esser	sharonle1212@gmail.com	96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 03:26 PM
Testimony: I am a lifelong resident of Hawai'i and have lived in Kailua since 1964. I strongly support RES26-159 to protect the fish and wildlife that remain in our increasingly depleted coastal waters. As someone who swims regularly in these waters, I have personally seen the decline. Even compared with just one year ago, there are noticeably fewer fish. This firsthand experience reinforces the need to act now before the damage becomes irreversible. Our oceans are part of Hawai'i's natural heritage. We must not allow short-term commercial interests to further degrade the marine ecosystems that sustain our communities and make these islands so special. I respectfully urge you to support RES26-159.		
Name: Lisa Cates	Email: lisa.k.cates@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 03:55 PM
Testimony: Aloha Councilmembers, A permanent ban, through rulemaking or legislation, will have negative, unintended consequences on the future of all Hawai'i's fisheries and those that rely on them for subsistence, cultural practice, and means to support their families. DAR presentations and legislative briefs report the aquarium fishery as "highly regulated" and "sustainable", and based on science and data, State scientists have determined that reopening the aquarium fishery will have low environmental impact. The permitting framework under review limits the number of permits the state can issue, limits the species of fish that can be collected, and provides a hard upper limit on the total number of each species that can be harvested annually for each region. DAR has developed an extensive, long-term monitoring program for reef fish populations and the commercial aquarium fishery, with decades of data and catch reports, fish population surveys, and trend data to support the re-opening. Global studies, conducted in the Philippines, are often cited suggesting high mortality rates for aquarium fish (98%). However, these estimates are derived from different fisheries and methods not used in Hawai'i and should be viewed with caution. Studies conducted in Hawai'i have determined that collectors using controlled decompression and		

appropriate venting methods have extremely low, single-digit percentage mortality rates. Delivery and sale of dead, injured, or unhealthy fish would end the industry without rulemaking or legislation.

Harvesting of fish for commercial purposes is a common use in Hawai'i - we export most of our subsistence catch which represents the majority of fish taken from our waters. Our State needs to support economic diversity and professions that can earn a living wage. Some of the aquarium fishermen and their families have invested everything into equipment, boats, gear, and an EIS. Some are Native Hawaiian generational aquarium collectors that received their knowledge and skills from their parents and grandparents, and they hope to pass it down to their children. Are their Hawaiian values and protections under the State Constitution irrelevant because they don't kill the fish they harvest? Fish are "subsistence" even if it provides the means to feed your 'ohana and support your community.

Finally, closing down a scientifically-proven, sustainable fishery because advocates perceive the trade as cruel will open the door for the next fishery closure. Perceptions of cruel harvest, such as handlines, long-liners, akule surround nets, or anything else is threatened under this precedent. Please support all lawai'a, livable wages, economic diversity, and sustainable fisheries. Please don't pass this resolution. Mahalo!

Name: Maki Morinoue	Email: info@hulihi.com	Zip: 96725
Representing: HULI PAC	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 04:01 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Honolulu City Council,

My name is Maki Morinoue, and I am testifying on behalf of HULI PAC in strong support of AGENDA ITEM: RES26-159 and AGENDA ITEM: RES26-160. Resolution 26-159 urges the Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules, and Resolution 26-160 urges the State Legislature to enact legislation.

Honolulu City Council has an opportunity to become the fourth county council in Hawai'i this year to call for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection. By passing these resolutions, the Council can help build momentum ahead of the Board's decision and send a clear message that O'ahu residents support permanent protection for Hawai'i's reef wildlife.

Kauai County passed Resolution No. 20026-21 this month, which urges the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes. Hawai'i Island County Council passed Resolution 422-25, and Maui County Council passed Resolution 26-53, both unanimously calling for a statewide ban. Three islands. Three councils. One clear message: keep the commercial aquarium collection banned permanently. Now, all islands are looking to Oahu to pass a similar law to help save our coral reef by allowing reef fish to restore biodiversity to our underwater forest, which is responsible for producing 50% of Earth's oxygen, food, and health.

Hawai'i's coral reefs are not a commodity. They are the foundation of our ecosystems, food security, culture, and economy.

Herbivorous reef fish like yellow tang and orangespine unicornfish play critical ecological roles in controlling algal growth and maintaining coral resilience. Fish collected for the aquarium trade suffer severe stress and internal injuries. Since 2021, commercial aquarium collection has been prohibited throughout the State. Yet the Division of Aquatic Resources is now proposing new administrative rules to reopen aquarium fish collection in West Hawai'i. This is a dangerous step backward that would undermine reef protection and violate Hawai'i's constitutional public trust doctrine.

We are grateful for Kauai's recent leadership on this critical issue. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, with nearly 4,000 members, has made this a priority for the 2026 Legislative Package. Multiple organizations—including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawai'i County Council, Earthjustice, the Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition, and For the Fishes have all supported legislation to ban aquarium collection.

Most significantly, in April 2026, the Hawai'i First Circuit Environmental Court ruled that the BLNR and DLNR have the legal authority to enact a complete, statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection. The legal pathway is clear. The community support is unanimous across the islands. The science is irrefutable.

This is an opportunity for Oahu to join Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kauai in calling for permanent protection of our reefs. It honors our constitutional responsibility to safeguard natural resources, uphold the right to a healthy environment, and protect traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices.

We urge the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to immediately adopt rules prohibiting commercial aquarium collection. Hawai'i's reefs—and the people who depend on them—cannot wait any longer.

Mahalo for your leadership,
Maki Morinoue
HULI PAC
Hōlualoa, Hawai'i Island

Name: C Yamamoto	Email: yamac282@icloud.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 04:26 PM

Testimony:

Please prohibit harvesting of marine life from Hawaii's oceans. Each species plays a critical role in the health of the environment, and the health of the environment impacts all of us, no matter if we live in rural or urban settings - weather

events are something we all experience. The health and stability of our ocean environment have an effect on weather patterns. Leave the aquatic life to their natural environment, where they can carry out their important role in the ocean.

Name: Ronald Robinson	Email: n904jd@icloud.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 04:27 PM

Name: Kai Koch	Email: kaifromkona808@proton.me	Zip: 96772
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 06:16 PM

Testimony:
I support the management of the AQ fishery and support DAR/DLNRs position on the matter

Name: Thomas Wallace	Email: tomlw Wallace@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 06:47 PM

Testimony:
Very important to ELIMINATE aquarium fishing.

Name: Briana Banua	Email: briana@thebiotagroup.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Biota Aquariums	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 09:29 PM

Name: Elena Bryant	Email: bryant.elena@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 15, 2026 @ 11:03 PM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of Resolution 26-159, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules prohibiting the commercial harvest of Hawai'i's reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

I come from a long line of subsistence and commercial food fishers--lawai'a that feed communities, not fish tanks. My 'ohana has roots in Ko'olaupoko and Ko'olaupoko spanning multiple generations, and I was raised with the understanding that our ocean is not simply a resource to be used, but a sacred place for which we carry a kuleana to care. We were taught to fish with restraint, to take only what was needed, and to leave enough for future generations. The commercial harvest of reef wildlife for ornamental purposes is fundamentally inconsistent with the traditional values of mālama 'āina and pono stewardship that my family was raised to uphold.

Herbivores, like those targeted by the aquarium pet trade, are essential to healthy reefs. Their greatest value is not in private aquariums around the world, but on Hawaii's reefs, where they graze algae, promote coral recovery, and sustain the ecosystems that support our communities, culture, and future generations.

This conviction is shared by communities throughout Hawai'i. Organizations representing thousands of residents across Hawaii have adopted resolutions, submitted testimony, and consistently called for an end to commercial aquarium collection because they believe the ornamental pet trade is incompatible with our community values and priorities. I mahalo the Honolulu City Council for standing with those communities and respectfully urge you to pass this Resolution. In doing so, you will honor years of community advocacy, affirm our shared responsibility to steward Hawaii's public trust resources, and help ensure Hawaii's reef fish remain where they provide their greatest value--on Hawaii's reefs.

Name: Kiara Bacasen	Email: kiarabacasen@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Sierra Club O'ahu Group	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 16, 2026 @ 12:00 AM

Name: Lori Chun	Email: melehale@gmail.com	Zip: 96828
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 16, 2026 @ 12:44 AM

Testimony:

My name is [your name] and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen

the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Linda Paul	Email: earthtrustwildlifeprograms@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: EarthTrust	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 16, 2026 @ 06:11 AM
Name: Kimeona Kane	Email: Kimeonakane@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 16, 2026 @ 08:50 AM
Testimony: Aloha, Kimeona Kane of Waimānalo, a kia'i loko, fishpond practitioner, in strong support of this resolution.		

Our ocean resources, and others, are dwindling. We must take every proactive measure to reestablish the systems necessary to rebuild, and sustain marine ecosystems, stock, and relationships.

Please support this resolution and hold the State accountable to preserving the integrity of our marine ecosystems by rejecting attempts to reopen commercial harvesting.

Mahalo nui,
Kimeona Kane

Name: Sue White	Email: greenpeace.foundation@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Greenpeace Foundation	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 16, 2026 @ 08:58 AM



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL Committee on Zoning and Planning

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of
RESOLUTION 26-159

and

RESOLUTION 26-160

July 16, 2026

9 a.m.

City Council Chambers

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i offers testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160**, which would issue a powerful and timely call to protect Hawai'i's waters from the commercial aquarium collection industry.

Hawai'i's coral reefs and the larger living systems dependent upon them are being severely threatened by human-induced global warming, pollution, and the largely unchecked profit-driven extraction of marine life – including, until relatively recently, commercial aquarium collection. **These resolutions may be critical to preventing this latter threat from being re-imposed on our nearshore waters, and exacerbating the decline of our reef ecosystems.**

Before the local aquarium collection industry was effectively shut down by court rulings in 2017 and 2021, hundreds of thousands of specimens of marine life, including ecologically and culturally important native and endemic species, were taken from Hawai'i's reefs and shipped to aquarium owners and commercial distributors thousands of miles away each year. Not surprisingly, the industry has been and continues to be the center of significant conflict and controversy, with the vast majority of the public, including Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and subsistence communities in particular, objecting to the large-scale extraction of public trust marine resources for the financial benefit of a select few.

Despite prevailing community concerns, and even after the Board of Land and Natural Resources voted in support of a petition to end commercial aquarium collection, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) recently proposed rules to set a process for reopening Hawai'i's waters to the aquarium collection industry. Should these rules pass, West Hawai'i Island and O'ahu would likely be the first areas where commercial aquarium collection would be allowed to resume.

Notably, DAR staff have justified their rule proposal by citing purported legal obligations under Hawai'i Revised Statutes – obligations that do not actually exist, as clarified by a recent environmental court ruling. Nonetheless, DAR has not withdrawn its rule proposal, which may be placed before the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) for final

adoption in the next few months.

Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 would accordingly add the Honolulu City Council's voice to the chorus of other government entities, organizations, and individuals now urging the BLNR to ban commercial aquarium collection, and who have also asked the Hawai'i State Legislature to do the same. Such a ban may be critical to protecting our coral reef ecosystems; perpetuating recreational, subsistence, and cultural fishing practices; building our climate resilience; and supporting local economies from the impacts of the aquarium trade.

As a final note, the Sierra Club emphasizes that DAR already struggles to meet urgent needs relating to the management and protection of our coral reefs and ocean environment. This includes addressing the numerous threats to our marine resources from irresponsible or uninformed harvesting practices, and leveraging the willingness and ability of communities throughout the islands to co-manage their nearshore fisheries. Beyond its direct ecological, cultural, social, and economic benefits, the commercial aquarium collection ban urged by these resolutions would also help to ensure that DAR does not commit a hugely disproportionate amount of limited agency resources to meeting the demands of a small number of private commercial entities, and allow DAR to instead focus its attention on fulfilling its critical public trust mission.

For these reasons, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **SUPPORT** Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



July 13, 2026

Councilmember Esther Kiaaina, Chair
And Members
Committee on Zoning and Planning
Honolulu City Council

~~Mohala~~ani Cypher, President
Ko`olau Foundation

~~Support~~ for Resolution 26-159 – Adopt Rules
Prohibiting the Harvest of Aquatic Life

Aloha Committee Chair Kiaaina and Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation offers its strong support for Resolution 26-159, urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resource (BLNR) to direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to adopt rules prohibiting the harvesting of aquatic life from state waters for commercial purposes.

Our organization advocates for the preservation of historic places, heritage and cultural practices, and for the protection of our Hawaiian environment and the health of pae `aina Hawai`i.

In our view, the State BLNR and the DLNR are obligated to take steps to protect the natural and cultural resources of Hawai`i, their kuleana as defined in the Hawai`i State Constitution. We applaud the introduction of this Resolution before the Honolulu City Council.

Please note: perhaps the most significant mistake made by King Kamehameha I, in his eagerness to support trade with Asia and the American continent, was to encourage the harvesting of sandalwood from Hawai`i's forests. This resulted in severe diminishment of `iliahī in the islands.

We urge the City Council to adopt this Resolution.

Mahalo for your consideration of our mana`o.

Testimony in Support of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160

Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee — July 16, 2026

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Kealii Pang. I spent 26 years as a federal biologist with the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working on native species conservation across Hawai'i and the Pacific. I write in strong support of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i State Legislature to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

Herbivorous reef fish keep our coral reefs healthy. They graze algae and give coral the space to grow. Removing hundreds of thousands of these fish for the aquarium trade weakens reef resilience at a time when our reefs already face heat stress, disease, and runoff. Most of these fish die within a short time after capture. This is not a sustainable use of a public trust resource.

Commercial aquarium collection also conflicts with cultural and subsistence fishing practices that Native Hawaiian families depend on. Our nearshore waters feed our communities and carry generations of knowledge about how to care for them. Opening these waters to a profit-driven export industry undermines that relationship.

The Board of Land and Natural Resources is moving forward with draft rules that would reopen West Hawai'i waters to commercial aquarium collection and set up a process to expand collection statewide, including O'ahu. The Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils have already passed resolutions opposing this. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee, Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, Sierra Club of Hawai'i, and many other organizations stand behind a permanent statewide ban.

I ask the Honolulu City Council to add its voice to this growing consensus. Please support Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

Honolulu, Hawai'i

launahale@yahoo.com | 808-349-3636



July 13, 2026

To: Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning & Planning
Attn: Chair Esther Kiaaina and Members

From: Charles Naumu, President
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

Subject: Supporting Res. 26-159 – Rules Prohibiting Harvest of Aquatic Life

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club stands in strong support of this resolution which urges the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules that prohibit collection of aquatic life from marine waters in the State of Hawai'i for commercial aquarium purposes.

As one of the largest civic clubs in the islands, from the moku of Ko'olaupoko on Windward O'ahu, we are deeply concerned about the commercial "takings" of marine life, particularly valuable fish used in aquariums. We have learned that these types of fish draw large commercial benefits to these collectors, to the detriment of our island ocean environment and the health of our seas.

Where we once found many species of aquarium-caliber fish in plentiful supply in our bays, like Kane'ohe bay, we now find those types of fish rare and harder to find. We can't even educate our own schoolchildren about the types of fish in our waters because there is so little left to show them.

We urge you of the City Council to pass this Resolution and forward it on to the Board of Land and Natural Resources for urgent and immediate action.

Me ke aloha pumehana.

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians.

One of the largest of the Hawaiian Civic Clubs, its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart".

P. O. Box 664 * Kaneohe, HI 96744 * Ph. (808) 235-8111 * www.koolaupoko-hcc.org

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Elsa Kalanikauleleiaiwi Dedman and I stand in STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and Hawai'i State Legislature, respectively, to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai'i waters.

These resolutions are both critical and timely. The BLNR is currently poised to pass rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade, and establish a process to do the same throughout the islands - including O'ahu. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven rule proposal, and believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should instead put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all.

As noted in these resolutions, a commercial aquarium collection ban would protect our reef-critical herbivorous fish species, sustain local and cultural fishing practices, support aquatic biodiversity, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

Not surprisingly, the Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, and Kailua; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo; Ko'olau Foundation; Earthjustice; Center for Biological Diversity; Conservation Council for Hawai'i; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; and many, many other organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i's waters, and make a powerful and timely statement in support of the public trust, and for the coral reefs, culture, resilience, and local economies of our islands.

Please **SUPPORT** Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elsa Kalanikauleleiaiwi Dedman
P.O. Box 230
Naalehu, Hawaii 96772
Phone: 832-230-7673

Opposed to Resolutions [26-159](#) and [26-160](#)

By Ron Tubbs B.S., N.D. UHM

“Environmental Review, and Global Warming 2026 Report”

Sustainability is Key to Hawaii’s future. As the most isolated island in the world, Hawaii is too dependent on tourism, the military, and other non-sustainable, unreliable economic sources. **Hawaii Tourism has already seen a "30.7% plunge" in visitor arrivals in March, signaling a rapid decline following the outbreak of conflict, impacting and disrupting previous growth trends. As of April 2026, airfare to Hawaii has surged due to a 50% spike in jet fuel costs following the conflict with Iran. U.S. domestic ticket prices have risen by 7% to 20%, with transcontinental flights experiencing the highest increases, in some cases doubling in price. Summer airfares are currently 17% higher, with additional \$10 bag fees expected. Average transcontinental fares, often affecting flights to Hawaii, have jumped from \$167 to \$414. Many fights have also been cut. Tourism is unsustainable and will face greater difficulties in the future.**

Ecology is a branch of [biology](#), and is the study of [abundance](#), [biomass](#), and distribution of organisms in the context of the environment.

Several marine species are found in all of the world's oceans, often categorized as highly migratory or ubiquitous, turtles, humpback whales, blue whales, killer whales, several shark species (like basking and great whites), [Sea cucumbers](#) various phytoplankton and jellyfish. These species thrive in global waters due to their adaptability, ranging from the surface to deep benthic zones.

Certain fish *families* are present in all tropical and temperate oceans, including reef ecosystems. These widespread reef-associated families include Butterflyfish (*Chaetodontidae*), Surgeonfish (*Acanthuridae*), Parrotfish (*Scaridae*), Wrasses (*Labridae*), Damselfish (*Pomacentridae*), and Goby (*Gobiidae*) species. Many of Hawaii's fish species are found worldwide!

Key aspects to marine ecology are species distribution, reproduction, growth rates, population doubling times, human impacts, like fishing pressure, global warming impacts, run off pollution, “solution to pollution is dilution”, “Deep Refuge” corals and fish at depth receive little effects by global warming. With a wide depth distribution comes resilience to temperature changes: a yellow tang at the surface thrives in 78-degree F water, but at 260 feet of depth, they also live in 50-degree F water. Most marine fish have very broad tolerance for ecosystem chemistry and temperature! Every single fish in the aquarium fisheries white list is an IUCN species of “Least Concern” for management, environmental factors, and vulnerability to fishing. A **least-concern species is one evaluated and categorized by**

the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as not a focus of wildlife conservation because it is still plentiful in the wild. They do not qualify as [threatened](#), [near threatened](#), or conservation-dependent.

Resilience (Ref. [120179](#)): Medium, minimum population doubling time 1.4 - 4.4 years (Preliminary K or Fecundity.). Fishing Vulnerability (Ref. [59153](#)): Low vulnerability (10 of 100). Price category (Ref. [80766](#)): [High](#).



[Least Concern](#) (IUCN 3.1)^[1]

[Least Concern \(LC\)](#) ; Date assessed: 09 October 2009

Marine Fish are Hawaii's and the World's most renewable resource.

Blue Fin Tuna can produce 45-50 million and even upwards of 540 million per spawn daily.

Opah Moon Fish produces [300 million eggs](#) per female.

Tuna produce 5 million to 15 million fry per female per spawn daily over a period of weeks!

Ulua jack adult females produce 44,000 fry per spawn

Yellow tangs daily produce 24,000 to 44,000 fry per spawn per female, many times a month. Male fish sperm spawn numbers far outweigh female egg counts, so females with lower numbers are referred to in fecundity reproductive science. Recent research indicates that they can spawn daily, and that means they probably greatly exceed the 1.14 million to 1.055 million per female yearly estimates that were based on full-moon breeding days alone!

Multiply that by the 3.6 million West Hawaii Yellow Tang 2026 population in the 30-to-60-foot range alone, at a 1% survival rate to full adult breeding stage, has a potential of 22 billion new adult breeder fish on the reefs every few months! Yellow tangs are found up to 265 feet deep so the 3.6 million is only a small population estimate!

Other surgeon fish have also been shown to breed daily year-round.

Yellow tangs after the fry spend around 4 months at sea developing, they

return to the reefs, where they reach breeding size in 3 months. Yellow tangs as small as 2.6 inches 65mm have reproductive organs and oocytes in their ovaries. Large 8-inch breeders are restricted for the Hawaii aquarium fishery, leaving active breeders on every Hawaiian reef ocean location to repopulate. **The aquarium fishery is truly a “Model Fishery,” Leaving breeders and fishing only smaller fish that replenish quickly!**

The complete yellow tang population doubling time is only 15 months.

Fishers Angel female spawns 102 times out of 110 days, producing hundreds to thousand of fry per spawn.

Potters Angel spawns nearly every day, producing thousands to hundreds to 6,000 fry daily.

Flame Angels spawns up to 10,000 eggs per spawn, Captive breeding programs report that over a 124-d period, females produced 97 spawns

Wrasse, like the luna wrasse, produce hundreds to thousands of fry per spawn up to 7 times a day.

Triggers like the Cross hatch can produce 32,000 fry per spawn daily.

Let's look at the Oahu Oceanic Institute published captivity reproductive potential of Flame Angels. Flame Angles, which are produced in captivity under non-ideal conditions, produce 1,000-1,500 eggs per female daily. Flame angel captive breed mean daily egg fertilization rates ranged from 60% to 80%, and hatch rates were typically 80%. So, at 280 spawning days per year, An estimated average of 10,000 eggs per egg-spawning female results in 2 million 800 thousand eggs per female flame angel per year. The survival rate of eggs to the adult breeding stage in 180 days is usually around 1%, **resulting in a potential of 28,000 new adult breeders every 6 months per female.** Adult males can fertilize more than one female, and the female-to-male ratio is 7:1. The rate-limiting factor for reproductive fecundity is the female; males can fertilize nearly every egg of multiple females with their greater numbers of sperm.

NOAA reports consistently show that over 90% of monitored U.S. fish stocks are not subject to overfishing, highlighting a robust, sustainable management system. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, **90–93% of United States and Hawaii fish stocks are fished at sustainable levels**, with many rebuilding. Data shows 80% are not currently overfished.

We must support a managed, sustainable fishery to create a more

sustainable society, especially in isolated Hawaii.

Historical Global Warming Perspective

Since the introduction of the first men to Hawaii in 400 A.D., land-based species have resulted in over 100 endemic plant species, 30 bird species, 74 insect species, and 41 tree snails [becoming endangered or extinct](#). Insects, Birds, snails, and many others are listed as Hawaii IUCN red species of concern. In 2023 eight more birds were removed from the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants due to their confirmed extinction.

Marine Fish are more resistant to the impacts of global warming, and no Pacific marine fish species have become extinct over the current historical period. No Hawaiian marine fish are on the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species. Moreover, almost all of Hawaii's marine fishes used for seafood and the aquarium trade are listed as species of IUCN "Least Concern." The lowest conservation level is there for exactly these reasons.

Examining the marine species extinctions of the past five global extinction-level events, marine fish have been more resilient to global impacts and are likely to out-survive land-based species.

It should be noted, however, that some marine mammals, with their low and long reproductive cycles, are more vulnerable than broadcast-spawning, highly reproductive marine fish species.

Marine fish vast geographical distribution, due to broadcast breeding and larval distribution over as much as five thousand miles and even other oceans like the Atlantic and Indian Ocean from and to Hawaii, makes them much less vulnerable to fishing and environmental impacts. Marine fish studied in aquariums show that they are more resistant to global warming temperature changes, pH changes, salinity changes, and other ecological changes than land-based species. For example, Tuna and many other species are found in all oceans of the world. Ocean Depth habitat range, the latitude of the Hawaiian Islands chain from 19 degrees to 28 degrees latitude, and 1500 miles of 132 atolls, reefs, and shoals create a vast, unique habitat range protecting Hawaii's ocean biodiversity. Seventy percent of the earth is ocean, making marine fish in Hawaii less vulnerable to point-source pollution and global warming.

The Hawaii Sustainable Seafood Industry and fisheries generate around \$867 million in annual sales impacts, making it a significant contributor to the state's economy, with the majority of this value coming from the high-value, a low-volume

longline fishery that is considered the largest food-producing industry in Hawaii. Small Nearshore fisheries without the Aquarium Fishery 53 million benefits are worth 16 million annually, and the Tuna Fishery is worth 100 million annually.

Along with agriculture, Managed Marine Fishing and mariculture, aquaculture could be very valuable and sustainable resources for Hawaii's increased sustainability. Pisciculture is a type of aquaculture that consists of fish farming to obtain fish products as food, and this could greatly lessen our dependence on imported foods and the carbon footprint imports create.

Reports show **global aquaculture production** (including aquatic plants) in 2016 was 110.2 million tonnes, with the first sale value estimated at US\$244 billion. Three years later, in 2019, the reported output from global aquaculture operations was over 120 million tonnes, valued at US\$274 billion. Increased Aquaculture and managed fisheries should be Hawaii's "Blue Revolution" for a sustainable future.

Hawaii could greatly benefit from the 2.15 billion per year ornamental marine fish trade and the **207- billion-dollar** United States pet trade, which has grown from 100 billion in just a few years.

You cannot take live marine fish for aquaculture without some type of aquarium fish permit, as this type of fishing is essential for aquaculture to replace broodstock periodically to maintain healthy, highly reproductive brood stocks!

Aquarium fishers are the source of broodstock for most aquaculture facilities, fish ponds, public aquariums, and research facilities in Hawaii, and we do not want to lose their expertise with a ban.

The value of Hawaii's nearshore oceans estimated worth is 15.3 billion dollars in highly renewable resources in 2024, with a current 50% estimated increase every 20 years, which means one of The state of Hawaii's most valuable resources is our Ocean. *Tourism impacts are Hawaii's biggest ocean ecological offender and the largest source of Carbon Footprint and is not sustainable. This value could be as much as 400% higher with sustainability applied to Hawaii's reef fishes used in the aquarium fishery. Example: A \$3 large Kole for food is worth \$60 each for small non-breeding kole used for the aquarium trade.*

Reports show global aquaculture production (including aquatic plants) in 2016 was 110.2 million tons, with the first sale value estimated at US\$244 billion. Three years later, in 2019 the reported output from global aquaculture operations was over 120 million tons valued at US\$274 billion. Managing fisheries to their safest environmental output, improved ocean marine management science, and Aquafarming should be Hawaii's "Blue Revolution" to ensure a sustainable future.

The aquarium fishery, with its higher biomass value and sustainable, highly renewable resources, should be utilized to its fullest to aid the state's plan for a sustainable future.

Oahu Yellow Tang, ***Zebrasoma flavescens***, **DAR** Catch Report Data for the Aquarium Fishery between 2009 to 2020, comparison to Fish Populations 2010 to 2019 done by **PIFSC**, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC). One would expect to see an inverse relationship in these charts if the fishery were not sustainable. The Oahu Aquarium Fishery's most targeted species, Yellow Tangs, from 2009 to 2020, has the following data that supports the fishery despite increased take being done at a sustainable level.

2010 to 2019 done by PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC)

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom 0-98 ft only. Currently done only every three years. Data is only available for the years of surveys listed above

DAR Catch Report Stats Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2009-2020

Due to the West Hawaii closure in 2017, the yellow tang catches for Oahu Increased, but the fish populations also increased (2017-2019 above). It is important to note that the Oahu Aquarium fishery operated between 2010, the first year of the fish surveys, and 2020. The above fish population data shows an increase in fish populations during the fisheries' activities from 2010 to 2020. Notably, the greatest increase in the yellow tang population occurred during the highest catch years of the Oahu fishery. After the Courts ordered the EIS requirement, the fishery on Oahu continued under CML licenses from 2017 to the end of 2020. Data from West Hawaii also show no significant declines in fish counts related to fishery catches over the course of decades of surveys, indicating stable populations during the fisheries' open years. This stability also continues even in higher catch years.

Below is the raw data for the above charts.

2010 to 2019 done by PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) NOAA

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom 0-98 ft only.

University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization report in 2024 by UHERO.

“Hawaii’s economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years”. The University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawaii to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

What UHERO found based on industries already in Hawaii, the study shows Hawaii has great potential for ocean- based industries—such as *fishing, fish farming and hatcheries*, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.”

With science supporting the sustainability of the aquarium fishery, approval of fishery permits could aid the state in its greatly needed shift to sustainable, renewable resource uses.

Out of the national 277-billion-dollar pet industry, Hawaii pet owners spent 355 million dollars on pets in 2021. Providing 21.8 million state tax revenues and 27.3 million local tax revenues. Hawaii residents have 1.7 pets per household on average. Nearly 57% of Hawaii households have one pet. That is 11% of U.S. household’s fish. Taping into the sustainable renewable income aquarium fishing can provide sustainable economic benefits. **Marine fish used as pets are worth per fish as much as 400% more than those same fish used for food purposes.** The Hawaii aquarium fishery leaves larger breeders' sizes, for repopulation quickly some fish like yellow tangs double their populations in 15 months, this is what makes it a **“Model Fishery.” Declines in food fish near shore near human-populated areas have not been seen in reef fish used for aquarium purposes.** Confirmed by Alan Friedlander Ph.D. studies.

Science presented by
by Ron Tubbs B.S. N.D. UHM

An extensive, detailed environmental review or an exact data information source is available upon request.

Source [in-text links](#) and now below:

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Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that overall fish populations of targeted aquarium fish species increased significantly in West Hawaii over 20 years. "Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish

within this depth range alone. Over time, management and habitat increases due to coral growth contribute to increased fish populations. Overall Kole abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased 118% (>5.1 million fish) during this time period with a current estimated population of almost 9.6 million fish. As with Yellow Tang, summer 2014 recruitment for Kole in many areas was very strong.

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Oahu there is a much greater refuge area than West Hawaii. Sources; 2013 By [Friedlander, Alan M. \(Alan Marc\)](#) ; [Donovan, Mary K.](#) ; [Stamoulis, Kostantinos](#) ; ... https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/907/noaa_907_DS1.pdf

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Opposed to Resolutions [26-159](#) and [26-160](#)

By Ron Tubbs B.S., N.D. UHM

“Environmental Review, and Global Warming 2026 Report”

Sustainability is Key to Hawaii’s future. As the most isolated island in the world, Hawaii is too dependent on tourism, the military, and other non-sustainable, unreliable economic sources. **Hawaii Tourism has already seen a "30.7% plunge" in visitor arrivals in March, signaling a rapid decline following the outbreak of conflict, impacting and disrupting previous growth trends. As of April 2026, airfare to Hawaii has surged due to a 50% spike in jet fuel costs following the conflict with Iran. U.S. domestic ticket prices have risen by 7% to 20%, with transcontinental flights experiencing the highest increases, in some cases doubling in price. Summer airfares are currently 17% higher, with additional \$10 bag fees expected. Average transcontinental fares, often affecting flights to Hawaii, have jumped from \$167 to \$414. Many flights have also been cut. Tourism is unsustainable and will face greater difficulties in the future.**

Ecology is a branch of [biology](#), and is the study of [abundance](#), [biomass](#), and distribution of organisms in the context of the environment.

Several marine species are found in all of the world's oceans, often categorized as highly migratory or ubiquitous, turtles, humpback whales, blue whales, killer whales, several shark species (like basking and great whites), [Sea cucumbers](#) various phytoplankton and jellyfish. These species thrive in global waters due to their adaptability, ranging from the surface to deep benthic zones.

Certain fish *families* are present in all tropical and temperate oceans, including reef ecosystems. These widespread reef-associated families include Butterflyfish (*Chaetodontidae*), Surgeonfish (*Acanthuridae*), Parrotfish (*Scaridae*), Wrasses (*Labridae*), Damselfish (*Pomacentridae*), and Goby (*Gobiidae*) species. Many of Hawaii's fish species are found worldwide!

Key aspects to marine ecology are species distribution, reproduction, growth rates, population doubling times, human impacts, like fishing pressure, global warming impacts, run off pollution, “solution to pollution is dilution”, “Deep Refuge” corals and fish at depth receive little effects by global warming. With a wide depth distribution comes resilience to temperature changes: a yellow tang at the surface thrives in 78-degree F water, but at 260 feet of depth, they also live in 50-degree F water. Most marine fish have very broad tolerance for ecosystem chemistry and temperature! Every single fish in the aquarium fisheries white list is an IUCN species of “Least Concern” for management, environmental factors, and vulnerability to fishing. A **least-concern species is one evaluated and categorized by**

the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as not a focus of wildlife conservation because it is still plentiful in the wild. They do not qualify as [threatened](#), [near threatened](#), or conservation-dependent.

Resilience (Ref. [120179](#)): Medium, minimum population doubling time 1.4 - 4.4 years (Preliminary K or Fecundity.). Fishing Vulnerability (Ref. [59153](#)): Low vulnerability (10 of 100). Price category (Ref. [80766](#)): [High](#).



[Least Concern](#) (IUCN 3.1)^[1]

[Least Concern \(LC\)](#) ; Date assessed: 09 October 2009

Marine Fish are Hawaii's and the World's most renewable resource.

Blue Fin Tuna can produce 45-50 million and even upwards of 540 million per spawn daily.

Opah Moon Fish produces [300 million eggs](#) per female.

Tuna produce 5 million to 15 million fry per female per spawn daily over a period of weeks!

Ulua jack adult females produce 44,000 fry per spawn

Yellow tangs daily produce 24,000 to 44,000 fry per spawn per female, many times a month. Male fish sperm spawn numbers far outweigh female egg counts, so females with lower numbers are referred to in fecundity reproductive science. Recent research indicates that they can spawn daily, and that means they probably greatly exceed the 1.14 million to 1.055 million per female yearly estimates that were based on full-moon breeding days alone!

Multiply that by the 3.6 million West Hawaii Yellow Tang 2026 population in the 30-to-60-foot range alone, at a 1% survival rate to full adult breeding stage, has a potential of 22 billion new adult breeder fish on the reefs every few months! Yellow tangs are found up to 265 feet deep so the 3.6 million is only a small population estimate!

Other surgeon fish have also been shown to breed daily year-round.

Yellow tangs after the fry spend around 4 months at sea developing, they

return to the reefs, where they reach breeding size in 3 months. Yellow tangs as small as 2.6 inches 65mm have reproductive organs and oocytes in their ovaries. Large 8-inch breeders are restricted for the Hawaii aquarium fishery, leaving active breeders on every Hawaiian reef ocean location to repopulate. **The aquarium fishery is truly a “Model Fishery,” Leaving breeders and fishing only smaller fish that replenish quickly!**

The complete yellow tang population doubling time is only 15 months.

Fishers Angel female spawns 102 times out of 110 days, producing hundreds to thousand of fry per spawn.

Potters Angel spawns nearly every day, producing thousands to hundreds to 6,000 fry daily.

Flame Angels spawns up to 10,000 eggs per spawn, Captive breeding programs report that over a 124-d period, females produced 97 spawns

Wrasse, like the luna wrasse, produce hundreds to thousands of fry per spawn up to 7 times a day.

Triggers like the Cross hatch can produce 32,000 fry per spawn daily.

Let's look at the Oahu Oceanic Institute published captivity reproductive potential of Flame Angels. Flame Angles, which are produced in captivity under non-ideal conditions, produce 1,000-1,500 eggs per female daily. Flame angel captive breed mean daily egg fertilization rates ranged from 60% to 80%, and hatch rates were typically 80%. So, at 280 spawning days per year, An estimated average of 10,000 eggs per egg-spawning female results in 2 million 800 thousand eggs per female flame angel per year. The survival rate of eggs to the adult breeding stage in 180 days is usually around 1%, **resulting in a potential of 28,000 new adult breeders every 6 months per female.** Adult males can fertilize more than one female, and the female-to-male ratio is 7:1. The rate-limiting factor for reproductive fecundity is the female; males can fertilize nearly every egg of multiple females with their greater numbers of sperm.

NOAA reports consistently show that over 90% of monitored U.S. fish stocks are not subject to overfishing, highlighting a robust, sustainable management system. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, **90–93% of United States and Hawaii fish stocks are fished at sustainable levels**, with many rebuilding. Data shows 80% are not currently overfished.

We must support a managed, sustainable fishery to create a more

sustainable society, especially in isolated Hawaii.

Historical Global Warming Perspective

Since the introduction of the first men to Hawaii in 400 A.D., land-based species have resulted in over 100 endemic plant species, 30 bird species, 74 insect species, and 41 tree snails [becoming endangered or extinct](#). Insects, Birds, snails, and many others are listed as Hawaii IUCN red species of concern. In 2023 eight more birds were removed from the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants due to their confirmed extinction.

Marine Fish are more resistant to the impacts of global warming, and no Pacific marine fish species have become extinct over the current historical period. No Hawaiian marine fish are on the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species. Moreover, almost all of Hawaii's marine fishes used for seafood and the aquarium trade are listed as species of IUCN "Least Concern." The lowest conservation level is there for exactly these reasons.

Examining the marine species extinctions of the past five global extinction-level events, marine fish have been more resilient to global impacts and are likely to out-survive land-based species.

It should be noted, however, that some marine mammals, with their low and long reproductive cycles, are more vulnerable than broadcast-spawning, highly reproductive marine fish species.

Marine fish vast geographical distribution, due to broadcast breeding and larval distribution over as much as five thousand miles and even other oceans like the Atlantic and Indian Ocean from and to Hawaii, makes them much less vulnerable to fishing and environmental impacts. Marine fish studied in aquariums show that they are more resistant to global warming temperature changes, pH changes, salinity changes, and other ecological changes than land-based species. For example, Tuna and many other species are found in all oceans of the world. Ocean Depth habitat range, the latitude of the Hawaiian Islands chain from 19 degrees to 28 degrees latitude, and 1500 miles of 132 atolls, reefs, and shoals create a vast, unique habitat range protecting Hawaii's ocean biodiversity. Seventy percent of the earth is ocean, making marine fish in Hawaii less vulnerable to point-source pollution and global warming.

The Hawaii Sustainable Seafood Industry and fisheries generate around \$867 million in annual sales impacts, making it a significant contributor to the state's economy, with the majority of this value coming from the high-value, a low-volume

longline fishery that is considered the largest food-producing industry in Hawaii. Small Nearshore fisheries without the Aquarium Fishery 53 million benefits are worth 16 million annually, and the Tuna Fishery is worth 100 million annually.

Along with agriculture, Managed Marine Fishing and mariculture, aquaculture could be very valuable and sustainable resources for Hawaii's increased sustainability. Pisciculture is a type of aquaculture that consists of fish farming to obtain fish products as food, and this could greatly lessen our dependence on imported foods and the carbon footprint imports create.

Reports show **global aquaculture production** (including aquatic plants) in 2016 was 110.2 million tonnes, with the first sale value estimated at US\$244 billion. Three years later, in 2019, the reported output from global aquaculture operations was over 120 million tonnes, valued at US\$274 billion. Increased Aquaculture and managed fisheries should be Hawaii's "Blue Revolution" for a sustainable future.

Hawaii could greatly benefit from the 2.15 billion per year ornamental marine fish trade and the **207- billion-dollar** United States pet trade, which has grown from 100 billion in just a few years.

You cannot take live marine fish for aquaculture without some type of aquarium fish permit, as this type of fishing is essential for aquaculture to replace broodstock periodically to maintain healthy, highly reproductive brood stocks!

Aquarium fishers are the source of broodstock for most aquaculture facilities, fish ponds, public aquariums, and research facilities in Hawaii, and we do not want to lose their expertise with a ban.

The value of Hawaii's nearshore oceans estimated worth is 15.3 billion dollars in highly renewable resources in 2024, with a current 50% estimated increase every 20 years, which means one of The state of Hawaii's most valuable resources is our Ocean. *Tourism impacts are Hawaii's biggest ocean ecological offender and the largest source of Carbon Footprint and is not sustainable.* **This value could be as much as 400% higher with sustainability applied to Hawaii's reef fishes used in the aquarium fishery. Example: A \$3 large Kole for food is worth \$60 each for small non-breeding kole used for the aquarium trade.**

Reports show global aquaculture production (including aquatic plants) in 2016 was 110.2 million tons, with the first sale value estimated at US\$244 billion. Three years later, in 2019 the reported output from global aquaculture operations was over 120 million tons valued at US\$274 billion. Managing fisheries to their safest environmental output, improved ocean marine management science, and Aquafarming should be Hawaii's "Blue Revolution" to ensure a sustainable future.

The aquarium fishery, with its higher biomass value and sustainable, highly renewable resources, should be utilized to its fullest to aid the state's plan for a sustainable future.

Oahu Yellow Tang, ***Zebrasoma flavescens***, **DAR** Catch Report Data for the Aquarium Fishery between 2009 to 2020, comparison to Fish Populations 2010 to 2019 done by **PIFSC**, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC). One would expect to see an inverse relationship in these charts if the fishery were not sustainable. The Oahu Aquarium Fishery's most targeted species, Yellow Tangs, from 2009 to 2020, has the following data that supports the fishery despite increased take being done at a sustainable level.

2010 to 2019 done by PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC)

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom 0-98 ft only. Currently done only every three years. Data is only available for the years of surveys listed above

DAR Catch Report Stats Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2009-2020

Due to the West Hawaii closure in 2017, the yellow tang catches for Oahu Increased, but the fish populations also increased (2017-2019 above). It is important to note that the Oahu Aquarium fishery operated between 2010, the first year of the fish surveys, and 2020. The above fish population data shows an increase in fish populations during the fisheries' activities from 2010 to 2020. Notably, the greatest increase in the yellow tang population occurred during the highest catch years of the Oahu fishery. After the Courts ordered the EIS requirement, the fishery on Oahu continued under CML licenses from 2017 to the end of 2020. Data from West Hawaii also show no significant declines in fish counts related to fishery catches over the course of decades of surveys, indicating stable populations during the fisheries' open years. This stability also continues even in higher catch years.

Below is the raw data for the above charts.

2010 to 2019 done by PIFSC, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) NOAA

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom 0-98 ft only.

University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization report in 2024 by UHERO.

“Hawaii’s economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years”. The **University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization** (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawaii to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

What UHERO found based on industries already in Hawaii, the study shows Hawaii has great potential for ocean- based industries—such as *fishing, fish farming and hatcheries*, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.”

With science supporting the sustainability of the aquarium fishery, approval of fishery permits could aid the state in its greatly needed shift to sustainable, renewable resource uses.

Out of the national 277-billion-dollar pet industry, Hawaii pet owners spent 355 million dollars on pets in 2021. Providing 21.8 million state tax revenues and 27.3 million local tax revenues. Hawaii residents have 1.7 pets per household on average. Nearly 57% of Hawaii households have one pet. That is 11% of U.S. household’s fish. Taping into the sustainable renewable income aquarium fishing can provide sustainable economic benefits. **Marine fish used as pets are worth per fish as much as 400% more than those same fish used for food purposes.** The Hawaii aquarium fishery leaves larger breeders' sizes, for repopulation quickly some fish like yellow tangs double their populations in 15 months, this is what makes it a “**Model Fishery.**” **Declines in food fish near shore near human-populated areas have not been seen in reef fish used for aquarium purposes.** Confirmed by Alan Friedlander Ph.D. studies.

Science presented by
by Ron Tubbs B.S. N.D. UHM

An extensive, detailed environmental review or an exact data information source is available upon request.

Source [in-text links](#) and now below:

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Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that overall fish populations of targeted aquarium fish species increased significantly in West Hawaii over 20 years. "Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish

within this depth range alone. Over time, management and habitat increases due to coral growth contribute to increased fish populations. Overall Kole abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased 118% (>5.1 million fish) during this time period with a current estimated population of almost 9.6 million fish. As with Yellow Tang, summer 2014 recruitment for Kole in many areas was very strong.

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Oahu there is a much greater refuge area than West Hawaii. Sources; 2013 By [Friedlander, Alan M. \(Alan Marc\)](#) ; [Donovan, Mary K.](#) ; [Stamoulis, Kostantinos](#) ; ... https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/907/noaa_907_DS1.pdf

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Aloha Chair Kiaina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council
Zoning and Planning Committee

My name is Robert Aldrich. I **support** Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 that would ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawaii waters.

I am a retired Fish & Wildlife Officer with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife who specialized in marine enforcement. I know the importance of species that live in shallow waters.



July 14, 2026

Re: Resolution No. 26-159– Adopt Rules Prohibiting the Harvest of Aquatic Life
Hearing: Committee on Zoning & Planning, Honolulu City Council, Thursday July 16,
2026 9:00AM

Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Committee,

The Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter respectfully submits testimony in strong support of Resolution No. 26-159, urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, to adopt rules prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from the State of Hawai'i marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

During the 2026 legislative session, Surfrider Foundation supported HB2101, legislation that would have established a statewide prohibition on commercial aquarium collection. Surfrider is also actively engaged in the ongoing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process evaluating the proposed reopening of commercial aquarium collection on O'ahu. In addition, Surfrider supported Kaua'i County Council Resolution No. 2026-21, unanimously adopted on July 8, 2026, which urges BLNR to adopt rules prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life for aquarium purposes or, alternatively, calls on the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact a statewide prohibition.

Surfrider Foundation strongly opposes reopening commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i given the already degraded condition of Hawai'i's reefs, the ecological importance of herbivorous reef fish, uncertainty regarding cumulative ecological impacts, and Hawai'i's constitutional public trust obligations. Given these conditions, the Board of Land and Natural Resources can and should prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide rather than advancing proposals that risk further ecological degradation.

Healthy coral reef ecosystems are public trust resources and a pillar of Hawai'i's ecological, cultural, and economic well-being. They also function as critical natural infrastructure that helps safeguard Hawai'i's coastlines. NOAA has documented that healthy coral reefs can absorb up

to 97% of wave energy, significantly reducing shoreline erosion, flooding, and storm impacts, with an estimated \$1.8 billion in annual flood protection benefits.¹ As Hawai'i faces accelerating climate impacts, including sea level rise, protecting these public trust resources becomes increasingly important.

The broader public economic, ecological, and coastal resilience value of intact reef ecosystems likely outweighs by orders of magnitude the comparatively narrow economic benefits generated by the commercial aquarium trade, particularly where the public bears the burden of associated ecological risks and long-term degradation costs. As identified in the Schaar & Cox cost-benefit analysis, a statewide prohibition on aquarium collection was the only policy scenario evaluated that produced positive net annual benefits to Hawai'i while negatively impacting the fewest stakeholder groups.² The study further concluded that reef fish provide substantial non-extractive economic and ecological value that may exceed the direct economic benefits generated by the aquarium trade.

The central question is not whether aquarium collection alone causes reef collapse, but whether additional extractive pressure is compatible with already stressed reef ecosystems. Under Hawai'i's Constitution, the State has a duty to protect these public trust resources, including the Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices that depend upon healthy, abundant reef ecosystems.

Hawai'i's reefs are already experiencing significant cumulative ecological stress associated with climate-driven bleaching, chronic land-based pollution, invasive algae proliferation, shoreline modification, and coastal development pressure.

Studies have documented that coral reefs are increasingly vulnerable to marine heatwaves and climate-driven bleaching events, reducing reef recovery capacity and increasing the ecological importance of herbivorous reef fish in maintaining algal control, coral recruitment, and reef resilience.³ Scientific literature has further demonstrated that the combined effects of nutrient pollution, herbivore depletion, and cumulative anthropogenic stressors can push coral reef systems toward persistent algal dominance and long-term ecological degradation.⁴

This resolution comes at a pivotal moment. Earlier this year, the Environmental Court of the First Circuit confirmed that the Board of Land and Natural Resources has the legal authority to prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide. Following the Kaua'i County Council's

¹ NOAA Office for Coastal Management. *Coral Reefs and Coastal Protection Overview*.
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² Schaar, M., & Cox, L.J. (2021). *Costs and benefits of Hawai'i's aquarium fish industry management strategies*. Marine Policy, 129, 104509. Available at:
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⁴ Bellwood, D.R., Hughes, T.P., Folke, C., & Nyström, M. (2004). *Confronting the coral reef crisis*. Nature, 429, 827–833.
<https://www.nature.com/articles/nature02691>

unanimous adoption of Resolution No. 2026-21, adoption of Resolution No. 26-159 would further demonstrate growing statewide support urging BLNR to exercise that authority and permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

For these reasons, the Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter respectfully urges the Committee to recommend adoption of Resolution No. 26-159.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration of this important measure.

Sincerely,

Hanna Lilley
Hawai'i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Kaitlyn Jacobs
O'ahu Chapter Chair
Surfrider Foundation

July 14, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of the State of Hawaii, and I respectfully submit this testimony to the Zoning and Planning meeting in support of [RES26-159](#). My partner and I moved to this island because of its extraordinary natural beauty and unique environmental resources.

We believe Hawaii's marine life should be protected and preserved in its natural habitat, not removed for commercial aquarium collecting and exported elsewhere. Hawaii's reef ecosystems are limited and fragile, and continued commercial collection threatens these public resources for the sake of private profit.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support [RES26-159](#) and end commercial aquarium collecting in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Joe Culbertson

Keaau, HI



FRIENDS of HANAUMA BAY

CONSERVE • PROTECT • RESTORE

*Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments,
emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay*

Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning and Planning

Esther Kia‘āina, Chair
Tommy Waters, Vice Chair
Radiant Cordero
Val A. Okimoto
Andria Tupola

Thursday, July 16, 2026 9 A.M.

SUBJECT: STRONG SUPPORT FOR Resolution 26 - 159 URGING THE STATE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES, TO ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM STATE OF HAWAI‘I MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES.

Aloha Chair Kia‘āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Committee Members,

Resolution 26 - 159 reflects a necessary evolution in public policy. While commercial aquarium collection was once permitted under statute, we now have decades of scientific research, court decisions, and lived community experience demonstrating the ecological and cultural costs of removing reef fish and invertebrates for export. The cumulative impacts of extraction, particularly of key herbivorous species, undermine reef resilience at a time when we can least afford further stressors. This Resolution appropriately aligns state policy with mandates contained in Article XI and Article XII of the Constitution of the State of Hawai‘i, which affirm the State’s obligation to conserve and protect Hawaii’s natural resources and to safeguard traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices.

Hawai‘i’s coral reefs and the larger living systems dependent upon them are being severely threatened by human-induced global warming, pollution, and the largely unchecked profit-driven extraction of marine life - including, until recently, commercial aquarium collection. Before the local aquarium collection industry was effectively shut down by court rulings in 2017 and 2021, millions of specimens of marine life, including ecologically and culturally important herbivore species, were taken from our reefs and

shipped to private aquarium collectors each year. Not surprisingly, the industry has been and continues to be the center of significant conflict and controversy, with the vast majority of the public objecting to such large-scale extraction of public trust marine resources solely for ornamental purposes, and the financial benefit of a select few.

On O‘ahu, the most heavily targeted aquarium species - again, largely herbivores - have been depleted by approximately 90% on average due in part to previous aquarium collecting (Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020).

Data from DLNR’s Division of Aquatic Resources show that, contrary to earlier assumptions, yellow tang populations have not recovered as biologically or historically expected following the court-ordered cessation of aquarium collecting in late 2017.

Published cost-benefit analyses show residents receive **no public benefit** from the aquarium trade while bearing **all environmental and enforcement costs**.

Worst of all, the commercial aquarium trade uses **unimaginably cruel methods** and **tolerates mortality rates absolutely unthinkable for any other pet trade**.

In 2023, the **Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously passed an** overwhelmingly supported, community-led proposal to **permanently ban commercial aquarium collecting state wide through rulemaking**.

In April 2026, the Hawai‘i First Circuit Environmental Court ruled that the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) **have the legal authority to enact a complete, statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection**.

It is past time for the BLNR and DLNR to start protecting our marine wildlife as a public trust asset for current and future Hawai‘i residents instead of servicing the extractive international pet trade. Our reef herbivores and marine invertebrates have no voice - so we urge the Honolulu City Council to speak for them and help ensure their preservation and conservation through a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection.

Mahalo for your strong support of Resolution 26 - 159!

With Aloha,
Lisa Bishop, MS
President

RE: STRONG SUPPORT FOR:

RESOLUTION 26-159 – ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES; AND,

RESOLUTION 26-160 – ENACT LEGISLATION THAT PROHIBITS THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES.



Honolulu County Council

Committee on Zoning & Planning

Dear Chair, Kia'aina, Vice-Chair Waters and Committee members,

The Biota Group is in favor of RES26-159 and RES26-160 to ban commercial aquarium collection.

Aquaculture is a sustainable alternative to wild collection, and our company has proven that this alternative is viable to meet global demand. Over the past seven years our company has invested millions in Hawaiian research and infrastructure to aquaculture popular ornamental species within Hawaii. This allows for consistent, sustainable, well-paid jobs and careers that are future proof given ever-changing global climate and increased environmental restrictions.

A commercial aquarium collection ban would increase the confidence of companies like ours to invest further in Hawaiian ornamental aquaculture. There is a significant risk of financial loss to Hawaii's established and growing aquaculture sector than there is to gain in the commercial fisheries sector- in both monetary value and job impacts.

Aquaculture allows Hawaiian reefs to stay stocked with marine life while still allowing the iconic animals as ambassadors to educate the world about Hawaii's reefs.

We urge you to pass RES26-159 and RE26-160 to solidify Hawaii's commitment to sustainable practices, future building, and protecting the reefs.

Jill Zamzow, M.Sc., Ph.D., former NOAA-NCRMP fish survey diver (jzamzow@gmail.com)

I am offering comments on Honolulu City Council Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 regarding aquarium fishing in the State of Hawai'i. I am concerned that there has been very little data analysis performed, therefore there is little basis upon which to make decisions.

I have been analyzing NOAA-NCRMP and DAR survey data from O'ahu and West Hawai'i. The 20 species of fish in the figure below have been proposed for O'ahu aquarium collecting, and as you can see, many of them are declining in abundance, or at best, simply holding steady. None are thriving and increasing. At least three species have an estimated O'ahu-wide abundance precipitously close to zero. An additional eight of the 35 proposed O'ahu aquarium collection species are so rarely encountered on surveys that NOAA declined to provide data.

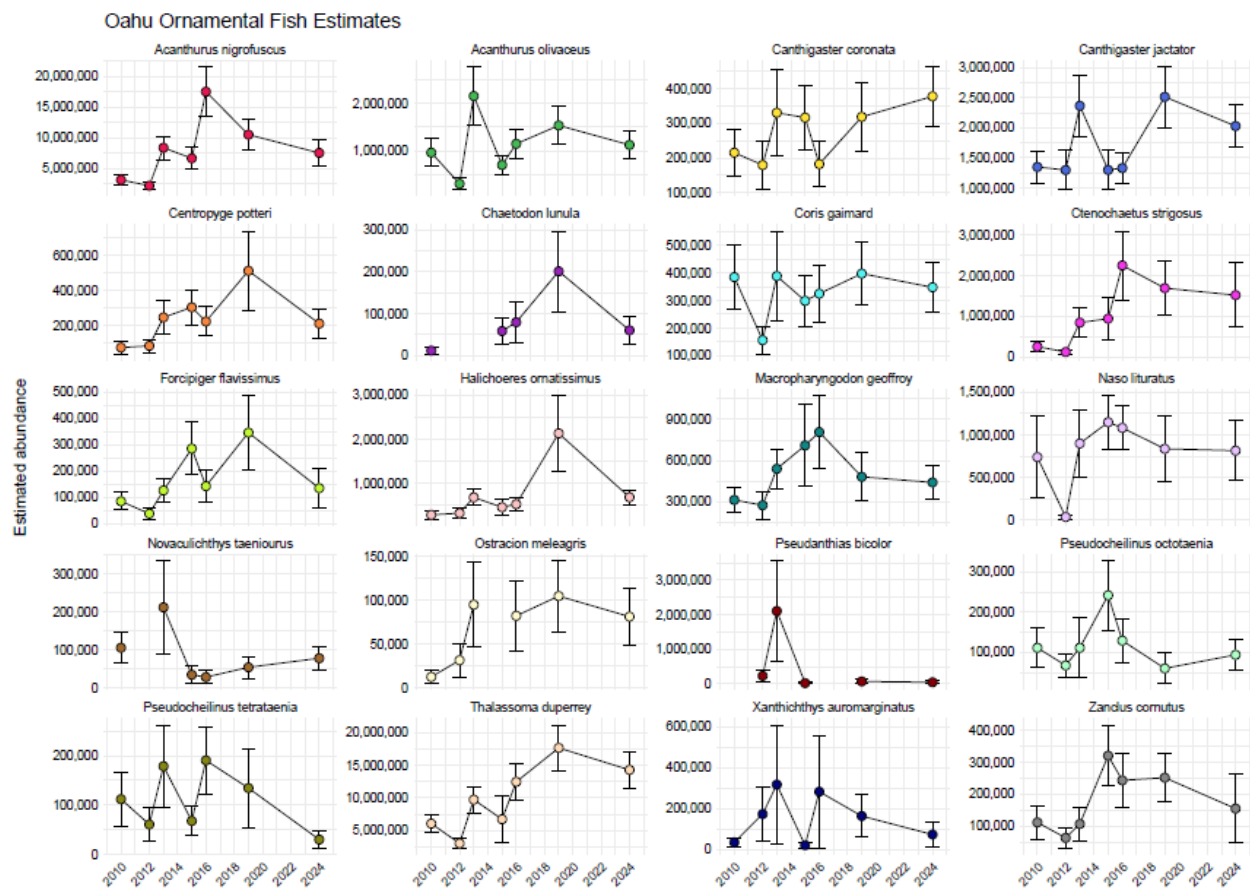


Figure 1: O'ahu total island abundance estimates over time for 20 fish species proposed for aquarium collecting. Data from NOAA's National Coral Reef Monitoring Program.

Hawaii's coral reefs are subject to many threats: climate change, land-based pollution (urban runoff, septic), invasive species, coral bleaching, ocean acidification, lack of sufficient protected areas, extreme weather events, and more. I propose that more data analysis should be

performed prior to re-establishing an aquarium fishery.

14 July 2026

Aloha Honolulu Councilmembers of O‘ahualua,

I am U‘ilani Naipo, a marine advocate for place-based governance, traditional practices, and ‘āina stewardship. I am testifying in strong support of the adoption of resolutions:

Resolution 26-159 Proposed Resolution Urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to Direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, to Adopt Rules, or Alternatively Urging the Hawai‘i State Legislature to Enact Legislation, Prohibiting the Harvest of Aquatic Life from State Marine Waters for Commercial Aquarium Purposes.

Resolution 26-160 Urging the Hawai‘i State Legislature to enact legislation that prohibits the harvest of aquatic life from State of Hawai‘i marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

Our reefs and marine ecosystems have been sacrificed for far too long. Millions of fish have been removed from Hawai‘i’s reefs, disrupting their essential roles within a delicate and balanced marine ecosystem. Once shipped to the continent, many of these fish face extreme stress and low survival rates compared to life on Hawai‘i’s reefs.

Under the Hierarchy of Use, our cultural and natural resources must be prioritized above all other uses, including commercial exploitation. Our fish — and the marine ecosystems from which they are taken — are public trust resources belonging to the people of Hawai‘i and should not be treated as ornamental commodities. Commercial aquarium fishing benefits only a small number of operators, at high costs to the State for its attempt to manage the practice. It degrades our marine habitats, shared by the people of Hawai‘i and visitors who depend on healthy reefs.

On January 23rd, the Hawai‘i County Council adopted Resolution 422-25, urging the Hawai‘i State Legislature to prohibit the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

On March 6th, the Maui County Council joined Hawai‘i County in adopting Resolution 26-53, reaffirming its commitment following its prior adoption of Ordinance No. 3809, Bill No. 99, in 2010.

On July 8th, Kaua'i County Council adopted Resolution 2026-21 Urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, to adopt rules, or alternatives urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact legislation, prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from state marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

In Hawai'i's 2026 Legislative session, 1 of 2 ban aquarium collection bills made it to the conference committee, where it then stalled. Resolution RES reflects the unwavering commitment of Kaua'i's marine advocates, who remain steadfast in their efforts to keep reef fish on Hawai'i's reefs, where they play an essential role in maintaining the health, resilience, and ecological balance of our marine ecosystems.

- Since 1976, more than 8.6 million fish have been removed from Hawai'i's reefs for the commercial aquarium trade, both nationally and globally;
- In West Hawai'i, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) proposes a total allowable annual take of 100,000 lau'ipala (yellow tang), the take of Potter's angelfish, an endemic species, and others; Ch91 rule-making is being conducted by DAR, and is anticipated to be before the Board of Land and Natural Resources in August.
- An EIS is being worked on for O'ahu.
- At the BLNR in October 24, 2025, more than 1,400 written testimonies were in opposition to the re-establishment of commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i County waters. West Hawai'i is the current target to be opened for commercial aquarium fishing by the end of this year.

Among testifiers were community organizations that serve as co-managers with the state DLNR divisions and/or the County, who collaboratively mālama our nearshore and marine waters. Many residents, visitors, and tourism businesses also oppose and identify the negative impact of commercial aquarium collection.

- Permitting the take of aquatic life effectively legalizes the privatization and exploitation of our public trust reef fish resources for the benefit of a small number of aquarium collectors;
- Commercial fishing is **not** a cultural practice, and **not** protected under Hawai'i's Constitution,
 - Article XII, Section 7 (Native Hawaiian Rights); and

- Article XI, Section 1 (Conservation and Development of Resources) trust doctrine applies to all public natural resources.

There are currently no permits issued for aquarium collection in West Hawai'i for nearly 10 years, and on O'ahu for 5 years. Poaching still occurs throughout Hawai'i waters.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources is currently conducting Ch91 rule-making that will potentially reopen the commercial aquarium fishery in West Hawai'i. Collectors have submitted their preliminary EIS for Aquarium Collection on O'ahu. With your adoption of Resolution 26-159 and Resolution 26-160, it will unify our stance to protect our reefs and marine ecosystems.

Please join Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i Counties in sending a strong message to the Legislature and the Board of Land and Natural Resources: extractive and exploitative commercial activity has no place in our waters, and our marine culture and natural public trust resources belong on our reefs, where they serve vital ecological and cultural functions.

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to provide testimony.

U'ilani Naipo
Marine Advocate for Place-Based Governance,
Traditional Practices and Marine Stewardship



July 16, 2026, 9:00 AM

Honolulu County Council
Committee on Zoning & Planning

RE: STRONG SUPPORT FOR:

RESOLUTION 26-159 – ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES; AND,

RESOLUTION 26-160 – ENACT LEGISLATION THAT PROHIBITS THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES.

Dear Chair Kia'aina, Vice-Chair Waters and Committee members,

We are organizations committed to protecting and restoring Hawai'i's reef wildlife by permanently ending the commercial harvest of these animals for personal aquariums outside Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our **strong support for Resolution 2026-159 and 2026-160**. In adopting these Resolutions, Honolulu City Council would become the fourth county council this year to support a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection and would join Hawai'i, Maui and most recently, Kaua'i Counties in urging state action.

For decades local communities and residents across Hawai'i have sought to end the aquarium pet trade that has taken millions of important marine animals from our reefs and shipped them to pet stores and aquarium hobbyists across the continental U.S. and internationally. There has never been greater urgency to keep Hawai'i's coral reef wildlife where it is needed most—on our reefs—for the benefit of present and future generations.

The combination of overfishing, climate change, poor water quality, and coastal development has led to significant statewide concern regarding the decline of fish populations and its threat to local food security in Hawai'i. In the face of these mounting threats, the removal of reef fish from the ecosystem for use as aquarium pets and ornaments cannot be justified. This is especially true now that the species most sought by the trade, including yellow tang, are commercially aquacultured for aquarium purposes on O'ahu.

Fewer than 2 percent of Hawai'i residents own a saltwater aquarium, while a 2025 scientific opinion poll shows that **84 percent of O'ahu residents support permanently ending** this primarily export-oriented, extractive industry.¹

Included below are examples of scientific, economic, cultural, ethical, and statutory facts supporting the need for a prohibition:

Science:

- Research shows that aquarium-targeted species on O'ahu reefs have experienced severe and persistent depletion.
 - On leeward O'ahu, populations of yellow tang collapsed following combined environmental disturbance and intensive collection pressure and have not recovered to former levels.
 - Prior to hurricane Iwa in 1982, collectors reported taking upwards of 23,000 yellow tang annually from leeward O'ahu reefs. Within three years of Hurricane Iwa, reported catch declined by more than 90%, and since 1986, has remained at a fraction of former levels, indicating a long-term loss of abundance rather than a temporary fluctuation.²
 - Collection pressure subsequently shifted geographically. Kāne'ohe Bay became a focal point of extraction, and one of the most heavily collected areas on O'ahu. In 2008, 8,604 of the four most heavily collected herbivorous surgeonfishes were taken from Kāne'ohe Bay; by 2019, that number had increased to 25,745. Between 2000 and 2020, aquarium collectors reported an average annual catch of 71,983 fish from O'ahu, with approximately 29% to 60% taken from Kāne'ohe Bay alone.³
 - In a comparison between Hanauma Bay, Hawaii's oldest marine protected area, and areas open to commercial aquarium collection, yellow tang populations are 93% less abundant in areas where collection has occurred, while other key species, including kole and umaumalei (orangespine unicornfish) are each depleted by approximately 90%.⁴
 - NOAA reef fish monitoring data for O'ahu indicate that yellow tang and a number of other aquarium-targeted species have not shown the recovery expected following the 2021 statewide court-ordered closure. This lack of recovery is particularly significant because fish populations are generally expected to increase when fishing pressure is removed, and population recovery is a widely accepted measure of sustainability. In fact, the aquarium trade's most recent

¹ Anthology Research [Hawaii Reef Fish Poll](#) (2025) at pg. 4

² Walsh et al. (2004) [The commercial marine aquarium fishery in Hawaii 1976-2003](#) at pdf pg. 11-14; DLNR catch reports

³ DLNR catch reports

⁴ Grabowsky & Thornhill (2020). [Abundance of AQ-Targeted Fish on Oahu](#) at pdf pg. 20

Environmental Impact Statement relies heavily on this principle, repeatedly citing population doubling times and species resilience to support claims that aquarium collection can be conducted sustainably.

For example, numerous proposed white-list species are identified as having **population doubling times of less than 15 months** and "high" resilience (Appendix, Table 1). Yet NOAA monitoring data show that many of **those same species have declined** rather than recovered in recent years (Appendix, Figure 1), directly contradicting one of the trade's central claims regarding sustainability.

- DAR has dramatically reduced monitoring of reef fish species targeted by the aquarium trade in West Hawai'i and has conducted no comparable long-term monitoring for aquarium-targeted species on O'ahu or anywhere else in the state. After more than two decades of collecting and reporting scientifically robust fish abundance data through multiple survey rounds each year in West Hawai'i, DAR reduced monitoring to a single annual survey beginning in 2022, greatly limiting the state's ability to detect changes in reef fish populations and leaving it essentially blind to the status of species depleted by decades of aquarium collecting.⁵

Economic:

- Published cost-benefit analyses conclude that the aquarium trade provides little to no measurable public benefit while imposing significant environmental, management and enforcement costs on the State. DAR's own cost estimate for administration and management of the aquarium trade, excluding enforcement, is estimated at \$300-500 thousand annually, yet the state would only receive \$2,200 annually in Commercial Marine License fees for 22 commercial aquarium collecting permits the trade is requesting for O'ahu and West Hawai'i.⁶
- The O'ahu aquarium trade's most recent Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notice proposes 15 aquarium collection permits. Trade members have consistently argued that aquarium collecting must be permitted because it creates jobs. However, the trade's published economic value details document a very low level of income that is derived from commercial fish collection:
 - Average annual value of collected fish and invertebrates reported by 20 collectors on O'ahu from 2000 - 2017 was \$247,926 or **\$12,396 per person**.⁷

⁵ DLNR (2025). [Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area \(WHRFMA\)](#), pdf, pg. 23

⁶ Schaar and Cox (2021). AQ Cost Benefit Analysis: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104429>

⁷ PIJAC, Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits and Commercial Marine Licenses for the Island of O'ahu (2020), http://oeqc2.doh.hawaii.gov/EA_EIS_Library/2020-05-08-OA-DEIS-Oahu-Commercial-Aquarium-Permits.pdf, pg. 25

- Illegal poaching for the aquarium trade remains a significant problem, as evidenced by a thriving black market for Hawai‘i reef fish that are advertised online. Convictions in five cases since 2021 involving at least seven aquarium trade members on Hawai‘i Island and earlier this year, an aquarium dealer on O‘ahu, have not served as a deterrent, and the lack of resources for state and federal law enforcement agencies leaves the door wide open for illegal take of Hawai‘i’s marine life.

Cultural and ethical:

- The trade inherently conflicts with local culture and Native Hawaiian values, including pono fishing practices that limit take to what is needed and mālama ‘āina principles.
- The trade also conflicts with the State’s constitutional public-trust obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations.
- Coral reef fishes and invertebrates are wild animals adapted to complex reef environments—not captivity. Collection methods, handling, confinement, starvation, and long-distance transport cause severe physiological stress, injury, and high mortality. Most fishes suffer barotrauma, immune suppression, and significantly shortened lifespans even when they survive capture. For example, yellow tangs which have lifespans in the wild that can exceed 40 years, are known to die within a year in captivity.

Statutory:

- Prohibiting the commercial aquarium pet trade **would not affect** research, education, captive-breeding/aquaculture or collection by public or private facilities, such as the Waikiki aquarium, Aulani Resort, or Maui Ocean Center as these collections are conducted under a DAR-issued Special Activity Permit (SAP) or Aquaculture Facility License (AFL).
- Prohibiting the commercial aquarium pet trade would **in no way** negatively impact food fishing, fishponds, or the use of bait. The absence of these impacts during the current statewide prohibition since 2021 clearly demonstrates these facts.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass these resolutions and send a clear message to the Legislature and the Board of Land and Natural Resources that Hawai‘i’s reef wildlife is more valuable on our reefs than in aquariums thousands of miles away.

Mahalo,

Rene Umberger
Executive Director
For the Fishes

Mike Nakachi
President
Moana ‘Ohana

APPENDIX 1. Comparison of trade recovery claims and observed NOAA population trends on O‘ahu

SPECIES	FishBase Population Doubling Time (Trade EIS)	NOAA 2019 vs. 2024
Yellow tang	< 15 months	Declined
Kole	< 15 months	Declined
Ornate wrasse	< 15 months	Declined
Fourline wrasse	< 15 months	Declined
Hawaiian Whitespotted Toby	< 15 months	Declined
Forcepsfish	< 15 months	Declined
Orangeband surgeonfish	< 15 months	Declined
Saddle wrasse	< 15 months	Declined
Raccoon butterflyfish	< 15 months	Declined
Spotted boxfish	< 15 months	Declined

Table 1. Examples of species identified by the aquarium trade as having rapid population recovery (<15-month doubling time) and observed NOAA population trends on O‘ahu. Note: Population doubling times are from Table 4-7 of the aquarium trade's Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement (2024)⁸, which relies on FishBase resilience and doubling-time metrics. Population trends are derived from NOAA/PIFSC O‘ahu reef fish monitoring data shown in Figure 1.

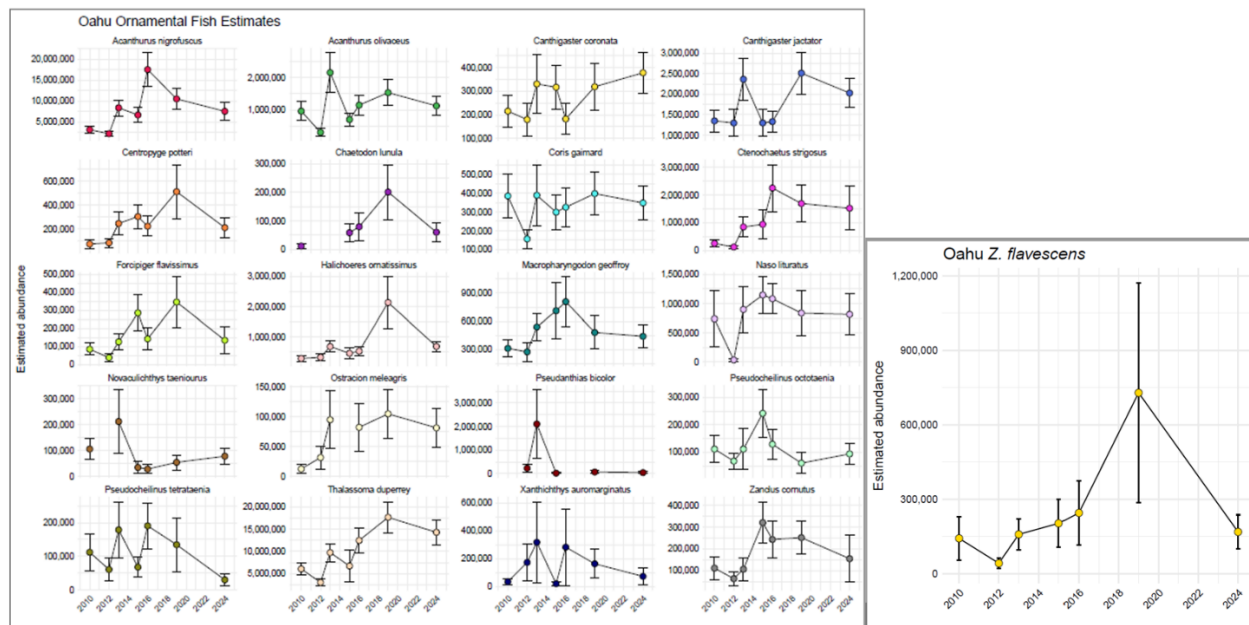


Figure 1. O‘ahu total island abundance estimates over time for 21 fish species proposed for aquarium collecting. Data from NOAA’s National Coral Reef Monitoring Program.

⁸ [2024 PIJAC Oahu Revised Draft EIS](#)

July 15, 2026

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF RESOLUTIONS 26-159 & 26-160

TO: Honolulu City Council

FROM: Thomas Lim

POSITION: Strong Support

SUBJECT: Protecting Our Marine Waters from Commercial Aquarium Harvesting

Dear Chair Esther Kia'aina, Vice Chair Tommy Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Thomas Lim and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am writing to express my strong support for Resolution 26-159 and Resolution 26-160. These resolutions are vital steps in urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) and the Hawai'i State Legislature to permanently halt the commercial harvest of wild aquatic life for the aquarium trade.

Our nearshore coral reefs are currently facing unprecedented, compounding pressures from climate change, rising ocean temperatures, and severe bleaching events. Allowing the commercial extraction of our wild reef fish to resume for private, out-of-state pet industry profits is ecologically and culturally unsustainable.

I urge the Council to pass these resolutions for several critical reasons:

Reef Health and Climate Resiliency: Herbivorous species like the lau'ipala (yellow tang) and kole play an indispensable role in maintaining the health of our reefs by eating smothering algae. Stripping our reefs of these essential species directly damages the ecosystem's ability to recover from environmental stress.

Protection of Public Trust Resources: Hawai'i's marine wildlife belongs in our oceans as a shared ecological, cultural, and community resource—not inside far-off home aquariums. Exploiting our local reef ecosystems for commercial gain directly conflicts with the public trust doctrine and our constitutional obligation to safeguard natural resources.

Widespread Public Consensus: Local communities across O'ahu have expressed overwhelming opposition to this extractive trade, with local neighborhood boards and public polls showing that the vast majority of residents support a complete ban.

With viable, reef-safe aquaculture alternatives now operating successfully in places like Waimānalo, there is absolutely no justification for continuing to capture wild reef fish from our sensitive ecosystems.

I strongly urge the Honolulu City Council to stand with our local communities, protect our oceans, and unanimously pass Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Thank you for your leadership and for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Thomas Lim

1717 Ala Wai Blvd. #1702

Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

Waikīkī Honolulu- Council District 4

7/15/2026

Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council
Zoning and Planning Committee,

As a retired Hawaii Teacher & Data specialist, this Waimanalo kama'aina is strongly
OPPOSED to Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160:

1. **The new Aquarium Rules Package greatly reduces allowable species, and catch to only 1% generally, and only 5% in a couple cases, even though previous catch levels were sustainable** as verified by 20 years of research and over 2100 underwater surveys. A 2020 opinion letter from (21) **PhD oceanographers expressed “strong support” for West Hawaii’s aquarium fishery, based on their immense data and DAR’s “highly effective” management of the West Hawaii fishery.**
2. **The Aquarium Fishery is a sustainable resource which diversifies Hawaii’s economy, brings in many tax dollars, and supports employment (pet supply shops, packing supplies, snorkel shops, boat and engine repair men, cargo workers, trans-shippers, and the fishers) which have been lost since the aquarium fishery closed. Why eliminate a sustainable resource that brings in taxes?**
3. **The premise that the aquarium fishery does irreparable harm to the ecosystem– is false propaganda.** Case in point is the *Hawaii Institute for Marine Biology’s* finding published in *Ocean Sustainability* Aug.,2025. When Hanauma Bay was shut down to its’ 1 million visitors/year for 7 months during Covid (2020). the bay, which is never fished by aquarium fishers, had an astounding revitalization. In the 7 mo. when the crowds left, the fish returned in abundance! Overcrowding is just one of many factors affecting fish counts.
4. **I used aquariums to teach the values of appreciating, respecting, and caring for nature, and to make scientific concepts understandable (ex. biodiversity, salinity, acidification).**
5. **These resolutions disregard the rights and efforts of aquarium fishers who were directed by the Hawaii Supreme Court to pursue an EIS and complied at great expense personally. These resolutions make a farce of the whole EIS process.**

Please **VOTE NO on Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.**

Sincerely,

Mary Tubbs, M.Ed. N.E.A., Retired



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-159
URGING THE STATE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO DIRECT THE
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF AQUATIC
RESOURCES, TO ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE
FROM STATE OF HAWAI'I MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM
PURPOSES.

Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning and Planning
City Council Chamber
Honolulu, Hawai'i

July 16, 2026

9:00 a.m.

City Council Chamber

Aloha e Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Committee on Zoning and Planning:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs ("OHA") submits this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **Resolution 26-159**, which urges the Board of Land and Natural Resources ("BLNR") to direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources ("DLNR"), Division of Aquatic Resources ("DAR"), to adopt rules permanently prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

OHA supports this resolution which urges DAR not to re-open our reefs to the commercial aquarium collection industry after a nearly ten-year judicial pause on the practice on Hawai'i Island and five years across the pae 'āina. Resolution 26-159 appropriately recognizes the BLNR's authority and its constitutional responsibility to manage Hawai'i's marine resources for the benefit of present and future generations, and to maintain the existing status quo which does not include commercial aquarium collection on any island. Reflecting the negative impacts that commercial aquarium collection had when it moved from the West Side to Kaneohe Bay, the Neighborhood Boards of Kahalu'u, Kāne'ohe, Kailua and Waimānalo have already adopted similar resolutions encouraging the permanent end of this industry.

Background

OHA has constitutional and statutory duties to advocate for the betterment of Native Hawaiians, advance policy affecting Native Hawaiian rights, and protect natural and cultural resources essential to the exercise of traditional and customary practices. The commercial extraction of reef wildlife for ornamental display fundamentally conflicts with these duties. Therefore, consistent with its legal obligations and the wishes of beneficiaries who came to OHA to support their campaign to end commercial collection,

OHA's 2026 State Legislative Package included a bill to ban commercial aquarium through statewide legislation.

Resolution 26-159 appropriately directs the DLNR to accomplish the same policy objective as OHA's package bill but through administrative rulemaking. While the procedural path differs, the underlying policy remains the same: Hawai'i's public trust marine resources should be managed for the long-term benefit of Native Hawaiian communities, subsistence practitioners, and the public at large, not subjected to commercial extraction by a minority of business owners for export into the ornamental aquarium trade¹. Under the doctrine, where there is scientific uncertainty concerning the effects of commercial use on public trust resources, including traditional and customary practices, the precautionary principle favors resource protection.²

These constitutional principles clearly caution the state against permitting an industry shown to repeatedly impinge upon the interests and concerns of the general public and those most intimately connected to the affected place and ecosystems through observed long term negative impact on marine resources. Beyond the specific interests of affected communities, businesses, and Native Hawaiian practitioners, up to 84% of Hawai'i Island and O'ahu residents favor banning the industry.³

Practical Considerations

Healthy coral reefs are among Hawai'i's most valuable public assets. They sustain local fisheries, support subsistence and traditional and customary practices, protect shorelines from erosion and storm surges, contribute to food security, improve water quality, and form the foundation of Hawai'i's nature-based tourism economy.

According to the industry's own advocates, the aquarium trade in West Hawai'i generates between \$499,416 to \$2,022,686 of income per year within the state and represents 67% of statewide industry activity).⁴ In contrast, healthy coral reefs generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in tourism revenue and provide critical ecosystem services, including shoreline protection and food security, further enhancing their economic value.⁵

Of even greater concern, to reach its conclusion that reopening the industry in West Hawai'i is sustainable, DAR's proposed rules to reopen the trade in West Hawai'i-

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XI, § 1

² See *In re Waiāhole*, 94 Haw. 97, 115-142 (2000).

³ See [Earthjustice Press Release](#), "Land Board Advances Plan to Re-Open West Hawai'i Waters to Aquarium Pet Industry," (Oct. 27, 2025) (citing a recent poll conducted by conducted by Honolulu-based Anthology | FINN Research).

⁴ RFEIS at p.102.

⁵ [Restoring Hawai'i's Reefs | The Nature Conservancy](#) (Sept. 16, 2018).

which would provide the template for reopening the trade on O'ahu- would limit industry participation to a handful of business owners. In other words, DAR proposes a state created monopoly in favor of a minority of business owners at the expense of the greater public and the long-term health of the resource. The economic costs of the industry to the public would also include policing and permitting this limited entry quota system.

At the same time, costs for DAR to administer the permitting program and police compliance with geographically defined marine protected areas under the proposed rules reduce the economic value of this industry to the state. Moreover, DAR's sustainability conclusion for West Hawai'i is based on a permit-quota system that rests, in turn, upon untested enforcement and closes this industry to newcomers, further limiting the extent to which this industry benefits the public beyond existing industry participants.⁶ Whether DOCARE can in fact enforce the permit-quota system to maintain "sustainability" is unknown.

The comparison is even more significant when viewed through the lens of public trust. Reef fish such as yellow tang and kole perform ecological functions that cannot easily be replaced. By grazing algae, they promote coral recruitment, improve reef resilience following bleaching events, support biodiversity, and maintain habitat for countless other marine species. Their presence contributes directly to healthier reefs that attract visitors, sustain recreational and subsistence fisheries, reduce shoreline erosion, and enhance Hawai'i's resilience to climate change. These ecosystem services possess tremendous economic value. Conversely, when reef ecosystems are degraded, the resulting costs are borne not by the minority of commercial collectors but by Hawai'i's residents and taxpayers. Reef degradation increases demands for coral restoration, invasive algae removal, watershed management, coastal engineering, shoreline stabilization, beach nourishment, scientific monitoring, enforcement, and climate adaptation measures. It diminishes opportunities for subsistence fishing and reef-based recreation while weakening the natural coastal infrastructure that protects homes, businesses, and public facilities. These are substantial public expenditures that greatly exceed the limited private economic benefits generated by commercial aquarium collection. **Therefore, the commercial aquarium industry distributes its economic benefits narrowly while exposing public resources to broad public costs.**

The industry benefits a relatively small number of commercial operators who derive private profit from harvesting fish that belong to the people of Hawai'i as public trust resources. Those same resources simultaneously support thousands of local fishers, Native Hawaiian practitioners, recreational ocean users, tourism businesses, and coastal communities whose interests depend upon abundant and healthy reef ecosystems. Public policy should recognize this imbalance when evaluating competing uses of shared marine

⁶ OHA is sensitive to concerns of industry participants but notes that because the industry was judicially banned, there has been no collection for the better part of a decade, and a ban would not displace existing jobs. Further OHA is committed to developing programs to help beneficiaries pursue other maritime career pathways.

resources.

For these reasons, the relevant economic question is not simply whether commercial aquarium collection produces income. Nearly every commercial use of a public trust resource produces some economic return. The more important question is whether commercial extraction represents the highest and best use of Hawai'i's marine resources when all public benefits and public costs are considered. OHA respectfully submits that it does not. The long-term economic value of healthy, resilient reef ecosystems far exceeds the limited private value generated by exporting native reef fish into the global aquarium trade.

Resolution 26-159 presents an opportunity for our counties to encourage the State to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities as trustee to protect Hawai'i's marine ecosystems before additional harm occurs. The resolution appropriately recognizes that the BLNR has the legal authority to adopt rules prohibiting commercial aquarium collection and urges it to exercise that authority in a manner consistent with Hawai'i's public trust obligations and the overwhelming public interest in preserving healthy coral reef ecosystems.

Accordingly, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** Resolution 26-159.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON ZONING & PLANNING

TESTIMONY IN **STRONG SUPPORT** OF RESOLUTION NOS. 26-159, 26-160

Thursday, July 16, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
City Council Chamber

Dear Committee Members:

Earthjustice submits this testimony in **strong support** of Resolution Nos. 26-159 and 26-160, which urge the State of Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources and state legislature to prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide. Earthjustice is a public interest environmental law organization with a Mid-Pacific Office based in Honolulu for nearly 40 years. For over a decade, we have represented a hui of reef advocates—including Native Hawaiian subsistence fishers and cultural practitioners from throughout the pae 'āina—to protect Hawai'i's reefs from the extraction of hundreds of thousands of fish each year to supply the global aquarium pet industry.

An Opportunity To Reverse A Historical Injustice

In 1953, Hawai'i's territorial legislature passed a law allowing “aquarium fish permits” that would enable collectors to use fine-meshed nets to capture juvenile fish targeted by the commercial aquarium trade. See Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31. This law's passage was based on the ignorant view by those in power that the fish species sought after by the industry are “not edible.” S. Stand. Comm. Rep. 442, in 1953 Senate Journal, at 669. *Such a finding would never stand today.* Commercial aquarium collectors target popular food fish including kole (goldring surgeonfish) and pāku'iku'i (achilles tang), herbivorous fish that are essential to coral reef health, and other colorful fishes that are found nowhere else in the world—all of which are culturally significant for Native Hawaiians. Because of this outdated legislation, commercial aquarium collectors have enjoyed a decades-long pass to extract hundreds of thousands of fish from Hawai'i's reefs annually, which has devastated nearshore ecosystems by reducing fish populations and directly damaging reefs through harmful collection methods.

Litigation And Other Community-Led Advocacy

Due to Hawai'i Supreme Court and environmental court rulings mandating environmental review, no legal commercial aquarium collection has occurred in West Hawai'i

since 2017, or anywhere else in the state since 2021.¹ In 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously approved a community-led petition to ban commercial aquarium collection by administrative rule. The rulemaking petition was filed by reef advocates including lawai'a pono practitioners from West Hawai'i, which has been ground zero for commercial aquarium collection for decades, and Kāne'ohe, which experienced a dramatic increase in commercial aquarium collection after collectors depleted West O'ahu reefs.

Rather than initiating rulemaking to ban commercial aquarium collection, as the unanimously approved rulemaking petition proposed, Department of Land and Natural Resources staff instead ran in the opposite direction by developing rules to authorize aquarium collection. Department staff has pursued its permitting rules based on the erroneous view that the Board lacks the power to ban commercial aquarium collection and that only the legislature can ban this extractive activity.² On April 6, 2026, however, First Circuit Environmental Court Judge Shirley Kawamura ruled that, under the Board's conservation rulemaking authority and Hawai'i's Constitutional Public Trust Doctrine, the Board in fact does have the authority to prohibit activities like commercial aquarium collection that "may disturb, degrade, or alter the marine environment." Judge Kawamura's ruling is attached hereto as attachment "A." Based on the Court's ruling, the Board has signaled that it will re-consider the rulemaking petition later this summer.

Community Sentiment Strongly Opposing Commercial Collection

Three public opinion polls conducted since 2012 have repeatedly shown overwhelming public support for ending commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i. The 2025 poll showed that *84% of O'ahu and Hawai'i Island residents support a ban*, while only 10% support collection. The following government and non-government entities have also passed resolutions supporting and urging a statewide ban:

- Hawai'i County Council;
- Kaua'i County Council;
- Neighborhood boards for Waimānalo, Kailua, Kāne'ohe, and Kahalu'u;

¹ Given the lack of any legal collection in five years or more, any claims that a ban would negatively affect current livelihoods is disingenuous at best and, at worst, suggests ongoing illegal poaching.

² See Board of Land and Natural Resources Oct. 24, 2025 Meeting, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE2zPoVp8qs&list=PLDh6ZXzdUvQkHtqVoauOkfa26NfNLh2pK&index=4> at 7:22:09 and 7:55:33 (Board Members Denise Iseri-Matsubara's and Riley Smith's statements on the Board's purported lack of authority to ban commercial aquarium collection).

- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs;
- Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club;
- Ko'olau Foundation; and
- Kāne'ohe Bay Regional Council.

Hundreds Of Thousands In State Subsidies For The Trade

If commercial aquarium collection is allowed to continue, collectors would pay just \$100 per year (just **\$700 total** for 7 West Hawai'i collectors, which are the only permits even potentially on the table at this time) for a program that the Division of Aquatic Resources has estimated would cost the state **\$300,000-\$500,000** annually to administer *for Hawai'i Island alone*.³ Enforcing the Department's proposed aquarium catch quotas—if it even were possible—would be extremely resource-intensive, since enforcement would require counting live fish at sea and onshore, further straining the Division of Conservation and Resources and Enforcement's limited resources. Collectors would extract hundreds of thousands of fish and ship them overseas to sell as ornamental pets, while Hawai'i's reefs increasingly struggle to feed local families and withstand climate change. The Council should urge the Board and legislature to prioritize pono food fishing and reef resilience to benefit all Hawai'i citizens, instead of continuing to support an extractive practice that benefits only a handful of commercial collectors.

Harmful Impacts Of The Trade

Data from the industry-sponsored West Hawai'i EIS show that fish populations are significantly lower in areas open to commercial aquarium collection than in areas closed to collection. For example, the diagram below from the EIS shows significantly lower lau'ipala (yellow tang) density in open areas (green) than in closed areas (blue and red). It is also our understanding that the Department is collecting significantly less fish population data along West Hawai'i than it has in prior years, which will hinder the agency's ability to assess how resumed collection would affect West Hawai'i populations. The Department's claim that collection is "sustainable," therefore, cannot be validated and is mere guesswork *at best* under this scaled back data collection regime.

³ See Schaar & Cox, The future for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact statement, Marine Policy (2021) (attached hereto as attachment "B").

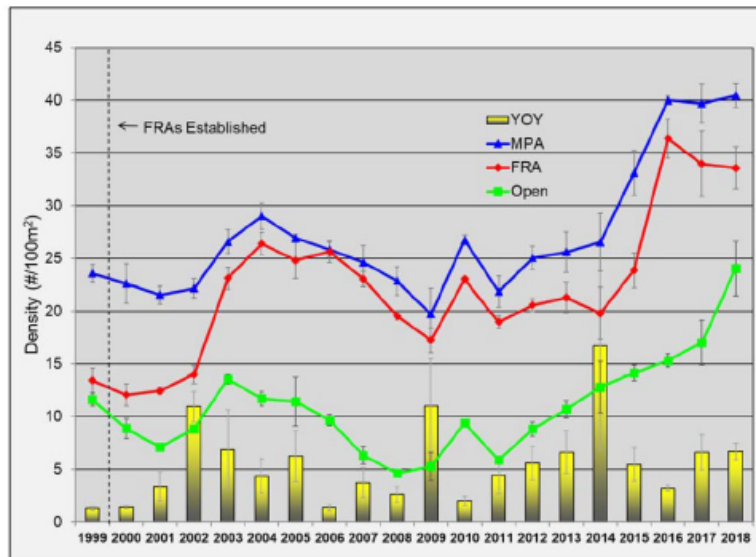


Figure 5. Overall changes in Yellow Tang density (Mean $\pm$ SE) in FRAs, MPAs, and Open Areas, 1999-2018. Yellow vertical bars indicate mean density (MAY-NOV) of Yellow Tang YOY. YOY are not included in trend line data (DAR 2019a).

Availability of Reef-Safe Alternatives

Rather than propping up a wasteful and costly industry that stands to benefit only a handful of collectors, Hawai'i should continue to invest in reef-safe alternatives to commercial aquarium collection. Biota Aquariums operates a Waimānalo-based facility that has been successfully aqua-culturing and selling lau'ipala (yellow tang)—the Hawai'i reef fish most sought-after by the aquarium pet trade—for years. Prohibiting wild catch of reef life for the aquarium pet trade would enable modern, reef-safe aquarium fish operations to flourish and thrive in Hawai'i. Such operations create jobs and provide economic opportunities without threatening further harm to public trust resources.

Conclusion

For the first time since the territorial legislature enacted Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31, Hawai'i's reefs have finally had a break from commercial aquarium collection. Now that the Environmental Court has ruled that the Board has the authority to protect Hawai'i's reefs from this destructive activity, the Board has a rare opportunity to right historical wrongs and fulfill its constitutional duties to protect Hawai'i's reef ecosystems as public trust and culturally significant resources for present and future generations. See Haw. Const. art. XI, § 1; Haw. Const. art. XII, § 7. Please pass Resolution Nos. 26-159 and 26-160 and send a strong message to the Board and legislature showing O'ahu's support for prohibiting commercial aquarium collection.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or for further information.

Respectfully submitted,



Mahesh Cleveland
Elena L. Bryant
Dru N. Hara
Earthjustice, Mid-Pacific Office

Attachments:

- A: April 6, 2026 Opinion on Appeal
- B: Schaar & Cox 2021, *The future for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact statement*

Electronically Filed
FIRST CIRCUIT
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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

STATE OF HAWAII

KALANIHALE, KO 'OLAUPOKO	)	Civil No. 1CCV-25-0001709 (SMK)
HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB, FOR THE	)	(Agency Appeal) (Environmental Court)
FISHES, CHARLES K.H. YOUNG AND	)	
MICHAEL NAKACHI,	)	OPINION ON APPEAL
	)	
Petitioners-Appellants,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	
	)	
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL	)	
RESOURCES, STATE OF HAWAII	)	<u>Oral Argument</u>
AND DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND	)	Date: April 2, 2026
NATURAL RESOURCES, STATE OF	)	Time: 10:00 a.m.
HAWAII,	)	Judge: Hon. Shirley M. Kawamura
	)	
Respondents-Appellees.	)	
	)	
	)	

OPINION ON APPEAL

On October 16, 2025, Petitioners-Appellants Kalanihale, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, For the Fishes, Charles K. H. Young, and Michael Nakachi (collectively, "**Appellants**") appealed from the Board of Land and Natural Resources' ("**BLNR**") Order Denying Petition for Declaratory Ruling ("**Order**"), entered on September 26, 2025, pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("**HRS**") § 91-14.

In its Order, BLNR denied Appellants' Petition for Declaratory Ruling, filed on October 10, 2024, which had requested that BLNR issue the following declaratory rulings:

- (1) HRS § 190-3 authorizes rulemaking to prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide; and
- (2) HRS § 188-31 and HAR § 13-74-2(4) provide for discretion to deny aquarium collection permits and related commercial marine licenses and also present no conflict with the Board's power to adopt rules under HRS § 190-3.

Dkt. 34, Certified Record on Appeal ("**CROA**") at 0797. At the conclusion of the Declaratory Ruling Petition, Appellants restated this as a "request [for] a declaratory ruling affirming the Board's authority to (1) prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking, and (2) deny commercial aquarium collection permits and licenses in its discretion." Dkt. 34, CROA at 0820.

On December 29, 2025, Appellants filed their Opening Brief (Dkt. 52). On February 6, 2026, Respondents-Appellees BLNR and Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i ("**DLNR**") (collectively, "**Appellees**") filed their Answering Brief (Dkt. 54). On February 20, 2026, Appellants filed their Reply Brief (Dkt. 60).

Oral argument was held before the above-entitled Court on April 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Dru Hara, Mahesh Cleveland, and Kylie Wager Cruz appeared on behalf of Appellants. John Dubiel appeared on behalf of Appellees.

The Court, having reviewed the briefing of the parties and the CROA, and having heard and considered the arguments of counsel presented at the hearing, and good cause appearing therefor, rules as follows:

A. Agency Appeals, HRS § 91-14

1. Agency “orders disposing of petitions for declaratory rulings under HRS § 91–8 are appealable to the circuit court pursuant to HRS § 91–14.” *Lingle v. Haw. Gov’t Emps. Ass’n, AFSCME, Loc. 152, AFL-CIO*, 107 Hawai’i 178, 186, 111 P.3d 587, 595 (2005).

2. An agency’s conclusions of law are reviewable under HRS § 91-14(g), for whether they have been made in violation of constitutional or statutory provisions, in excess of statutory authority or jurisdiction of the agency, and/or affected by other errors of law. Haw. Rev. Stat. § 91-14(g); *In re Application of Hawaiian Elec. Co., Inc.*, 81 Hawai’i 459, 465, 918 P.2d 561, 567 (1996), *as amended* (July 11, 1996).

3. Issues of law are reviewed de novo. *Keep the N. Shore Country v. Bd. of Land & Nat. Res.*, 150 Hawai’i 486, 503, 506 P.3d 150, 167 (2022).

4. “Upon review of the record, the court may affirm the decision of the agency or remand the case with instructions for further proceedings; or it may reverse or modify the decision and order if the substantial rights of the petitioners may have been prejudiced[.]” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 91-14(g).

B. Statutory Interpretation

5. When construing a statute, the Court’s “foremost obligation is to ascertain and give effect to the intention of the legislature which is to be obtained primarily from the language contained in the statute itself.” *Kauai Springs, Inc. v. Planning Comm’n of the Cty. of Kaua’i*, 133 Hawai’i 141, 163, 324 P.3d 951, 973 (2014) (citation omitted).

The Court “must read statutory language in the context of the entire statute and construe it in a manner consistent with its purpose.” *Id.*

6. Further, “[l]aws in pari materia, or upon the same subject matter, shall be construed with reference to each other[,]” and “where the statutes simply overlap in their application, effect will be given to both if possible, as repeal by implication is disfavored.” *Richardson v. City & Cnty. of Honolulu*, 76 Hawai‘i 46, 55, 868 P.2d 1193, 1202 (1993).

C. Statutory Authority of DLNR Generally, HRS Chapter 171

7. “Administrative agencies are created by the legislature, and the legislature determines the bounds of the agency’s authority.” *Paul’s Elec. Serv., Inc. v. Befitel*, 104 Hawai‘i 412, 417, 91 P.3d 494, 499 (2004), *as corrected* (July 14, 2004).

8. HRS Chapter 171, relating to Public Lands, is the chapter that created DLNR and prescribes its “broad powers and authority over public lands and the resources thereon, including water.” *Kia’i Wai O Wai’ale’ale v. Bd. of Land & Nat. Res.*, 157 Hawai‘i 303, 320, 576 P.3d 816, 833 (2025).

9. HRS § 171-3(a) establishes that DLNR’s jurisdiction includes the State’s “public lands, the water resources, ocean waters, navigable streams, coastal areas (excluding commercial harbor areas), and minerals and all other interests therein.” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 171-3(a).

10. That same section provides DLNR with management and administrative authority over “aquatic life, aquatic life sanctuaries, public fishing areas, boating, ocean recreation, [and] coastal programs,” among other things. Haw. Rev. Stat. § 171-3(a).

11. HRS § 171-6 further enumerates the specific powers of BLNR as the executive head of DLNR, including the power to “[a]dopt rules which, upon compliance with chapter 91, shall have the force and effect of law,” before stating that BLNR may

“[d]o any and all things necessary to carry out its purposes and exercise the powers granted in this chapter.” Haw. Rev. Stat. §§ 171-6(4), (20).

D. DLNR’s Role as Trustee of Public Trust Resources

12. Beyond the broad powers over matters in its jurisdiction granted to the agency by statute, DLNR’s management of public trust resources also “implicates the Board’s duties as trustee of Hawai’i’s public trust water resources.” *Kia’i Wai*, 157 Hawai’i at 317, 576 P.3d at 830.

13. The Hawai’i Supreme Court has confirmed that the State’s “marine waters and submerged lands” are “subject to the State’s constitutional and common-law public trust duties.” *Umberger v. Dep’t of Land and Nat. Res.*, 140 Hawai’i 500, 521, 403 P.3d 277, 298 (2017).

14. The Hawai’i Supreme Court has also recognized that, per article XI, section 1 of the Hawai’i Constitution Article XI § 1, “resource protection” is a recognized public trust purpose. *In re Water Use Permit Applications (Waiāhole)*, 94 Hawai’i 97, 139–40, 9 P.3d 409, 451–52 (2000).

15. The public trust creates an “affirmative *duty*” of the State and its political subdivisions “to take the public trust into account in the planning and allocation of water resources, and to protect public trust uses whenever feasible.” *Waiāhole*, 94 Hawai’i at 141, 9 P.3d at 453 (emphasis in original).

16. “As the public trust arises out of a constitutional mandate, the duty and authority of the state and its subdivisions to weigh competing public and private uses on a case-by-case basis is independent of statutory duties and authorities created by the legislature.” *Kaua’i Springs*, 133 Hawai’i 141, 172, 324 P.3d 951, 982.

17. “[T]he public trust doctrine at all times forms the outer boundaries of permissible government action[.]” *Id.* (quoting *Waiāhole* at 132, 9 P.3d at 444).

18. “[T]he State's constitutional public trust obligations exist independent of any statutory mandate and must be fulfilled regardless of whether they coincide with any other legal duty.” *Ching v. Case*, 145 Hawai‘i 148, 178, 449 P.3d 1146, 1176 (2019).

E. BLNR Erred in Concluding that HRS § 190-3 Does Not Authorize Rulemaking to Prohibit Commercial Aquarium Collection Statewide

19. HRS § 190-1 expressly designates “[a]ll marine waters of the State” as a “marine life conservation area to be administered by [DLNR] subject to this chapter and any other applicable laws not inconsistent herewith or with any rules adopted pursuant hereto.” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 190-1.

20. That same section states that “[n]o person shall fish for or take any fish, . . . or other marine life, . . . within any conservation district established pursuant to this chapter except in accordance with section 190-4 and rules adopted by [DLNR] pursuant hereto.”¹ *Id.*

21. HRS § 190-4 states that DLNR “*may*, in any conservation district, prohibit the taking of marine life or the engaging in activities prohibited by this chapter and rules adopted thereunder, except by permit issued by it for *scientific, education, or other public purposes* on such terms and conditions deemed necessary to minimize any

¹ The Hawai‘i Supreme Court has confirmed that all State marine waters are within conservation districts pursuant to this section; per DLNR administrative rules, the conservation districts are further divided into subzones, such that “lands and State marine waters seaward of the shoreline . . . in which . . . aquarium collection practices . . . are conducted, are within conservation districts.” *Umberger*, 140 Hawai‘i at 522, 403 P.3d at 299.

adverse effect within the conservation district.” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 190-4 (emphasis added).

22. HRS § 190-3 provides that DLNR “*shall* adopt rules governing the taking or conservation of fish, . . . or other marine life as it determines will further the state policy of conserving, supplementing and increasing the State’s marine resources” and that the rules “*may* prohibit activities that may disturb, degrade, or alter the marine environment . . . and otherwise regulate the fishing and taking of marine life . . . generally throughout the State[.]” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 190-3 (emphasis added).

23. HRS § 190-3 further provides that “[t]he rules *shall* upon taking effect *supersede* any state laws inconsistent therewith.” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 190-3 (emphasis added).

24. Here, the plain language of HRS § 190-4 grants DLNR the discretionary authority to prohibit the taking of marine life, and HRS § 190-4 prohibits the taking of marine life except for “scientific, education, or other public purposes.”

25. Additionally, the plain language of HRS § 190-3 expressly allows DLNR to prohibit activities that may degrade the marine environment, to prohibit the taking of all marine life in designated areas, and to do so statewide.

26. Moreover, the provision allowing DLNR rules properly promulgated under HRS Chapter 190 to have the effect of superseding all inconsistent state laws evidences a legislative intent to strengthen DLNR’s authority to use this section to accomplish the Chapter’s purpose—to further the “state policy of conserving, supplementing and increasing the State’s marine resources.” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 190-3.

27. The plain language of HRS Chapter 190 aligns with the directive of article XI, section 1 of the Hawai'i Constitution: the State "shall conserve and protect" all of Hawai'i's natural resources and promote their development and utilization "in a manner consistent with their conservation," prescribing regulation methods while granting DLNR prohibition power in furtherance of the purpose of protecting aquatic life resources. Haw. Const. art. XI § 1.

28. Thus, the Court finds that HRS § 190-3 by its plain language does authorize rulemaking to prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide, and BLNR erred in concluding it does not.

F. BLNR Erred in Concluding that a Rule Prohibiting Commercial Aquarium Collection Would Impermissibly Nullify or Conflict With its Discretionary Permitting Power Under HRS § 188-31

29. Next, HRS § 188-31 provides that DLNR "*may* issue an aquarium fish permit . . . for the taking of marine or freshwater nongame fish and other aquatic life for aquarium purposes[,]" including "for sale." Haw. Rev. Stat. § 188-31 (emphasis added).

30. The Hawaii Supreme Court in *Umberger* has stated that DLNR's authority under this section is discretionary and that "DLNR has the statutory discretion not to issue an aquarium collection permit." 140 Hawai'i at 527, 403 P.3d at 304.

31. Thus, HRS § 188-31 vests DLNR with the discretionary power to issue aquarium collection permits, available for DLNR to use in its independent judgment.

32. Additionally, while HRS § 190-3 vests DLNR with the power to prohibit the take of marine life, this does not affect a repeal of HRS § 188-31, because that statute

would remain effective as the basis for DLNR to issue some permits as exemptions to general prohibitions enacted under HRS § 190-3.²

33. Furthermore, any possible conflict between HRS § 188-31 and HRS § 190-3 would be resolved by the plain language of HRS § 190-3, which provides that “[t]he rules shall upon taking effect supersede any state laws inconsistent therewith.” Haw. Rev. Stat. § 190-3.

34. Thus, the Court finds that BLNR erred in concluding that a rule prohibiting commercial aquarium collection would impermissibly nullify or conflict with its discretionary power under HRS § 188-31.

G. BLNR Exceeded the Scope of the Requested Declaratory Ruling

35. Finally, HRS § 91-14(g) “precludes judicial reversal or modification of an administrative decision even where affected by error of law . . . unless substantial rights of the petitioner may have been prejudiced.” *Honoipu Hideaway, LLC v. Land Use Comm’n*, 156 Hawai‘i 367, 377, 575 P.3d 24, 34 (2025).

36. Here, Appellants requested that BLNR issue a declaratory ruling that (1) HRS § 190-3 authorizes rulemaking to prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide, and (2) HRS §188-31 and HAR § 13-74-2(4) provide for discretion to deny aquarium collection permits and related commercial marine licenses and also present no conflict with the BLNR’s power to adopt rules under HRS § 190-3. Dkt. 34, CROA at 0797.

² The Court notes that when Appellants previously requested that BLNR start the rulemaking process for enacting a general ban on commercial aquarium collection, their original Rulemaking Petition included proposed language that would allow DLNR to retain its discretion to issue licenses or permits as exemptions from a general ban. Dkt. 23, CROA at 0068.

37. However, in its Order Denying the Petition, DLNR went further than the requested declaratory ruling, concluding in paragraphs 17 and 18 that:

- a. “Assuming, *arguendo*, that DLNR does have authority to completely ban commercial aquarium fishing through rulemaking and that HRS § 190-3 does not conflict with HRS § 188-31, DLNR, through [DAR], has nevertheless determined that the commercial aquarium fishery, if properly regulated through rules, would be sustainable[;]” and
- b. “The Board therefore determines that a complete ban on commercial aquarium fishing would not “further the state policy of conserving, supplementing and increasing the State’s marine resources” and therefore not be an appropriate application of HRS § 190-3, regardless of whether HRS § 190-3 and HRS § 188-31 conflict.”

Order, Dkt. 50, CROA at 1118.

38. The Court notes that it is ultimately DLNR’s kuleana to determine, after appropriate process and consideration, whether a complete ban on commercial aquarium collection would or would not further state policy.

39. The Court further notes and respectfully reminds DLNR that it must make such a determination with due consideration to “the State’s constitutional public trust obligations[, which] exist independent of any statutory mandate and must be fulfilled regardless of whether they coincide with any other legal duty.” *Ching*, 145 Hawai‘i at 178, 449 P.3d at 1176.

40. Nevertheless, in this case, where Appellants’ declaratory relief sought was specifically limited to two legal issues based on statutory interpretation, DLNR’s findings (#17 and 18) that a complete ban on commercial aquarium fishing would not further state conservation policy goes beyond the scope of the requested declaratory ruling and may pre-judge issues not ripe for adjudication.

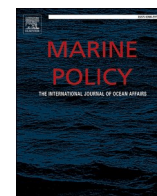
41. The Court finds that by exceeding the scope of the request for declaratory ruling, the substantial rights of Appellants may have been prejudiced.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing, the Court **REVERSES** the Order Denying Petition for Declaratory Ruling pursuant to HRS § 91-14(g)(4), as it was made based on erroneous application of HRS § 188-31 and exceeded the scope of the requested relief.

DATED: Honolulu, Hawai'i, April 6, 2026.

/s/ Shirley M. Kawamura 
Judge of the Above-Entitled Court



The future for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact assessment

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ABSTRACT

Conflict has surrounded Hawai'i's commercial marine aquarium fishery since its inception in the late 1940s. In 2019, the Hawai'i Supreme Court requested that an environmental impact statement (EIS) analysing the ecological and cultural impacts of Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery be completed for Hawai'i Island (Big Island) and O'ahu. The costs and benefits associated with the fishery and their distribution across stakeholder groups was however not addressed in the EIS. This paper presents a cost-benefit based analysis of four policy scenarios using existing secondary data for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery. From the analysis, a state-wide collection ban was the option that yielded positive annual net benefits and negatively impacted the fewest stakeholders. In contrast, the EIS recommends ten permits for fishing off the coast of Big Island be issued.

1. Introduction

Some view the marine aquarium fish trade as a path to expanding the conservation of reef environments based on the assumption that owning aquarium fishes cultivates awareness and interest in the conservation of their source habitats [46,6,31,47]. While conservation groups have promoted the aquarium trade as a means of enhancing livelihoods in developing countries, others are concerned that the profit motive of commercial fishers serves as an incentive to overharvest species commonly found in marine aquariums [37,39,59]. If marine aquarium fisheries are not properly regulated and the regulations are not promulgated, a common-pool resource dilemma will result in economic profitability prevailing over long-term sustainability – a tragedy of the commons scenario [43].

Hawai'i's commercial marine aquarium fishery has been a source of debate among various stakeholder groups including aquarium fishers and hobbyists, marine scientists, Native Hawaiians (Kānaka Maoli), resource managers, policy makers and community members [2,36,46]. The fishery's costs and benefits are distributed differently among these stakeholders, resulting in years of conflict. As has been observed in many fisheries around the world, fishers in Hawai'i under report their catches and mortality rates [23,48,52,56], which further exacerbates conflicts. The fishery is comprised of two geographically distinct zones. The first is the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that extends the length of the west coast of Hawai'i Island (Big Island) from

Ka Lae, Ka'u[–] (South Point) to 'Upolu Point. The second encompasses North Kohala, and the main Hawaiian Islands excluding all zones that are designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) [57].

Residents and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners have pushed to ban aquarium fishing in Hawai'i citing the lack of sustainable and humane harvesting methods, inadequate enforcement, inaccurate catch reporting and poor alignment with Kānaka Maoli ideals of resource management [23]. In 2017, the Hawai'i Supreme Court placed a moratorium on aquarium fishery permits, citing a need for a Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) review [15–17]. The court concluded that the permitted use of fine mesh nets involves the public's use of state land and therefore requires discretionary approval from the state [15–17]. The court's request in 2019 for an environmental impact statement (EIS) analysing the ecological and cultural impacts of the marine aquarium fishery came after Environmental Assessments (EA) for Big Island and O'ahu were submitted by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) and deemed insufficient by the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Chair Suzanne D. Case [15–17]. The final environmental impact statement (EIS) funded by PIJAC and conducted by a consulting firm, which concluded that DLNR should issue permits to ten commercial aquarium fishers in the WHRFMA, was unanimously rejected by the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) after concluding that the EIS did not adequately disclose the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action [14]. PIJAC appealed BLNR's decision to the Environmental Council who affirmed BLNR's rejection of

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Table 1
Description of policy scenarios analysed in CBA.

Scenario	Characteristics
A. Status quo (2019)	AQ Permits void and fishery continues without use of fine mesh nets on O'ahu, Big Island and no collecting in WHRFMA Voluntary catch report data Majority of catch is exported Unknown impacts to other fisheries, the environment, cultural resources and on-reef tourism State funds monitoring and management of fishery Potential for non-compliance Provides industry income Provides tax and fee revenue to state
B. Permitting system (2016)	Administrative rules and bag limits apply across the State Voluntary catch report data Majority of catch is exported Unknown impacts to other fisheries, the environment, cultural resources and on-reef tourism State funds monitoring and management of fishery Potential for non-compliance Provides industry income Provides tax and fee revenue to state
C. State-wide collecting ban	No aquarium species from Hawai'i state waters can be collected Collection exemptions possible for research, educational institutions and managers Wild-captured aquarium exports banned No impacts on other fisheries, the environment, cultural resources or on-reef tourism State avoids costs associated with managing the fishery Potential for non-compliance Loss of industry income Loss of tax and fees revenues to state
D. Captive breeding collection	Permits issued to fishers with facilities for captive breeding Opportunity to export from Hawai'i Unknown impacts on other fisheries, cultural resources, the environment and on-reef tourism State funds monitoring and management of fishery Potential for non-compliance Provides income opportunity for industry Provides tax and fee revenue to state

the EIS [27].

The 2019 state-wide moratorium allows commercial aquarium fishing to continue without commercial aquarium permits, as long as fine-mesh net equipment is not used and fishers possess a commercial marine license (CML), whereas, all collection has been outlawed regardless of gear-type for the WHRFMA [20]. A November 2020 order from Hawai'i's First Circuit Court requires environmental review for issuance of new or renewed annual CMLs to be used for aquarium fishing purposes, allowing aquarium collecting by CML holders to continue until their CML expire one year after issuance [18,21]. A January 2021 order from the same court further strengthened the November 2020 order by issuing an injunction to halt aquarium collection under existing CMLs, completely banning commercial aquarium fishing in the State of Hawai'i pending environmental review by the industry [13].

Many U. S. government agencies use cost benefit analysis (CBA) in addition to or in place of environmental impact assessment to assist in management decision-making. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [54] concluded that cost benefit analyses used to determine environmental regulations increased net benefits to society and "provide the balance required in complex regulatory decisions." International non-profit organizations also rely on CBAs in managing natural resources. Verdone [55] used CBA to analyse landscape forest restoration in Rwanda for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

This paper presents a cost benefit (CBA) based analysis using published information and existing data to provide evidence to assist decision makers considering the future of this fishery. Four policy scenarios were developed, the relevant costs and benefits for each scenario are described and/or estimated and their distribution across stakeholder groups are assessed. The CBA results are compared to the EIS recommendations and conclusions in order to determine how the two differ and which one provides a more accurate appraisal of maintaining the aquarium fishery.

2. Methods

Four past, current or proposed scenarios for managing this fishery are described (Table 1) in order to identify the associated costs and benefits, along with stakeholders impacted. Scenarios A and B assume that the aquarium fishery continues, though the number of fishers in the industry is not mandated in either one. Scenario A involves maintaining the 2019 status quo that restricts the use of fine mesh nets and no collecting in the WHRFMA. Scenario B assumes that the 2016 bag limits would be applied across the State. These were considered here because they both attempt to limit the catch. Scenario C involves a state-wide ban, which has been suggested by many stakeholders who do not benefit from the fishery. Scenario D allows the fishery to continue only to facilitate the establishment of captive breeding operations. This option is considered as one that protects wild fish in the long run, while also encouraging an industry that cultivates awareness and interest in the conservation of their source habitats by producing aquarium fish. The environmental impact statement (EIS) funded by PIJAC recommends limiting the number of permits, rather than limiting the catch.

The stakeholder groups who were identified in each scenario are described (Table 2) and the acronym used for the group throughout the

Table 2
Codes and descriptions for stakeholder groups.

Code	Stakeholder Group Description
S1	Native Hawaiians
S2	Residents of Hawai'i
S3	Tourists
S4	Collectors and wholesalers from O'ahu
S5	Collectors and wholesalers from Hawai'i Island excluding the WHRFMA
S6	Collectors and wholesalers from the WHRFMA
S7	All collectors and wholesaler in the State
S8	State government agencies

paper is identified. Previous research [2,23,36,46], various media reports, hearings and litigation surrounding the ongoing conflict in this fishery provided details about the stakeholder groups. A description of the methods used to estimate or describe each cost/benefit and their expected sign follow. While CBA normally involves discounting to ensure that net present value of costs and benefits are calculated, annual point estimates are used in this CBA. Since the estimates do not vary over time, discounting adds nothing to the analysis.

2.1. Cost and benefit estimates and descriptions

2.1.1. State management costs

Since both Scenarios A and B involve limiting the industry's catch and require voluntary reporting, the State will have to enforce these regulations. Therefore, to estimate this cost, DAR personnel in DLNR were contacted and asked to estimate DAR's 2019 management cost for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery including salaries of employees who work directly with the fishery, aquarium fish surveys and any other costs associated with the fishery that DAR funds. DAR officials provided a low estimate of USD 300,000 annually covering the time spent by 20 or more individuals in the aquarium fishery along with their supplies and equipment. Their high estimate of USD 500,000 annually includes costs, such as fringe benefits that are not included DAR's annual 2019 budget, but are found in DLNR's overall budget. For Scenario C, these management costs should be eliminated overtime. Scenario D would likely involve management costs, which could be reduced as the policies and regulations that support this scenario are refined.

2.1.2. Tourism value

According to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority [29], the State's economy relied on tourism for its largest source of private capital. Spalding et al. [50], estimated the "on-reef" tourism value for the entire state of Hawai'i at USD 550.8 million per year. Spalding was contacted and estimated, using the existing data base the annual "on-reef" values for O'ahu and Hawai'i Island to be approximately USD 442,496,000 and USD 16,921,000 respectively, for an annual upper bound of USD 459,417,000. This was inflated to 2019 USD for a total annual value of USD 478,891,356.77. Cesar and Beukering [7] estimated the value of tourism to be USD 304 million and inflating this value to 2019 USD yields a low estimate of approximately USD 442.1 million.

This estimated tourism value between USD 478,891,356.77 and 442,100,000 USD represents the direct and indirect market value of on-reef tourism to the State in 2019. Maintaining this value over time is partially contingent on maintaining the health and beauty of Hawai'i's reefs. The aquarium fishery may reduce this over time as fish are removed from the reefs in Scenarios A and B because the limits are not calculated based on the productivity of the fishery and are difficult to enforce. Evidence also suggests that catches are underreported. Therefore, if the fishery continues, overharvesting of this public resource will likely occur and as a result, the value of tourism will decrease. Uncertainty exists as to how quickly this decline will occur. Researchers predict that unmitigated bleaching events could lead to the loss of shallow coral cover in Hawai'i by the year 2050 [35], which indicates that a 30 year time frame could be considered in making marine resource management decisions and would result in an extremely large total cost of continuing this aquarium fishery by 2050.

2.1.3. Industry income

In order to determine the market value of the aquarium fishery in Hawai'i, the methods used by Dierking [22] were updated with recent data to conservatively estimate 2019 gross revenue for the industry. Unpublished 2019 catch report summary information, unpublished 2019 dealer purchase information, unpublished 2019 individual catch reports, and unpublished permit lists from 2015 to 2018 were obtained from DAR. The 2019 price and cost information from dealer websites, retail price lists on websites, and industry structure information

provided the data used for the estimation. The lower bound for total revenue accruing to fishers was calculated by multiplying the "diver price" for each species by the number sold to estimate annual revenue of USD 1,676,982 in 2019.

Wholesale revenue could not be estimated due to the lack of price information among local fishers who are also wholesalers. In order to estimate the upper bounds, the 2016 catch report data for "number sold" was used with retail prices on the website of a Hawai'i based fisher retailing fish. The "number sold" on the 2016 catch report for each of 12 species was multiplied by the 2019 retail price listed by the primary collector/retailer. The total revenue across all the species represents the upper bounds of USD 8,343,896, which includes the value of the fish after they were exported.

2.1.4. License fees

The State does collect license fees for the aquarium fishery. Commercial aquarium permits are USD 50 and recreational aquarium permits have no cost [20]. Commercial aquarium collectors must also purchase USD 100 commercial marine fishing licenses annually from DAR. Scenario A, which represents the status quo in 2019 only accounts for the cost of the commercial marine fishing license since all commercial aquarium permits are void. Scenario D assumes that a permit is required to collect for captive breeding. This scenario explores an option that would raise the permit cost to USD 500 and cap the number of permits issued at 100 state-wide.

2.1.5. Export values

The industry values also include the value of fish exported, which were investigated to determine how much of this value accrues to the State. Catch reports for 2016 are the most recent, complete annual data set and thus are used to estimate exports. Twelve species commonly targeted in Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery (Table a1, appendix) were included. The data for six out of the twelve species discussed in this study (*Naso lituratus*, *Forcipiger flavissimus*, *Chaetodon multicinctus*, *Zanclus cornutus*, *Centropyge potteri*, *Coris gaimard*) indicated that the fish sales on initial catch reports by licensed fishers was lower than numbers of fish reportedly purchased by licensed dealers from licensed fishers on dealer sales and export reports. This suggests that a percentage of the catch was not reported on catch reports or was sold to dealers by fishers who do not report their catch to the state.

Dierking [22], reported that roughly 95% of the aquarium fish caught from the West Hawai'i fishery were exported. Two criteria were used to identify retailers from which price information was obtained. The first criteria requires that the species' primary and sole collection origin had to be Hawai'i, and the second requires the species be one of the 12 species described in this study, not including captive bred fish. Retail prices for 2019 were collected from 11 online aquaria retailers with 10 on mainland U.S.A. and one from Hawai'i. Species name, price, retailer name, city of operation and website information were used to generate an average out-of-state retail price for each of the 12 species and were compared to online retail prices offered by the local aquarium fishers/retailer. Retail price differences were 1.5–5.1 times higher in mainland markets compared to the local market.

The profits made on the mainland and the taxes on the value added accrues to the area in which the fish is retailed. Since these profits and taxes occur from the sale of a Hawai'i public resource, a negative impact occurs in comparison to keeping the fish in the reef to ensure that the State's tourism sector and/or residents continue to benefit from these fish. This is consistent with a 2019 decision by the Hawai'i Supreme Court that "all public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the common benefit of Hawai'i's people and the generations to come" ([8], p. 1150).

2.1.6. Environmental costs

Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery almost exclusively targets herbivores and corallivores. The development of a State Coral Bleaching

Table 3
Cost and benefits associated with each scenario.

Scenario	Impacted Stakeholder Groups	Annual Estimates (USD)	
		Low	High
A. Status Quo (2019)			
- State management costs	S8	-300,000.00	-500,000.00
- Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	-442,105,806.46	-478,891,356.77
+ Industry income	S4, S5	1,784,936.43	8,343,896.00
+ License fees	S8	17,400.00	17,400.00
Total valued net benefit		-440,603,470.03	-471,030,060.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
- Losses from exports	S2, S8		
- Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
- Social costs	S1, S2, S8		
- Other fisheries' indirect costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
- Captive breeding costs	S4, S5		
B. Permitting System (2016)			
- State management costs	S8	-300,000.00	-500,000.00
- Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	-442,105,806.46	-478,891,356.77
+ Industry income	S7	1,784,936.43	8,343,896.00
+ License fees	S8	26,100.00	26,100.00
Total valued net benefit		-440,594,770.03	-471,021,360.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
- Losses from exports	S2, S8		
- Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
- Social costs	S1, S2, S8		
- Other fisheries' indirect costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
- Captive breeding costs	S7		
C. Statewide AQ Collection Ban			
+ Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	442,105,806.46	478,891,356.77
- Industry income	S7	-1,784,936.43	-8,343,896.00
- License fees	S8	-26,100.00	-26,100.00
Total valued net benefit		440,294,770.03	470,521,360.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
+ Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
+ Social costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
+ Other fisheries' Indirect costs	S1, S2, S8		
D. Captive Breeding Collection			
- State management costs	S8	-300,000.00	-500,000.00
- Tourism value	S2, S3, S8	-442,105,806.45	-478,891,356.77
+ Industry income	S7	1,784,936.43	8,343,896.00
+ License fees	S8	50,000.00	50,000.00
Total valued net benefit		-440,570,870.03	-470,997,460.77
Costs/benefits not valued			
- Losses from exports	S2, S8		
- Environmental costs	S1, S2, S3, S7, S8		
- Social costs	S1, S2, S7, S8		
- Other fisheries' indirect costs	S1, S2, S8		
- Captive breeding costs	S7		

Recovery Plan, in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), DLNR, and DAR concluded that the establishment of a combination of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Herbivore Fishery Management Areas (HFMA) across the main Hawaiian Islands ranked among the most preferred actions to address the State's coral reef recovery from climate change induced bleaching events [19]. The State's decision to employ spatial herbivore management, highlights the importance of herbivores as a critical tool for reef recovery and resiliency, thus increasing their value and importance in Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems.

Past studies have indicated that climate change impacts coupled with local, human-induced stressors can retard coral reef resilience, resulting in regime shifts from coral to algal turf dominated systems if left unchecked [1,8,9,26,30]. Herbivores have been found to play critical roles in resisting these regime shifts [26]. While the long-term impact of the aquarium fishery on herbivore management is uncertain, the potential exists for the fishery to prevent the State from realizing its reef recovery goals.

2.1.7. Social costs

A 2017 survey of Hawai'i residents concluded that 90% of respondents support further regulation of Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery, and that 83% of respondents support ending the trade altogether [4]. From the fishers' perspective, Stevenson et al. [51] found that 20.7% of all fishers disliked the bureaucracy and 17.2% disliked the poor reputation of the West Hawai'i aquarium fishery.

No secondary information about the overall social impacts is available. However, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council [44] did summarize several interviews in a Cultural Impact Statement found in Appendix A that describes the contentious nature of the fishery and its lack of alignment with Native Hawaiian values and fishing/management views/traditions [44].

While the impact of the fishery on the long-term social well-being of State's residents is uncertain, the majority appears to conclude that continuing to operate this fishery reduces their social well-being.

2.1.8. Indirect costs for other fisheries

While some studies have indicated that fish populations have increased in open areas and Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs) where no aquarium collecting occurs, other studies have argued that many marine aquarium fish stocks in Hawai'i are still relatively data poor [41]. The Hawai'i Supreme Court has adopted a precautionary principle associated with the public trust with a ruling concluding that "where (scientific) uncertainty exists, a trustee's duty to protect the resource mitigates in favour of choosing presumptions that also protect the resource" ([32], p. 466)).

Overfishing is the primary driver of reef fish declines across the main Hawaiian Islands and the populations of food-fish species that overlap with some commonly collected aquarium species are particularly affected [24]. Specific concern regarding the sustained abundance of some commonly targeted food-fish species in the West Hawai'i aquarium fishery exists due to some species exhibiting declining populations [57]. Concern regarding the aquarium fishery's impact on the commercial and recreational nearshore reef fisheries has arisen due to overlap in target species [46,57]. This concern supports the conclusion that the aquarium fishery is likely to have negative impacts on other fisheries in the long-run.

2.1.9. Captive breeding costs

Scenario D involves allowing the aquarium fishery to continue in order to support captive breeding efforts. In order for this scenario not to have negative impacts on Hawai'i reefs, a detailed policy and supporting regulations would be required. Descriptions of the costs paid by wholesalers and collectors by Dierking [22] can be used to infer the cost categories associated with local collection and wholesale business operations. Captive breeding and husbandry would result in similar costs

Table 4

A comparison of procedures and recommendations for the CBA to those for the 2020 Hawai'i Island EIS.

Cost Benefit Analysis	Big Island 2020 EIS ^a
Explores four policy alternatives, including a ban.	Rejected considering a ban since it did not meet PIJAC's purpose. Considered three scenarios that involved no permit limits and one with a permit limit.
Provided evidence-based recommendations based on impact estimates, descriptions, and the distribution of them among stakeholder groups.	Provided a recommendation based on direct market benefits of the industry.
Recommends a statewide ban on the collection and export of marine aquaria. Suggests that captive breeding collection might hold potential if properly managed.	Recommends reducing the number of permits to ten across the State.
Completed as a student project using existing secondary data and not funded by any industry, government agency or non-profit organization.	Funded by the PIJAC.

^a [44]

as wild collection, along with some additional costs to accommodate more technologically advanced equipment required to stimulate spawning [40,58].

Marine ornamental species can be categorized as demersal spawners or pelagic spawners. Most demersal spawners produce clutches of eggs in nests or on substrates and tend to form strong breeding pairs, often displaying parental care which makes them the preferred choice for captive breeding aquarists [40]. The specialized knowledge and equipment required for rearing marine aquarium fish that are pelagic spawners will make them more expensive to produce compared to wild collection [49]. This increase in costs would primarily impact those that purchase these captive bred fish. Currently, nearly all of these people live outside of the State and therefore likely have no particular interest in protecting the public resources of residents. Rhyné [49] also argues that promoting access to breeding information could result in more successful ornamental rearing and help conserve populations of wild aquarium fish.

3. Results and discussion

The results indicate that Scenario C, a state-wide ban on aquarium collecting, is the only scenario that produced positive net benefits (Table 3). Because point estimates in 2019 USD were the only quantitative data presented here, this conclusion is based on one annual estimate of costs and benefits. The stakeholder groups negatively impacted by a state-wide ban include a small group of local fishers, wholesalers, and dealers that comprise Hawai'i industry while benefits accrue to larger populations of stakeholders.

The status quo policy in Scenario A would allow collection to continue with methods other than fine-mesh nets. In the WHRFMA, where all permits are now void, poaching has been observed, resulting in vessel, aquarium gear and fish take seizures [5]. Thus, monitoring costs may increase if this scenario occurs. Scenario B, which represents what took place in 2016 does not put a cap on the issuance of permits, though it does provide for the collection of fees by the State. Overall, market benefits would still accrue only to aquarium collectors and wholesalers, though the distribution of net benefits between these industry members varies between Scenarios A and B because Scenario A excludes fishers in the WHRFMA.

Scenario D allows collection for captive breeding with a permit similar to DAR's Special Activity Permit system which allows research, education or management institutions to collect marine organisms with specific gear restriction exemptions [18,21]. However, all existing permit holders can claim to be engaged in breeding. Further research may be needed to identify potential regulatory and enforcement solutions for Scenario D. Fishers could be required to prove their capacity to captive breed species and stricter live-fish export regulations could be developed. While this would increase costs, the potential indirect and non-market benefits associated with not removing fish from the reefs in the long-run would also increase and provide the positive benefits associated with consumers having access to aquarium fish. Militz et al. [38] found that 90.5% of consumer respondents were willing to pay more for fishes that were certified as harvested in an environmentally

sustainable way. This type of certification could be considered for captive bred fish to create a mechanism that convinces the customers to absorb some of the costs associated with switching to a sustainable practice [38]. In addition, captive breeding facilities could become attractions for residents and visitors. If captive breeding attractions included educational content designed to inform people about protecting fish and the surrounding reefs, the carrying capacity of Hawai'i's near shore ecosystems may increase.

A comparison of this CBA with the PIJAC funded EIS found that the procedures and overall recommendations were significantly different (Table 4). Both the CBA and the EIS relied on existing data to complete the analysis and the market benefits of the industry estimated by the CBA and the EIS are similar. The EIS did not consider a ban because it did not meet PIJAC's purpose to continue fishers' livelihoods [44]. The EIS considered three scenarios that involved unlimited permits and one that limited permits on the Big Island to ten. The costs for Native Hawaiians and other stakeholder groups of continuing to operate the fishery were considered negligible and no justification is provided as to why this decision was made [44]. No recommendations on compliance enforcement relative to the proposed bag limits or oversight to prevent poaching were included. No caveat was included that oversight and enforcement expenses might increase if permits were limited [44]. One individual who was allegedly named as one of the proposed permit holders [45] was also cited in a February 2020 poaching incident (R. Umberger, personal communication; [5]) which indicates the need for such a caveat. Overall the EIS puts forth a recommendation that supports the industry.

Because Hawai'i's Supreme Court reaffirmed that all public resource are to benefit Hawai'i's people [32] and that private or commercial use should receive a "high" level of scrutiny, the size of the stakeholder groups is also of interest. The resident population, including Native Hawaiians, was 1,415,872 in 2019 [53] and Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council [44] indicates that their preferred plan would directly benefit ten resident fishers with permits and their employees. Visitors, which numbered 10,424,995 in 2019 [28], will also likely pay a cost if marine aquarium fish are removed from the State's reefs. Tourists can also decide to travel elsewhere should the reefs become degraded, which will result in significant market costs for Hawai'i in the long-term.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis presented here determined that a state-wide ban on collection is likely to produce impacts of positive annual net benefits. The EIS funded by PIJAC recommended that collection permits be limited to ensure that the fishery remains in existence. Relying on EIS recommendations that aim to support one group of stakeholders at the expense of others to determine policy could be considered biased. CBA is used globally for evidence-based decision-making.

When considering the "sustainability" of any system, distributional and equity issues over a long-time frame must be considered [10]. The CBA presented in this paper explores these distributional issues that this fishery poses to a variety of stakeholder groups and the environment using the available evidence. While modern economic systems often

focus on gross domestic product to track economic progress and guide policy, tracking environmental and social indicators has been identified as important to ensure sustainability in certain economic sectors specific to Hawai'i [42].

Other fisheries, which pose similar environmental problems [3,11,12,25,33,34], should consider employing CBA in order to inform decision-making. Relying on an EIS funded by an industry stakeholder group is likely to produce a document aimed at justifying the position of the funder. Stakeholders that receive cultural ecosystem services from resources that are also being harvested for market benefits often include relatively large populations of disadvantaged minorities and indigenous populations. Businesses interested in protecting their market benefits likely have an advantage if an EIS is the only source of management recommendations. Sustainable management requires that the costs and benefits accruing to all stakeholder groups be investigated to ensure that policies are equitable.

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Siena Schaar: Investigation, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft. **Linda J. Cox:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

none.

Data availability

The majority of data used for this research came from secondary sources. Relevant pricing data was collected from public websites and catch data was retrieved by UIPA from the Hawai'i Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR).

Appendix

See Tables A.1–A.3.

Table A.1

The 12 common marine aquarium species included in this report.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Hawaiian Name
Yellow Tang ^b	<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>	Lau'ipala, Lau'i pala, or Lā'i pala)
Goldring Surgeonfish ^a	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>	Kole
Achilles Tang ^b	<i>Acanthurus achilles</i>	Paku'iku'i
Orangespine Unicornfish ^b	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	Umaumalei, Kala, Ume, Mahaha, Pakala, Pakalakala or 'Ohua
Chevron Tang ^b	<i>Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis</i>	n/a
Longnose Butterflyfish, (Forcefish) ^b	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	Lau wiliwili nukunuku 'oi'oi
Multiband (Pebbled) Butterflyfish ^a	<i>Chaetodon multicinctus</i>	Kikākapu, Kapuhili
Fourspot Butterflyfish ^b	<i>Chaetodon quadrimaculatus</i>	Lauhau
Tinker's Butterflyfish ^b	<i>Chaetodon tinker</i>	n/a
Moorish Idol ^b	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	Kihikihi
Potter's Angelfish ^a	<i>Centropyge potteri</i>	n/a
Yellowtail Coris Wrasse ^b	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	Hinalea 'akilolo

^a Indicates endemic species

^b Indicates native species

Table A.2

Average retail prices (U.S Mainland) compared to average retail price (local collector/seller) of 12 common aquarium species, and price difference (%).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Avg. Retail Price (U.S Mainland) n = 10	Avg. Retail Price (Local collector/seller) n = 1	Mark-up (%)
Yellow Tang	<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>	\$74.41	\$16.00	465.1
Goldring Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>	\$71.88	\$14.00	513.4
Achilles Tang	<i>Acanthurus achilles</i>	\$392.32	\$150.00	261.5
Orangespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	\$152.71	\$37.50	407.2
Chevron Tang	<i>Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis</i>	\$233.11	\$150.00	155.4
Longnose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	\$46.00	\$15.00	306.6
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon multicinctus</i>	\$35.37	\$10.00	353.7
Fourspot Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon quadrimaculatus</i>	\$78.99	\$40.00	197.5
Tinker's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon tinker</i>	\$699.99	\$350.00	200.0
Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	\$49.98	\$10.00	499.8
Potter's Angelfish	<i>Centropyge potteri</i>	\$108.06	\$30.00	360.2
Yellowtail Coris	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	n/a	\$30.00	n/a

Table A.3

Comparison of specimens reported sold on licensed aquarium collectors' detailed catch reports (2016) versus specimens reported bought from licensed fishers by licensed dealers, on licensed aquarium dealers' personal sales and export reports (2016).

Common Name	Scientific Name	No. Sold (AQ detailed catch report)	No. Bought (AQ dealer pers. Sale/export report)	% (no. bought/no. sold)
Yellow Tang	<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>	322,651	284,784	88.26
Goldring Surgeonfish	<i>Ctenochaetus strigosus</i>	45,765	44,106	96.37
Achilles Tang	<i>Acanthurus achilles</i>	6787	5758	84.84
Orangespine Unicornfish ^a	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	9966	10,338	103.73
Chevron Tang	<i>Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis</i>	5126 (B.I only)	4135	80.67
Longnose Butterflyfish ^a	<i>Forcipiger flavissimus</i>	1329	1507	113.39
Multiband Pebbled Butterflyfish ^a	<i>Chaetodon multicinctus</i>	314	666	212.10
Fourspot Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon quadrimaculatus</i>	480	448	93.33
Tinker's Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon tinker</i>	293 (B.I only)	218	74.40
Moorish Idol ^a	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	805 (B.I only)	970	120.50
Potter's Angelfish ^a	<i>Centropyge potteri</i>	6708	8726	130.08
Yellowtail Coris Wrasse ^a	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	866	993	114.67

(B.I only) indicates collection and reporting on detailed catch report only from Hawai'i island

^a Indicates sales or export reporting over 100% of what was reported on initial detailed catch report.

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-159

Urging the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to Adopt Rules Prohibiting the Commercial Aquarium Harvest of Aquatic Life

Committee on Zoning and Planning

Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. | Position: Support

Aloha e ka Luna Noho me nā lālā o ke Kōmike no ka Mahele ‘Āina a me ka Ho‘olālā,
‘O wau kēia ‘o Kū‘ike Kamakea-‘Ōhelo, ke keiki a Kalani ‘Ōhelo lāua ‘o Kawahine Kamakea, he
kama, he kupa no Waimānalo.

Ke hāpai aku nei au i kēia leo kāko‘o no ka Palapala Ho‘oholo 26-159, e paipai ana i ka Papa o
ke Ke‘ena o ka ‘Āina a me nā Kumuwaiwai Kūlohelohe e pāpā loa i ka lawe pā‘oihana ‘ana i
nā mea ola o ke kai no ke kālepa aquarium.

I was raised by fishermen and kūpuna. My understanding of the ocean did not begin with
biology textbooks or economics. It began through genealogy.

The Kumulipo begins with the ko‘a, the coral polyps, as the first form of life. From the ko‘a,
life unfolds in sequence until the birth of kānaka. Every organism that comes before us in that
ka‘ina is our kūpuna.

That is why I cannot look at our reef fish and see inventory. I cannot look at coral and see
habitat alone. I cannot look at limu and see weeds.

I see family.

Healthy reefs depend upon healthy fish populations. Herbivorous fish maintain the balance
that allows coral reefs to survive and recover. Every species plays a role in the health and
resilience of the ecosystem. As Kanaka, our kuleana is simple: mālama our kūpuna.

As someone raised by fishermen, I was taught that a lawai‘a is not measured by the fish he
catches today, but by whether his grandchildren inherit waters more abundant than the ones
he received.

Abundance, not maximum harvest, is the Hawaiian standard.

The State of Hawai‘i holds these marine resources in public trust for present and future
generations. That trust demands stewardship, not commercialization.

The aquarium trade asks us to place a price on our own genealogy. Hawaiian ‘ike asks us to
mālama our kūpuna.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of Resolution 26-159.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kū‘ike Kamakea-‘Ōhelo
Waimānalo



July 16, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

To the Honolulu City Council Committee on Zoning and Planning in support of Resolution 26-159

URGING THE STATE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES, TO ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM STATE OF HAWAII MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES

Aloha Chair Kia‘āina, Vice Chair Waters, and members of the Committee:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs supports this resolution and the urged prohibition of the collection and harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquariums.

The resolution we adopted on this matter at our 2025 Annual Convention that is cited in this measure is attached. Our members find that Hawai‘i’s coral reef ecosystem is critically important and severely threatened. The removal of herbivore fish from the ecosystem further threatens the resilience of reefs, fisheries, and subsistence food sources. The absence of an effective statewide regulatory framework prohibiting this harmful harvesting practice impedes efforts to protect the reef ecosystem, restore fish populations, and balance stewardship of aquatic resources. Our members urge the adoption of rules that specifically prohibit commercial aquarium collection permits.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit confederation of 60 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,500 members located across Hawai‘i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this resolution.

ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

A RESOLUTION

NO. 2025 - 40

CALLING FOR A BAN ON COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTION IN THE STATE OF HAWAI'I'S WATERS

WHEREAS, the coral reef ecosystems of Hawai'i are immeasurably important to the people, environment, and way of life of Hawai'i, with a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study estimating their total economic value at \$33.57 billion; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's reefs are already under significant threat from climate change, with forecasts predicting the loss of up to seventy percent of Hawai'i's coral reefs within the next twenty-five years, underscoring the need for strong protections of reef ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, herbivore fish, which graze on algae and protect reefs from harmful algae overgrowth, are essential for the survival of coral reefs and also serve as important subsistence and cultural food sources for Native Hawaiian communities and local fishers; and

WHEREAS, for decades the commercial aquarium pet trade has removed millions of reef fish from Hawai'i's waters for shipment to pet stores and private aquariums on the continental United States, leading to a documented decline in fish abundance, diversity, and biomass, with some species reduced by as much as eighty percent in areas targeted for commercial extraction; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of Hawai'i, in *Kaupiko v. BLNR* (2025), upheld the commercial aquarium industry's environmental impact statement, potentially reopening nearly the entire West Hawai'i coastline to commercial collection, despite widespread community opposition and the serious ecological risks involved; and

WHEREAS, Native Hawaiian families and communities, such as in Hāena, Miloli'i, Kipahulu and Mo'omomi have fought for and established community-based subsistence fishery areas to protect reef resources for future generations, exemplifying pono stewardship and reaffirming that Hawai'i's marine resources must be managed for the benefit of the people, not for private profit; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Land and Natural Resources estimates it costs Hawai'i taxpayers approximately \$500,000 annually to manage the aquarium pet trade, while generating less than \$25,000 in revenue, thereby draining public resources while harming public trust resources; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting the commercial collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium trade is consistent with existing state laws protecting Hawai‘i’s environment, including the 1988 prohibition on the extraction of sand, rocks, soil, live rock, and coral; and

WHEREAS, such a prohibition is further supported by the Hawai‘i State Constitution, Article XI, Section 1 (conservation, control, and development of resources), Article XI, Section 9 (environmental rights), and Article XII, Section 7 (traditional and customary rights of Native Hawaiians).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at its 66th Annual Convention in Keauhou, Hawai‘i, in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Mōhalu, this 1st day of November 2025, calling for a permanent ban on commercial aquarium collection in the State of Hawai‘i’s waters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs urges the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Governor of Hawai‘i, and the Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i to enact permanent statewide regulations prohibiting the issuance of commercial aquarium collection permits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs affirms that Hawai‘i’s coral reefs and reef species must be managed in the public trust for the benefit of Hawai‘i’s people, future generations, and the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Hawai‘i’s Congressional delegation, as well as the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Chair of the State Senate subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the State House subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and all County Mayors.



The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Mōhalu, on the 1st day of November 2025, at the 66th Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in Keauhou, Hawai‘i.

DreanaLee Kalili

DreanaLee Kalili, President

I support Resolution 26-159 and Resolution 26-160 because Hawai'i's coral reefs are already under tremendous pressure from climate change, pollution and habitat loss. Continuing to remove reef fish for the commercial aquarium trade adds another unnecessary burden to an ecosystem that is vital to our Islands.

Healthy reefs benefit everyone who lives in Hawai'i, not just today but for future generations. I urge the Honolulu City Council to support these resolutions and encourage both the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the State Legislature to permanently end commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Steve Petranik
17 Aalapapa Place,
Kailua, Hawai'i

As an O'ahu resident, I believe Hawai'i's reef fish belong on our reefs, where they support healthy marine ecosystems and can be enjoyed by everyone – not removed for the commercial aquarium trade.

Fish have an important role to play in supporting healthy reefs. It's our *kuleana* to *malama* the reef ecosystem for future generations.

The scientific, environmental and public-interest case for permanently ending commercial aquarium collection has never been stronger. I respectfully ask you to support Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 and send a clear message that protecting Hawai'i's unique reef wildlife is a priority for our community.

Thank you for your service and your consideration.

Dr. Ann Auman
17 Aalapapa Place
Kailua, Hawai'i

Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning & Planning
Resolution 26-159 & Resolution 26-160
Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
City Council Chamber

Dear Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Committee Members,

The Kāne'ōhe Bay Regional Council has previously taken action opposing the commercial aquarium collection trade and urging both the Hawai'i State Legislature and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to permanently end the commercial harvest of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade in the State of Hawai'i.

On July 28, 2021, the Council adopted a resolution supporting legislative action to end the commercial harvest of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade in Kāne'ōhe Bay.¹

On July 31, 2023, the Council sent a letter to then-BLNR Chair Dawn Chang urging DLNR to adopt administrative rules permanently prohibiting commercial aquarium collection statewide.²

Resolution 26-159, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources to direct the Division of Aquatic Resources to adopt rules prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, and Resolution 26-160, urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact legislation prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, are consistent with the Kāne'ōhe Bay Regional Council's prior action.

Mahalo,



Elena L. Bryant
Legislative Chair
Kāne'ōhe Bay Regional Council

¹ See Resolution Supporting Legislative Action to End the Commercial Harvesting of Reef Wildlife for the Aquarium Pet Trade, Kāne'ōhe Bay Regional Council (2021) *available at* https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2021/10/Kaneohe_Reso_AQ_Ban_amended.pdf (attached).

² See KBRC Aquarium Fishing Letter to Chair Chang (2023) *available at* https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2023/08/Aquarium_Fishing_Letter_to_Chair_Chang.pdf (attached).

Resolution Supporting Legislative Action
to End the Commercial Harvesting of Reef Wildlife for the Aquarium Pet Trade

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's coral reefs and the wildlife dependent upon them are severely threatened by the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife including the aquarium pet trade outside Hawai'i, in addition to climate-change-induced ocean heat waves, pollution, and sedimentation; and

WHEREAS, the aquarium pet trade targets herbivorous fish for ornamental purposes though they are critical to coral reef persistence in the face of climate change which is forecast to kill 70% of Hawai'i's coral reefs over the next 30 years;¹ and

WHEREAS, the Ko'olau Poko Sustainable Communities Plan, adopted in August 2017, is founded on principles of sustainability that promote the long-term health of O'ahu, its people, and its community resources for current and future generations, and expressly focuses on the protection of physical and biological resources, and the use of resources "so they are not depleted, permanently damaged or destroyed"; and

WHEREAS, the Ko'olaupoko region includes Kāne'ohe Bay, which is a unique open space resource known for its beauty, rich cultural heritage, and recreational value, and is the largest sheltered body of water in the main Hawaiian Islands; and

WHEREAS, commercial aquarium catch reports reveal that collection of the herbivorous yellow tang, *kole*, orangespine unicornfish (*umaumalei*), and Achilles tang (*paku'iku'i*) in Kāne'ohe Bay dramatically increased from 8,593 in 2018 to 36,494 in 2019, with the yellow tang take exceeding the average island-wide take going back to 2000;² and

WHEREAS, coral reefs and the wildlife dependent upon them are a Public Trust resource "held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people" and 83% of residents polled support ending the destructive aquarium trade;³ and

WHEREAS, legislative action to end the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade is consistent with the goals of the Ko'olau Poko Sustainable Communities Plan, which focuses on the long-term protection of community resources," including the protection and enhancement of Ko'olaupoko's "natural, cultural, historic, agricultural, and aquacultural/fishpond resources"; and

WHEREAS, commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for ornamental purposes outside Hawai'i is neither compatible with the local values and lifestyles of Hawai'i's residents, nor does it significantly contribute to the quality of life or economy of Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, by reducing the abundance of marine life and diminishing the beauty and health of Hawai'i's coral reefs, the aquarium trade degrades the value and limits the myriad of benefits provided by these critically important ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, this highly destructive and wasteful enterprise can no longer be justified, nor be mitigated by mere regulation, given the challenges with enforcement.

¹ *Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II* [Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, K.L.M. Lewis, T.K. Mavcock, and B.C. Steward (eds.)]. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA.

² 2018-2019 DLNR Aquarium Trade Catch Reports

³ Anthology Research, 2017: Hawai'i Resident Study

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council urges the Legislature to take action to end commercial harvesting of our coral reef wildlife in Kāneʻohe Bay for the aquarium pet trade and to provide adequate resources to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for enforcement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the State of Hawaiʻi, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Office of Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Office of Representative Scot Matayoshi, Office of Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Administrator of the Division of Aquatic Resources, and the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan Permitted Interaction Group.

STATE OF HAWAI‘I
KĀNE‘OHE BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

July 31, 2023

Chairperson Dawn N. S. Chang
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Chang,

The Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council (“Council”) stands in solidarity with our community, and the communities across Hawai‘i pae ‘āina, who oppose the commercial aquarium collection trade, and our Council strongly urges the Department of Land and Natural Resources (“DLNR”) to act to permanently end the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade in the State of Hawai‘i.

The Council has been tasked with, among other things, (1) serving as the public advocate for Kāne‘ohe Bay, (2) making recommendations to the state and county on matters regarding the use of Kāne‘ohe Bay by the general public and commercial ocean use activities, including on legislative matters, and (3) the implementation of the Kāne‘ohe Bay Master Plan, which establishes a framework for the sustainable management of the Bay’s natural resources while accommodating a variety of uses. With this kuleana in mind, we call on DLNR to take action to enact administrative rules to permanently prohibit aquarium collection, in Kāne‘ohe Bay and—recognizing that the exclusion of one fishery from the aquarium trade will only shift demand and put additional stressors on other communities—statewide. Populations of reef fish in Kāne‘ohe Bay are highly connected with those of the Ko‘olaupoko and Ko‘olaupoko regions as well as O‘ahu’s South Shore and the fisheries on the Island of Moloka‘i.¹ We further recognize that while each community has different needs and requirements, fisheries management should be on a larger scale than just Kāne‘ohe Bay. Implications of commercial aquarium collection need to be looked at on a statewide basis.

¹ Coleman, R. R., Kraft, D.W., Hoban, M.L., Toonen, R.J., & Bowen, B.W. (2003). Genomic assessment of larval odyssey: self-recruitment and biased settlement in the Hawaiian surgeonfish *Acanthurus triostegus sandvicensis*. *Journal of Fish Biology*, 1-5.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jfb.15294>

Our community is firm in its position that the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for ornamental purposes is neither compatible with the local values and lifestyles of Hawai‘i’s residents and of our host culture. For decades, members in our community have fought to end the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade, including past and current members of our Council. Numerous boards and committees in our community adopted resolutions calling for legislative action to end commercial aquarium collection in our State, including but not limited to the Kahalu‘u Neighborhood Board, Kāne‘ohe Neighborhood Board, Kailua Neighborhood Board, Waimānalo Neighborhood Board, the Ko‘olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and Ko‘olau Foundation, among others. On July 28, 2021, the Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council chose to stand with our community and similarly call for legislative action to ban commercial aquarium collection.²

We know that no aquarium collection permits for O‘ahu have yet come to DLNR for approval; however, for DLNR to simply state that it will consider our ongoing long-held opposition to the trade if/when any aquarium collection permits may come to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (“BLNR”) in the future, is not acceptable. You have repeatedly stated publicly that community input should drive decision-making, and that it is the community itself who should determine and define “sustainable” and what activities, if any, may or may not occur in their respective areas. However, as we write this letter, the mainland Pet Industry is attempting to reopen O‘ahu’s reefs to collection despite overwhelming opposition.

Years of community and cultural opposition to the trade has been ignored. This includes DLNR’s continued opposition to legislative efforts to end the trade, including this legislative session, where DLNR again referenced, by its own definition—not the community’s—that the trade is “sustainable.” This position continues to dismiss firmly held cultural and social values of our community. Coral reefs and the wildlife dependent upon them are public trust resources “held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people.” Haw. Const. Art. XI, § 1. Reef wildlife is a natural resource held in the public trust for all, notably, for native Hawaiians whose cultural values are irreconcilable with virtually every aspect of this exploitative activity. Special interests, consisting of seven collectors in West Hawai‘i and 15 collectors on O‘ahu, who represent the profit-driven motives of mainland wildlife and pet trade dealers should not take priority over the people of Hawai‘i.

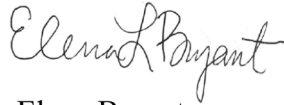
Therefore, we now request that DLNR take action to enact administrative rules to permanently prohibit aquarium collection—statewide—consistent with DLNR’s constitutional mandates and its obligations under *Ka Pa‘akai o ka ‘Āina v. Land Use Commission*. Pursuant to Act 4 of the 1998 Legislative Session, DLNR shall draft any administrative rules regarding commercial aquarium collection in consultation with the Council. *See* Haw. Rev. Stat. § 200-39. The issuance of even one aquarium collection permit anywhere in the state will open the door to poaching and further degradation of other state fisheries. The trade has already caused potentially irreversible harm to our natural and cultural resources, and in violation of DLNR’s

² Resolution Supporting Legislative Action to End the Commercial Harvesting of Reef Wildlife for the Aquarium Pet Trade, Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council (2021) *available at*: https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2021/10/Kaneohe_Reso_AQ_Ban_amended.pdf

own mandate that priority protection be given to the resource and the people over any commercial interests.

We respectfully await your prompt response.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Elena Bryant".

Elena Bryant
Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council

cc: Governor Josh Green, M.D.
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Herbert Richards, III, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Karl Rhoads, Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Brenton Awa, Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair of the Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senator Stanley Chang, Member, Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senator Kurt Fevella, Senate Committee on Water and Land

Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning & Planning
Resolution 26-159 & Resolution 26-160
Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
City Council Chamber

Dear Chair Kia'ina, Vice Chair Waters, and Committee Members,

The Kne'ohē Neighborhood Board No. 30 has previously taken action opposing the commercial aquarium collection trade and urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to permanently end the commercial harvest of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade in the State of Hawai'i.

On March 18, 2021, the Kneohē Neighborhood Board adopted a resolution supporting legislative action to the end of commercial harvest of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade.

Resolution 26-159, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources to direct the Division of Aquatic Resources to adopt rules prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, and Resolution 26-160, urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact legislation prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, are consistent with the Kne'ohē Neighborhood Board's prior action.

Mahalo,

Mo Radke
Chair
Kne'ohē Neighborhood Board No. 30

Attachment below: Adopted KNB Resolution of March 18, 2021



KANEOHE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 30

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3705 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov>

**Resolution Supporting Legislative Action
to End the Commercial Harvesting of Reef Wildlife for the Aquarium Pet Trade**

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's coral reefs and the wildlife dependent upon them are severely threatened by the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife driven by the aquarium pet trade outside Hawai'i, in addition to climate-change-induced ocean heat waves, pollution, and sedimentation; and

WHEREAS, the aquarium pet trade targets herbivorous fish for ornamental purposes though they are critical to coral reef persistence in the face of climate change which is forecast to kill 70% of Hawai'i's coral reefs over the next 30 years;¹ and

WHEREAS, the Ko'olau Poko Sustainable Communities Plan, adopted in August 2017, is founded on principles of sustainability that promote the long-term health of O'ahu, its people, and its community resources for current and future generations, and expressly focuses on the protection of physical and biological resources, and the use of resources "so they are not depleted, permanently damaged or destroyed"; and

WHEREAS, the Ko'olau Poko region includes Kāne'ohe Bay, which is a unique open space resource known for its beauty, rich cultural heritage, and recreational value, and is the largest sheltered body of water in the main Hawaiian Islands; and

WHEREAS, commercial aquarium catch reports reveal that collection of the herbivorous yellow tang, *kole*, orangespine unicornfish (*umaumalei*), and Achilles tang (*paku'iku'i*) in Kāne'ohe Bay dramatically increased from 8,604 in 2018 to 25,745 in 2019, with the yellow tang take exceeding the average island-wide take going back to 2000;² and

WHEREAS, coral reefs and the wildlife dependent upon them are a Public Trust resource "held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people" and 83% of residents polled support ending the destructive aquarium trade;³ and

WHEREAS, legislative action to end the commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade is consistent with the goals of the Ko'olau Poko Sustainable Communities Plan, which focuses on the long-term protection of community resources," including the protection and enhancement of Ko'olau Poko's "natural, cultural, historic, agricultural, and aquacultural/fishpond resources"; and

WHEREAS, commercial harvesting of reef wildlife for ornamental purposes outside Hawai'i is neither compatible with the local values and lifestyles of Hawai'i's residents, nor does it significantly contribute to the quality of life or economy of Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, by reducing the abundance of marine life and diminishing the beauty and health of Hawai'i's coral reefs, the aquarium trade degrades the value and limits the myriad of benefits provided by these critically important ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, this highly destructive and wasteful enterprise can no longer be justified, nor be mitigated by mere regulation, given the challenges with enforcement.

¹*Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II* [Reidmiller, D.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, K.L.M. Lewis, T.K. Mavcock, and B.C. Steward (eds.)]. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA.

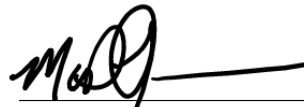
²2018-2019 DLNR Aquarium Trade Catch Reports

³Anthology Research, 2017: Hawai'i Resident Study

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Kāne'ohe Neighborhood Board urges the Legislature to take action to end commercial harvesting of our coral reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade and to provide adequate resources to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for enforcement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Office of Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Office of Representative Scot Matayoshi, Office of Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Chair of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and Administrator of the Division of Aquatic Resources.

***The Kaneohe Neighborhood Board No. 30 adopted this resolution at its Thursday, March 18, 2021
Regular Board meeting, by vote 9-1-0.***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mo Radke', followed by a horizontal line.

Mo Radke, Chair

Aloha Chair Kia‘āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

My name is Ted Bohlen. I am testifying for the Hawai‘i Reef and Ocean Coalition in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Resolution 26-159, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to ban commercial aquarium collection in all Hawai‘i waters.

The Hawai‘i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawai‘i’s coral reefs and ocean.

This measure is critical at this time. The BLNR is currently considering reopening commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. If adopted, this resolution would make clear that the Honolulu City Council does not agree with this industry-driven proposal and believes that the BLNR should instead end this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all, and prevent the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes - the vast majority of which die within a short time after being harvested.

The following reasons support the passage of this resolution:

- Coral reefs are threatened by climate ocean heating, land-based pollution (sediments, wastewater, especially from cesspools, and chemical sunscreens).
- **Coral reefs are also threatened by the insufficient numbers of herbivorous fish to clean the reefs.** These “lawnmower” fish graze on algae and seaweed that can smother coral. They scrape the reef free of all algae and other coral-competitors so that new corals can settle and grow to repair reefs, thereby helping to maintain the delicate balance necessary for reefs to thrive.
- Research shows that herbivorous fish populations have been severely depleted near human population centers in Hawai‘i. On O‘ahu in particular, the most heavily targeted aquarium species—again, largely

herbivores—have been depleted by approximately 90% on average due in part to aquarium collecting (Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020).

- The depletion of these natural reef caretakers makes the reefs more vulnerable to environmental stressors, leading to ecosystem degradation. We need our reef saviors – the herbivores – to keep present and future dead reef surfaces clean so new coral larvae can settle, survive, and grow. Research indicates that reefs with increased herbivores see less coral mortality following severe heat stress compared to reefs with reduced fish populations. Gove *et al.*, “Coral Reefs benefit from reduced land-sea impacts under ocean warming,” Nature August 2023.
- Scientists project annual heat-stress events by as early as 2030. Scientific consensus indicates that up to 70% of Hawai‘i’s reefs could be lost by mid-century without strong local protections, including increased herbivore abundance and biomass to control algal overgrowth. **With damage to corals from recent Kona storms and a severe El Nino event forecasted this fall, Hawaii may experience heat stress and wide coral death this year.**
- Data from the DLNR’s Division of Aquatic Resources show that, contrary to earlier assumptions, populations of the very popular yellow tang aquarium fish have not recovered as biologically or historically expected following the court-ordered cessation of aquarium collecting in late 2017.

A peer-reviewed cost-benefit analysis found that **ending the aquarium trade yields net positive economic benefits**, supporting over \$440 million annually in direct and indirect reef-related tourism value.

- Saving taxpayers money: DLNR has estimated that administering the aquarium trade costs the State hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, excluding enforcement, while generating only minimal permit revenue. Ending the trade would avoid these ongoing public costs.

- Supporting truly **sustainable alternatives**. The only sustainable aquarium trade is one based on aquaculture. Thanks to advances by Hawai'i researchers and businesses, including the Oceanic Institute and Biota, popular species such as yellow tang are now captive-bred and commercially available without harming wild reef populations.

This resolution represents a responsible, science-based, and culturally grounded solution that aligns with public opinion, protects reef ecosystems under increasing climate stress, and fulfills the State's constitutional public-trust obligations. Prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes is in the best interest of City and County of Honolulu residents and is necessary to protect coral reef ecosystems and uphold the rights and protections enshrined in the State Constitution.

Please pass Resolution 26-159 to help protect Hawai'i's reefs and reef wildlife!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

15 July 2026

Opposition to Aquarium Fish Collecting

Ronald Robinson, MD, MPH, MBA, FACHE

I am writing in **support of RES26-159** and in strong opposition to commercial aquarium collecting.

I live near Kailua Kona in Hawaii county and serve as a volunteer for three marine non-profits (Malama Kai, Reef Check, Ocean Defenders Alliance). I'm an avid recreational SCUBA diver, so I see the reef personally several times each week. In addition, I am the squadron commander for Hawaii's Kona Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, so I see the reef and its fish populations from the air on a frequent basis. Finally, I am a physician trained in science and the scientific method of observation. My ability to observe this situation from the perspectives of science, business, and community service places me in a position to provide an educated opinion on this vital issue.

The scientific evidence is overwhelming that commercial aquarium collection damages the fragile reef ecosystem. (1,2) Fish like the yellow tang play a crucial role in maintaining the health of coral reefs by grazing on algae. Their decline can lead to algal overgrowth, which harms coral and disrupts the entire marine ecosystem. They are also a food source for larger predatory fish and their decline can affect the population dynamics of these predators. The fact that the yellow tang population did not recover as predicted during the recent hiatus in aquarium fish collection is an indicator that the models being used by DAR are inaccurate, and the coral reef ecosystem is much more fragile than they predicted.

From a community perspective, each fish that remains on the reef delights hundreds of people. Each fish collected, if it survives, benefits a privileged few. In the 25 years I have been diving this reef I have seen fish populations decline due to environmental stress and the ongoing poaching of aquarium fish despite the recent ban on aquarium fish collection. Keeping our fish on the reef is vital to our tourist industry, and to businesses such as my own. In addition, since the fish are now available by commercial aquaculture, there is no reason other than the financial self-interest of commercial aquarium fish collection to continue the practice of removing wild fish from our reef.

I strongly oppose allowing a small group of selfish commercial aquarium collectors to negatively impact our shared coral reef resource.

Blast fishing is wrong – it was banned in 1940.

Cyanide fishing is wrong – it was banned in in the 1960's.

Commercial whaling is wrong – it was banned in 1986.

Commercial aquarium collecting is wrong – ban it now.

Do your kuleana – just say “NO!” to aquarium fish collecting.

(1) <https://earth.org/the-destructive-truth-behind-aquariums/>

(2) Tissot and Hallacher, 2003

RE: STRONG SUPPORT FOR:

**RESOLUTION 26-159 – ADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF
AQUATIC LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES; AND,**

**RESOLUTION 26-160 – ENACT LEGISLATION THAT PROHIBITS THE
HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM
PURPOSES.**

Honolulu County Council

Committee on Zoning & Planning

Dear Chair Kia'aina, Vice-Chair Waters and Committee members

The Biota Group is in favor of RES26-159 and RES26-160 to ban the commercial aquarium collection.

Aquaculture is a sustainable alternative to wild collection, and our company has proven that this alternative is viable to meet global demand. Over the past seven years our company has invested millions in research and infrastructure to aquaculture popular ornamental species within Hawaii. This allows for consistent, sustainable, well paid jobs and careers that are future proof given ever-changing global climate and increased environmental restrictions.

A commercial aquarium collection ban would increase the confidence of companies like ours to invest further in Hawaiian ornamental aquaculture. There is a significant risk of financial loss to Hawaii's established and growing aquaculture sector than there is to gain in the commercial fisheries sector- in both monetary value and job impacts.

Aquaculture allows Hawaiian reefs to stay stocked with marine life while still allowing the iconic animals as ambassadors to educate the world about Hawaii's reefs.

We urge you to pass RES26-159 and RE26-160 to solidify Hawaii's commitment to sustainable practices, future building, and protecting the reefs.



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL Committee on Zoning and Planning

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of
RESOLUTION 26-159

and

RESOLUTION 26-160

July 16, 2026

9 a.m.

City Council Chambers

Aloha Chair Kia'aina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Zoning and Planning Committee,

Sierra Club of Hawai'i O'ahu Group writes to offer testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160**, as we support resolutions aimed at protecting Hawai'i's waters from the commercial aquarium collection industry.

Collectively, we benefit from healthy reefs and abundant shorelines, as a source of food, recreation, cultural grounding, and untold value in the form of biodiversity and other key ecological services. However our reef ecosystems face imminent decline and in some cases collapse due to the combined impact of human-induced global warming, pollution, and unchecked profit-driven extraction of marine life.

Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 may be critical to preventing this latter threat from being further imposed on our nearshore waters, and exacerbating the decline of our reef ecosystems.

In our recent past hundreds of thousands of specimens of marine life, including ecologically and culturally important native and endemic species, were taken from Hawai'i's reefs and shipped to aquarium owners and commercial distributors thousands of miles away each year. Such businesses rarely exist on a sustainable scale that aligns with the natural cycles of regeneration found in these complex natural resources. **Thus unsurprisingly this kind of extraction of public trust marine resources for the financial benefit of a select few simply does not support healthy reefs and abundance in our local marine life.** As such, the purported benefits of such business simply outweighs the known costs.

Yet in violation of their responsibility to protect the public trust, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) recently proposed rules to set a process for reopening Hawai'i's waters to the aquarium collection industry. Should these rules pass, West Hawai'i Island and O'ahu would likely be the first areas where commercial aquarium collection would be allowed to resume.

Nowhere in Hawai'i should commercial aquarium extraction be allowed. And when O'ahu faces the unique pressures of a large urban population and oppressive nearshore military presence, it makes even less sense to add yet another layer of pressure to an already highly stressed ecosystem. We argue that threats to these critical ecosystems ought to be minimized or where possible eliminated, rather than reinforced, to enable their recovery from past and ongoing harms. Further we urge against the disingenuous argument that posits O'ahu's shores, or any of Hawai'i's shores, as a lost cause in the face of global or seemingly "unavoidable" threats (like civilian and military pollution). The truth is we have yet to offer these ecosystems a real shot at recovery by taking concerted, informed local action that address those threats seriously and persistently.

Thankfully other government entities, organizations, and individuals are now urging the BLNR to ban commercial aquarium collection, and have asked the Hawai'i State Legislature to do the same. Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 would add the Honolulu City Council's voice to this chorus. Such a ban may be critical to protecting our coral reef ecosystems; perpetuating recreational, subsistence, and cultural fishing practices; building our climate resilience; and protecting so many other essential and sustainable local industries from the extractive and unsustainable impacts of the aquarium trade.

For these reasons, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i O'ahu Group respectfully urges the Committee to **SUPPORT** Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kiara Bacasen

Chair, Sierra Club O'ahu Group

Earthtrust



July 15, 2026

Testimony by Earthtrust In Support of City and County Resolution 26-159

**URGING THE STATE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES, TO ADOPT
RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM
STATE OF HAWAI‘I MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL
AQUARIUM PURPOSES**

**On behalf of Earthtrust, headquartered in Kailua, Hawaii and its supporters,
this testimony is submitted in Support of Res26-159**

The most serious consequence of collecting wild reef fish for the ornamental fish trade is the selective depletion of certain species such as the yellow tang and its impact on other species and coral reef habitat. Collecting juvenile algae grazers for home and office aquariums can result in algal blooms and the smothering of reef-building stony corals.

Coral reefs provide habitat for a wide range of marine species with complex life histories linked together in complicated food webs. Even the smaller

reef species taken for the aquarium trade may be long lived and late maturing, with slow growth and low reproductive rates.

Preferences for particular sizes, color forms or rarity can produce extremes in selective harvesting. Removal of cleaner fishes can result in a higher parasite load on other reef fishes. Taking juvenile fishes or male wrasses because of their distinctive coloring can cut off a reproductive cycle.

Earthtrust testimony : C&C Res26-159

Removal of significant numbers of particular species of sub reproductive reef fish for the aquarium trade can interrupt food chains, cause reproductive failure and alter habitat. The use of poisons and explosives to collect aquarium fish also damages Hawaii's coral reefs. There really is no "surplus production" that can be fished "sustainably". Any "excess" is food for their natural predators, which humans may also harvest.

More than 400 species of marine ornamental fish have been successfully bred in captivity including the popular clown fish and Yellow Tang. While the price of cultured fish may be higher, their life expectancy and quality are also higher. They rarely have parasites or diseases found in the wild and are easier to feed because they are accustomed to artificial chow. Aquariums can and should be stocked only with cultured fish.

Sincerely,

Linda Paul

Linda M. B. Paul
International Director,
Endangered Species Program
Earthtrust
Email: earthtrustwildlifeprograms@gmail.com
Website: earthtrust.org PH: 415-662-3264

TESTIMONY: GREENPEACE FOUNDATION

In Support of City and County Resolutions 26-159 and Res26-160

RES: 159: URGING THE STATE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES, TO ADOPT
RULES PROHIBITING THE HARVEST OF AQUATIC LIFE FROM
STATE OF HAWAI'I MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL
AQUARIUM PURPOSES

RES: 160 URGING THE HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE TO ENACT
LEGISLATION THAT PROHIBITS THE HARVES OF AQUATIC MARINE
LIFE FROM STATE OF HAWAI'I MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL
AQUARIUM PURPOSES

Greenpeace Foundation, headquartered in Kailua, Hawaii and its supporters urge the City and County of Honolulu to pass Res26-159 and Res26-160 in order to protect the fragile reef systems in Hawaiian waters by prohibiting the capture of reef fishes for the aquarium trade.

It is anticipated that, due to the continuing disruption of climate cycles due to man's activities which increase CO₂ into the atmosphere that ocean temperatures will continue to rise as more and more CO₂ sinks into the oceans. This will put ever Increasing stress on the reefs and may lead, ultimately, to collapse of the reefs around Hawaii. Reef fishes are highly important to the health of the reefs and their removal puts stress on the reefs, compounding the stress from warming temperatures and other factors.

Yellow Tang are one of the most sought after species in wild capture. The success of breeding Yellow Tangs in captivity is provides a way and example forward for the aquarium industry to switch from wild capture to

breeding in captivity. Due to breakthroughs by the Oceanic Institute in how to successfully breed Yellow Tangs in captivity, there is no longer justification for the taking of this species in the wild.

MORTALITY OF WILD YELLOW TANGS AFTER CAPTURE IN THE WILD

Note: we using the extremely conservative catch quota of 100,000 in these examples)

Initial Catch Trauma: - mortality caused by expanding swim bladders bursting from rapid ascent: **6.2% mortality**
6,500 deaths

Pre-Export Losses: while in holding facilities - mortality due to stress and starvation **20 % mortality**
20,000 deaths

Shipping and Distribution: mortality caused by starving the fish to reduce waste during long-haul transport :
Estimates not available but the source: For the Fishes, found that the highest rate of mortality occurs during shipping, acclimation and handling at retail facilities

ADVANTAGES OF CAPTIVE BRED VS WILD CAUGHT

Yellow Tang can live up to 40 years in the wild; most don't survive over 1 year after capture

Aquarists report that the wild caught Yellow Tang have significant mortality within the first year after they purchase the fish due to stress and not eating in captivity. The captive bred arrive healthier, free of parasites and eager to eat.

GREENPEACE FOUNDATIONS STRONGLY URGES THE CITY AND COUNTY TO ADOPT RES26-159 and RES26-160

Submitted for Greenpeace Foundation by:

Sue White
Vice-President
Greenpeace Foundation
1118 Maunawili Road
'Kailua, HI 96734
Email: Greenpeace.foundation.com