

RES26-159
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 329

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Aug 12, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 157

Oppose: 11

I wish to comment: 9

Name: Sally Tompkins	Email: sallysharill@gmail.com	Zip: 96716
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 7, 2026 @ 01:41 PM
Testimony: Our reefs and the fish and other animals that live among them are interdependent and symbiotic. The reefs provide most of our oxygen on earth and this fall we expect to see a huge percentage of our reefs wiped out by warming ocean temperatures. To further endanger them by continuing to interfere with the natural balance of life through harvesting the aquatic animals they depend on will be devastating.		
Name: Uilani Naipo	Email: uilani.naipo@me.com	Zip: 96720
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:11 AM
Name: Peter Klune	Email: captainpedro99@gmail.com	Zip: 96754
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:15 AM
Testimony: This is something that should have passed a long time ago. We do not do enough in the state to protect the natural resources in our Waters. It's ridiculous that we would even consider an aquarium trade benefiting a handful of people who are stripping our reefs of the very aquatic Life that makes us Hawaii. Enough!		
Name: Mark Schacht	Email: oceandem12@gmail.com	Zip: 94804
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:42 AM
Testimony: Dear Chair and Members: Please compel DLNR to begin a regulatory process that will ban commercial reef fish harvesting from Hawaiian waters. This is widely supported, environmentally justified and long over due. Mahalo.		
Name: Clarissa Passos	Email: byclarissa@gmail.com	Zip: 96738
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:46 AM
Testimony: Please preserve and protect the beauty of our Hawaiian islands reefs! Aquarium industry is plenty capable of figuring out		

how to raise and reproduce fish inland without depleting the wild life. That is enough destruction of natural beauty caused by humans in our planet.

Name: Alma Mcgoldrick	Email: almabmcgoldrick@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:49 AM

Testimony:
Please join the other local governments, including Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii County Councils, in passing a resolution supporting this ban which up to 84% of residents support. Thank you.

Name: Mike Rudenko	Email: mauispeardiver@gmail.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:52 AM

Testimony:
Aloha council,
Please hear voices of the people and finish the aquarium collection once and for all! This barbaric outdated practice benefits no one except for a handful of individuals most of whom don't even live in the state of Hawaii!
Multiple scientific studies who's how destructive it is, reef ecosystem suffer tremendously when the population of herbivores is reduced.
It's proven science and it's common sense. Stop the greed, stop the aquarium collection!

Thank you for your time.
Aloha.

Name: William Stockton	Email: mantaentgc@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Testimony:
Dear Council Members,

I strongly support banning commercial aquarium collection as I have witnessed first hand the depletion of reef fish on Hawaii Island.
Please join the neighbor islands and pledge to ban commercial aquarium collection.

Please support RES26-159

Thank you for your time,
Aloha, Bill Stockton

Name:

Ana Cartwright

Email:

ahnahdesign@icloud.com

Zip:

96816

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 10:10 AM

Testimony:

I used to be an aquarium keeper, most of my young life and realizing living away from Hawaii on the mainland people don't know how to take care of marine life in aquariums and 90% of them end up dying right away

I had fish that lived 20 years, which was unheard of in aquarium keeping

because I was born on the islands and knew the chemistry and although nowadays the industry it's just a multimillion dollar sham of killing animals they call specimens raping the reefs shall we say of aquatic life does no good to the well-being of the islands aquaculture corals and fish will be depleted completely if they continue to let people steal them out of the ocean and put them up for sale for their own financial gain

it's a disgusting business same with birds, Wildlife of any kind that is stolen out of the wild and put up for sale

I support stopping this horrible trade in its tracks before more innocent marine life die at the hands of uneducated people that just want something pretty swimming around in water

..they can get an app from AI and get the same results and they don't have to change water or worry about feeding them.

Let's leave Hawaii fishes alone to thrive. !!!

Name:

Patricia Cadiz

Email:

pbc5@mac.com

Zip:

96779

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 10:21 AM

Testimony:

I support all bands on commercial aquarium Fish collection. The reef are an important part of the healthy reef ecosystem. A lot of people don't understand that the reef is also an important part of our natural defenses against climate change. Supporting this bill has multiple benefits and actually is your fiduciary responsibility to your constituents and the state of Hawaii's public trust resources.

Name:

Douglas Perrine

Email:

douglasperrine@yahoo.com

Zip:

96740

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 10:54 AM

Testimony:

The apapane is a beautiful brightly colored forest bird that is endemic to Hawaii, but abundant and widely distributed within Hawaii. The DLNR would never consider allowing commercial hunters to collect apapane to be caged and sold in the pet trade. The Potter's angelfish is a beautiful brightly colored reef fish that is endemic to Hawaii, but abundant and widely distributed within Hawaii. The DLNR has allowed the DAR to advance a permit for commercial hunters to collect Potter's angels to be bagged and sold in the pet trade. What's the difference? A few functionaries in the DAR that are stuck in an old-fashioned way of thinking that all marine resources are best utilized by fully exploiting them through extractive fishing, regardless that fish-watching, like birding, is a more lucrative and sustainable use. The other difference is that the angelfish live in the ocean where fewer people view them and speak out to protect them. The ocean also more easily conceals poaching, and complicates enforcement, so that allowing any fish collection provides cover for the collection of more vulnerable species. Most Hawaii residents oppose commercial aquarium collection. It's time for DAR to listen and change course.

Name:

Krista Cutter

Email:

krista_c2000@yahoo.com

Zip:

96755-3074

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 11:27 AM

Testimony:

Over the past 26 years, I have been snorkeling in the waters off the Kohala coast. I've seen troubling fluctuations in the fish populations and varieties. Water temperatures and pollutants, as well as overfishing, have been consistently worse. The forecasts of an El Niño, as well as climate change and political ignorance, do not bode well for the present reef and fish health and well-being.

Harvesting from our precious marine waters is not feasible, now or in the future. Please protect our wildlife for generations to come. The consequences will pay off. Thank you.

Name:

Elisa Plauche

Email:

elisa8094@aol.com

Zip:

96708

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 11:28 AM

Testimony:

I think it's wrong to sell off our resources to businesses that destroy our environment and the creatures that live there. Aquarium businesses that sell saltwater fish to the rich for a profit, degrade and diminish those species.

Name:

Shayla Middleton

Email:

shayla@blissfulhat.com

Zip:

96753

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 12:28 PM

Testimony:

Thank you for taking written testimony on this important issue!

I support permanently banning commercial aquarium collecting because I have seen major abuses with my own eyes at the Kihei boat ramp

One day a man was boasting about how many buckets of fish he had and his "daily haul", about that size he said, was allowing him to buy a bigger boat so he could collect EVEN MORE FISH...??!!

This turned our stomachs as he had SO MANY fish that day!! We saw over a dozen 5 gallon buckets filled to the brim with fish, and they looked like they were all not doing well at all :(

He kept urging us to buy his boat and get into this "lucrative business"

I have since learned about how this industry is a lot like the cut flower industry where the fish do not survive very long and more and more fish need to be purchased to refull aquarium tanks across the world.

I did not know that fish often only live about a year in a fish tank when they can live for decades in the ocean.

In the 20 years, I have been here. I've seen a great decline in fish and it's so sad. I hope you will support this bill and permanently ban commercial aquarium collection. Thank you.

Name: M Moran	Email: mmmmahalo2000@aol.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Kihei Community Association	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 01:00 PM
Testimony: Please support this		

Name: barbara orlowski	Email: h2ocolorbarbara@gmail.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 01:34 PM
Testimony: end aquarium collection in hawaii waters		

Name: James Ward	Email: relaxjim@yahoo.com	Zip: 96704
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 02:26 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

As a resident and diver in the Milolii area of the big island I have seen first hand the effect of aquarium collecting on the waters of south Kona. At the last DAR public hearing in Kona we were told of a new permitting process for the Harvesting of yellow Tang and other species. I asked how many DNLR officers are assigned to 100 miles of West Hawaii coastline to police the new rules and the answer was 2. Respectfully, in my 20 years as a resident, and someone who dives at least once a week I've NEVER seen a DNLR officer south of Honokohau harbor. Bottom line is there is no economic benefit to the people of Milolii from aquarium collection. The fact that tourists remark there not as many of those "golden fish" as there used to be is not helping tourism either. I have been watching the aquarium trade hire "experts" to submit new EIS many times in 15 years always supporting "sustainable collection and fishery management". This is an industry that harms our reef ecosystem to profit a few. Mahalo for your time

James Ward

Name: Elizabeth Mcfarland	Email: ulualiza@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 02:37 PM

Testimony:

As a long time resident of Hawaii, I wish to comment on how important it is to ban taking fish for aquariums. I was a diver at Sea Life Park and the Ocenarium at Pac Beach hotel. We had many fish bought in for display. Many of these fish survived. Many did not. As much as I loved and cared for these fish, it is a selfish and sometimes destructive practice. We need to care for and support the fish in our ocean environment! It is selfish to (often times) condemn these creatures to lives with people not able to give them the life they were meant to live. Thank you !

Name: Lisa Bishop	Email: lisa.fohb@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Friends of Hanauma Bay	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 03:05 PM

Name: Sherry Marek	Email: alohamarek@outlook.com	Zip: 96719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 03:25 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Many species of saltwater Aquarium fish are now bred in captivity. That is the wonder of science. And that's the way forward. There is no reason to allow AQ collection of wildlife from Hawaii's reef.

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

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

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek

Big Island resident

Name: Wendi LeVigne	Email: wendi.levigne@mac.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 03:37 PM

Testimony:

I've watched the reefs of Australia and Hawaii degrade over the last 40 years. As a Hawaii resident, with the aina our responsibility to protect, it is unsupportable, and unfathomable that we would let this practice of commercial aquarium trade continue to strip our precious reefs of their natural balance and deny the wildlife the habitat they are entitled to - all for the slight entertainment value of humans who likely do not care well for these fish. Containment in artificial environments (aquariums) is tantamount to animal abuse. There is no defensible argument for continuing the practice of commercial tropical fish trade for aquarium use, from an ecosystem or humane animal protection perspective. It is gross negligence on our part to allow the trade to continue and jeopardize our reefs and our wildlife, and for no redeeming reason makes it all the more egregious. Please ban the trade without further hesitation. Mahalo.

Name: Neil Frazer	Email: neilfrazer@icloud.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 8, 2026 @ 05:04 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters and Council Members,

I support this resolution for the following reasons:

(1) The small fish captured for private aquariums have co-evolved with Hawaii's coral reefs, and play an important ecological role in maintaining the health of our reefs. You can probably think of fifty services that our reefs provide us, but one that is often forgotten is that they reduce damage from tsunamis by causing tsunami waves to break far from shore.

(2) If mainland folks wish to admire our fish they should visit Hawaii, don mask and snorkel, and swim with them.

Hanauma Bay has been a terrific success. Imagine if the nearshore waters of all our islands had even half the fish density of Hanauma Bay. Imagine visitors being inspired by our example and returning home determined to prosper the natural environments of their own lands and waters.

(3) Notwithstanding (1) and (2), I strongly support local food fisheries managed by traditional Hawaiian methods. If the big ships full of groceries ever stop coming from the mainland our local inshore fishermen will help save us from starvation — but only if there are fish left for them to catch. It is likely that those pretty little reef fish play important roles in the near-shore marine food chains that lead to commercially important food fish.

Mahalo to Chair Waters and Member Esther Kia'aina for sponsoring this resolution, and mahalo to all of you for your unselfish service to our Island.

Sincerely/ Neil Frazer, PhD./peer-reviewed scientific papers at

https://www.soest.hawaii.edu/earthsciences/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/pubs_neil.pdf

Name:

Linda Halbritter

Email:

bubbleglo@icloud.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 05:18 PM

Testimony:

Please STOP the harvesting of marine life from Hawaiian waters for aquarium purposes!

Name:

Deborah Fulton

Email:

deefulton.scubadiva@gmail.com

Zip:

96725-9757

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 09:30 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmen and Councilwomen:

Please accept this testimony in favor of banning aquarium fish collection in Hawaii forever. I am an avid scuba diver and REEF fish ID expert. I have been observing the numbers and variety of Kona coast reef fish for a decade. It was so interesting to see the reefs start to bloom during the pandemic. I can attest to the fact that there are several rare species that are threatened by the aquarium trade. I and my group of divers used to see one lonely thornback cowfish at one dive site. We have not seen that fish or any others of the same species for 4 years.

I understand that the name "Gold Coast" was given to Kona because yellow tangs were so thick that when waves broke, the face of the waves looked golden with fish. Not any more. Yes, yellow tangs are still common. But one can review the fish survey data submitted by citizen scientists to see that the trend in population numbers is down across the Kona coast. Granted climate change and water pollution are contributing to the decline. But aquarium fishing will take a toll.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Dee Fulton

Name:

Judith Cucco

Email:

myjet2@gmail.com

Zip:

96825

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 8, 2026 @ 10:31 PM

Testimony:

Our reefs face increasing pressure from climate change, pollution, habitat degradation, and overfishing. Removing reef fish for the aquarium trade is an unnecessary additional stressor.

The aquarium trade's own sustainability claims have not been borne out by NOAA and DAR monitoring data following the 2021 statewide closure.

The trade provides little public benefit while imposing environmental, management, and enforcement costs on the State.

The Environmental Court has confirmed that the Board of Land and Natural Resources has the authority to prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking.

Name:

Johnnie-Mae Perry

Email:

waianaenb569@gmail.com

Zip:

96792

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 9, 2026 @ 03:24 AM

Testimony:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, support RES26-159

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.

Name:

Lynn Allen

Email:

maui.acudoc@gmail.com

Zip:

96753

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 9, 2026 @ 04:53 AM

Testimony:

The reef ecosystem needs our protection in as many ways as possible. One means is to prohibit the aquarium trade from damaging the ecosystem through its fish removal practices. We need to act now in as many ways as possible.

Name:

lexa grutter

Email:

a.grutter@uq.edu.au

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 9, 2026 @ 09:17 AM

Testimony:

I support permanently banning aquarium fish collecting because like many others on the islands, today, being a Sunday I am going to the beach and I will snorkel and want to see natural levels of fish, not a reef decimated by aquarium collectors that benefit a few individuals only. Mahalo!

Name:

Mark Johnson

Email:

markajohnson0@gmail.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Position:

Submitted:

Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 10:03 AM
Testimony: I urge the city council to tell the DNLR to permanently ban the collecting of reef fish not only in the city and county of Honolulu, but across the entire state. Thanks for listening to a concerned citizen.		
Name: Amy Venema	Email: captamy@yahoo.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 9, 2026 @ 11:15 AM
Testimony: I support this bill. I've been a boat captain and educator on Maui for 30 years. We need to keep our fish in ocean on our reefs. The changes I've seen over the years to the reef ecosystem has been dramatic. This is one thing we can control to help keep them healthy. Please pass this bill.		
Name: Kenneth Perreira	Email: mpearls.621@gmail.com	Zip: 96732
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 9, 2026 @ 12:17 PM
Testimony: Aloha, My name is Kenneth Perreira, I have signed so many papers and made testimony for all this aquarium fish collection to Stop in All of Hawai'i Nei. The fish die, they cannot survive for long outside of the birth home. And then if all this passes, and no more collocations, They going do it illegally! Who is going to watch, or guard our oceans? Is it up to us to do this? We have missing people and children in Hawai'i every day. We can't even protect them? We need a task force built up from volunteers? Put cameras on buoys? Crazy right. But we do have a Satellite. Hope I can do my best when I'm out fishing and I see something questionable? Protect The Land, Air And Sea! Please! Mahalo K.Perreira		
Name: Cynthia Sweeney	Email: cindysplanet@rocketmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 9, 2026 @ 12:48 PM
Testimony: Please support legislation to protect our precious ocean resources from aquarium collectors. Our reef fish are a vital part of the health of our oceans and island ecosystems. This is aquarium collection is a barbaric and futile venture.		
Name: Robert Pecoraro	Email: nyfrogman@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 12:59 PM
Testimony: Our reefs are already suffering badly, because of climate change and sewage spills/leakages into our once pristine ecosystem. Now they want to add the pressure of removing the fish that keep the algae at bay. These herbivores give the reefs at least a fighting chance to survive. Since the tropical fish collecting ban in West Hawaii, the populations of these fish, and other popular aquarium trade fishes have increased. We are finally seeing once rare fish, such as Longfin Anthias, Bicolor Anthias, Flame Wrasse and other fish that had all but disappeared whilst they were being collected. The fish that are collected have a high mortality rate. Those that survive end up in an aquarium, for a few to enjoy, rather than remaining on the reef, free for all to enjoy, while keeping the ecosystem in balance. Before we moved to Hawaii, we traveled here frequently to dive and enjoy a unique environment, where about 25% of the aquatic life is endemic to Hawaii. We should strive toward preserving these creatures in their natural environment, rather than allowing them to be collected, killed and/or shipped out of Hawaii. It makes no sense to allow tropical fish collection again, especially since it has been banned for so many years. Please consider the wishes of those who care, including Native Hawaiian groups, and do the right thing. Please put a permanent ban on tropical fish collection and help give the reefs a fighting chance to survive. I respectfully request that the Board of Land and Natural Resources permanently prohibits commercial aquarium collection through rule-making.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeannette Heidrich	jheidrich@mac.cm	96740
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 01:20 PM
Testimony: We need our reef fish on the reef to protect our reefs, and also to provide the beauty that tourists come to see. Also, the reef fish are abused when taken off the reef. Stop the collection of reef fish!!!!!!!!!!		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ryan Christopher	rchristo808@gmail.com	96743
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 02:30 PM
Testimony: Aloha, I want to voice my support of this bill to restrict the commercial trapping and taking of our reef fish for commercial sale. The should be for everyone to enjoy, not just for a few to take a profit from. Tourist is the largest part of the Hawaii economy. If our reefs are depleted and or destroyed we will lose that tourism and all locals will suffer. Mahalo Ryan Honokaa HI		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Marianne Eaton	marianne@mac.com	96719

Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 9, 2026 @ 03:20 PM
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Testimony:

We need a bill permanently ending the commercial harvesting of marine life for the aquarium pet trade. Capturing wild animals and transporting them thousands of miles in conditions that are often fatal is not humane. Upwards of 40 percent of wild caught fish bound for pet stores perish before they arrive on the sales floor. Collection methods include cruel practices such as puncturing swim bladders to bring fish to the surface more quickly. Fins and spines are cut before transport to enable the use of cheaper, thinner bags. Fish are starved before shipment so they don't foul the water in the bags. These fish are critical to the survival of Hawai'i's coral reefs in the face of climate change, which, beginning in 2014, destroyed parts of our important reef ecosystems through a series of unprecedented ocean heat waves, and which is forecast to drive annual ocean heat waves as soon as 2030. I urge an end to this inhumane trade.

Name: Pauline Fiene	Email: severns@mauigateway.com	Zip: 96793
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 9, 2026 @ 03:44 PM
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Testimony:

I strongly support a permanent ban on aquarium collecting. We all see that our reefs have declined and are struggling with many stressors. Some things we can't control in the near term, like the warming ocean and acidification. But we CAN control the senseless removal of reef fish which have extremely important roles to play in the health of the reef, now more than ever. We must get serious about keeping our reef fish here where they belong and are needed, and not captured and shipped out of state for the enjoyment of a few.

Name: Mary Keller	Email: islandharpist@gmail.com	Zip: 96779
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 9, 2026 @ 04:03 PM
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Testimony:

We must never allow our reefs to be plundered by any businesses that seek profit from taking our fish. I have swum all around Maui for 9 years now; NOTHING about Maui's reefs is improving. Why should we allow profit-making interests to come in and take our precious marine life.

It is time to SHUT DOWN this issue once and for all. (Why does it keep coming up again year after year??)

Name: Robert Culbertson	Email: dancingcloudrefuge@gmail.com	Zip: 96776
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Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
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Bid Island Reef Keepers hui	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 04:13 PM
Testimony: Aloha Council members! Help us show the state DLNR that our island chain is linked with strong support for a long overdue reformed and rational conservation policy. Hawaii's reef fish are not expendable ornaments for private fish tanks! Reef fish are nature's top tools for reef health and recovery! Rob Culbertson Honokaa, HI		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Wendy Noritake	wendynoritake@mac.com	96755
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 04:33 PM
Testimony: I support the Honolulu City Council to prohibit the harvesting of our natural resource, our precious reef fish and coral, from the State of Hawai'i marine waters. The collecting of aquarium fish for commercial purpose is inhumane and cruel to the fish, and it goes against Hawai'i cultural norms to not take the natural resources for personal gain. So many of our reef fish are endemic to Hawai'i, and found nowhere else on earth! This is a barbaric industry and this practice must be stopped. Thank you so much for supporting the fishes for generations (theirs and ours) to come! Wendy Noritake		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Topher Dean	topherdean1@gmail.com	96719
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Clean the Pacific	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 05:07 PM
Testimony: Dear County Council, My heart is daring to allow a ray of hope and sunshine in these dark times. I see that there is an opportunity to stop the devastation of our coral reef habitats by banning the extraction of our precious reef fish. My son, Kanoe Phillips, and I were snorkeling off the Mahukona pier about 7 years ago. Afterwards we sat on the edge		

and talked story for a while. Suddenly he exclaimed, "LOOK!" I looked down in the water and there was a school of yellow tang, about 10-12 total. We watched them drift back and forth in the gentle swells for a few minutes, then Kanoe said, "I heard schools like this were common once." I can't overstate how much that sentence broke my heart. I just looked at him in disbelief and sorrow, because he has no idea of the beauty that once existed. When I was his age, I went snorkeling there often and there were always multiple schools of yellow tang, each one containing hundreds of fish, a dizzying display of dazzling yellow fish. Think about that. He went to some of the most remote areas off the west coast of Hawaii Island with the DAR, and this sad little remnant of yellow tang off the pier was amazing to him? Oh, the shame. This is almost entirely the result of the aquarium industry.

Now with all of the stressors that humanity is bringing to bear on this tiny blue dot we call home, the last thing these fish need is to be ripped from their homes and imprisoned for life in some dentist's office. I'm telling you, there's going to be a reckoning for our sociopathic indifference to the pain and suffering we're inflicting on the natural world. For every action there's an equal and opposite reaction, and we will reap the bitter fruit of our greed and selfishness as a species. This is one act of kindness you can take, for the fishes and for people like me who swoon with joy at the beauty of planet Earth's spectacular miracle of life.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Bohlen	tbohl8@yahoo.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 06:23 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Deborah Wallace	1happygyrl@gmail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 07:30 PM

Testimony:

It is so very important that we ban all aquarium fishing. It is wrong that we allow aquarium fishing for the financial benefit of a few to the detriment of all of our citizens, our tourist, and especially to the detriment of our reefs and ocean fishes. Aquarium fishing harvest, not only the desired fish, but a huge quantity of by catch is killed.

This is just not Pono. It is wrong..

Thank you for your consideration

Deborah Wallace

Hawaii Kai

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Zettelyss Amora	orderdesk33@gmail.com	96743
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 9, 2026 @ 08:30 PM

Testimony:

As a 22 year ocean swimmer on the Kohala Coast I have seen the damage done by neglecting to protect Hawaii's most valuable natural resource. I urge you to support this bill for a permanent ban on fish collection for the aquarium trade.

Mahalo,

Our reefs face increasing pressure from climate change, pollution, habitat degradation, and overfishing. Removing reef fish for the aquarium trade is an unnecessary additional stressor.

The aquarium trade's own sustainability claims have not been borne out by NOAA and DAR monitoring data following the 2021 statewide closure.

The trade provides little public benefit while imposing environmental, management, and enforcement costs on the State. The Environmental Court has confirmed that the Board of Land and Natural Resources has the authority to prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jake Phillips	Jake@TheBiotaGroup.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
The Biota Group	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 05:01 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Esther Shimazu	estherstimazu@gmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:10 AM

Testimony:

Our land and waters are already overburdened and degraded as anyone who's lived here a while can plainly see. Please stop at least this further insult.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Simmy McMichael	Simmy808@gmail.com	96745
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:25 AM

Testimony:

Please adopt this Resolution, our Reef Matters. We are dealing with climate changes, pollution (cesspools, runoff, overfishing). We Do Not want our reef fishes to be removed for aquarium trade all for Kala \$. For the cultural and natural resources, we need now to fully protect for the now and next generation. It is our Kuleana as stewards of our A'ina to do this protection. We need to do what is Pono as much has changed. Our Ocean is our Life of Hawai'i. Without it we cannot function, mind, body and soul. I used to see so many reef fishes while surfing, not now, much has changed.

I was born in the Territory of Hawai'i, and have seen the changes and what used to be clean and healthy, our ocean is not. Please Malama and Protect our Fishes!!

Mahalo,

Simmy McMichael

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jeanne Herbert	jeannebherbert@gmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:34 AM
Testimony: Aloha City Council members, I am writing in support of Resolution 26-159 urging BLNR to permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection. Our significantly degraded reefs and marine life are under immense pressure from pollution, runoff, warming oceans, and fish collection among many other factors. Commercial aquarium collection should be relegated to dust heap of history of bad practices. Aquarium collection is not pono and there is little local benefit. We need to look to the future and protect our marine life and the reef ecosystem. Mahalo, Jeanne Herbert		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Patricia Johnson	apstj@yahoo.com	96740
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:42 AM
Testimony: Banning all commercial gathering of reef fish of all the Hawai'i islands is a must. Supporting an industry that only support# a few is not the best interest of all the people of Hawaii. There are no fisheries that raise and release tropical fish, so don't let them be removed.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Bo Pardau	bodiver@gmail.com	96740
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 08:06 AM
Testimony: I have lived on the Big Island for 22 years and spend an extraordinary amount of time in the ocean. I have seen the decimation of our reefs in 2014-2015 from El Nino warming and that makes it imperative that we keep our herbivore fish in abundance to keep the algae at bay. I have seen our reef rebound since the aquarium ban went into affect and I don't want to see it diminished again for the advantage of a few collectors.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
James Schulz	schulznow@gmail.com	96719
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 08:25 AM
Testimony: Our ecosystem is dramatically affected more by collection of aquatic species than the admiration of seeing these in an .		

Name: Waltraut Mori	Email: amori@chaminade.edu	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 09:02 AM
Testimony: Please help to stop this destructive trade - it depletes our struggling reefs. I wonder how many of these beautiful fishes survive capture and shipping to faraway places. I think we are better than this.		
Name: Rene Umberger	Email: rene@forthefishes.org	Zip: 96753
Representing: For the Fishes	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 09:15 AM
Name: Ronald Robinson	Email: N904jd@icloud.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 09:42 AM
Name: Diane Ware	Email: volcanogetaway@yahoo.com	Zip: 96785
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 10:21 AM
Testimony: My name is Diane Ware and I SUPPORT Honolulu Council RES26-159 After years of controversy and concern, including from Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing communities throughout the islands the aquarium collection industry was shut down by court order in 2017 and has remained closed for nearly a decade. However, the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is poised to reopen West Hawai'i and O'ahu waters through proposed rules it claims are required under current law. This resolution will is a critical opportunity to make clear in statute that Hawai'i's waters should not be reopened to the ornamental aquarium trade, in West Hawai'i or anywhere else across our island chain. Reef fish, especially herbivorous species targeted by collectors, are essential to healthy coral reefs that protect our shorelines, support food systems, and sustain cultural and subsistence practices. The people and county councils have spoken, the constitution is clear regarding the Public Trust Doctrine and Native Hawaiian customary rights and DLNR's mission to uphold those rights. I ask that you honor those rights to protect our reefs from unscrupulous extraction of reef creatures for the profit of the international Pet Trade.		

Malama pono,

Diane Ware, Moku o Ka'u

Name:

Monika Frazier

Email:

mfrazier@hawaii.edu

Zip:

96743

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 11:19 AM

Testimony:

I am in support of a statewide ban on aquarium fishing because it has had severe negative impacts on our fisheries and the health of our reefs. Aquarium fishing is not in alignment with community-based management for sustainable fisheries so we can feed our communities for generations to come.

Name:

Glenn Choy

Email:

choyhawaii@gmail.com

Zip:

96839

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 11:33 AM

Testimony:

I urge passage of this measure. Thank you.

Name:

Michael von Platen

Email:

mikevp@mikevp.com

Zip:

96830

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 11:34 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Michael von Platen 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Keith Neal	Email: windrider4002@yahoo.com	Zip: 96743
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:03 PM

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.

Name: KAREN INGRAHAM	Email: hikaren808@gmail.com	Zip: 96737
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:07 PM

Testimony:

i am against any harvesting for the aquarium trade. let our waters and sea life be.

Name: Jill Zamzow	Email: jzamzow@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
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Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:11 PM
Name: Diane Fujimura	Email: diyimnida1@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:13 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council, My name is Diane Fujimura 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. As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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:

Joyce Barbarich	JOYCE.BARBARICH@GMAIL.COM	96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:19 PM
Testimony: I support both resolutions calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i. Commercial aquarium collection is not financially important to Hawaii's economy but is extremely harmful to our tourism and our goals of protecting the natural environment we treasure and which makes everyone else wish they were here. Please ban all commercial aquarium fishing. Mahalo!		
Name: James Cooper	Email: jimcooper@mindspring.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:24 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council, My name is James Cooper 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. 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. 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: Darrell Ziegler	Email: darrell_ziegler@hotmail.com	Zip: 96738
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:46 PM
Testimony: Aloha - I strongly oppose commercial aquarium collection in Hawaii and strongly support this Resolution. Our natural resources are critical and should be protected from exploitation. Mahalo		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jai Cox	jaicox363@gmail.com	96772
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 10, 2026 @ 12:56 PM
Testimony: Aloha my name is Jai Cox, I'm a fisherman on Big Island I live South Point area, I've been in the water as a spearfisherman for a very long time. I am in the environment of these targeted species multiple times a week and I can tell you that their numbers are incredibly plentiful. This fishery also has no significant impact on the reef or environment. Given the rigorous regulations and careful science that has gone into this fishery there should be no reason to ban it. Let us fishermen fish to provide for our families, mahalo		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Joan Fujimura	jhfujimura@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 01:04 PM
Testimony: I urge the legislature to prevent further decimation of our fish and wildlife in our oceans. The ecology of our oceans are so important to the ecology of our earth, our air, or land. Please do not allow human greed for pretty things to destroy our ocean life and ecology. Mahalo, Joan		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Patricia Blair	patricia Blair@msn.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 01:18 PM
Testimony: Please protect Hawaii's reefs ! Ban aquariums commercial collections!		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Donna Durgin	donna.durgin@gmail.com	96737
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 01:19 PM
Testimony:		

My name is Dpnna Durgin 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. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade.

Not surprisingly, many organizations alongside thousands of testifiers from across the islands all have supported a statewide ban on commercial aquarium collection. Please SUPPORT Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.

Name: Casey Takayama	Email: jjizake@hotmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 01:36 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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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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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Iorna Larsen-jeyte	Email: tutulorna@gmail.com	Zip: 96785
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 01:51 PM

Testimony:

I have been a swimmer snorkler all my adult life in Hawaii. From 1962 to 2026. Almost 65 years. I've seen the precipitous decline in reef fish in the shallower waters of all islands but particularly in Kona. At night people quietly enter the reefs and net scoop the reef fish. There's money to make on these fish! Never mind the health of the ecosystem in the waters and reefs. This is not pono Hawaiian cultural practice. Take what you need for subsistence and leave the rest to grow. Boats come into Captain Cook monument and use large nets to scoop the reef fish. It's sickening. and sad., Please pass a this Bill to prohibit aquarium fish hunting. Mahalo Lorna Larsen Jeyte Volcano

Name: John Hoover	Email: jphoover@gmail.com	Zip: 96785
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:00 PM

Testimony:

I live in Volcano, Hawaii. I am a former aquarist and I even wrote a book about keeping Hawaii's marine fish in aquariums responsibly (Hawaii's Fishes, a Guide for Snorkelers, Divers, and Aquarists, Mutual Publishing, Honolulu, 1993). I am still 'aquarium friendly' and believe that saltwater aquariums are a wonderful hobby and educational tool. However, I also support the permanent ending of commercial collecting of wild aquarium fish in the State of Hawaii. I know from experience that marine fish do not live long in the average aquarium, so there needs to be a continual supply. I also know that many Hawaiian reef fish can now be bred in captivity and that captive bred fish are hardier in aquariums than wild-caught fish.. Unfortunately, artificial breeding is expensive and not viable commercially if there's an endless supply of cheap wild-caught fish. So let's give our reefs a break and at the same time give a boost to commercial breeding of aquarium fish here in Hawaii. Eventually, this could be a small local industry that would create many more jobs than those lost if a ban were to be enacted. Thanks for your consideration.

Name: Sunshine Eckstrom	Email: silvercanyonequine@gmail.com	Zip: 96712-9417
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:08 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Please strongly support a permanent ban on commercial aquarium collection in all of Hawaii's waters. We need to protect our already endangered reefs and ocean ecosystem from being cruelly plundered for commercial gain. Let's protect our unique and beautiful species. The long term health of our oceans and of us are at stake.

Mahalo

Name:

Catherine Goeggel

Email:

oAnghusa@gmail.com

Zip:

96817

Representing:

Animal Rights Hawaii

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:12 PM

Testimony:

I am offering supportive testimony for Resos 26-158 and 26-160

Please vote for these two resos. The integrity of our islands depends upon healthy reefs. We are already seeing the results of coral bleaching. The health of the reefs depend upon coral grooming by herbivorous fishes- the same beauties that collectors want because they can sell them across the world.

We need a permanent ban on taking reef fishes. The entire process is disturbing, traumatic for the fish, and many die en route, causing collectors to take many more fish than they need. The practice is not pono. It is wasteful and it is dangerous to our ocean environment .

Mahalo!

Name:

Joie Yonamine

Email:

joie.yonamine@gmail.com

Zip:

96822

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:19 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Joie Yonamine 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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.

Joie Yonamine

Name: Anne Fojtasek	Email: annef@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:20 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support banning commercial aquarium collecting for the health of our fish and the health of our reef.

Anne Fojtasek

Name: Anne Lorenzo	Email: trjanne@yahoo.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:21 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Anne 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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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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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Caroline Azelski	Email: RES26-159@azelski.net	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:22 PM

Testimony:

I support permanently banning commercial aquarium collecting because harvesting benefits a very small segment of the population. Keeping the fish on the reef benefits all residents and visitors who choose to enjoy them. Healthier reefs may also lead to more money available for environmental stewardship now that we have the environmental impact fee. Thank you.

Name: Carol Defazio	Email: loracarol321@gmail.com	Zip: 96719
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:25 PM
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Testimony:

I strongly disagree with any removal of all reef fish by commercial aquarium collection in Hawaiian waters.

Carol Defazio

Name: Robert Topic	Email: bobtopic@hotmail.com	Zip: 96744
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:31 PM
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Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Robert Topic 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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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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: Lorrie Taylor	Email: lorriemt@gmail.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:40 PM

Testimony:

The drastic drop in fish populations remains obvious. Recovery is slow. Given all the current pressures on our aquatic environmental system it feels important and obvious to end the collection of fish for aquariums. We need stronger and more protections on our natural resources as they are an important piece of our complete environment. Please protect our fish and pass a permanent ban on their collection for aquarium purposes.

Name: Hannah Eagle	Email: hannaheagle@gmail.com	Zip: 96719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:47 PM

Testimony:

Selected Agenda Item: RES26-159

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.

Name: Catherine Courtney	Email: kittyc8571@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:52 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support this resolution. Aquarium fish collection has no place in our stat. Please pass this Resolution

Name: Laura Legge	Email: laura.legge@icloud.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: For the Fishes	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:55 PM

Testimony:

Enough is enough! We need our reef fishes on our reefs protecting our beautiful home. Some Dr. in Peoria does not need our Hawaiian fish in his waiting room. He can purchase fish that aren't wild caught. Or better yet, get a video!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Helen White	helen@whiteolsson.com	96719
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:57 PM

Testimony:

From my experience snorkeling the Kohala Coast over the past 13 years I have noticed a specific decline in reef fish particularly the Angle fish. This decline has been in part due to collecting for the aquarium trade and often poaching. There has been poaching of large coral heads too. I can only assume to supply large aquariums. I oppose the trade based on this decline but also as it is very difficult to police those that are in compliance with the law and those that are not. Better to make it illegal so it is easier to police more effectively and prevent this source of the ongoing decline.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kyle Oba	kyleoba@gmail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:58 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Kyle 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Christopher Scott Novak Sternhagen	Email: SwimzzHawaii@proton.me	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 02:59 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Christopher Scott Novak Sternhagen, and I strongly SUPPORT Resolution 26-159.

I urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources to use its authority to permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking. Our reefs are already under severe stress from climate change, bleaching, pollution, and low herbivore biomass. Removing reef fish—especially herbivores like yellow tang (lau'ipala) and kole that help control algae and support coral recovery—is an unnecessary additional stressor that benefits only a small number of commercial collectors while imposing environmental, cultural, management, and enforcement costs on the public.

Commercial aquarium collection has been largely shut down since 2017–2021. Restarting it now would prioritize private ornamental trade over the public trust, Native Hawaiian customary practices, food security, coastal protection, and the long-term health of Hawai'i's reefs. The Environmental Court has confirmed BLNR has the authority to prohibit this practice. Please support Resolution 26-159 and call on BLNR to permanently end commercial aquarium collection.

Mahalo for protecting Hawai'i's reefs and the 'āina for present and future generations.

Christopher Scott Novak Sternhagen

Name: Kathleen Provazek	Email: proviva22@gmai.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 03:09 PM

Testimony:

I would ask our representatives to protect the reef fish by not allowing the aquarium industry to take our fish and profit

off of them. I am outraged that we have to beg our representatives to protect our wildlife from profiteering. It makes me sad but even more angry that there is so much unconsciousness and ignorance about the need to protect our reefs and their habitants.

Why would we ever allow the taking of our beautiful reef fish to be harvested and sold for profit? YOU MUST LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII. TO THOSE OF US WHO LIVE HERE AND UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF THIS FRAGILE ECOSYSTEM. Please do not allow the exploitation of our reef fish. Let's make this a permanent law that we can count on for the future of our reefs and we never again have to fight for their safety.

Name: Katherine Lees	Email: leeschung@yahoo.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 03:11 PM

Testimony:

I urge the banning of commercial aquarium collection for all Hawaiian waters.

As a full time resident and an active ocean swimmer, I have seen first hand how damaging aquarium collection in my local area was to the targeted fish and how since it has been restricted, there has been a moderate come back of those same species.

Commercial aquarium collection benefits very few while damaging the environment, impacting native rights and taxing the ability for local enforcement of any rules or regulations.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Name: Godfrey Akaka	Email: gkaka88@yahoo.com	Zip: 96729
Representing: Hawaii Fish and Game Association	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 03:18 PM

Testimony:

The Hawaii Fish and Game Association opposes the ban of the most sustainable fishery aquarium fishing. The county has no jurisdiction on this matter and is in opposition to scientific data and facts. The interference between county and state matters will set a presedence for future negative proceedings. Furthermore, the ban of the most sustainable fishery will begin the ban for every other fishery in completing the goal of extreme environmentalists.

Name: John & Rita Shockley	Email: shockleyjr@gmail.com	Zip: 96797
Representing: Free Access Coalition	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 03:26 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Free Access Coalition stands 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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.

John & Rita Shockley. Coordinators. Free Access Coalition. www.freeaccesscoalition.weebly.com

Name:

Alan White

Email:

alanwhite1@hawaiiantel.net

Zip:

96734

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 03:32 PM

Testimony:

Hawaiian reefs are overfished and the health of a reef depends on having a diverse and abundant population of fish that feed on algae and generally complete the ecosystem. The problem with aquarium collection is that it depletes selected species and exacerbates the overfishing problem. If the main islands had more and larger no take zones then with time maybe aquarium gathering would be viable but at the present the no-take areas are too small and thus aquarium fishing should be banned. Thank you.

Name:

Earl Kim

Email:

mothra246@yahoo.com

Zip:

96813

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 03:51 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Earl J. Kim 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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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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, Kāhala'u, Kāne'ohe, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Mathew Belcher	Email: Surfcatmat@aol.com	Zip: 96743
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 04:20 PM

Name: Deborah Winter	Email: winterd@whitman.edu	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 04:27 PM

Testimony:

Please approve this bill protecting our reef fish from commercial collectors of aquarium fish.

Thank you.

Name: Kathy Shimata	Email: katshimata@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 04:34 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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.

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: Nick Ramirez	Email: surfgood@hotmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 04:34 PM

Testimony:

I oppose res26- 159. The dlNr has been managing the aquarium fishing responsibly and should be urged to continue managing aquarium fishing. The city council should not be working to help put local people out of work.

Name: Dee Ann Fujioka-Lilley	Email: deeann.fujioka@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 04:34 PM

Testimony:

I support permanently banning commercial aquarium collecting because the health of Hawaiian reefs and their inhabitants are already under stress, and are likely to continue to be adversely affected by climate change and pollution without the additional, unnecessary pressure of aquarium collecting.

The public costs of managing the trade and enforcing compliance are disproportionate to any benefits that the aquarium trade or the public derive from the aquarium collecting activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Name: Kealii Pang	Email: mokumanamana@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 05:04 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Kealii Pang. I am a retired biologist who spent 26 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working to conserve Hawai'i's native species and ecosystems. I offer this testimony from both my professional experience in

conservation and my personal commitment to aloha 'āina.

I strongly support Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i State Legislature to prohibit commercial aquarium collection throughout Hawai'i's waters.

During my career, I learned a basic lesson from working with Hawai'i's natural resources. Protecting native ecosystems requires us to think beyond the immediate use of an individual species. We need to protect the relationships among species, habitats, people, and place.

Our coral reefs demonstrate this relationship clearly. Reef fish are more than individual animals available for harvest. They have ecological roles within the reef community. Herbivorous fishes graze algae and help maintain conditions needed by corals. Native and endemic fishes also represent millions of years of evolution in Hawai'i. Some occur nowhere else on Earth.

For me, this issue also goes beyond biology.

Aloha 'āina teaches us to have a reciprocal relationship with the places that sustain us. We care for 'āina and kai because they care for us. Mālama expresses the responsibility to put this relationship into practice. Kuleana places responsibility upon each generation to pass healthy lands, waters, and native species to those who follow.

Kapu also offers an important lesson for this decision. In traditional Hawaiian resource management, kapu placed limits on human activities when restraint was needed. A kapu was not simply a restriction. It served a purpose. It protected places and resources, allowed renewal, and recognized that human wants do not always take priority.

That principle speaks directly to commercial aquarium collection.

We should ask what Hawai'i gains by allowing native reef fish to be removed from our waters and sold as ornamental animals. We should also ask what Hawai'i loses. Once these fish leave our reefs, their ecological role leaves with them.

Our reefs already face warming seas, coral bleaching, pollution, invasive species, fishing pressure, and other stresses. We should not knowingly add an avoidable commercial extraction pressure when our responsibility is to strengthen reef ecosystems for the future.

After 26 years in conservation, I have seen the consequences of waiting too long to protect native species and ecosystems. Recovery is far more difficult once populations and habitats decline. Prevention and restraint are better conservation choices.

For me, a permanent prohibition on commercial aquarium collection represents a modern expression of an old Hawaiian

principle: when the health of a resource requires restraint, we accept the responsibility to impose limits.

This is aloha ‘āina.

This is mālama i ke kai.

This is kuleana.

And when protection is needed, this is the purpose of kapu.

I respectfully ask the Honolulu City Council to adopt Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 and send a clear message to the State of Hawai‘i: our native reef fish belong first within the living ecosystems that sustain Hawai‘i.

E mālama i ke kai. E mālama i ka ‘āina.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

Name: Glenn Metzler	Email: metzeco@gmail.com	Zip: 96749
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 05:44 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Glenn Metzler, residing in Keaau on Hawaii Island. I am 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.

I and so many others enjoy snorkeling and enjoying the diversity of marine life in our waters. I am a biologist and understand how important it is that we maintain the biodiversity of our reefs and the areas where healthy reefs still remain, especially with the threat of climate change and warming waters. Allowing aquarium collecting would be an additional stress on the reef ecosystem.

Your Zoning and Planning Committee have supported these resolutions and both critical and timely.

Thank you.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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David Meyer	osheadavid@protonmail.com	96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:03 PM

Testimony:

Dear Honorable Members of the Honolulu City Council

I have been snorkeling at Hanauma Bay since December, 1970 visiting my brother and sister-in-law, physicians on O'ahu. On each visit, I'd travel to Hanauma Bay at dawn and snorkel with a group of locals. When my wife and I moved to Hawaii from the island of Cyprus in November, 2024 one of the reasons we chose O'ahu was our love for Hanauma Bay. I have snorkeled the site from the inner reef to Baboon's Nose over 800 times in my life.

For the past few years, I have also done citizen scientist surveys of reef fish populations for the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (reef.org), and international marine conservation organization based in Key Largo, Florida. By surveying, I became more aware of the decline of the populations of reef fish like the Yellow Tang (*Zebrasoma flavescense*) and the Gold Rim Surgeonfish (*Acanthurus nigricans*) - both beautiful and prized by Aquarists. I and my local friends who have snorkelled there thousands of time can testify that the reef fish have declined both in diversity and number .

Hawaii's reef fish population attract tourism. As a volunteer docent at the Bay, a common question I field is "This was one of my favorite places, what happened to all the fish?" The Aquarium trade has not shown any scientific evidence that its taking of reef fish from Hawaiian waters will not contribute to further decline.

Without getting into the meanings these fish play in Hawaiian culture, I stress that each species contributes to a complex reef ecosystem, already stressed by rising water temperatures, waste, and other concerns.

If the aquarium trade is not prohibited from harvesting wildlife in Hawaiian waters, some of these species will disappear.

Please vote for prohibition.

Name: Lon Wallace	Email: lon_wallace@hotmail.com	Zip: 96743
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:05 PM

Testimony:

Aloha~ I am writing today to offer full support of and sincere urging for passing the ban bill regarding 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 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 minimal or no regard for the negative impact they generate and short-sighted damage they leave behind.

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

Name:

Mary True

Email:

streamgirlll@yahoo.com

Zip:

96783

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:29 PM

Testimony:

Commercial aquarium collecting needs to be permanently banned. This is an industry which takes much, but gives little. Everyone loses the abundance and beauty of the diversity on our reefs so a very can profit. And even that small profit comes with great loss. The reefs which are already endangered lose, the snorkelers lose and mainly the fish lose as the vast majority of them die during the process. A healthy and diversified fish population helps maintain a healthy reef and due to climate change the reefs need all the help they can get.

Thanks! Mary True, Pepe'ekeo

Name:

Margarita Alo-Chu

Email:

lanialochu@hotmail.com

Zip:

96792

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:34 PM

Testimony:

Please keep our Aquatics where they belong DOE generations to come. No commercialized business to take them from their home.

Mahalo

Name:

Lynda Wallach

Email:

lyndawallach@gmail.com

Zip:

96755

Representing:

Position:

Submitted:

Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:40 PM
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Testimony:

I have been a resident of North Kohala on Hawaii Island for 25 years. Our fish are a treasured natural resource and should be allowed to live in their own environment not in a tank for the Fish harvesting benefits a few while harming our reefs, our fish and our local populations. I urge you to support this bill

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Leslie Cole	leslie@indigenousexpressions.com	96816

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:55 PM

Testimony:

Aloha e Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Leslie Cole 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.

There are numerous ecological and cultural reasons why commercial aquarium collection should be banned throughout Hawai'i, which many others have eloquently stated. My reason is more simple: It is the right thing to do.

Since colonization, Hawai'i has been a place where money interests have run free, bulldozing everything in their path, in order to achieve their selfish goals at the expense of others. Greed has destroyed the lives of local residents and our surrounding environments for hundreds of years. With each selfish transaction, something beautiful is destroyed. How much more can we take?

When fish are stolen from the reefs, the sole reason is so a few people can profit off them. There is zero benefit to anyone but those selling them. Most saltwater aquarium fish die in captivity anyway, because tanks are hard to maintain and wild fish are too stressed to survive in a 20 gallon glass box after roaming free in the ocean. So they are being wiped out in the wild, taking a wrecking ball to the entire balance of the ecosystem, only to die soon after in a dentist's office.

Have we devolved so low as people that we no longer care about nature? Do people not understand that when nature dies, we die too? Is money so blindingly alluring that people will grab it at any cost, even if it means killing the very thing that makes our island home so special? Is our government so corrupt that it would actually allow people to destroy our reefs in the middle of a global climate catastrophe, when so much has already been threatened or taken away?

Please shut this down and give us a glimmer of hope, knowing we have elected officials who care more about nature than profit.

Mahalo		
Name: Linda Willaby	Email: lwparisfrance@hotmail.com	Zip: 96778
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 06:58 PM
Testimony: I support permanently banning commercial aquarium collecting so that the mass removal of wild marine life stops. Those fish need to stay on Hawaiian reefs and not in some far away aquarium. They help to protect the fragile coral reef ecosystem and to protect and preserve Native Hawaiian cultural practices. It would be very short sighted to allow commercial collection to continue. You would be selling out Hawaii's future. This is an island and a healthy coral reef is of the utmost importance.		
Name: Deborah Nichols	Email: djkeala@yahoo.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:05 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council, My name is Deborah Nichols 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. Protecting our reef fish, sustaining local and cultural fishing practices, supporting aquatic biodiversity, and preventing the needless take of hundreds of thousands of native and endemic fish for purely ornamental purposes is necessary to ensure these resources remain intact for future generations. If adopted, these resolutions would make clear that the Honolulu City Council believes that the BLNR and the Hawai'i State Legislature should put an end to this inappropriate and harmful practice, once and for all. Please SUPPORT both Resolution 26-159 and 26-160. Mahalo nui for your consideration of this testimony.		
Name: Carole Fujioka	Email: caroleann.fujioka@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:12 PM
Testimony: I am opposed to the collection/fishing of all reef fish and other inhabitants of all the reefs in Hawaii. I feel that their		

existence is vital to the health and well being of all aquatic life in our reefs; and an important part of Hawaii culture and existence for our future. We must cherish and protect this important part of our lives.

Name: Maki Morinoue	Email: info@hulihi.com	Zip: 96725
Representing: HULI PAC	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:16 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 permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking, and Resolution 26-160 urges the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact a statewide prohibition.

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 in July, 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 earlier this year. 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, culture, 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:	Email:	Zip:
James Hopkins	jth49@icloud.com	96755
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:27 PM

Testimony:

Support for RES26-159—my wife and I are full time residents in North Kohala on the Big Island. We write to express our strong support for RES26-159 which would urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources to permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking.

The reasons and need for a ban on commercial aquarium collection 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.

Rulemaking banning the aquarium trade is the solution. Vote yes on RES26-159.

James Hopkins

Name:

Eric Koch

Email:

hawaiianfisherman@proton.me

Zip:

96740

Representing:

Self

Position:

Oppose

Submitted:

Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:30 PM

Testimony:

Aloha council,

I am a commercial fishermen in West Hawaii. All my life I've been fishing in the waters surrounding Hawaii. Through the seasons I participate in various fisheries, all with the intent to earn a living. You know fishing for a living has to be one of the oldest professions throughout time. I catch the fish and i sell the fish and this is how I sustain my ohana and myself. One of the commercial fisheries I have been doing for 20 years is aquarium. Of all the fisheries, this one is the most sustainable. It also has the strongest scientific support and is the most studied fishery in all of Hawaii. The only people who don't seem to understand it are very opinionated and unwilling to look into the facts, or talk story with experienced people that have spent thousands of hours underwater. The fishery has been under environmental review based on a Supreme Court order for the last 8 years. It's was never banned, but temporarily on hold while the process has unfolded. We the fishermen have poured our life savings proving beyond a shadow of a doubt what was already known...we had to prove to the activists and the uninformed what the facts are. We have done that. We completed the EIS twice, the BLNR approved it. The Supreme Court affirmed the document bringing this long process to an end. The BLNR unanimously voted to send a set of rules out for public hearings. DAR wrote these rules and are recommending to end this process. They say this fishery is THE BEST MANAGED fishery in all of Hawaii. They say this, on record. Ask them yourself. So what is this really about? The activists who demanded our lives get flipped upside down, jump through HEPA Hula Hoops, spend our life savings, are unsatisfied with then result. It's not because of the impact of the fishery...it's been determined to be "low-to no impact". It's not the scientists saying there's a problem, the top 23 coral reef ecologist/biologist have written a letter of support for the fishery. This includes the Bishop Museum. These activists are now broadly claiming the fishery is an affront to the Hawaiian culture itself. This is despite all the Hawaiians that participate in the fishery. This is despite the fact of people like William Aila on record making such a claim is ridiculous. Some people just don't like the concept of someone like me going out and earning a living on the sea. That's why they attack commercial take. They claim they support fishing but only for sustenance. That's good and great but without fishermen like me, how do non fishermen get fish? Now we aren't eating aquarium fish but we do sell them locally for Kama aina and that money I earn sustains me. When I spend that money in my community, it's sustains others. This is economics 101 and when a fishery has been

PROVEN to be sustainable, that's responsible use of resource. Anything to the contrary makes no sense. I've yet to hear any sort of a coherent counter argument and that's why if you actually do your due diligence, you'll see I'm correct. Don't interfere with a process you don't fully understand. Doing so actually harms so many local families and for what? There's no valid reason.

Please oppose this resolution. Aloha

Eric K.

Ka'ū Hawaii

Name: Gayle Puou	Email: operationppaws@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 07:44 PM

Testimony:

Please keep our reefs and fishes guarded. Our reefs and fishes will not flourish if humans are allowed to harvest what we have left. I hope our future children will be able to see the beauty of our ocean.

Name: James Long	Email: daegnut@gmail.com	Zip: 96772
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 08:36 PM

Testimony:

I fully support RES26-159 in protecting Hawai'i's natural aquatic resources and prohibiting the collection of any of Hawai'i's natural aquatic resources including, but not limited to fish, for aquariums.

Name: Suzanne Villeneuve	Email: oceandauphin@gmail.com	Zip: 96768
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 08:47 PM

Testimony:

Please leave the fish in the water, where they belong, they don't need to be harvested for aquarium

Name: Kim Tomey	Email: kimtomey@aol.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 08:58 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support this bill!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Alberta J Freidus-Flagg	ajf@hawaii.rr.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 09:24 PM
Testimony: I support this resolution whole-heartedly.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mary Groode	dechenmaui@gmail.com	96753
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 09:57 PM
Testimony: I have lived on Maui for 50 years and have seen the amount of reef fish get smaller over time. The aquarium collectors take our precious fish off the reef for selling them and making a profit. These fish have a very important job to do to keep the coral reefs clean and in balance. Many people come to Hawaii to snorkel and dive and view our underwater amazing reefs. What a thrill to see beautiful butterfly fish on the reef. How amazing to see an octopus out hunting, changing color and texture. All of Hawaii should stop the aquarium trade and preserve our fish for our viewing, for our visitor's enjoyment and for the health of the coral reef itself. Thank you for giving this serious matter the attention it deserves. Aloha, Mary Groode		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ron Tubbs	rtubbs@hawaii.rr.com	96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Sustainable Fisheries	Oppose	Aug 10, 2026 @ 10:05 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Maile David	mdavidcouncil@gmail.com	96704
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 10, 2026 @ 10:45 PM
Testimony: Aloha and mahalo a nui for this opportunity to submit comments in support of Res26-159. As a generational native Hawaiian of Kona, my 'Ohana has traditionally sustained themselves from the land and ocean resources. In my lifetime living and growing up in Kona, I have personally witnessed the mass development of lands along our coastline and the rapid decline and total depletion of certain varieties of our reef fish resources due to years of harvesting young reef fish by the aquarium industry. Please approve Res26-159 and adopt rules prohibiting the harvest of aquatic life from the State		

of Hawai'i marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes. Mahalo a nui loa.

Maile David

Name: Mary Tubbs	Email: maliaoflanikai@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 11:20 PM

Name: James Lovell	Email: jim@jtltiming.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 10, 2026 @ 11:54 PM

Testimony:

DLNR scientific studies conducted over the last 25+ years, has shown that this industry is having no impact on the resource. It is the most regulated fishery in Hawaii and has been proven to be sustainable. There is no reason it needs to be banned.

Name: Thomas Lim	Email: thomaslimipad2@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 12:49 AM

Name: Jennifer Chiwa	Email: jennifer.chiwa@gmail.com	Zip: 96814-2814
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 03:42 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Honolulu City Council Members.

Please support Resolution 26-159. Please stand with the Hawaii City Council and many Hawaii Island advocates who support protecting and preserving Hawaii's aquatic life and support a ban on harvesting of this aquatic life that would serve to benefit only the commercial aquarium trade.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

Name: Laura megan Hughes	Email: lhughes8@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Aug 11, 2026 @ 03:48 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council, My name is Laura Hughes 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. As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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:
Melanie Kim	Feisty9267@yahoo.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 11, 2026 @ 05:26 AM
Testimony: Commercial aquarium trade adds cruel capture and transport methods that kill many animals before they ever reach a		

home tank. The current government has reduced environmental protections to support Hawaii's fish and marine life in the pacific leading to to their demise. Please support this resolution.

Name: Mel Levine	Email: amihanvoyager@gmail.com	Zip: 96719
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 05:49 AM

Testimony:
I support banning tropical reef fish collection

Name: Cydney Yamamoto	Email: cydneeiko@gmail.com	Zip: 96186
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:14 AM

Testimony:
I support permanently banning commercial aquarium collecting. The aquarium trade provides little public benefit while imposing environmental, management, and enforcement costs on the State. 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: Susan Davis	Email: sdavismusicgal@icloud.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:31 AM

Testimony:
Dear Senators,

As a resident of Kapaau, Hi and an ardent supporter of Hawaii having healthy oceans, coral, and fisheries, I strongly encourage you to end the aquarium trade in Hawaii.

Our oceans and fisheries are already in peril due to warming, acidification, overfishing and pollution. As I am sure you know, marine Biologists are expecting this year's El Nino to cause bleaching of Hawaii's coral during the months of September and October. We have not seen a full recovery of our corals from the 2013-2014 bleaching event, and the most recent NOAA study on coral health states that coral cover is still about 30% lower than before the bleaching.

Tropical fish are stewards of the reef. They help keep coral reef ecosystems healthy and in balance. By removing these fish, coral reefs get out of balance and become more susceptible to stress from warming oceans, bleaching, and ocean

acidification. Keeping healthy fish populations is essential for healthy and resilient coral reef ecosystems. As protectors of Hawaii's unique and limited natural resources, the Board of Land and Natural Resources needs to stop the extraction of Hawaii's reef fish by the exploitive pet trade industry.

In Kohala, Big Island, where I reside, subsistence fishing is an integral part of Native Hawaiian culture. The Aquarium industry serves markets outside of Hawai'i where huge profits are being made from Hawai'i's precious natural resources with no reciprocation to the many residents, in particular Native Hawaiians. Extracting reef fish for the pet trade industry is not consistent with Native Hawaiian subsistence, cultural, or religious practices, nor is it consistent with being protectors of our precious marine environment.

At this pivotal turning point in the history of coral reefs we must all learn to live sustainably and support strategic management to secure our future and protect our resources. I strongly object to any further compromise or negotiation that enables a trade that is a direct threat to our marine environment and our indigenous culture.

Sincerely,

Susie Davis
Kapaau, HI 96755

Name: Kathy Carroll	Email: kathycarroll96763@gmail.com	Zip: 96763
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:59 AM

Testimony:

I am in support of banning the harvesting of Hawai'i's aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade. Our aquatic life is under pressure from climate change, pollution and ocean recreation. Commercial aquarium collection adds undue addition pressure to our already-fragile system.

Name: Allen Chinn	Email: mvm4la@gmail.com	Zip: 96720
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 07:00 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Allen Chinn 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Cathy Finney	Email: ccfinney98@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 07:31 AM

Testimony:

I would like to save our oceans for future generations. Stop the harvesting of our fish for aquariums.

Name: Mike Nakachi	Email: mike@moanaohana.com	Zip: 96745
Representing: Moana Ohana	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 07:36 AM

Testimony: Strong support for Res26-159		
Name: Mahesh Cleveland	Email: mcleveland@earthjustice.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Earthjustice	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:10 AM
Name: An Vo	Email: an.tong.vo1@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:20 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council, My name is An and I support Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 because native fish should not be used as ornaments in an aquarium if native fish die in aquariums. Please support Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.		
Name: 'Alohi Nakachi	Email: alohi.nakachi@oha.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Office of Hawaiian Affairs	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:21 AM
Name: Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Email: serenaphillip@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96717
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:37 AM
Testimony: I am in support of RES 26-159		
Name: Suyin Freiberg	Email: suyin@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:38 AM
Testimony: In support of Resolution 26-159		

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hanna Lilley	hlilley@surfrider.org	96816-1731
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Surfrider Foundation	Support	Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:47 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Peggy Reising	k_reising@msn.com	96706-5000
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:50 AM
Testimony: The time to pretend ignorance of the harm that Humanities Existence has had on this Planet is past. Our ability to understand what has followed Humans disregarding our effect on our environments be it ocean or desert. We know better, let Us strive to do better.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hanna Lilley	hlilley@surfrider.org	96816-1731
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Surfrider Foundation	Support	Aug 11, 2026 @ 08:59 AM
Testimony: (correct testimony) August 11, 2026 Re: Resolution No. 26-159– Adopt Rules Prohibiting the Harvest of Aquatic Life Hearing: Honolulu City Council, Tuesday August 12, 2026 10:00AM Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Council, 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. 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. 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. 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.

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 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

Name:

carole richelieu

Email:

crraloha@gmail.com

Zip:

96825

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:14 AM

Testimony:

I support RES 26-159

Name:

Malia Kipapa

Email:

mkipapa@gmail.com

Zip:

96740

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:18 AM

Testimony:

Aloha e Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Malia Kipapa, and I write in strong support of RES26-159, 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 to enact legislation prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's state marine waters for the aquarium trade.

I am a kupa of Moku o Keawe and a lineal descendant of Kona, Pāhoehoe, raised in a family with generations of shoreline

and deep-sea fishing practices. My advocacy regarding aquarium fish collection began in 2009 while serving on the West Hawai'i Fisheries Council. It was during that time that I first learned about the long-standing conflicts surrounding commercial aquarium fish collection in Kona and the impacts this practice can have on our nearshore ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

As I deepened my understanding of these issues, I became committed to educating myself, my 'ohana, and my community about the importance of protecting our marine resources here in Hawai'i. Our nearshore fisheries are a vital cultural, ecological, and food resource that must be managed with the health of future generations in mind. Prioritizing the protection of these resources over commercial exploitation is an important step toward ensuring the long-term abundance and resilience of our marine ecosystems.

I respectfully urge the Honolulu City Council to adopt RES26-159 and support efforts to prohibit the commercial harvest of aquatic life for aquarium and private purposes. Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

With Aloha,
Malia Kipapa Kona, Hawai'i

Name: Janet Clark	Email: xterrajanet@gmail.com	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:28 AM

Testimony:
Hawaii's reef fish do not need to be scooped up for profit by the aquarium trade. They are needed to support the health of our reefs statewide.

Name: Kaimi Kaupiko	Email: kkaupiko@gmail.com	Zip: 96704
Representing: Kalanihale	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:37 AM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Ka'imi Kaupiko, and I submit this testimony in strong support of Resolution 26-159, urging the Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources to permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection through administrative rulemaking.

As someone from the rural fishing community of Miloli'i on Hawai'i Island, I have been raised to understand that our

relationship with the ocean is not simply about what we can take from it. It is about kuleana — our responsibility to mālama, protect, and ensure that our marine resources remain abundant for the generations who come after us.

Our coral reefs and reef fish are already facing tremendous pressures. Climate change, warming ocean temperatures, coral bleaching, pollution, habitat degradation, coastal development, and fishing pressures are all affecting the health and resilience of our nearshore ecosystems. At a time when our reefs are being challenged from so many directions, we should not add another unnecessary pressure by removing reef fish from their natural ecosystems for the commercial aquarium trade.

These fish are not merely commodities. They are part of a complex and interconnected reef ecosystem. They have ecological roles, cultural importance, and value to the people of Hawai'i who depend upon healthy oceans for subsistence, cultural practice, education, recreation, and the continuation of our way of life.

Since the statewide closure of commercial aquarium collection in 2021, Hawai'i has had an important opportunity to observe our reefs without the additional pressure of commercial aquarium extraction. The monitoring and scientific information available should guide us toward a precautionary approach that places the long-term health of our reefs first.

The aquarium trade provides limited public benefit compared with the environmental, management, monitoring, and enforcement costs associated with allowing this commercial extraction to continue.

Most importantly, the Environmental Court has affirmed that the Board of Land and Natural Resources has the authority to address commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking. The State therefore has both the responsibility and the opportunity to take meaningful action.

Across Hawai'i, communities have worked for generations to protect our nearshore resources. Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i counties have already expressed support for permanent protection. Honolulu now has an opportunity to stand together with communities throughout our pae 'āina and send a unified message that Hawai'i's reef wildlife deserves lasting protection.

For communities like Miloli'i, mālama 'āina and mālama kai are not abstract concepts. They are responsibilities passed from one generation to the next. The decisions we make today will determine what kind of ocean our keiki and mo'opuna inherit.

I respectfully urge the Honolulu City Council to ADOPT Resolution 26-159 and call upon the Board of Land and Natural Resources to permanently prohibit commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking.

Mālama i ke kai, mālama i ke ola.

When we care for the ocean, we care for life.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Ka'imi Kaupiko

Miloli'i, Hawai'i

Name: Carter Collins	Email: carter@solar matters.org	Zip: 96755
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:43 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I am writing in strong support of Resolution 26-159. Our coral reefs are already under massive pressure from climate change, ocean warming, and pollution. Removing thousands of wild reef fish for commercial profit adds unnecessary stress to an fragile ecosystem that belongs to all of Hawai'i.

Protecting our marine life is vital for ocean health, local food security, and future generations. Please pass Resolution 26-159 to urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources to permanently end commercial aquarium collection through rulemaking.

Name: Inga Gibson	Email: PonoAdvocacy@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Pono Advocacy	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:52 AM

Name: Kanani Enos	Email: kanani@kealakekua.org	Zip: 96704
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:56 AM

Testimony:

I support the permanent banning of the commercial aquarium trade because it is non-sustainable, detrimental to the balance of our environment, and in direct conflict with my cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices as a kanaka maoli. Mahalo.

Name: Stephanie Kendrick	Email: skendrick@hawaiianhumane.org	Zip: 96826-1806
Representing: Hawaiian Humane Society	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 10:03 AM

Name: Randy Fernley	Email: tropdiver1951@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 10:16 AM
Testimony: Aloha Committee Members, In the mid 1970's, I started a tropical fish business in Aiea. After 50 years, I was forced to liquidate due to the marine aquarium fishery being shut down in 2021. At that time, we had both a huge following of local hobbyists along with an education program which helped 100's of elementary school students develop a love for Hawaii's marine ecosystems. Unfortunately, this all came to an abrupt end and I was forced to retire earlier than expected. As more and more public awareness of the aquarium fishery came to light due to extensive scientific research from both the state and the federal government (NOAA), I have hopes that the fishery will once again open up and allow our local residents to enjoy this educational hobby. Please oppose Resolution 26-159 Thank you for your time, Randy Fernley (former owner of Coral Fish Hawaii)		
Name: lynne matusow	Email: lynnehi@aol.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 10:36 AM
Testimony: It is high time DLNR/BLNR listens to the courts and the people to save our aquatic life. Climate change, pollution and ocean recreation are adding to the pressure. Commercial aquarium collection and its cruel transportation methods kill many animals long before they reach a home tank. Instead of listening to the courts, the people, and others DLNR is proposing rules to reopen the trade. The legislature is playing games. The bills this session were all over the place and who knows what the legislature will do next year. Please support this resolution.		
Name: Daniel Cottrell	Email: dcotttell33@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Aug 11, 2026 @ 11:05 AM
Testimony: I Daniel strongly oppose this bill,		
Name: Jonnetta Peters	Email: jp@conservehi.org	Zip: 96802
Representing: CONSERVATION COUNCIL FOR HAWAII	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 11:30 AM
Name: Taurie Kinoshita	Email: taurie@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 11:31 AM
Testimony: To the Honorable Committee, I am writing in strong support of RES 26 - 159. Our aquatic life is under pressure from climate change, pollution and ocean recreation. Commercial aquarium collection adds cruel capture and transport methods that kill many animals before they ever reach a home tank. The is an urgent issue: we need to protect our oceans and care for our environment. Everything collapses if we lose these resources, it is not only the poor suffering aquatic creatures that would be effected. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Taurie Kinoshita		
Name: Keynin Kretz	Email: kkretz@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 11:42 AM
Testimony: I don't believe any industry should be banned without overwhelming evidence. And after the last decade of debate I have not seen evidence supporting a ban. Along with my own observations diving below 60feet i have seen no decline in fish populations while the trade was open. And I have not seen an increase in populations since the closure 8 years ago. Thank you for your time.		
Name: Pdgggy regentine	Email: peggy@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 11:55 AM

Testimony:

I support RES 26-159 to ban harvesting Hawai'i's aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade. Without this banning, there will be fewer beautiful fish and aquatic life for all to enjoy in our islands. I grew up in the panhandle area in FL and always saw seashells and today there are no more. This is similar to Niihau shells I would think. Peggy Regentine

Name:

Emily Burt

Email:

ainabella@yahoo.com

Zip:

96704

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 11, 2026 @ 11:57 AM

Testimony:

As an ocean user in South Kona, I have witnessed the effects of aquarium fishing on our near shore waters. Certain reef fish have become scarcer to non existent. Further, when aquarium fishing was active I witnessed target fish floating dead daily, sometimes in the hundreds on my 6 mile paddle. This is not a trade that is sustainable and there is no real way to enforce whatever rules that the collectors agree to abide by.

Name:

Holeka Inaba

Email:

holeka.inaba@hawaiicounty.gov

Zip:

96720

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 11, 2026 @ 12:15 PM

Name:

Judith Aikawa

Email:

spikecat1@aol.com

Zip:

96790

Representing:

Self

Position:

Support

Submitted:

Aug 11, 2026 @ 01:01 PM

Testimony:

I strongly support RES 26-159 that urges the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Aquatic Resources, to ban harvesting Hawai'i's aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade.

Our aquatic life is under pressure from climate change, Pollution and ocean recreation. Commercial aquarium collection adds cruel capture and transport methods that kill animals. This commercial activity needs to END.

Name:

Eric Moennich

Email:

eric.moennich@yahoo.com

Zip:

96792

Representing:

Self

Position:

I wish to comment

Submitted:

Aug 11, 2026 @ 01:08 PM

Testimony:

My name is Eric Moennich and I strongly oppose:

RES26-159

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.

Please do not pass this resolution.

Current EIS studies show that this fishery has been properly managed and will continue to be managed in the future.

Ending a fishery permanently is not a fair outcome for fishers. Managing a fishery and keeping catch numbers within scientifically sustainable limits is the right thing to do.

Please manage fisheries but not end fisheries.

Thank you.

Name: Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe	Email: esta.asi24@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 02:47 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Lauren 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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 Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi, and Maui County Councils; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; ʻAha Moku Advisory Committee; Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council; neighborhood boards of Waimānalo, Kāhalaʻu, Kāneʻohe, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawaiʻi Kai); 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.

With these resolutions, the Honolulu City Council can join the chorus of voices calling for a permanent end to commercial aquarium collection in Hawaiʻi’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.

Me ke aloha ʻāina,
Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe

Name: Travis Matteson	Email: wraptors@gmail.com	Zip: 96761
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 03:40 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Travis Matteson and I stand in firm support of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160 to end commercial aquarium collection across Hawaiʻi.

Our coral reefs and native fish are vital to our island culture, local food security, and marine biodiversity. Commercial collecting strips our reefs of critical herbivorous fish just to sell them as decorations, with most dying shortly after capture. This practice directly threatens traditional subsistence fishing and the health of our ecosystem.

With the BLNR currently considering rules that would reopen reef exploitation, your voice is more critical than ever. Neighbor island county councils, Native Hawaiian organizations like the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and ʻAha Moku Advisory Committee, and community boards across Oʻahu have already demanded a statewide ban.

I ask the Honolulu City Council to stand with our communities, honor the public trust, and support Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160. Me ka mahalo.

Name: Jenny Yagodich	Email: kaipuna@aol.com	Zip: 96712
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 04:40 PM
Testimony: Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee, I am in strong 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 Hawai'i's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes. I have spent years working in and around Hawai'i's coastal waters, educating the public, conducting marine monitoring, and seeing firsthand how heavily our reefs are used. We need to stop asking how much more we can take from our reefs and instead give them the opportunity to recover. Hawai'i's commercial aquarium fishing industry has not been operating as a functioning industry for nearly a decade. Commercial collection was legally disrupted beginning in 2017, and statewide commercial aquarium collection was prohibited in 2021. The argument that this would suddenly put people out of work is difficult to justify when the industry has already been unable to operate as it once did for nearly a decade. During this time, we have seen recovery in areas where collection has stopped. One factor in that recovery is that juvenile fish have been allowed to remain on the reef rather than being removed before they have had the opportunity to mature and reproduce. But that recovery has occurred while other threats to our reefs have continued, and in many cases increased. Our reefs are now under more pressure than ever from warming oceans, coral bleaching, pollution, sedimentation, invasive species, fishing pressure, and rapidly increasing human use. If reefs have been able to recover while one major pressure was removed, now more than ever is the time to protect that progress rather than reintroduce another pressure. Aquarium fish are not just commodities. They are part of functioning reef ecosystems, support subsistence fishing and cultural practices, and contribute to the health and resilience of our shorelines. We also have alternatives. Captive breeding and aquaculture can provide aquarium fish without continuing to remove wild fish from Hawai'i's reefs. Resolution 26-159 gives us an opportunity to protect what is recovering rather than reopen a commercial practice that has already been absent for years. I respectfully ask you to support Resolution 26-159. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Tamra Hayden	tjeanhay@gmail.com	96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 04:43 PM
Testimony: This practice significantly reduces our coral populations. We have enough dealing with climate change we don't need more human action destroying our reefs.		
Name: Elena Bryant	Email: bryant.elena@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Kaneohe Bay Regional Council	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 04:58 PM
Name: Elena Bryant	Email: bryant.elena@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 05:04 PM
Testimony: I respectfully urge you to pass this Resolution urging the 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 Hawaii's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes. 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. Mahalo.		
Name: Wayne Tanaka	Email: hawaii.chapter@sierraclub.org	Zip: 96803
Representing: Sierra Club of Hawai'i	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:06 PM
Name: Robert Aldrich	Email: bob.pierce75@gmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:09 PM
Name: Jacqueline Leinau	Email: admin@pupukeawaimea.org	Zip: 96712
Representing: Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:26 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Susan Smith	susanjtf@gmail.com	96791-9502
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 06:47 PM
Testimony: I support Resolution 26-159 protect our reef fish. Aquatic life around Oahu is under multiple threats-pollution, climate change, ocean recreation . Commercial aquarium collection adds cruel capture and transport methods with majority of fish dying before they reach an aquarium tank. Our aquatic life is one of the draws of our #1 economic driver - tourism.		
Name: Jason Helyer	Email: jhely9@gmail.com	Zip: 96740
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 07:26 PM
Name: Reine Ah Moo	Email: boardinwaikiki@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 11, 2026 @ 09:39 PM
Testimony: I support Resolution 26-159, which urges the State Board of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life from Hawai'i's marine waters for the aquarium trade. Hawai'i's marine ecosystems are a treasured public resource that support biodiversity, cultural practices, education, recreation, and tourism. Protecting native reef species helps preserve healthy ecosystems for future generations while reinforcing Hawai'i's commitment to responsible stewardship of its natural resources. As this resolution advances, I encourage continued reliance on sound scientific research, collaboration with marine experts, and meaningful engagement with affected stakeholders to ensure long-term conservation outcomes.		
Name: Mina Elison	Email: minaelison@hotmail.com	Zip: 96704
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 12, 2026 @ 07:08 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council, 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. As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the		

BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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: Rocky Kaluhiwa	Email: rockykaluhiwa1122@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Hawaii State Aha Moku	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 12, 2026 @ 07:42 AM

Name: G Herskowitz	Email: eusgfo@gmail.com	Zip: 96791
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 12, 2026 @ 08:48 AM

Testimony:

Please support this measure, Marine Life is critical to the health of our coastlines and oceans. The impacts from the recent know low storms have made this precious resource even more at risk. Now is the time to protect Marine Life so that it can recover.

Name: Ginny Tiu	Email: ginnytiu808@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 12, 2026 @ 09:26 AM
Testimony: I am in full support of Res 26-159 for the well being of our community.		
Name: Kaneawaiola Lindsey	Email: ahcc.gov@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 12, 2026 @ 09:30 AM

8 August 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'U'ilani Naipo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

U'ilani Naipo

Marine Advocate for Place-Based Governance,
Traditional Practices and Marine Stewardship



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 Meeting

Tommy Waters, Chair
Andria Tupola, Vice Chair
Esther Kiaʻāina
Radiant Cordero
Tyler Dos Santos-Tam
Scotty Y. Nishimoto
Val A. Okimoto
Augie Tulba
Matt Weyer

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 10 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 HAWAIʻI MARINE WATERS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES.

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Committee Members,

Founded 36 years ago, Friends of Hanauma Bay is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments, emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay.

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 Hawaiʻi, 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**, and 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!

Lisa Bishop, MS
President

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

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 Hawaii State Legislature to pass legislation that prohibits the harvest of aquatic life from State of Hawaii Marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes.

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 Legislature should instead pass legislation to 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)

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 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.



August 12, 2026, 10:00 AM

Honolulu City Council

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 Waters, Vice-Chair Tupola and Council 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 Council 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.

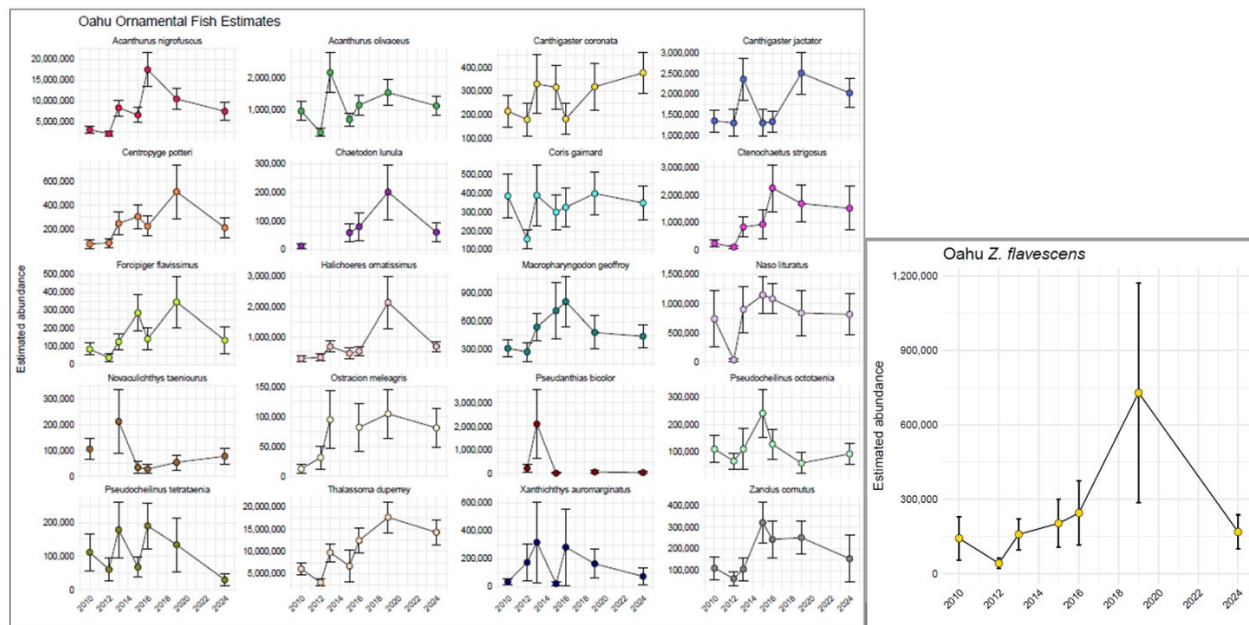


Figure 1. O‘ahu total island abundance estimates over time for 21 fish species proposed for aquarium collecting. Data from NOAA’s National Coral Reef Monitoring Program.

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

10 Aug 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

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.

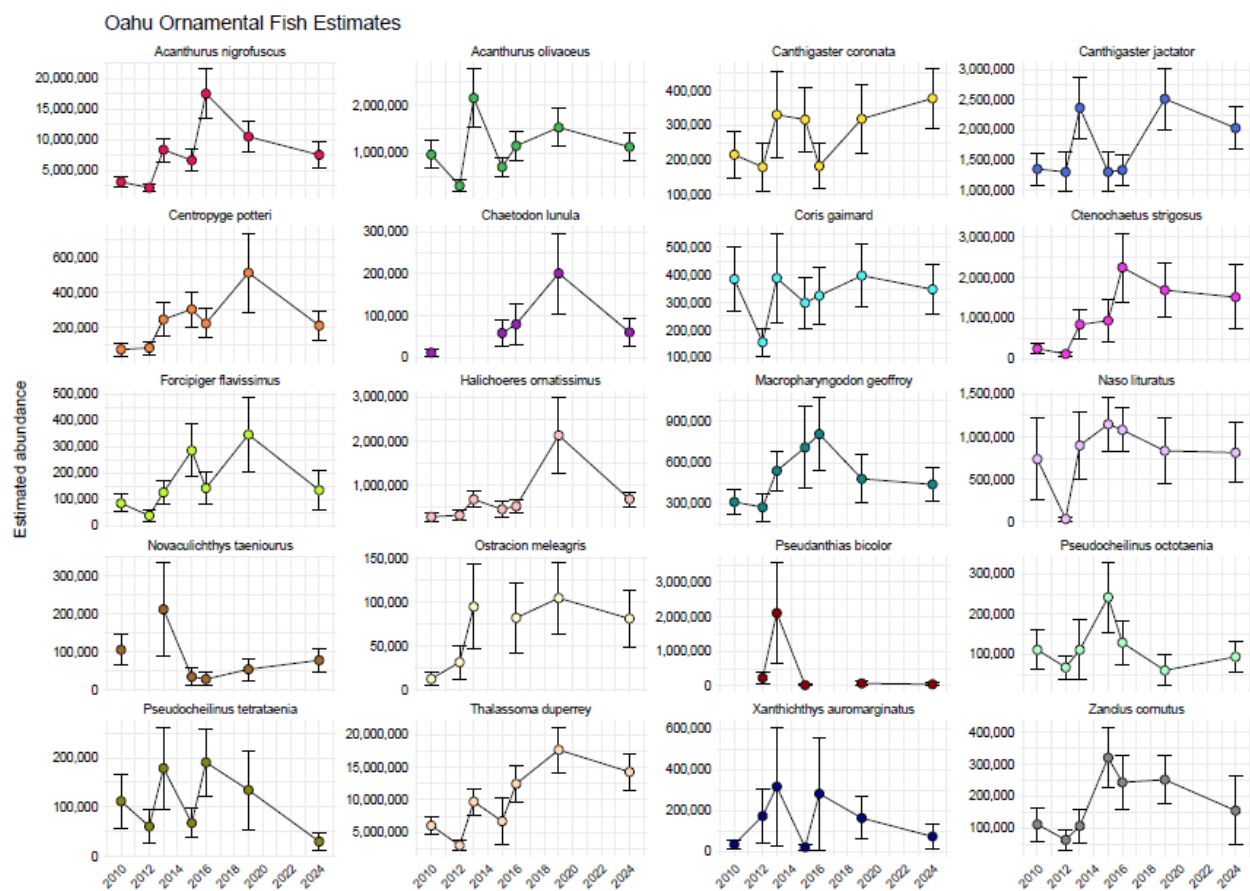


Figure 1: O'ahu total island abundance estimates over time for 20 fish species proposed for aquarium collecting. Data from NOAA's National Coral Reef Monitoring Program.

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.

August 9, 2026

I am writing in strong support of RES26-159.

Removing herbivorous reef fish undermines reef resilience. The Aquarium Collection trade does not support a healthy reef fish population.

A healthy reef fish population is critical to me on an almost daily as a swimmer and diver. Adding my voice and action to protecting the herbivorous reef fish for current and future generations is my responsibility.

Stop the taking of marine life for commercial profit to be sold as pets or for ornamental display.

RES26-159: 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.

Seeking to prohibit the commercial harvesting of aquatic life for the aquarium trade. It aims to protect reef ecosystems, citing environmental sustainability and aligning with Native Hawaiian values against selling reef wildlife.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mathew Belcher
Kamuela, HI 96743

Aloha Honolulu City Council

Testimony Opposed to Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160

to Ban the Aquarium Fishery

You are the victim of fraud and have been lied to.

First, you are submitting resolutions to do something deemed unconstitutional by International, Federal, and state of Hawaii Laws. The Honolulu City Council visited this issue years ago and deemed it a valid fishery and voted not to pass any resolutions against the fishery. Only duped individuals subject to false informational fraud have acted in opposition to the fishery. Recent voting saw many pro-aquarium fishery candidates being ousted because tourist Groups and others see what damage they have done! I suggest you read the real facts, seek out DAR advice and facts.

Constitutional laws bind the aquarium fishery permits legality under the Hawaii State Constitution HRS 187-188. The State of Hawaii Legislature has heard this argument over and over and will never ban fishery! Just this legislative session, all attempts failed again.

Attorney General reviews have said again that you cannot ban any user group, especially a proven sustainable fishery, from state waters! Management has been done, and an environmental full review was passed. Clearly, this is not about sustainability or ecology. This user conflict is about one user group against another and the use of ecological Fraud against state officials for personal and monetary gain. If it is not about ecology, then it should not be banned. Clearly, the DAR researchers' position on the rules package and permits is not going to affect state resources or have any ecological effects.

You should at least **read the rules** that you are attempting to stop. **Link:**

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2026/02/Combined-AQ-Rules-RAMSEYER-13-77.113-60.413-75-2026.02.27.pdf>

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/djtlsvg7qs?feature=shared>

Oahu’s Mean CATCH by SPECIES (2009-2020, DAR) as a PERCENTAGE of the Species’ POPULATION Mean per NOAA’s Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center’s (PIFSC) Counts (2009-2020/2024)

Aquarium Fish Species		
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Yellow Tang		
	Kole Tang	
		Threadfin Butterfly
Bicolor Anthias		
	BlueThroat Trgger	
		Crowned Puffer
Dragon Wrasse		
	Golden Dwarf Eel	
		Eight Line Wrasse
Four Lined Wrasse		
	Brown Surgeon	
		Longnose Butterfly
Millet Butterfly		
	Moorish Idol	
		Naso Tang
Orangesoulder Surgeon		
	Ornate Wrasse	
		Henicopus
Potters Wrasse		
	Potters Angel	
		Raccoon Butterfly
Saddle Wrasse		
	Spotted Box	
		Whitespotted Toby
Whitemouth Moray		

NOAA fish counts are scientifically calculated estimates based on many NOAA scientific divers' direct fish counts; overall, they are very accurate in many cases, and all of it is considered a “**gold standard**” by researchers for management. That is, it relies on regular direct fish count data. Nearly every other fishery in the world uses other non-direct count management methods and data sources.

Breaking News: Biblical Fish Bloom Of 2026?

Meta-analysis by Ron Tubbs, B.S., N.D. UHM 7-19-26

A recent survey on July 19th, 2026, of an April 2025 fish count area shows a significant increase in marine fish species at the 80-foot ledge depth south of Oahu. There was a noted increase in fish populations for the yellow tangs (fourfold) and Potter's angels (an estimated 10-fold increase) compared to the 2025 SAP fish count survey! More accurate data is needed, and DAR and NOAA have been notified.

Many researchers and fishermen were wondering if the 2026 “Super” El Niño will affect fish populations like the 2014-2015 “Godzilla” event did. We may have our answers soon!

Signs indicate that early reproductive fish bloom has occurred, and summer fish populations have significantly increased. Whether this event is widespread or has already ended has yet to be determined. But the big abundance on our reef is greatly welcomed after a reported decline in the 2024 PIFDS NOAA Oahu fish counts. Contributing factors to this observation may be that the April observation was pre-summer fish increases, but decades of observations of that area clearly indicate a significantly higher population value based on historical base observations, indicating we are once again in an uptrend with fish populations.

Abundance seemed widespread, affecting several species like the 2014-2015 Biblical fish bloom linked to the “Godzilla” El Niño. The 2026 population just observed was mainly juvenile reef fish; so far, a similar small reproductive fry drop observed and reported in Aug. 2014 has not been seen. Both 2025 and 2026 video survey observations support very healthy reefs and corals observations.

Reef fish populations seem to be linked to El Niño and La Niña events. According to the research presented below, El Niño may favor greater fish increases by reducing currents, allowing fish fry to stay on our Hawaii reefs and potentially increasing fish populations, as we are not seeing during the current 2026 El Niño event. La Niña may not be as great of a local fish population-increasing event, but it may be a major factor in the dispersal of reef fish larvae over vast distances, increasing biodiversity as far away as the Northern Philippines. According to the two papers by Heim-Ballew, Heidi, and Carlon DB, Garcia SM, Faucci A., full citation below.

Video of April 2025 SAP DAR Collection fish survey Link:

<https://studio.youtube.com/video/URO7iLXARS4/edit>

Video taken 7-19-26 Short low air bump dive. Additional comparison video needed.

<https://youtu.be/PS1inObcw0k>

Reef Fish Population Breaking News Update

Video of 8-5-26 fish counts and survey;

https://youtu.be/xP9q8_mG1Xw?feature=shared

Clearly, the new fish populations are increasing, and the final results will have to wait until the end of next month. The 8-5-26 fish populations have increased since the 7-1-26 dive, with new small yellow tangs, Heniochus, and other small new fish not observed on 7-19-26 now found on the reefs. New smaller fish species were also observed in just 11 days!

I do not think this increase is biblical, because water temps have not reached the 2015 levels. But it is clearly a big increase in populations over the 2025 observations, are a welcome sign.

News

Early halalu, oama season draws fishers to Oahu's shoreline.

Jul 20, 2026 Large schools of halalu and oama usually show up around July or August, but several local fishers said they started seeing them as early as May. For more Local News from Hawaii News Now: <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com> For more YouTube Content:

 [@hawaiinews](https://www.youtube.com/@hawaiinews) August 1, 2026

Amazing Videos Must Watch: Educational

Huge Reef Fish Bloom during Warmer 2015 Rene Umberger Fishery Lies at the End
<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/26454840/videos-show-tropical-fish-swarming-states-reefs/>

Video of Aquarium Fish on Oahu, Environmental Review 2021:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt8sRh493UI>

Video of Hawaii's Most Abundant Wrasse: Flame Wrasse Oahu, Watch Large screen Only Please: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z45MzI_Nkt8

Video Of Oahu Yellow Tangs 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psTHLKfsdIA&t=8s>

Yellow Tang Fish Counts Oahu Video with DAR SAP 2024
<https://youtu.be/IGcbqBU733c?feature=shared>

Results West Oahu, Population Density for Oahu
Transect 1 75 Yellow Tangs per 25M
Transect 2 65 Yellow Tangs
Transect 3 54 Yellow Tangs

Website Explaining Fishery with Science Links
<https://hawaiitropicalsaltwateraquariumfish.com/>

In the fall of 2014, due to an increase in plankton food supply, a much greater number of the 5 million fry per spawning live to adult stages. There was a "Biblical Increase in Fish Populations." Link video and news on this:

"More fish than I have ever seen before", Rene Umberger, but she testifies "No Fish" "Fish Declines"! [See Video](#)

2015 Video Proof EJ Lies: How do you shut down a sustainable fishery?

Bruce Calson PhD Video Presentation

S Kupao-Odo, Attorney Earth Justice, "no studies, no limits, DLNR refuses to do studies, no documents published by DLNR, millions of fish taken." And she gets a ruling that the fishery must do an EIS!

Dr. Bruce Anderson, Administrator of the Division of Aquatic Resources (**DAR**)
“NOT AN ACCURATE STATEMENT AND THEY SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.” “Very good data on this, as good as anywhere in the world: stable, with populations remaining the same or increasing, means the fishery is sustainable.” Many studies have been published, and yearly reports to the legislature every 5 years have been completed.

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU_WZOyJzqk&t=9s

Video Link: https://youtu.be/EJ_t6bggX60

Scientists detect a sharp acceleration in global warming | ScienceDaily
<https://share.google/kW6MZPvTdupPvWNrx>

August 1, 2026

Source:

Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

Summary:

Global warming appears to have shifted into a faster gear. After removing the effects of El Niño, volcanic eruptions, and solar cycles, researchers found that the planet has warmed at roughly 0.35°C per decade over the past ten years, compared with just under 0.2°C per decade from 1970 to 2015. The acceleration, which becomes visible around 2013 to 2015, appeared across five major global temperature datasets with more than 98% statistical certainty.



El Nino forms, expected to strengthen, say NOAA forecasters June 2026



NOAA (.gov) <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/el-nino-forms-ex...>

Jun 11, 2026 — *El Niño, the warm phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), is predicted to intensify to a moderate or strong level this fall.*

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) officially confirmed that El Niño conditions have developed and are actively strengthening. Forecast models indicate a 63% probability that this event will escalate into a "super El Niño", potentially reaching unprecedented ocean temperature anomalies. Whether ocean temperatures reach 30 °C in the hottest month of August has yet to be determined, but today, 7-22-26, they are at 26 °C.

While "super El Niño" is not an official scientific classification, meteorologists use the term to describe historically strong events where sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific surge above 2° C to 3° C above average.

What could we expect according to the science reviewed below? We could see not only the early summer increase in fish populations that has occurred, but maybe another larger fish recruitment in September & November. If we see another fish recruitment, they will not have been seen on the nearshore reefs for up to 4 months. So, observations will be important from

December to February 2027 to further document this event.

Science is complicated, and no one knows yet the future regarding global warming and its impacts on our Hawaii fisheries. Let's look at the environmental science and the resilience of those fisheries.

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

Survivability is usually low depending on environmental factors, but this year environmental factors seem favorable. Here are a few reproductive numbers for various fish species.

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

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

Tuna produces 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 was 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 thousands of fry per spawn.

Potter's Angel spawns nearly every day, producing approximately 1,000

to 10,000 fry daily.

Flame Angels spawn up to 10,000 eggs per spawn. Captive breeding programs report that over a 124-day period, females produced 97 spawns, so reproduction can occur nearly every day.

Wrasses, 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's published captivity reproductive potential of Flame Angels. 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. **Most marine fish are unable to breed in captivity, and aquarium fishermen are required to provide brood stock for those that can be reproduced via aquaculture. Many have gone bankrupt trying to breed marine fish.**

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 show 80% are not currently overfished.

Marine species can migrate horizontally and vertically away from warmer waters, pollution, and unfriendly environmental impacts, and nearly all reef fish species in Hawaii also inhabit cooler, much deeper depths; this is referred to as “Deep Refuge”.

We must support a managed, sustainable fishery to create a more sustainable society, especially in isolated Hawaii, and reduce global warming impacts worldwide.

News 2014:

CORAL Excerpt: “Biblical” Spawning Event on Hawaiian Reefs

by [Ret Talbot](#) | Aug 29, 2014 <https://www.coralmagazine.com/2014/08/29/biblical-spawning-event-on-hawaiian-reefs/>

The term "biblical fish bloom" refers to an unprecedented 2014 marine event in Hawaii. Divers across the Hawaiian Islands witnessed a massive, sudden influx of juvenile reef fish—including swarms of butterflyfish, surgeonfish, tangs, and goatfish—the scale of which locals described as "biblical"

El Niño upwellings and current wind dispersal have been linked to increased fish populations.

This may be partially due to the early ocean warming effects, increases in zooplankton, rotifers, algae, copepods, and food supply for young larvae.

During the 2015–2016 "Godzilla" El Niño, warmer ocean temperatures and altered wind dynamics disrupted typical larval dispersal in Hawaii. Rather than uniformly facilitating longer-distance dispersal across the archipelago, there may be a lack of transport for high larval pushes, leaving larvae to recruit closer to home and thus significantly increasing local fish populations. The Godzilla recruitment and huge increase of marine fish populations were not just in Hawaii; 2014 warming linked to significantly increased recruitment in Pacific Ocean-wide and northern California fisheries also.

Note below the large increase in fish populations after the “Godzilla” Fish Bloom

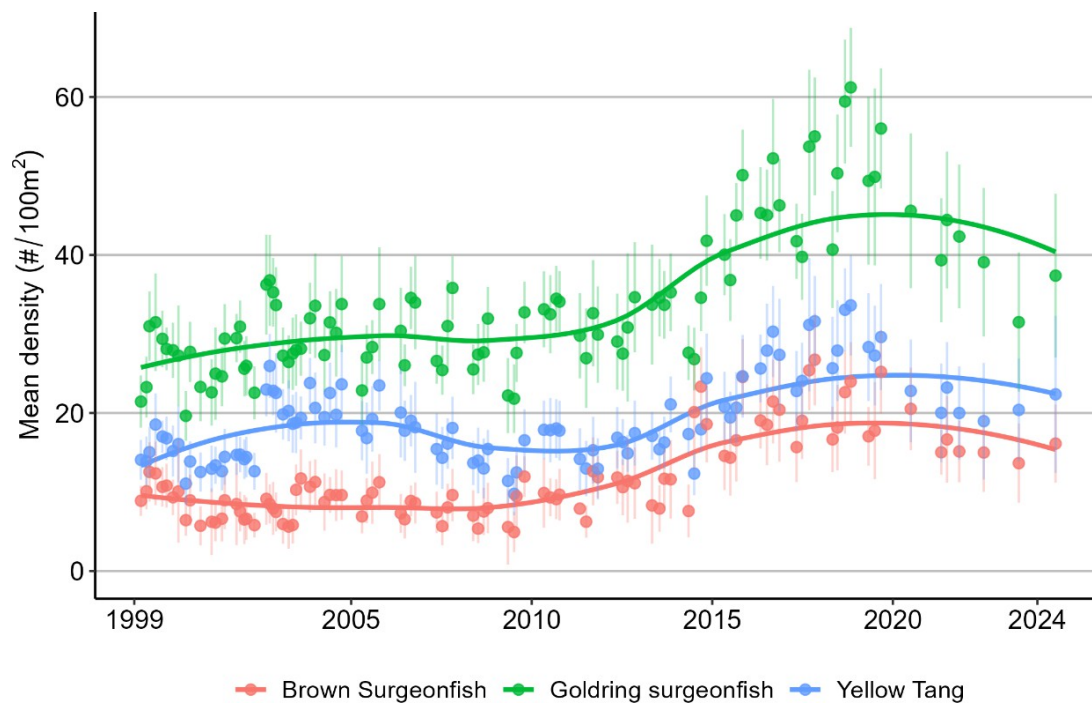


Figure 23. Mean density of select small surgeonfishes in WHAP surveys. Points represent mean density across 25 WHAP sites for each survey round per species. Error bars represent standard deviation to depict the level of variability between sites. Recruit sized individuals are removed from these data for ma'i'i'i (red), kole (green), and lau'pala (blue) .

The overall average value shows an increase in populations from 1999 to 2024. Until 2017, the aquarium fishery was open, indicating no significant long-term impacts on overall fish populations. Millions more Kole and yellow tang fish, fish used for the aquarium trade, were counted after the 2014-2015 event. This clearly shows little impact in increasing, not decreasing, fish populations during the most active fishery years. There is no long-term link between the aquarium fishery and decreasing fish populations based on this data.

“These patterns suggest that La Niña and the neutral phases of the ENSO cycle are generally favorable for adult reproduction and larval development in the spring and

summer, while El Niño phases may limit recruitment in the late summer and fall. We hypothesize that episodic recruitment during non-El Niño phases is related to favorable survivorship and transport dynamics that are associated with the formation of pairs of anticyclonic and cyclonic eddies on the leeward sides (western shores) of the Main Hawaiian Islands.

Heim-Ballew, Heidi. *Identifying migration flexibility and the environmental factors that influence variation in recruitment success in partially migratory Hawaiian fishes*. Diss. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 2019.

Larval fish recruitment is generally highly variable in space and time, and can significantly influence adult population abundance, density and distribution, as well as community structure in coral reef systems.

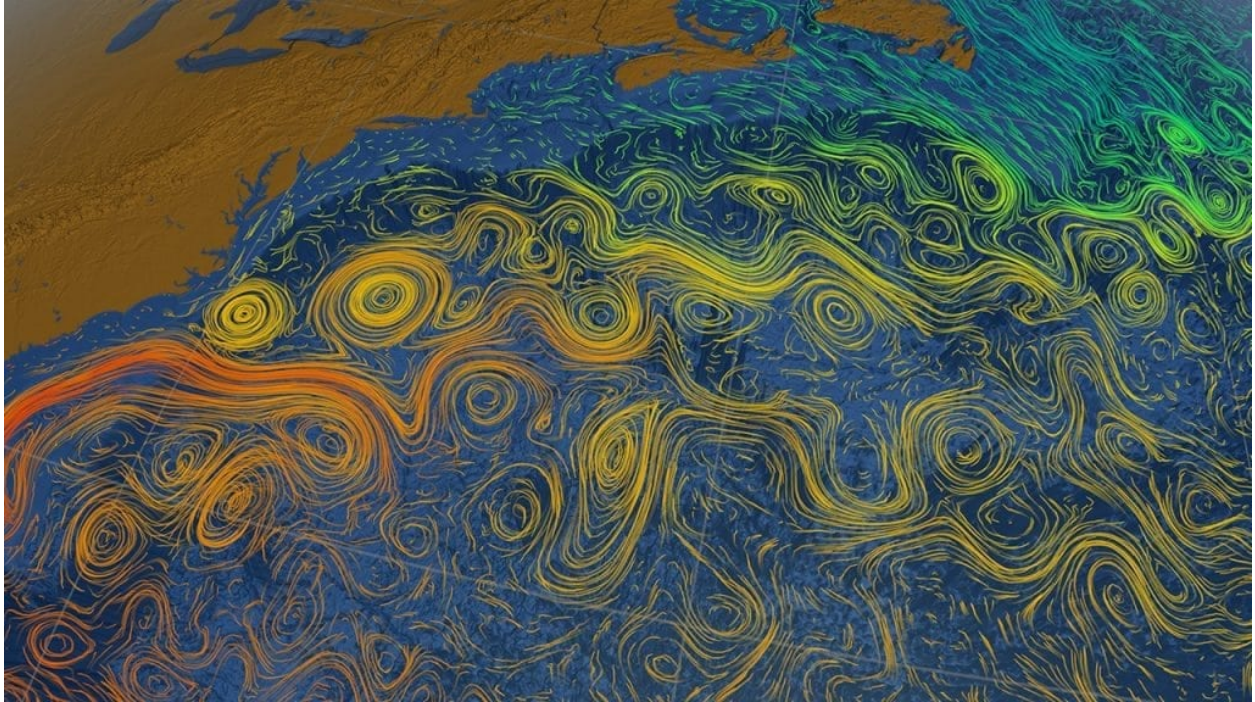
Carlson DB, Garcia SM, Faucci A (2024) Coupling and de-coupling of the El Niño Southern Oscillation to the supply of larval fishes to benthic populations in the Hawaiian Islands. PLoS ONE 19(10): e0312593. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0312593>

Super El Nino Map Shows One State Bracing for Even More Snow This Winter - Men's Journal <https://share.google/5yeijJ1vs8OTHFenD>

El Niño events, especially large ones, are linked to increases in reef fish populations in Hawaii. 2012 review showed that multiple peer-reviewed scientific research papers over 30 years support the fact that fish populations increase when ENSO cycles occur. But they also question the effects and links about some biochemical processes that may cause fish decline. The published complex science on this topic can be conflicting.

“We found that the abundance and diversity of larval fishes was negatively correlated with the Multivariate El Niño Index (MEI), and that larval variables were positively correlated with measures of fall recruitment (September & November), but not correlated with spring-summer recruitment (May & July). In the MHI, SST variables were not correlated with the MEI, but two successive El Niño events of 2014–15 and 2015–2016 were characterized by SST maxima approaching 30°C. Two large pulses of benthic recruitment occurred in the 2009 and 2014 recruitment seasons, with > 8000 recruits observed by divers over the summer and fall months. These patterns suggest that La Niña and the neutral phases of the ENSO cycle are generally favorable for adult reproduction and larval development in the spring and summer, while El Niño phases may limit recruitment in the late summer and fall. We hypothesize that episodic recruitment during non-El Niño phases is related to favorable survivorship and transport dynamics that are associated with the formation of pairs of anticyclonic and cyclonic eddies on the leeward sides (western shores) of the Main Hawaiian Islands”.

Carlson, David B., S. Maria Garcia, and Anuschka Faucci. "Coupling and de-coupling of the El Niño Southern Oscillation to the supply of larval fishes to benthic populations in the Hawaiian Islands." *Plos one* 19.10 (2024): e0312593.



Eddies are vital to the Earth's climate system because they mix the ocean. By continuously transporting warm water toward the poles and cold, nutrient-rich water toward the equator, they distribute heat and sustain the marine food web. You can explore near real-time satellite imagery of global eddies using the [NASA Salinity Mesoscale Eddies](#) resource.

Carlson, David B., S. Maria Garcia, and Anuschka Faucci. "Coupling and de-coupling of the El Niño Southern Oscillation to the supply of larval fishes to benthic populations in the Hawaiian Islands." *Plos one* 19.10 (2024): e0312593.

in Hawaii suggest that the species spawns several months earlier in the calendar year and matures at larger body lengths in Hawaii

DeMartini, Edward E., Ross C. Langston, and Jeff A. Eble. "Spawning seasonality and body sizes at sexual maturity in the bluespine unicornfish, *Naso unicornis* (Acanthuridae)." *Ichthyological Research* 61.3 (2014): 243-251.

A strong increase of the P/B ratio of this species was observed during nutrient-poor, warmer water conditions typical of El Niño, owing to the massive recruitment of fast-growing juvenile scallops. Trophic ecology theory predicts that when primary production is nutrient-limited, the trophic flow of organisms occupying low trophic levels should be constrained (bottom-up control).

Riascos, José M., et al. "Breaking out of the comfort zone: El Niño-Southern Oscillation as a driver of trophic flows in a benthic consumer of the Humboldt Current ecosystem." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 284.1857 (2017): 20170923.

Kole Tangs *Ctenochaetus Strigosus* , **Yellow Tangs** *Zebrasoma flavescens* are currently the third and fourth most abundant reef fish. They were also the most

fished Aquarium Fish species. See the findings in the chart below.

Hawaii DC114 2020 Rpt; *Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) Report*; DLNR.

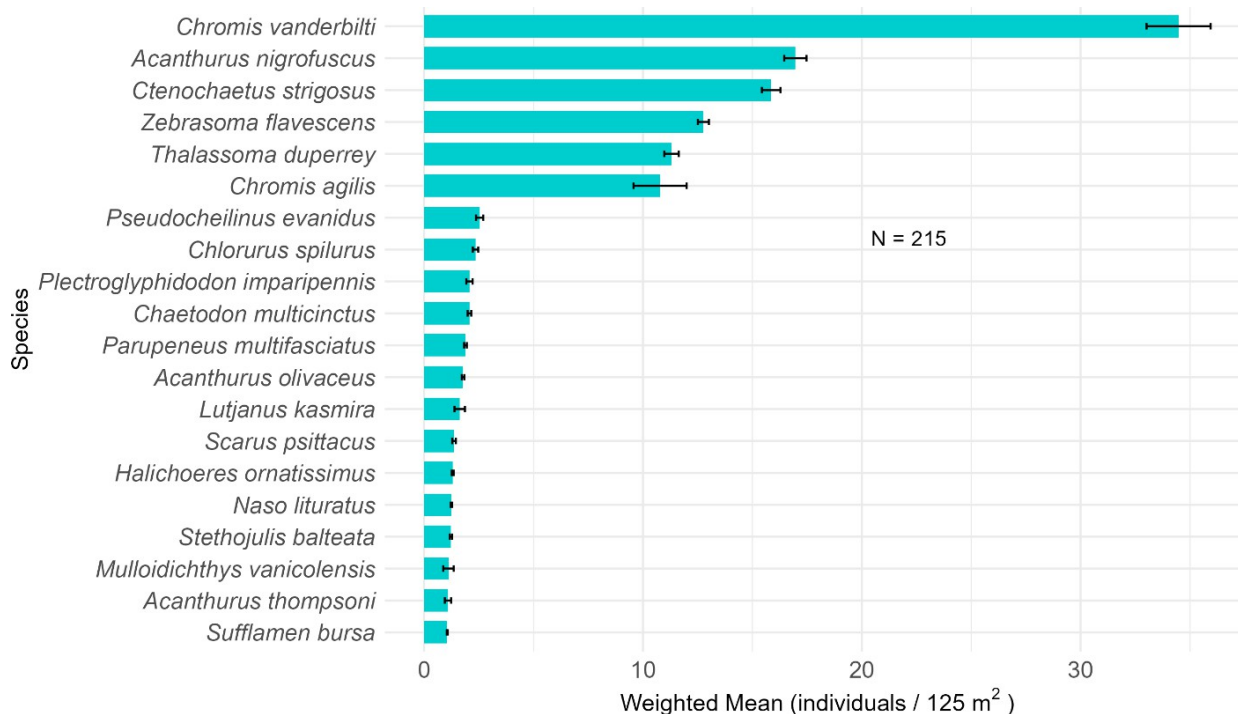


Figure 20. The 20 most abundant reef sh species recorded during 2022-2023 FAHU surveys. Mean density per transect (125 m²) weighted by stratum weights with error bars to show weighted standard error for the sample size of 215 surveys across nine strata. Scientific names were used to distinguish species with overlapping Hawaiian names. Translations can be found in Appendix table A-1. **Kole Tangs** *Ctenochaetus Strigosus* , **Yellow Tangs** *Zebbrasoma flavescens*

2015 Fish Bloom:



Swarms of butterflyfishes, tangs, and other reef fishes appeared throughout Hawaii. Image: Pauline Fiene.

Widespread reports of an unprecedented recruitment of reef fish juveniles in the Hawaiian Islands

Unusual Recruiting Patterns and Smiling Fishers

As Biologist **Matthew Ross**, an Oahu-based aquarium fisherman, explains it, “Recruitment, known colloquially among fishermen as ‘the drop’ is basically what defines our fishing season.” Ross likens it to how a farmer’s season depends on the rainfall and weather. “Every year is different,” he says, “usually some fish are plentiful and some aren’t. Occasionally we’ll get a year where most fish are abundant, and, unfortunately, we sometimes get years where practically everything is scarce.... Personally, watching the drop is one of the things I enjoy most about being in the fishery; it’s always exciting to see what pattern will emerge each year.”

“The recruitment has been strange this year,” says aquarium fisherman **Tony Nahacky**, who lives on the Big Island of Hawaii and has been diving the reefs since the late 1960s. West Hawaii, called the Kona Coast, where Nahacky has been diving for years, is where most of the fishing for aquarium species occurs in the State. The number of aquarium fishermen operating on the reefs of West Hawaii is relatively small compared to other fisheries, but they are closely attuned to the natural cycles. “Each year the aquarium fishermen eagerly anticipate the annual recruitment to see if it is going to be boom, average, or bust,” says Nahacky.

“This year we are smiling.”



Yellow Tang juveniles: the Biggest “Drop” of a lifetime for many reef observers. Image: Dr. William Walsh/DAR

In addition to observing much larger than normal numbers of recruits of several species of fishes on the reefs where he usually dives, Nahacky says he’s also noticed some other recruitment anomalies. For one thing, he has observed that a number of species appear to be recruiting at unusual times. “For example,” he says, “*Hemitaurichthys polylepis* [Pyramid Butterflyfish] I usually see arriving in September or October, but they were arriving by the end of June this year.” In addition, Nahacky says he has seen species that usually do not recruit on West Hawaii reefs recruiting in large numbers compared to normal. “*Heniochus diphreutes* [Pennant Butterflyfish], which recruit on Oahu,” he says, “are quite rare to see as juveniles here, but there were groups up to 70 we spotted.”

“Essentially,” Nahacky concludes, “you have a mix of unusual recruiting patterns this year. This is, of course, anecdotal information based on my observations and memory of past recruitment, but in discussion with other long time collectors they agree.”

Scientists Say It’s “Off the Chart”

Dr. Brian Tissot is the Director of the Marine Laboratory at Humboldt State University, and he, along with other scientists, has intensively studied the reefs of West Hawaii since 1999. “A typical year for Yellow Tangs,” says Tissot, “may show three to seven recruits per 100-square meters (about a thousand square feet) during the summer, with 10-15 per 100-square meters during good years.”

“This year the numbers were off the chart,” says Tissot, who was not been in Hawaii himself this summer but who has graduate students from his lab reporting back to him. “I don’t know the actual numbers,” he says, “but they were an order of magnitude higher at least and perhaps more.” Tissot says it is very unusual to see hundreds of recruits in a small area, but that’s exactly what people were seeing and documenting in Hawaii this summer.

Dr. William Walsh, an aquatic biologist with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), has been on the reefs this summer, and while he is unable to share actual survey numbers at this time, he confirms what everyone else is saying.

Walsh has been conducting reef surveys on West Hawaii reefs since the 1970s, and what he has observed this year is, in some places, nothing short of what he terms “Amazing.” At one of his survey sites, for example, Walsh says he documented “unprecedented recruitment of Yellow Tang and Lavender Tang” (*Acanthurus nigrofuscus*). He also reports very good numbers of some butterflyfishes and other surgeonfishes at the site. Other survey sites saw very good recruitment of some species like the Klein’s Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon kleinii*), various goatfishes, trumpetfish, Heniochus Butterflyfish, Chevron Tang (*Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis*), Multiband Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon multicinctus*), and Kole Tang (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*).

Walsh cautions that not all of his survey sites have seen exceptional levels of recruitment. “Our other sites have varying levels of recruits,” he says, “but really nothing too amazing. Good but not incredible.” Still, what he has seen this summer, he says, is unprecedented in his 40 years of conducting reef fish surveys in West Hawaii.

A Happy Synchronicity?

Neither Walsh nor Tissot know why this summer’s drops of many reef fishes throughout Hawaii have been as remarkable as they have been. “I don’t have an answer as to why such boom recruitment years occur other than they do,” says Walsh. There have been other good years for individual species, and there have even been some truly remarkable years, but they are often species-specific. Among the possible factors are water current patterns, weather, temperature, availability of foods, reduced predation and others.

“I don’t know why this occurred,” says Tissot. “I’m not sure anyone does. It may just be a happy synchronicity between multiple factors that influence larval success,” he conjectures, “or just a rare spawning event involving many species triggered by some environmental cue.”

“I’m sure there is all kinds of speculation on the causes,” Ross says, summing up the fisher perspective. “We all have our own crackpot theories. Some guys think it’s correlated to the prevailing winds, and some think the winter surf has something to do with it. I’m sure that folks in the conservation world are attributing it to the [Fishery Replenishment Areas] or some other conservation measures that have been enacted recently.” Ross’ own theory is that there is better fish recruitment when the water warms up faster in the summer. “But like I said,” he cautions, “this is a crackpot theory and who knows if it’s true or not.”

While he’s not sure of the causes, Ross is convinced it has nothing to do with fishing. “Since the high recruitment seems to be arbitrarily encompassing species that are caught for aquariums, caught for food, and not caught by anyone, I don’t think fishing has anything to do with it,” he says. “The ocean is so complex that I imagine it will always be a mystery.”



Diver with shoal of young Sidespot Goatfish, *Parupeneus pleurostigma*. Image: Karen Williams Bryan.

Regardless of why this year's recruitment was so good, many people are asking what it means about the current and future health of Hawaii's coral reefs and the fisheries that depend on them.

Dr. Bruce Carlson is the former director of the Waikiki Aquarium on Oahu, science officer at the Georgia Aquarium, and member of the Senior advisory Board of *Coral Magazine*. An avid SCUBA diver, Carlson has logged plenty of time on Hawaii's reefs. He recalls the massive recruitment of Fantail Filefish (*Pervagor spilosoma*) in the late 1970s and again in the late 1980s, and another influx of Hawaiian Bigeyes (*Priacanthus meeki*) in 2002. He adds that these events are retold in some Hawaiian legends so they are not just a modern phenomenon.

Carlson says these occurrences dramatically illustrate the dynamic nature of reef fish populations, and that random events may cause much of the variation in recruitment from year to year. "Most of these little fish will probably end up as food for larger fish like *ulua* [*"ulua"* is a generic Hawaiian name for jacks, such as *Caranx melampygus*]." Nonetheless, he says, this year's event suggests to him something about the health of Hawaii's reefs in general. "It's not bad for a reef system that has, as some would have us believe, been decimated by tropical fish collectors," says Carlson.

Anti-aquarium fishery activists, now bolstered by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, have been fighting for years to shut down what they say is an unsustainable fishery. Both the State of Hawaii and the preponderance of peer-reviewed scientific literature claim the fishery is amongst the best managed in Hawaii and is sustainable.

From a fishing perspective, Ross is optimistic. "As far as the effects on the [aquarium] industry go, it's definitely reassuring to see so many fish on the reef," he says. "Over the years, the fish stocks here have been very good, and I've never felt that fish overall were in short supply. This year, however, there is so much that next year could have terrible recruitment and we'd still be okay." Ross says fishers are also pleased to see some of the less common species, like Thompson's Tangs and Pyramid Butterflies, be so abundant. "They are good aquarium fish," Ross says. "It's good to know that we'll be able to provide them to the hobby on a consistent basis this year."

A Regional Phenomenon?

While much of the discussion regarding this year's recruitment has been centered on Maui and West Hawaii, Ross reports it is the best recruitment year he has ever seen in 12 years diving Oahu. Oahu's aquarium fishery is tiny compared to that of West Hawaii, but it is a fishery that relies heavily on diversity as opposed to West Hawaii which relies overwhelmingly on Yellow Tang. "We've had huge pulses in the past," he says, "but those usually have been limited to one species at a time. This is different. Most species of fish are very plentiful, with a few types in particular so abundant that they're forming huge schools that clearly exceed the carrying capacity of the reef and aren't displaying normal behavior."

Dennis Yamaguchi, one of Hawaii's most-experienced aquarium fishermen with more than 40 years of Hawaii diving experience, says last year's Yellow Tang drop on Oahu was the best he had seen since the 1970s. "This year," he says, "is light years beyond that."

As in West Hawaii, the Oahu aquarium fishers and other divers are reporting exceptional drops of both surgeonfishes and butterflyfishes. "Practically all of the tangs, especially Yellow Tangs, *Naso lituratus*, Kole, and Thompson's Tangs (*Acanthurus thompsoni*), are everywhere," says Ross. "They are so abundant that all of these species are occurring in large numbers outside their usual habitat." Ross explains that Yellow Tangs are usually found chiefly in finger coral, antler coral trees, and occasionally in rubble around Oahu, but this year, he says, there are large numbers of them "pretty much anywhere with any kind of structure."

When it comes to butterflyfishes, Ross says Pennant Butterflyfish (*Heniochus diphreutes*) are especially noticeable, as are Pyramids (*Hemitaurichthys polylepis*) and Longnose Butterflyfish (*Forcipiger flavissimus*). "Probably the most abundant one, though, is the Klein's Butterfly," he says. "They are so abundant on the North Shore right now that, in some places, they are forming a layer six-foot [two meters] deep that's hard to see through."

One of Ross's most-interesting observations is not one he made while diving though. As part of Oahu's extremely small aquarium fishery, Ross is, almost by necessity, familiar with all aspects of the fishery from harvest to import and export. "One thing we've noticed," he says, "is that Christmas Island has been shipping huge numbers of Chevron Tangs and Black Tangs—much more than normal." Perhaps, Ross conjectures, this recruitment event might not be limited to Hawaii.

The fastest coral growth can reach 7 inches per year, Acropora, but those are not common corals in Hawaii. The corals that do broadcast breed over long distances and can repopulate via long-distance in Hawaii show shallow-area growth rates of 3 to 5 inches a year.

This event is not just affecting fish; reports show coral spawning, the highest ever reported event, just occurred. Corals too are broadcast breeders.

Corals spawn on a Massive Scale: The synchronized, mass spawning involves trillions of gametes released by entire reef systems, significantly increasing the chances of fertilization.

After Corals Broadcast Spawn, they can settle 10s of meters to Hundreds of kilometers away (186 miles or more). At greater distances, it takes longer to reestablish significant populations.



Kahaluu Coral Spawning “Most Successful and Abundant ...



Big Island Video News <https://www.bigislandvideonews.com> › 2026/05/29 › k...
May 29, 2026 — The cauliflower coral spawning event in Kahalu'u Bay month was said to be the most “successful and abundant” coral spawning event in years.

Along with hotter El Niño events, shallow reef bleaching has occurred. We need to be watchful of corals this year.

Most of the islands' coral reefs have recovered from bleaching! 2014 and 2015

By Audrey McAvoy Associated Press POSTED: 04:53 a.m. HST, Jan 29, 2015

(5 months after the summer high temperature bleaching event of 2014 corals recovered).

“The DLNR studied coral for bleaching -- a stress response that causes corals to lose algae and color from their tissue -- in Kaneohe Bay.

So when the stress of warmer-than-average ocean temperatures prompted many of Hawaii's corals to expel algae last year -- a phenomenon called bleaching because corals lose their color when they do this -- many were worried they might die. Now the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources says most of the bleached corals have recovered. It plans to announce the result of its coral surveys on Thursday”.

Coral relies on an algal symbiotic relationship for food and their survival. Corals, when they overheat, expel their algae, leaving an appearance of bleaching, but they are not dead. They can survive without algae for three months. Previous coral bleaching events in 2014 and 2015, as well as others, were short-lived, and corals largely recovered. Heating events lasting more than 8 weeks can lead to coral mortality. August is the hottest month in Hawaii's summer.

SOURCES AND MORE SCIENCE:

For further reading on the intersection of ENSO cycles and marine ecology, you can explore the full datasets and biological modeling via the [PLOS ONE Study on Larval Fish Assemblages](#) or the [NOAA Institutional Repository](#).

Azani, N., et al. "The impacts of climate change on plankton as live food: A review." *IOP conference series: Earth and environmental science*. Vol. 869. No. 1. IOP Publishing, 2021.

Bailey-Brock, Julie H. "Fouling community development on an artificial reef in Hawaiian waters." *Bulletin of Marine Science* 44.2 (1989): 580-591.

“Artificial reefs have considerable potential for enhancing near shore fisheries by increasing habitat space and cover. Filamentous algae and solitary invertebrates

provide food for some fish and invertebrates within a 2-week period of immersion. Recruitment and community development were followed on PVC plates (18 × 20 cm) attached vertically to a concrete cube reef in 20 m of water off southeast Oahu, Hawaii. Plates were removed and replaced after immersion for 2-week, 2-, 6- and 12-month periods over a year”.

Raya, Vanesa, and Ana Sabatés. "Long-term changes of summer larval fish community in relation to environmental trends in the NW Mediterranean." *Frontiers in Marine Science* 13 (2026): 1760679.

Heim-Ballew, Heidi. *Identifying migration flexibility and the environmental factors that influence variation in recruitment success in partially migratory Hawaiian fishes*. Diss. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, 2019.

DeMartini, Edward E., Ross C. Langston, and Jeff A. Eble. "Spawning seasonality and body sizes at sexual maturity in the bluespine unicornfish, *Naso unicornis* (Acanthuridae)." *Ichthyological Research* 61.3 (2014): 243-251.

Riascos, José M., et al. "Breaking out of the comfort zone: El Niño-Southern Oscillation as a driver of trophic flows in a benthic consumer of the Humboldt Current ecosystem." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 284.1857 (2017): 20170923.

Claar DC, Szostek L, McDevitt-Irwin JM, Schanze JJ, Baum JK (2018) Global patterns and impacts of El Niño events on coral reefs: A meta-analysis. PLoS ONE 13(2): e0190957. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190957>

Daniel M., Robin W. Baird, and Michaela A. Kratofil. "Beaked whales and El Niño: Evidence for ENSO effects on Blainville's beaked and goose-beaked whale space use in Hawaiian waters." *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 751 (2024): 189-209.

If you're looking for NOAA temperature data for the Pacific Ocean around Hawaii, these are the primary datasets and portals:

1. Daily Sea Surface Temperature (SST), 1985–present

- NOAA Coral Reef Watch 5 km satellite product (CoralTemp)
- Daily global coverage with excellent resolution for Hawaii
- Available through ERDDAP for downloads (NetCDF, CSV, OPeNDAP) and custom maps.

Data portal:

2. Hawaii Regional SST Status

NOAA's National Marine Ecosystem Status provides summaries and long-term trends for Hawaiian waters.

Uses monthly composites from the CoralTemp dataset.

Includes trend analyses and historical context.

Dashboard:

3. Subsurface Temperature around Hawaiian Coral Reefs

In-situ logger measurements rather than satellite SST.

Covers reef sites throughout the Hawaiian Archipelago.

Useful if you need temperatures below the ocean surface (0–30 m depths).

Dataset:

Typical sea surface temperatures around Hawaii

Approximate climatological SST:

Season	Temperature
Winter (Jan–Mar)	23–25 °C (73–77 °F)
Spring	24–26 °C (75–79 °F)
Summer	26–28 °C (79–82 °F)
Early Fall	27–29 °C (81–84 °F)

Actual temperatures vary by location, ocean currents, and marine heatwaves.

Available formats

NOAA provides data in:

NetCDF

CSV

OPeNDAP

Graphs and maps through ERDDAP

Time-series for specific latitude/longitude coordinates

Why was 2015 so hot?

Sea surface temperature (SST) in the main Hawaiian Islands reached the highest recorded monthly temperature in well over a century (Figure 1). Temperatures in West Hawai‘i were even warmer, reaching 30.3°C (86.5°F) in September of 2015 (Gove et al. 2016). These anomalously warm and prolonged ocean conditions wreaked havoc on coral reefs in West Hawai‘i, causing upwards of 90% of coral bleaching and an overall relative loss of approximately 50% of coral cover across West Hawai‘i (Kramer et al. 2016).

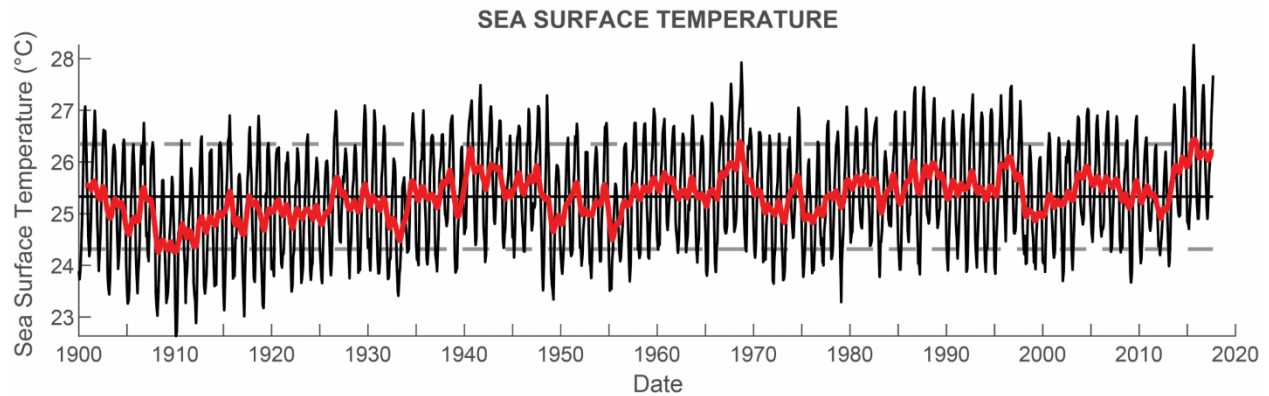
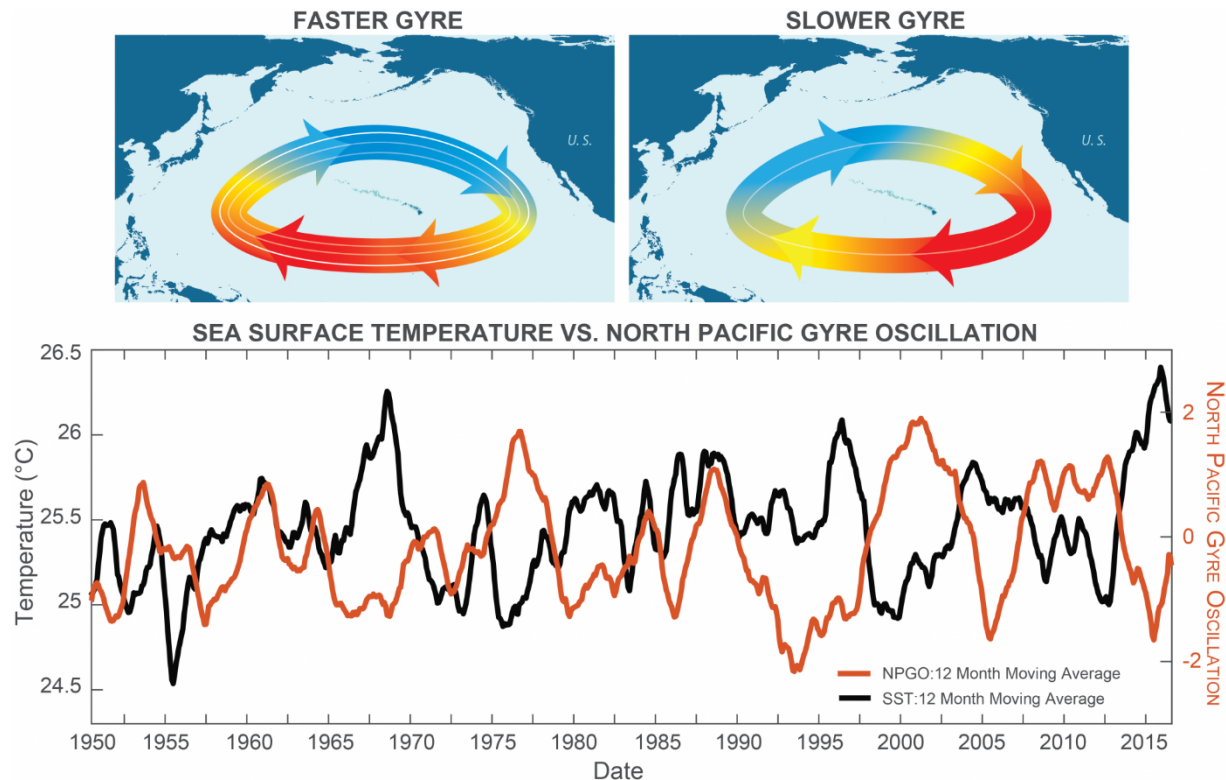


Figure 1: Weekly sea surface temperature for the main Hawaiian Islands from 1900–2018 (black line). Red line represents a 12-month moving average. Horizontal lines represent the long-term mean (1900–2018; solid line) and ± 1 standard deviation (dashed line). Data Sources: [Sea surface temperature, NOAA's Extended Reconstructed Sea Surface Temperature, version 4](#)

Although the dynamics governing ocean temperatures can be complex, it appears that the combination of local conditions and large-scale climate processes superimposed to produce the extremely warm temperatures observed in Hawai‘i in the summer of 2015. Here, we provide a descriptive and generalized explanation of this anomaly.

One source of variation in ocean temperatures is driven by the speed of the Subtropical Gyre, a ring-link system of ocean currents rotating clockwise across the North Pacific (Figure 2). Ocean currents in the Subtropical Gyre transport cooler waters from the northeast Pacific to the west and south, warming as it moves to the subtropical Pacific and the vicinity of Hawai‘i. Similarly, warm water from the western subtropical Pacific is transported towards Japan, cooling as it moves northward. When the rotational speed of ocean currents in the Subtropical Gyre is accelerated, cool waters from the northeast take less time to reach Hawai‘i, arriving cooler than normal, while the warm water in the western Pacific arrives warmer when it reaches Japan (Figure 3.4, Fast Gyre). Conversely, when the rotational speed of ocean currents in the Subtropical Gyre are slowed, cool waters from the northeast take more time to reach Hawai‘i and, therefore, arrive warmer than normal (Figure 2, Slow Gyre).



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Figure 2: Graphical representation of the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, with faster (top left) and slower (top right) gyre rotations and corresponding differences in Pacific-wide sea surface temperature (top) with color gradient from blue (cold) to red (hot) (top). Twelve-month moving average of sea surface temperature for the main Hawaiian Islands (black line) and the North Pacific Gyre Oscillation (NPGO; orange line) from 1950 to 2016 (bottom). Negative NPGO values indicate a slower rotation of the Subtropical Gyre, resulting in warmer ocean temperatures. Data Sources: [Sea surface temperature, NOAA's Extended Reconstructed Sea Surface Temperature, version 4](#); [NPGO index, Di Lorenzo et al. \(2008\)](#).

The second major climatic driver of changes in ocean temperatures in Hawai'i is the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). The PDO is often described as a long-lived ENSO-like pattern of Pacific climate variability. As seen with the better-known ENSO, extremes in the PDO pattern are marked by widespread variations in temperature, wind patterns, ocean mixing, and biological productivity (Polovina et al. 1994). The extreme phases of the PDO have been classified as either warm or cool, defined by ocean temperature anomalies in the northeast and tropical Pacific Ocean (Figure 3).

OCEAN TEMPERATURE AND WIND ANOMALIES

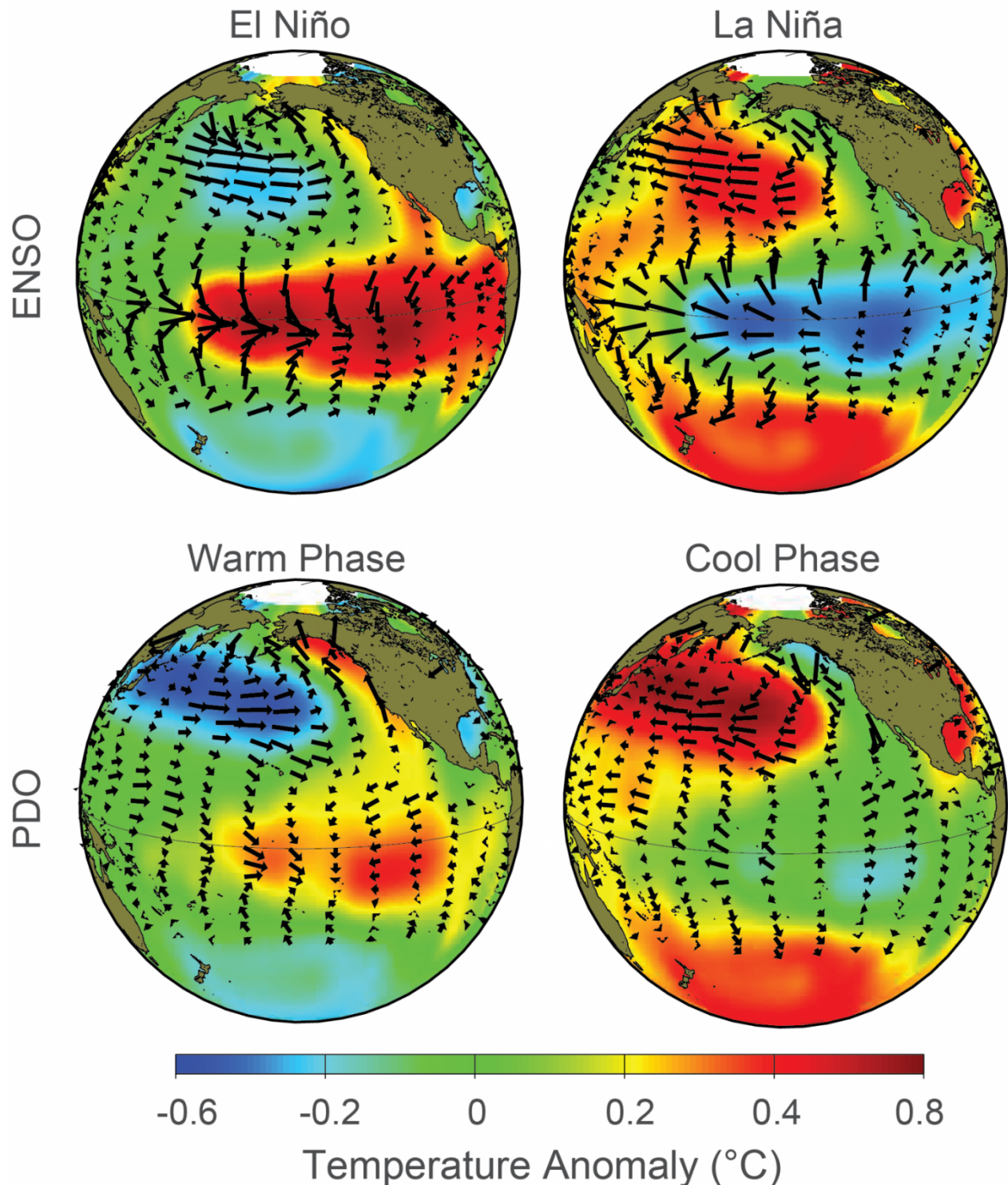


Figure 3: Typical sea surface temperature anomalies (color) and wind anomalies (black arrows) experienced during El Niño and La Niña (top left) and Warm and Cool Phases of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO, bottom left) across the Pacific Ocean. Graphic obtained from <http://research.jisao.washington.edu/data/pdo/> and presented here with permission.

In 2015, there was both a powerful El Niño and a warm phase of the PDO (Figure 4, ENSO & PDO Time Series), resulting in higher local ocean temperatures than either alone would typically produce. In 2014 and 2015, the equatorial and mid-latitude connection between the El Niño and warm phase of the PDO is thought to have been especially strong, resulting in the largest marine heat wave (i.e., “The Blob”) ever recorded in the Northeast Pacific that caused enhanced ocean warming across the Hawaiian Islands (Di Lorenzo & Mantua 2016).

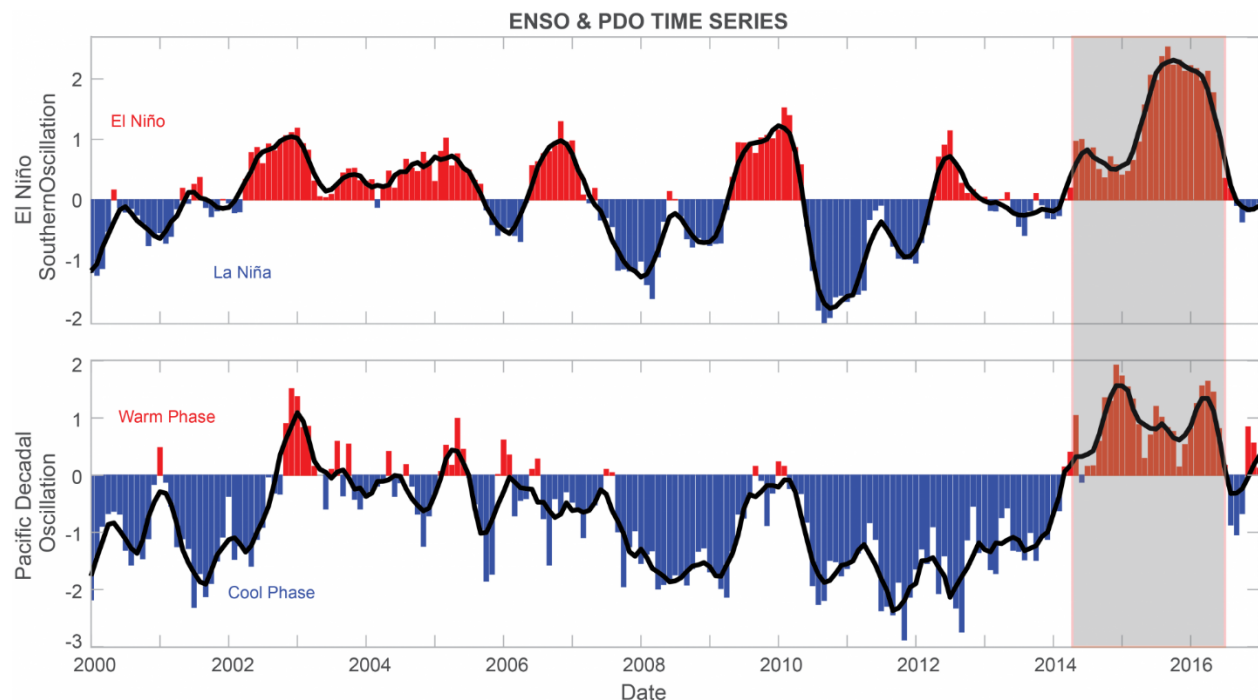
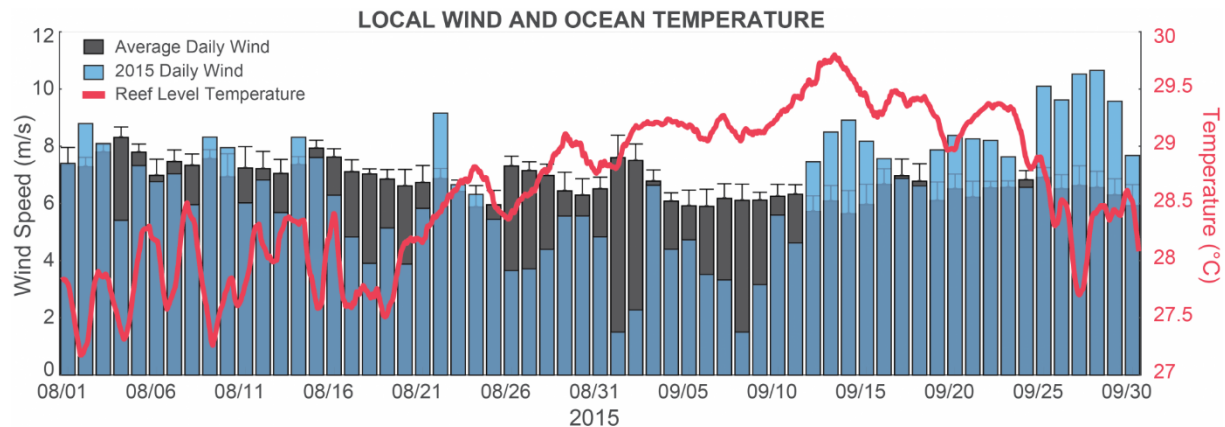


Figure 4: Indices representing the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), with El Niño and La Niña represented as red (positive) and blue (negative) values (top) and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), with the warm phase and cool phase represented as red (positive) and blue (negative) values (bottom). The black line represents a 6-month moving average. The gray box is shown to highlight the relatively strong El Niño and warm phase in the PDO co-occurring in 2015. Data sources: [Multivariate ENSO Index was obtained from NOAA’s Earth System Research Laboratory](#). The PDO index was obtained from [NOAA’s Centers for Environmental Information](#).

On a local scale, variations in wind conditions likely exacerbated the warming induced by the large-scale climate processes previously described. When winds are weaker than normal, they decrease the intensity of ocean mixing, which reduces the amount of deeper, cooler waters reaching the surface ocean, and results in increased warming. Throughout August and early September of 2015, wind speeds were weaker than average over 80% of the time (Figure 5). During this same period, reef-level (10 m; 33 ft) temperatures from Lapakahi, located 16 km (~10 miles) north of Kawaihae, increased by over 2.5°C (4.6°F) (Figure 5). At the peak of the warming event, local wind speeds were equal to or stronger than the long-term average for more than two weeks, helping to mix the upper surface and drive down ocean temperatures, ultimately contributing to the end of the 2015 thermal stress event.



Fi

Figure 5. Local wind and ocean temperature observed during the 2015 thermal stress event (August–September, 2015) in West Hawai‘i. Long-term (2009–2014) averaged daily wind speed (gray bars, error bars represent ± 1 standard deviation), daily wind speed (blue bars), and reef-level temperature (10 m; 33 ft) at Lapakahi, located approximately 16 km (10 miles) north of Kawaihae (red line), are shown. Data Sources: Daily wind is from NOAA’s ASCAT wind product, obtained from [NOAA’s Environmental Research Division Data Access Portal](#); reef-level temperature is from NOAA’s West Hawai‘i IEA.

Thus, the typical seasonal cycle, reduced wind conditions, and the combination of three major large-scale climate phenomena—NPGO, ENSO, PDO—all contributed to producing the highly anomalous warm ocean temperature around Hawai‘i in September 2015. The resulting “Biblical Fish Bloom” on Hawaii’s reefs are more than likely a factor of this effect. Looking toward the future, ocean temperature in West Hawai‘i is projected to steadily increase as a result of climate change (Figure 6). By the middle of the century, average monthly SST will be about 1°C (1.8°F) warmer than present-day, and for about 6 months of the year will be warmer than the present-day average September SST (27°C; 80.6°F) (van Hooidek et al. 2016). Further, it is likely the climate models used in these projections do not fully capture the large-scale climate variability—NPGO, ENSO, PDO—that influence SST and, therefore, may underestimate future ocean temperatures in West Hawai‘i.

<https://oceanwatch.pifsc.noaa.gov/>

Current Conditions & Tracking

Live Readings: Real-time graphic visualizations and contour maps for Hawaiian regional waters are actively tracked via the [NOAA OSPO Sea Surface Temperature Charts](#).

Local Forecasts: High-resolution regional modeling, graphs, and 7-day hydrodynamic forecasts around the islands are available through the [PacIOOS Water Temperature Forecast for Hawaii](#).

Seasonal Norms: Temperatures bottom out around 76°F–78°F (24°C–26°C) in late winter (February/March) and peak around August and September. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)]

8/9/26

OPPOSED TO Resolution 26-159

Dear Honolulu City Council Chair and Members,

As a former member of the Hawaii State Teacher's Association, and as a member of HSTA-Retired, and NEA (National Education Association), I OPPOSE ANY RESOLUTION TO BAN Hawaii's Commercial Aquarium Fishery. Commercial Aquarium Divers donated fish and aquariums to teachers like myself, and throughout the years participated in events at schools and at local harbors to educate families about ocean animals and how to care for their habitat.

Aquariums in any environment are proven to relieve tension. They are most are useful in the classroom to engage students in understanding abstract and practical concepts (ex. salinity, ecosystems, acidification, filtration). Most importantly, they develop appreciation for our ocean environment and teach responsible behavior in caring for it.

It is the aquarium divers who make sure to rotate their spots, adhere to strict size and catch rules to ensure many fish for the future, and generally take less than 1% of fish populations around Oahu. AQ divers are the source of local stock at our local public aquariums. Nearly every child in public school will go to the Waikiki Aquarium or Sea Life Park, both of whom used to get fish from Hawaii's commercial aquarium fishery. How sad, that if a ban goes into effect, that unless some special permit is gotten, our local kids will not be able to see the amazing fish that live in the depths of the ocean around their island home unless it is dead, on a plate, soon to die on the end of a spear or fishing pole or unless they pay the snorkeling industry \$150 to take them out for a dive.

The educational community, including public educational aquariums (unless they are making enormous sums of money selling reduced quality aqua-cultured fish) support Hawaii's Commercial Aquarium Fishery.

Please VOTE NO ON ANY AQUARIUM BAN RESOLUTION.

Sincerely,

Mary S. Tubbs, M.Ed.

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



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, August 12, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
City Council Chamber

Dear Council 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, cultural practitioners, and community advocates 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 and integral members of our reef ecosystems statewide. 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 year after year, 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, the First Circuit Environmental Court 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, perhaps as soon as late August.

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, Kahalu'u, and Hawai'i Kai;
- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs;

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=PLDh6ZXzdUvOkHtqVoauOkfa26NfNLh2pK&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).

- Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club;
- Ko'olau Foundation;
- Hawai'i State Aha Moku; 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").

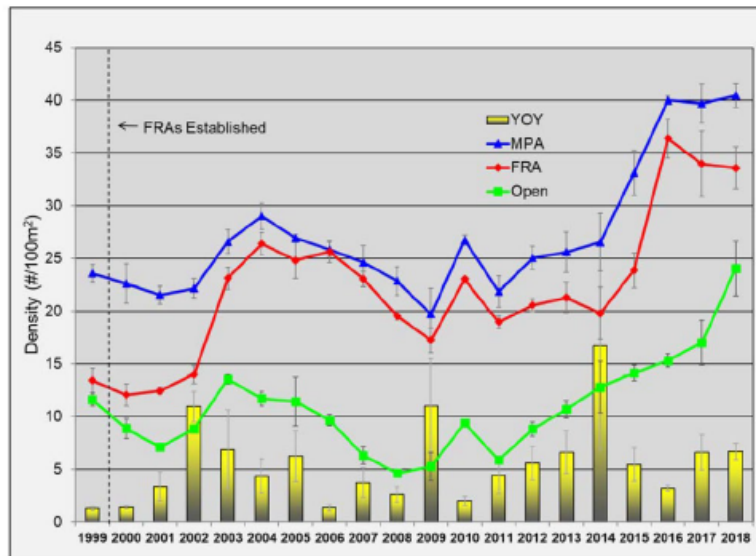


Figure 5. Overall changes in Yellow Tang density (Mean $\pm$ SE) in FRAs, MPAs, and Open Areas, 1999-2018. Yellow vertical bars indicate mean density (MAY-NOV) of Yellow Tang YOY. YOY are not included in trend line data (DAR 2019a).

On O'ahu, which would be the next island considered for issuance of commercial aquarium collection permits after West Hawai'i (in the event that a valid EIS for O'ahu permits were completed and accepted), nearshore fish populations collapsed in the early 1990s due to overfishing and the after-effects of hurricane Iniki. Prior to that collapse, O'ahu (and especially West O'ahu) was the island most exploited by commercial aquarium collectors. The aquarium trade's move to Hawai'i Island was a direct result of the O'ahu fish population collapse, and O'ahu fish populations *have never fully recovered*. Re-opening commercial aquarium collection would only further hinder the recovery of O'ahu's reefs and reef fish populations.

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 HAWAI'I

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 HAWAI'I	)	<u>Oral Argument</u>
AND DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND	)	Date: April 2, 2026
NATURAL RESOURCES, STATE OF	)	Time: 10:00 a.m.
HAWAI'I,	)	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.

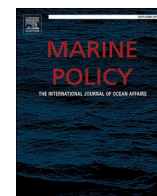
41. The Court finds that by exceeding the scope of the request for declaratory ruling, the substantial rights of Appellants may have been prejudiced.

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 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

Regular Meeting
City Council Chamber
Honolulu, Hawai‘i

August 12, 2026

10:00 a.m.

City Council Chamber

Aloha e Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

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 Hawai‘i Kai, 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- 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

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).

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 This definition of sustainable is only referring to collectors ability to "sustain" their participation in the fishery and not on the ecological sustainability of fishery populations. 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. Herbivorous 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 the resilience of Hawai'i to increased storm intensity and climate change. These ecosystem services possess tremendous market and non-market 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 resources.

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.

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.



August 11, 2026

Re: Resolution No. 26-160– Enact Legislation that Prohibits the Harvest of Aquatic Life
Hearing: Honolulu City Council, Tuesday August 12, 2026 10:00AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Council,

The Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter respectfully submits testimony in strong support of Resolution No. 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.

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 the Board of Land and Natural Resources (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 Hawai'i State Legislature should enact a permanent statewide prohibition on commercial aquarium collection to provide durable protections for Hawai'i's reef ecosystems and prevent future proposals that risk further ecological degradation. While BLNR has the authority to prohibit commercial aquarium collection, legislative action would establish a clear and durable statewide policy that provides long-term certainty for reef conservation and future management.

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

¹ NOAA Office for Coastal Management. *Coral Reefs and Coastal Protection Overview*.
<https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/coral-reefs.html>

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:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X21000397>

³ McClanahan, T.R., et al. *Coral reef ecosystem phase shifts under cumulative anthropogenic stressors*. Available at: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9436070/>

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>

This resolution comes at a pivotal moment. Following the Kaua'i County Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution No. 2026-21 and the Legislature's consideration of HB2101 during the 2026 legislative session, adoption of Resolution No. 26-160 would reinforce the growing statewide call for the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact a permanent prohibition on commercial aquarium collection.

For these reasons, the Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter respectfully urges the Committee to recommend adoption of Resolution No. 26-160.

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

August 12, 2026

Honolulu County Council

RE: Strong Support for Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160; Respectively Urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawaii State Legislature to Enact a Prohibition on Commercial Aquarium Collection.

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu County Council

Thank you for the opportunity to share my **strong support** for the above-referenced Resolutions, and for your consideration in joining the Maui, Kauai and Hawaii Island County Councils, who have already enacted similar Resolutions to completely prohibit the destructive aquarium pet trade.

Commercial aquarium collecting (AQ) has been illegal since the 2017 Hawaii Supreme Court decision that AQ requires environmental review. In 2021, the commercial aquarium pet trade submitted an EIS to the BLNR, which rightfully rejected it, for failing to meet basic requirements. The prior EIS dismissed all science that shows impacts of collection and the most serious environmental, ethical and cultural concerns expressed in prior comments.

For example, Dr Gail Grabowsky of Chaminade University, conducted surveys counting aquarium-collected species at 19 different areas across Oahu which included Hanauma Bay (protected area since 1967) and found that the abundance of the top 5 species collected by the aquarium trade were diminished by 90% outside of Hanauma Bay.

AQ EIS Dismisses Science that Proves Impacts

Compared to protected areas, the abundance of heavily collected species is reduced by ~90%.



Yellow tang



Moorish Idol



Raccoon Butterflyfish

Survey sites were coincidentally located in the same impacted moku listed on the previous slide: Ko'olaupoko, Kona, Wai'anae, Waialua

Abundances of Aquarium-collected Coral Reef Fishes in Protected and Open-access Areas of Oahu, Hawaii.
Gail Grabowsky, PhD. and Daniel Thornhill, PhD. (2020).

The impacts of the commercial aquarium pet trade are far too great given climate change and other conditions that threaten our important reefs. Thank you for the opportunity to share this information and we respectfully urge your support.

Inga Gibson

Director, Pono Advocacy

PonoAdvocacy@gmail.com



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Aug. 11, 2026

To: Chair Tommy Waters
Vice Chair Andria Tupola
and Members of the Honolulu City Council

Submitted By: Steph Kendrick, Vice President of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Support for Resolution 26-159
Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2026, 10 a.m., City Council Chamber

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, mahalo for considering our support of Resolution 26-159, which urges 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.

While the Hawaiian Humane Society promotes pet ownership, capturing wild animals and transporting them thousands of miles in conditions that are often fatal is not humane. More than 40 percent of wild caught fish bound for pet stores die before they arrive on the sales floor due to cruel commercial collection and transportation methods.

Our native reefs and the creatures who live there are under intense stress from climate change, degraded water quality and other human caused threats, nowhere more so than off of O'ahu. Commercial aquarium collection takes an outsized toll on this fragile ecosystem for the economic benefit of a very small number of harvesters. I urge the City Council to stand for our animals in the face of this threat.

Despite losses in both the court of law and the court of opinion, the State Board of Land and Natural Resources is pursuing plans to resume issuing permits to harvest aquatic life for the commercial aquarium trade for the first time since 2021.

We ask the Council to stand with animal welfare advocates and urge BLNR to instead prohibit this practice. Mahalo for your consideration.



August 11, 2026

Honolulu City Council
530 S. King Street, #202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Jonee Peters, Executive Director for Conservation Council for Hawai'i (CCH) with approximately 4,000 active members me. CCH is also the state affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation with 51 other affiliates with approximately 6 million members. CCH stands 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.

As recognized by your Zoning and Planning Committee, these resolutions are both critical and timely. Within a month, the BLNR may consider the final adoption of rules that would immediately reopen the waters of West Hawai'i Island to commercial aquarium collection for the first time in nearly a decade. These rules would also lay out the process for the same to occur throughout our 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, Kailua, and Maunaloa (Hawai'i Kai); 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.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Jonnetta Peters
Executive Director

**Telephone/Fax: 224.338-6511 | email: info@conservehi.org
web: www.conservehawaii.org | P.O. Box 2923, Honolulu, HI 96802**

President: Bret Nainoa Mossman | **Vice President:** Les Welsh | **Secretary:** Colleen Heyer
Treasurer: Mashuri Waite, PhD |

Directors: Erica Amundson, Puanani Anderson-Fung, Maka'ala Ka'aumoana, Steven Lee Montgomery, PhD,
Emily Sarasa |

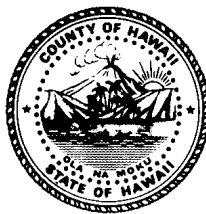
Executive Director: Jonnetta "Jonee" Peters **Operations and Events Manager:** Leah Kocher

National Wildlife Federation Region 12 Director: Rachel Sprague

National Wildlife Federation Pacific Region Associate Director: Emily Martin

Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu – Hawai'i's voice for wildlife | State Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

Holeka Goro Inaba, Ed.D.
Council Chair, District 8, N. Kona



Office: (808) 323-4280
Email: holeka.inaba@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

August 11, 2026

Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
and Members of the Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu

Subject: Testimony in Support of Resolution 26-159, Relating to Commercial Aquarium
Collection

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

I am writing in strong support of Resolution 26-159, urging the Board of Land and Natural Resources to direct the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, to adopt rules prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life from State marine waters for aquarium purposes.

As Chair of the Hawai'i County Council and the representative for North Kona, I have a particular interest in this issue because the proposed reopening of commercial aquarium collection would directly affect West Hawai'i. The Division of Aquatic Resources has proposed administrative rules that would allow commercial aquarium harvesting to resume in West Hawai'i after the practice has been prohibited statewide since 2021.

Our reef ecosystems already face significant pressures. Reef fish, particularly herbivorous species such as yellow tang and orangespine unicornfish, play an important role in controlling algae, supporting coral resilience, and sustaining healthy reef ecosystems and subsistence fisheries. Their value to Hawai'i extends far beyond their commercial sale for ornamental display.

Management of Hawai'i's marine resources should prioritize healthy reefs, traditional and customary practices, subsistence, and the ability of future generations to continue benefiting from these resources.

As noted in Resolution 26-159, the Hawai‘i First Circuit Environmental Court ruled in April 2026 that BLNR and DLNR have the legal authority to enact a complete statewide prohibition on commercial aquarium collection. I support the use of that authority to establish clear and consistent protection for Hawai‘i’s marine resources across all islands.

I respectfully urge the Honolulu City Council to adopt Resolution 26-159.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Holeka Goro Inaba', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Holeka Goro Inaba
Chair, Hawai‘i County Council

Honolulu City Council
Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
City Council Chamber

Resolution 26-159 & Resolution 26-160

Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

The Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council has previously taken action opposing the commercial aquarium collection trade and urging both the Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi.

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 Kāneʻohe 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 Hawaiʻi's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, and Resolution 26-160, urging the Hawaiʻi State Legislature to enact legislation prohibiting the commercial harvest of aquatic life from Hawaiʻi's marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, are consistent with the Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council's prior action.

Mahalo,



Elena L. Bryant
Legislative Chair
Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council

¹ See Resolution Supporting Legislative Action to End the Commercial Harvesting of Reef Wildlife for the Aquarium Pet Trade, Kāneʻohe 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.

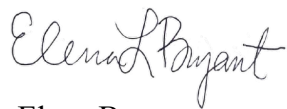
Therefore, we now request that DLNR take action to enact administrative rules to permanently prohibit aquarium collection—statewide—consistent with DLNR's constitutional mandates and its obligations under *Ka Pa'akai o ka 'Āina v. Land Use Commission*. Pursuant to Act 4 of the 1998 Legislative Session, 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



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

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

and

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.

August 12, 2026

10 a.m.

City Council Chambers

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

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 City Council to **ADOPT** Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Robert Aldrich, and I strongly urge support for Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.

As a retired California Fish and Wildlife Officer who specialized in marine enforcement, I have seen firsthand how essential nearshore fish populations are to the long-term health of littoral fisheries. These species are not just individual resources; they are part of a connected coastal ecosystem that supports biodiversity, recreational and cultural fishing traditions, and responsible stewardship for future generations.

Supporting these resolutions is a practical and necessary step toward protecting the nearshore environments that many communities rely on. Strong, science-informed management today will help ensure that these fisheries remain productive, resilient, and available to the public tomorrow.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you vote in favor of Resolutions 26-159 and 26-160.



Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea
Post Office Box 188
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

Board of Directors

*Denise Antolini
Keelan Barcina
Dr. Anne Chung
Dr. Jamison Gove*

Advisory Council

*Athline Clark
John Cutting
Olan Leimomi Fisher
Dr. Alan Friedlander
Dr. Debbie Gowensmith
Roberts "Bob" Leinau
Maxx E. Phillips, Esq.
Palakiko Yagodich*

Staff

*Jacqueline Leinau
Executive Director

Jenny Yagodich
Director of Educational
Programs & Makai Watch
Coordinator*

**Federal Nonprofit
Organization**
501(c)(3) FEIN 27-0855937
www.pupukeawaimea.org
info@pupukeawaimea.org

Honolulu City Council

530 South King Street, Suite # 100
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

August 11, 2026

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 26-159

Aloha Chair Waters and Councilmembers,

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is the grassroots, community non-profit that actively works to care for, educate about, and protect our fragile, near-shore marine ecosystems. Our mission is "working to replenish and sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community stewardship, education, and partnerships."

For over two decades, MPW has stewarded the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District, where collection has been prohibited since its designation. That sustained protection has given us a direct, ground-level view of what a reef without extraction pressure looks like over time.

MPW strongly supports Resolution 26-159. With the courts having confirmed BLNR's authority to enact a complete, statewide ban, the Board does not need to wait on the Legislature to act. DLNR holds a kuleana to manage marine resources for the public trust on behalf of all islands, and commercial collection for private display serves no cultural, subsistence, or ecological purpose. BLNR should use its confirmed authority to make the current pause permanent through rulemaking.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit written testimony **in support of Resolution 26-159, supporting the city council to urge BLNR to adopt rules directly.**

Jacqueline Leinau

Jacqueline Leinau
Executive Director

My name is Jason Helyer. I work as a Research Statistician in the fisheries program of the Division of Aquatic Resources, and I am a contributing author of Data Review and Management Brief for the West Hawaii Commercial Aquarium Fishery, the technical review prepared for the Board of Land and Natural Resources on the question this resolution addresses. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity. It is not an official statement from DAR, and my comments are limited to the assertions in the resolution.

Resolution 26-159 & 26-160 rests on several distinct kinds of claims: claims about resource condition and ecological impact, claims about animal welfare and handling, and claims grounded in cultural and ethical values. I take no position on the cultural and ethical objections to this fishery, and I do not believe scientific data can resolve them. My concern is narrower: that several of the resolution's factual premises are not supported by, and in some cases are contradicted by, the available monitoring data for a main region where the fishery operated, the management measures already in place, and the substance of DAR's proposal itself. I raise this less for the sake of this fishery than for the sake of the standard being applied to it. The West Hawaii aquarium fishery is the most intensively monitored nearshore fishery in the State. If more than twenty years of monitoring cannot inform a decision here, it is difficult to see what role monitoring data would play in decisions about fisheries where far less is known.

The sections below set out what the record shows. On the strength of that record, I oppose this resolution as drafted.

The claim that harvest is unsustainable

The management brief reviewed two independent, long-running fishery-independent survey datasets together with the management history of the fishery, and asked three questions: whether the proposed take would drive population-level decline, whether it would measurably degrade ecosystem health, and whether management measures could mitigate risk. The answers were no, no, and yes.

Estimated abundance for all eight proposed species was stable across the 2010–2019 survey period, with several species increasing significantly. Recruitment of the main species was stable or increasing against twenty-year means. Critically, both patterns held during years when reported aquarium harvest was high relative to the fishery's own history. That is not the signal a population under overfishing pressure produces.

The proposed catch limits point the same direction. DAR deliberately tested them against the most conservative population estimates available (the lowest annual mean in the survey series), and then the bottom of that estimate's confidence interval. Against those intentionally pessimistic denominators, proposed take ranged from 0.04 to 7.62 percent of the West Hawaii population, with every species but yellow tang falling below 5 percent. A closer analysis of yellow tang, restricted to the size class the fishery actually targets in areas actually open to it, found that between 69 and 95 percent of that size class escapes the fishery each year, with the adult breeding stock untouched. These are not figures that describe a fishery threatening population viability.

The claim that herbivore removal by the aquarium fishery impairs ecosystem health

Herbivorous reef fishes contribute meaningfully to coral reef health, and four of the eight proposed species are herbivores. The data, however, do not support the inference that aquarium collection at the proposed levels impairs that function.

WHAP tracked coral cover at fixed sites from 2003 through 2020, spanning the 2015 marine heatwave. Coral cover in areas open to aquarium collection tracked closely with Fish Replenishment Areas and long-term protected areas throughout, and change in cover before, during, and after the bleaching event showed no meaningful difference by management type. The single statistically significant difference detected ran opposite to the resolution's premise: long-term protected sites declined more than open sites.

The claim that the proposed species sustain subsistence fisheries

Twenty years of commercial reporting and creel survey data indicate that overlap is limited for most of the eight species and negligible for several, with kole the most commonly taken of the eight for food and yellow tang, Potter's angelfish, bird wrasse, and Thompson's surgeonfish rarely or never encountered in the non-commercial catch. Unreported catch in the commercial fishery is a known issue, and creel sample sizes are low (spearfishers, who take most of these species, are difficult to intercept). Both contribute to issues with estimates of take for these species. Still, the available evidence does not describe a fishery competing meaningfully with subsistence take for most of the species at issue.

The claim that the process lacked scientific evaluation and community dialogue

The resolution states that the current proposal has moved forward "without the depth of community dialogue, cultural consideration, or independent scientific evaluation that many believe is necessary." I would respectfully ask the Council to weigh that assertion against the documented record.

This fishery has been the subject of five legislatively mandated status reports. It is monitored by a fishery-specific survey program running more than twenty years, supplemented by independent NOAA PIFSC-ESD surveys and two additional DAR survey programs. It is the only fishery in the State for which participants must complete environmental review under the Hawaii Environmental Policy Act before entry, and the only one with a completed Environmental Impact Statement.

On community process: the Fish Replenishment Area network was developed by the West Hawaii Fisheries Council, a body of 24 voting members representing aquarium collectors, dive operators, commercial and recreational fishers, shoreline gatherers, and community representatives. The resulting public hearing remains the largest DAR has ever conducted, with at least 860 attendees and 93.5 percent of 876 testimonies in support.

One may reasonably conclude that this process should have gone further or reached a different result. But the characterization that it proceeded without depth of dialogue or scientific evaluation does not match the record.

How the resolution characterizes the DAR proposal

The resolution describes the proposal as allowing harvesters to remove various native species from the region with an annual permit. I would offer a correction for the record. The proposal reduces the list of collectable species from forty to eight, imposes species-specific annual catch limits where none previously existed, and applies to seven applicants who completed environmental review. Seven of the eight proposed limits fall below the fishery's recent pre-closure average catch. This is a substantially more restrictive framework than what preceded the closure, not a return to prior conditions.

Geographic and taxonomic scope

Resolution 26-159 & 26-160 urges a prohibition on the harvest of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes from all State marine waters. The evidentiary record I have described covers eight fish species in the West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area. The resolution reaches considerably further, both geographically and taxonomically. I raise this not as a technicality but because West Hawaii is where the science is most complete, and where that science indicates low risk. A statewide prohibition would apply most confidently in the one place where the evidence least supports it.

Existing management safeguards

Should the fishery resume, roughly 47.7 percent of West Hawaii waters in the 0–30 m depth range remain closed to aquarium collection, a degree of spatial protection with few parallels in any fishery. Slot limits protect both newly settled recruits and the larger breeding population of yellow tang. Annual monitoring continues. And DAR retains emergency rulemaking authority under HRS §91-3(b) and adaptive management authority under HRS §187A-5(b)(1), meaning that if monitoring detects unanticipated decline, the State can act without waiting for a full rulemaking cycle.

Uncertainty exists here, as it does in every nearshore fishery in the State, and I do not claim otherwise. What the record does not show is evidence that this fishery, at the proposed levels and under the proposed controls, presents a risk to these populations or to reef ecosystem health any more so than other nearshore fisheries.

Department of Land and Natural Resources
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
State of Hawai‘i
Post Office Box 621
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96809

Testimony of the Hawai‘i State Aha Moku Advisory Committee
To the Honolulu City Council

August 11, 2026

RE: 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

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.

Position: SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Hawai‘i State Aha Moku Advisory Committee (Aha Moku), we respectfully submit testimony in strong support of Resolution 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 Hawai‘i’s marine waters for commercial aquarium purposes, and 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.

The Aha Moku Advisory Committee was established pursuant to Act 288, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2012, to bring forward the voices and generational knowledge of Native Hawaiian practitioners, lineal descendants, and resource stewards in matters affecting Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural resources. Through the traditional moku and ahupua‘a systems, Aha Moku represents 147 moku accross Hawai‘i pae ‘āina and carries forward the ‘ike and kuleana of communities who have maintained relationships with these lands and waters for generations.

The Aha Moku has consistently testified before the BLNR and the Hawai‘i State Legislature in support of prohibiting commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i’s marine waters. Through the

collective voices of our moku representatives and generational practitioners throughout the pae ‘āina, the position has remained clear and unanimous: commercial aquarium collection must end.

For Native Hawaiian lawai‘a and cultural practitioners, reef fish and other marine species are part of an interconnected system of relationships between kānaka, ‘āina, kai, akua, and ‘aumākua. Traditional and customary practices, including fishing, gathering, mālama, and the transmission of ‘ike between generations, depend upon healthy and abundant marine ecosystems.

The continued extraction of aquatic life for commercial aquarium purposes directly affects these relationships by reducing the availability of culturally significant species and diminishing the ability of practitioners to maintain and pass on traditional practices. These impacts have not been adequately addressed in decisions regarding commercial aquarium collection.

Article XII, section 7 of the Hawai‘i Constitution requires the State to protect all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised by Native Hawaiians, including their rights to gather and access natural resources necessary for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes. The Hawai‘i Supreme Court has further recognized in *Ka Pa ‘akai O Ka ‘Āina v. Land Use Commission* that government agencies must identify cultural resources and Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, determine the extent to which proposed actions may affect or impair those resources and practices, and take feasible actions to reasonably protect them.

Despite these obligations, Native Hawaiian cultural impacts and the voices of generational practitioners have historically not been meaningfully incorporated into decisions regarding commercial aquarium collection. The Aha Moku and the 147 moku it represents have repeatedly raised these concerns before BLNR and the Legislature, yet commercial aquarium collection has continued to threaten the marine resources upon which traditional and customary practices depend.

The State of Hawai‘i and its agencies have a responsibility to protect the resources that sustain our communities and future generations. A statewide prohibition on commercial aquarium collection recognizes that Hawai‘i’s marine resources are part of a public trust and must be managed in a manner that honors both ecological sustainability and Native Hawaiian cultural rights.

For these reasons, the Hawai‘i State Aha Moku Advisory Committee respectfully urges the Honolulu City Council to **SUPPORT Resolution 26-159** to encourage BLNR and the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, to adopt rules prohibiting commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i’s marine waters, and to **SUPPORT Resolution 26-160** to encourage the Hawai‘i State Legislature to enact legislation that prohibits commercial aquarium collection in Hawai‘i’s marine waters.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully yours,

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August 12, 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 Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Councilmembers:

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 and 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 HAWAII'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