

October 22, 2025

Marie Aguilar
P.O. Box 1874
Kailua Kona Hawaii 96745

BLNR TESTIMONY
DAR
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu Hawaii

Re: Agenda for the Meeting of the Board of Land and Natural Resources on
October 24, 2025, Specific Testimony for Division of Aquatic Resources F2 -

Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of
Hawaii Administrative Rules ("HAR") relating to Aquarium Life Management
into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1 "Aquarium Fishery Management and on
Proposed Amendments to HAR Chapter 13-75: "Rules Regulating the Possession
and Use of Certain Fishing Gear" and 12-60.4. "West Hawai'i Regional Fishery
Management Area, Hawaii, for Clarity and Consistency with Proposed HAR
Chapter 13.77.1. The Proposed Rules would update and consolidate aquarium
life fishery management regulations by: 1(-6).

Testimony by Marie Aguilar OPPOSITION to Proposed Consolidation of
Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR)

Aloha Board of Land and Natural Resources

I am a long-time resident of Hawai'i Island and know first-hand the conditions
and impact of fish collection on my island. First, the seriousness
of the loss of our coral on the Hawai'i coasts is listed as severe and may not
recover anytime soon. The State of Hawai'i has a responsibility to protect
Hawai'i's natural resources. The tropical fish of Hawai'i are declining year
after year. and I have seen the decline from 1988 through 2021. Yellow tang
swam along the Kailua Pier, and their visual presence created the name
"Gold Coast" of the Big Island.

I am firmly opposed to Consulate HAR Chapter 13-77.1, which permits plans
that designate other islands as areas for fish collecting. The State of Hawai'i
cannot manage the Aquarium Management Program effectively with such
limited financial backing, given that the legislation has limited funds to work
with during a Federal shutdown, and an impending loss of Federal funds to
nonprofits and to the State of Hawai'i, which depletes our natural resources on
our ocean shores. There should be no plan to reopen our reefs for the aquarium

trade. And try to expand the Aquarium fish collecting STATE_WIDE. Please veto any plans to go with this Request for Approval today. This trade conflicts with local culture and Native Hawaiian values. Further, the US Department of the Interior protects endangered species. There are Hawaiian endangered species along the West Hawai'i shoreline, including the monk seal and numerous other small sea life species. If the DLNR permits aquarium fish collection, the United States Department of the Interior will take action against those responsible for failing to enforce the protection of endangered species. Beware of your responsibilities now. The communities of Hawai`i Island will make sure that the endangered species are protected.

I oppose this Plan to Proposed Amendments. This is wrong and It is against the State of Hawai`i's Constitution. This is not legal unless the State of Hawai`i Legislature approves its Plan to redraft the Rule HAR Chapter 13-75..

The effects of environmental conditions must be taken into consideration to ensure the future of our tropical fish population. The recently revised draft of the Environmental Impact Statement from the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council is flawed. First, there is the impact of a collection of tropical fish on the population. The reef fish population is declining due to profound ocean warming, which affects coral life. The damage to our coral from several summers of warm water is severe, and it needs to be replenished or recovered, if possible. Our coral reefs live symbiotically with tropical fish to flourish and be nurtured.

The Supreme Court held in 2017 that collection without environmental review violates the Act. DLNR later ordered to cease issuing further aquarium collection permits until the ecological effects of aquarium collection are fully and publicly vetted through the HEPA process. Previously, the heaviest impact on our fish collection was the lack of holding permit holders, who were limited in their ability to take aquarium fish. Now, the new revised EIS states that eight species are collected per month. The eight species being requested for collection are scarce. The collection of 200,000 yellow tangs cannot be allowed through seven permittees, and it does not account for those who died in transport. If each of these operators owns two boats and has staff using that license, they could collect in South Kau and North Kohala daily. The fish population could not be restored monthly while being collected daily, weekends included. There is no expiration on these permits, and they can be renewed annually.

Today, the same permit holders want to be able to take aquarium fish with limits; this is not acceptable for our ecosystem. State of Hawai`i, DLNR lacks the staff to monitor these permits and accurately account for daily and monthly

limits. This most definitely will not support what the Supreme Court ruled. No management of the fish collection limits is demonstrated in this submitted EIS. Self-monitoring is not acceptable. There is no enforcement; breaking the rules is a misdemeanor, but who will count their catch? Absolutely no one.

The most startling outcome of this Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement, written by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, is that this Council has a conflict of interest in presenting a proposal for the whole benefit of the retailing of our reef fish. They support aquarium fish pet stores throughout the mainland. Their impact statement is false; their statements do not provide the actual outcomes of the fish population from fish collecting. They have deleted facts. The collection of Hawai'i's natural resources cannot be open for sale to the mainland aquarium trade. The going prices for these fish start at \$70.00 for a yellow tang. What gains are Hawai'i's residents gaining from allowing the collection of their natural resources? No revenue can replace our ocean ecology. Do not accept this bargain hunter's profitable business for mainland commerce. The PIJAC study does not support factual counts of tropical fish in WHRFD.

Their Revised EIS does not mention who the seven (7) permit holders are and who they represent. Are these permit holders actual residents of Hawai'i? Can we really trust permittees who have access to our reef fish for 365 days? There are weekends when DLNR would have issues with patrolling the west coast of Hawai'i Island. Does DLNR require bonds for each permit holder? Our fish population will not recover. Recently, the County of Hawai'i presented a Sustainability Summit. The Summit successfully demonstrated to community leaders what sustainability means within our resource scope. Among our resources, the County of Hawai'i presented the following areas: Waste Management, Sustainable Tourism, Technology, Preserving the Environment, Energy, Health Care, Education, Affordable Housing, Economy, Transportation, Food Security, and Aloha + Challenge.

Greg Asner, a scientist at the Global Institute of Sustainability Airborne Observatory (University of Arizona State), understands conservationism through his scientific approach to mapping the coral reefs of the Hawaiian Islands. Global Airborne Observatory technology will be used to map coral health through Asner Labs, beginning in mid-2019. This technology, along with its mapping, will help save our coral reefs for the future. The Hawaiian Islands are a globally important case in point. In less than fifty years, Hawai'i's unique and highly endemic coral reefs have undergone alarming losses in coral extent and health and in fish populations. The Hawaiian Islands are now in highly variable reef conditions driven by a complex mosaic of coastal development, overfishing,

and ocean warming. In response to these alarming losses, Hawai'i's Former Governor, David Ige, announced a new effort in 2016 to manage and conserve at least 30% of Hawai'i's reefs by 2030, known as the Marine 30x30 Initiative. Currently, Hawai'i's reefs remain unmanaged. He is based here in Hawai'i. Showed maps of the depletion of the tropical fish using his satellite imagery, showing ten years of depleted sea life on the west coast of the Island of Hawai'i. Those images do not lie; they show the loss of our natural resources - tropical fish and the ocean coral reefs. Sustainability does not include fish collection. The State of Hawai'i, through the direction of Governor David Ige, has granted the Marine 30x30 Initiative in 2016, which is responsible for DLNR, to follow the protocol of this critical mapping and study for our coral reefs and its tropical fish population. Hawai'i is sustaining its resources and must continue to protect its marine life.

Each member of our County government recognizes the importance of Sustainability in every area of government. The State of Hawai'i and the County of Hawai'i must protect our island and ocean. Please reject this EIS for the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council. Their trade is not needed. For that purpose, tropical fish are now being raised at the State of Hawai'i -Natural Energy Labs. Their breeding system is working, so please leave our natural resources alone. It is your responsibility.

I oppose any fish collections on the Island of Hawai'i, specifically the West Hawai'i Regional Fish Management (west coast), especially as the Revised EIS Draft indicates from Ka'u to Kohala. Our island depends on economically sustainable tourism where tour operators bring visitors to snorkel, dive, and swim, and view our pristine waters. We cannot allow seven permit holders to exploit our natural resources for their economic gain. Third-world countries indeed protect the collection of their reef fish, and Hawai'i must not allow the collection of any tropical fish on their ocean shores.

The Board of Land and Natural Resources voted anonymously to disallow the previous Draft EIS, and if they were to vote again, they would likely vote the same. Not much has changed; illegal collectors have been caught red-handed in collecting our tropical fish and tried in the courts. Penalties were severe in some cases; were they ever collected and paid to the State of Hawai'i? Fish collector applicants can find an alternative source of economic support without depleting our resources, which our Governor currently protects. Hawai'i residents, as well as sea life tour boat owners and operators, depend on these natural resources. They protect our environment and are invested in our community. Most of our businesses on Hawai'i Island flourish with tourism.

Our economy is semi-dependent on eco-tourism, sustainability tourism, and Agri-tourism. We have learned a hard lesson with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our islands flourish with visitors who support our state. These visitors support our economy, enjoy our environmental friendliness, and expect us to care for our resources. Hawai'i's economy depends on tourism. Aloha and challenge remain a part of our Hawaiian lifestyle.

Thank you for reading my comments and recording the receipt of this letter.

Mahalo

Respectfully,


Marie Aguilar

Additionally, presenting the Native Hawaiian culture in fishing, fish netting, and its marine tools was educational to the reader. However, there is no similar correlation to the Revised EIS for those collecting tropical fish. Native Hawaiians are fishing and netting fish for human consumption to support their families. They are living sustainably and providing for their families.

Mahalo



Ka Moku'aina 'O Hawai'i Aha Moku O Pae'Aina

State of Hawai'i Aha Moku

P. O. Box 621

Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

Hawaii State Aha Moku Testimony
To the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Land Board)

Friday, October 24, 2025

Agenda Item F-2: Request for Approval to hold public hearings on Draft Administrative Rules updating and consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a New Chapter, Hawaii Administrative Rules (“HAR”) Chapter 13-77.1, “Aquarium Fishery Management” and Amending HAR Chapters 13-75, “Rules Regulating the Possession and Use of Certain Fishing Gear”, and 13-60.4, “West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area, Hawai’i, for clarity and consistency.

Aloha Chairperson Chang and Honorable Members of the Land Board.

The Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku) advises the Land Board to oppose Agenda Item F-2.

Attached to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the Aha Moku is comprised of forty-six (46) moku, and six-hundred and six (606) traditional natural and cultural resource districts within the eight main Hawaiian Islands. Working with the native Hawaiian communities and Public Trust, generational knowledge of these resources have been handed down generation to generation for centuries. The value of this knowledge shared with all stakeholders and protectors of Hawaii’s environment is the continued sustainability of Hawaii’s unique ecosystem which differs island to island.

For decades now, native Hawaiian *lawaiia* (fishermen and gatherers) of all main Hawaiian Islands have reported critical declines of endemic marine resources due to the aggressive collecting of fish and marine species on coastal and offshore areas. One of the hardest hit areas is West Hawaii on Moku O Keawe (Hawaii Island). In 2018 the West Hawaii aquarium collecting ban resulted in the largest yellow tang abundance ever documented on those reefs. However, that is only one example of the success of an aquarium collecting ban on one island.

The fear now, if this statewide ban is lifted, and the DAR request is approved, that the traditional subsistence species on which native Hawaiian traditional practices depend on all islands – will be wiped out sooner than later. Where all eight islands are in danger, Niihau is continuously a victim illegal aquarium collecting. There is no enforcement available to Niihau.

Because commercial aquarium collecting is such a grave concern to *lawaiia* within the entire Pae’Aina, the Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) polled their individual moku of each of their islands to see if generational ‘ohana could now accept the new rules that DAR is proposing. The responses were unified in their opposition! Currently, *lawaiia* continue to contend with climate change within their ahupua’a. The unusual ocean heat waves are already impacting the normal life cycles of marine species. However, in anticipation of and preparation for

the difference in ocean temperature, *konohiki* (resource managers) are taking steps in adjusting *kapu* and resting of the gathering of different marine species. While this works ahupua'a to ahupua'a, cautionary protection will be for nothing if the current aquarium ban is lifted and DAR's request is approved.

Our understanding is that the bulk of aquarium collection is exported directly to the mainland or to other foreign countries as "pet" or for ornamental purposes. So the indigenous host culture asks, "why will our traditional and cultural practices, protected by the Hawaii State Constitution, be put into a dangerous decline on all main Hawaiian Islands so that people from other places can benefit through their ornamental trade?" It is not only the native Hawaiians who will suffer if the current ban is lifted, but all Hawaii stakeholders in the protection of our ecosystems.

Further, in the DAR submittal and its request for approval to hold public hearings on new Draft Administrative Rules, it does not take into consideration that native Hawaiian traditional *lawaiia* practices would be adversely impacted, and possibly in many ahupua'a coastal areas actually destroyed. These practices are protected by the Hawaii State Constitution!

Finally, should this DAR recommendation be approved by the Land Board, as stated in the staff submittal, then the AMAC ask that the Kapa'akai Analysis be conducted for every commercial permit for aquarium collection be done. Currently, DAR states that there is no commercial aquarium harvest occurring and that permits are required. However, according to AMAC Po'o, and *lawaiia* that we have spoken to, aquarium harvest is illegally happening on all islands. There is no enforcement available that would prevent this.

We believe that the permitting authority **MUST** stay with the Land Board to ensure full transparency and accountability. Remember DLNR's own Mission Statement – **“Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors.”**

Hawaii is unique in that our endemic marine species can be found nowhere else in the world. We are unique in that all of us in Hawaii depend on our marine resources as a sustainable resource. We urge and advise the Land Board to deny DAR's request for approval to hold public hearings of new Draft Administrative Rules which will consolidate Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a new Chapter. We depend on the Land Board to continue to protect our marine resources from exploitation from those who would make money from Hawaii. Please remember that they "take" but do not give back.

Mahalo nui loa, for the opportunity to support the *lawaiia* request to continue to ban commercial aquarium harvesting within the Pae'Aina of Hawai'i Nei. Please know that Aha Moku is not advocating a position of opposition. However, through our AMAC Island Po'o, we bring the voices of the *lawai'a* of the islands forward to protect our finite ecosystems, and to protect our cultural practices.

Respectfully and humbly yours,

Rocky Kaluhiwa, State Chair
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
Po'o, Moku O Kakuhihewa
808-286-7955
rockykaluhiwa1122@gmail.com

Charles Young, Po'o
Moku O Keawe (Hawai'i)
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
808-987-9052
Youngc042@hawaii.rr.com

Manuel Kuloloio, Po'o
Moku O Kanaloa (Kaho'olawe)
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
808-479-2377
Manuel.Kuloloio@baesystems.com

Winifred Basques, Po'o
Nana'i Kaula (Lana'i)
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
808-215-1101
winnie@aloha.net

Keith Robinson, Po'o
Bruce Robinson, Konohiki
Ka Aina O Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau)
ainahau@hawaiian.net

Kawaikapuokalani Hewett, Loea and Kahu
Hawaii State Aha Moku
808-382-6043
kahalelehua@outlook.com

Kalei Luuwai, Po'o
Moku O Pi'ilani (Maui)
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
808-870-9040
rluwai@gmail.com

Walter Rawlins, Po'o
Moloka'i Pule O'o
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
808-336-1012
walterkrawlins45@gmail.com

Llewellyn Kaohelaulii, Po'o
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)
Hawaii State Aha Moku
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
808-742-9575
terriehayes@gmail.com

Leimana DaMate, Luna Alaka'i/Executive Director
Hawaii State Aha Moku
808-640-1214
Leimana.k.damate@hawaii.gov

Hawaii State Aha Moku 2025

PAE’AINA – HAWAII NEI

MOKUPUNI – MOKU – AHUPUA’A

Compiled by Kupuna of the eight (8) main Hawaiian Islands using generational knowledge.

MOKUPUNI	MOKU	AHUPUA’A
Moku O Keawe (Hawaii)	Kohala	<i>Wainanalii, Waikoloa, Puako, Ouli, Kawaihae, Waika, Kahua, Kaalaala, Kipi, Kaiholena, Lamaloloa, Lapakahi, Mahukona, Awalua, Hihii, Honoipu, Opolu, Kokoiki, Puuipa, Kealahewa, Opihipau, Kahei, Hawi, Kapua, Pahoa, Kapaau, Laaumama, Honopueo, Iole, Halelua, Halaula, Halawa, Aamakao, Makapala, Niulii, Pololu, Honokane Nui, Honokane Iki, and Awini. (41)</i>
	Hamakua	<i>Manowaialee, Kealakaha, Kaula, Kaa, Kukalau, Kaholalele, Paauilo, Pohakuhalku, Opihilala, Kaumoali, Kaapahu, Papalele, Keahau, Kalopa, Kahawailili, Paauhau, Papuaa, Nienie, Ahualoa, Honokaia, Kapoaula, Keahakea, Kapulena, Waikoloa, Waikoekoe, Kukuihaele, Waipio, Muliwai,</i>
		<i>Wiamanu, Laupahoehoe, Naokooko, Apua, Ohiahuea, Kolealii, Honopue, and Honokea (37)</i>
	Hilo	<i>Waiakea, Pueo, Kalalau, Wainaku, Honolii, Paukaa, Papaikou, Alakahi, Makahanaloa, Honomu, Kaiwiki, Hakalau, Mae’e, Umauma, Honohina, Waikamalo, Maulua, Puohai, Papa’aloo, Laupahoehoe, Humuula, and Ookala. (22)</i>
	Puna	<i>Apua, Kealakomo, Panau, Laeapuki, Kamoamo, Poupou, Kii, Kalapana, Kaimu, Keokea, Kehena, Opihikao, Kauaea, Kaukulau, Keahialaka, Pohoiki, Puala’a, Kapoho, Kula, Puua, Kahuwai, Nanawale, Waikahekahe, Keonepoke, Mahuu, Waikhekhe, Keaau (27)</i>
	Ka’u	<i>Keawaiki, Pohue, Kahuku, Kapininui, Pakiniiki, Kalilikii, Kalae, Kawela, Kiolakaa, Waiohinu, Kamilo, Honuapo, Kaalaiki, Hiilea, Ninole, Wailau, Punalu’u, Makaha KopuMoaula, Paauau, Kauhuula, Kaalaala, Kapapala, Kaaha, and Keauhou (25)</i>

	Kona	<i>Puuanahulu, Puuwaawaa, Kiholo, Kaupulehu, Kukio, Awakee, Laemano, Kalupulehu, Koelehuluhulu, Kau, Kaiaoa, Ooma, Kaloko, Honokohauiki, Puapuaa, Holualoa, Kaumalumalu, Kahaluu, Keauhou, Honuaino, Kaumo’o, Kealakekua, Keei, Honaunau, Keokea, Kealia, Kalahiki, Hookena, Waiea, Honokua, Kaohe, Maunaoni Makuu, Kolo, Olelomuana, Opihihale, Kaapuna, Kipahoehoe, Alike, Papa, Ho’opuloa, Milolii, Honomalino, Okoe, Kapua, and Kaulanamauna.</i> (45)
Moku O Piilani (Maui)	Hamakuapoko	<i>Paihihi, Waiawa, Honohina, Waiopua, and Poniau.</i> (5)
	Hamakualoa	<i>Papaaea, Hanawana, Hanehoi, Huelo, Waipio, Mokupapa, Honokaia, Hoolawa, Honopou, Kealiinui, Kealiiki, Peahi, Opana, Ulumalu, Kapuakulua, Kuiaha, Pauwela, and Haiku.</i> (18)

	Koolau	<i>Ulaino, Keaa, Mokupipi, Honoluluunui, Hopenui, Puuhaehae, Kapaula, Puakea, Kaliae, Wailua, Pauwalu, Keanae, Honomanu, Keopuka, Loiloa, Kolea, Mooloa, and Makaiwa.</i> (18)
	Hana	<i>Kualuu, Koali, Muolea, Puuiki, Mokae, Hamoa, Haneoo, Oloewa, Wanalua, Palmo, Niumalu, Kawaipapa, Wakiu, Kaeleku, and Honomaele.</i> (15)
	Kipahulu	<i>Koalii, Wailua, Puuhaoa, Papauluana, Kaumakani, Alae, Wailamoaa, Kikoo, Maulili, Poponui, Kapuakini, Kukuula, Kaapahu, Kukuilaiki, Popolua</i> (15)
	Kaupo	<i>Kukoa, Pahihii, Nuuu, Kakou, Kaumahalua, Kaupo, Manawainui, Niumalu, Kahuai, Maalo, Mikiiki, and Kealepa.</i> (12)
	Kahikinui	<i>Lualaihia, Alena, Kipapa, Na Kaohu, Na Kaaha, Mahamenui, and Manawainui.</i> (7)
	Honuaula Note: Also connected to Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	<i>Paeahu, Palauea, Maluaka, Mooloa, Moomuku, Kanehena, Kualapa, Kahili, Papaka, Kaloi, Kanaio, and Aualu.</i> (12)
	Kula	<i>Pulehunui, Kalepolepu, Waiohuli, Keokea, and Kamaole.</i> (5)
	Kealaloloa	<i>Oluwalu, Ukumehame, Papaiaua, Kumaalaea, and Pokahea.</i> (5)

	Lahaina	<i>Hanakaao, Wahikuli, Molalii, Makila, Waiamahole, Paho, Polanui, Launiupoko, Koonepolaielaia, and Awahia. (10)</i>
	Kaanapali	<i>Honokohau, Honolulu, Honokahua, Napili, Honokeane, Alaeloa, Mailepai, Kahana, Mahinahina, Honokawai, and Makaiwa. (11)</i>
	Wailuku	<i>Waikapu, Iao, Waiehu, Ahikuli, Waihee, Makaliula, Wailena, Kahakuloa, and Nakalele. (9)</i>
Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	Kona	<i>Lae O Kaka, Kamohio, Kaneloa, Wai Kahulu, and Kealaikahiki. (5)</i>
	Koolau	<i>Honokoa, Kii, Ahupa, Kaukamoku, Kuheia, Kaulana, Papaka, Lua O Kealialuna, Hakioawa, Owawahie, and Konapou. (11)</i>
	Honuaua* Note: Located on Piilani (Maui)	<i>Paeahu, Palauea, Maluaka, Mooloa, Moomuku, Kanehena, Kualapa, Kahili, Papaka, Kaloi, Kanaio, and Aualu. (12) *</i>
	Molokini	<i>No ahupuaa</i>
Nana'I Kaula (Lana'i)	Kona	<i>Ka'a, Kamoku, Kalulu, Kaunolu, Palawai and Kamao. (6)</i>
	Koolau	<i>Kaohai, Paawili, Maunalei, Mahana, and Paomai. (5)</i>
Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i)	Kaluakoi	<i>Punakou, Makaolehua, Kuunala, and Paohaku. (4)</i>
	Koolau	<i>Kalaupapa, Kepuhi, Moomomi, Keapukukaloa, Halawa, Puaahaunui, Hakaano, Papala, Wailua, Pelekunu, and Waikolu. (11)</i>
	Kawela	<i>Kaunakakai, Kapaakea, Kamiloloa, Makakupaia, Kawela, Makolelau, Kapuaokoolau, Kamalo,</i>
		<i>Wawaia, Puahala, Kaamola, Kawanui, Ohia, Ualapue, Kaluaaha, Mapulehu, Puko'o, Kupeke, Ahaino, Homomuni, Kawaikapu, Kainalu, Puinuohua, Waialua, Moanui, Kumini, Honouliwai, Honoulimalo'o, Lepehu, Pohakupili, and Moaka'e. (31)</i>
	Palaau	<i>Iloli, Hoolehua, Naiwa, Kahanui, and Kalamaula. (5)</i>
Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu)	Kona	<i>Moanalua, Kahauiki, Kalihi, Kapalama, Honolulu, Waikiki, Waialae, Wailupe, Niu, and Kuliouou. (10)</i>
	Ewa	<i>Honouliuli (Puuloa and Kapolei), Hoaeae, Waikele, Waiawa, Waipio, Waimanao, Manana, Waiau, Waimalu, Kaluaao, Aiea, Halawa (12)</i>
	Waianae	<i>Nanakuli, Lualualei, Waianae, Makaha, Keaau, Hikilolo, Makua, Kahanahaiki, and Keawaula. (9)</i>
	Waialua	<i>Kapaeloa, Punanue, Kuikuiloloa, Lauhulu, Kawaiiloa, Paalaa, Kamananui, Mokuleia, Aukuu, Kihahi, Kawaihapai, Kealia, and Kaena. (13)</i>
	Koolauloa	<i>Waimea, Pupukeya, Paumalu, Kaunala, Wailelea, Pahipahialua, Opana, Kawela, Hanaka'oe, Oio, Ulupehupehu, Punaluu, Kahuku, Keana, Malaekahana, Laiewai, Laiemaloo, Kaipapau, Hauula, Makao, Kapeke, Papaakoko, Haieaha, Kaiaha, Puheemiki, Waioho, Punaluu, Kahana, Makaua, Kaawa (30)</i>

	Koolaupoko	<i>Maunaloa, Koko, Waimanalo, Kailua, Mokapu, Kaneohe, Heeia, Kahaluu, Waihee, Kaalea, Waihole, Waikane, Kakipuu, and Kualoa. (14)</i>
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)	Koloa	<i>Mahaulepu, Paa, Weliweli, Koloa, Aepo, Lawai, Kaiaheo, Wahiawa (8)</i>
	Makaweli	<i>Hanapepe, Kupua, Makaweli (3)</i>
	Waimea	<i>Waimea, Kapena, and Kekaha. (3)</i> <i>Waiawa, Opelu, Kaawaloa, Nonomahiki, Kahelunui, and Kolo. (6)</i>
	Napali	<i>Kauwila, Haeleele, Hikimoe, Kaaweiki, Kauhao, Makaha, Milolii, Nualolo, Wawapuhi, Honopu, Kalalau, Pohakuau, Hanakoa, Hanakapiai (14)</i>
	Halelea	<i>Kalihiwai, Kalihikai, Pupoa, Waipa, Hanalei, Waikoko, Lumahai, Wainiha, Haena, and Limahuli (10)</i>
	Koolau	<i>Anahola, Aliomanu, Papaa, Moloaa, Kaakaaniu, Lepeuli, Waipake, Pilaa, Waiakalua, Kahili, Kilauea, and Namahana (12)</i>
	Puna Akau	<i>Kamalomalo, Kealia, Kapa'a, Waipouli, Olohena, and Wailua (6)</i>
	Puna Hema	<i>Kipukai, Kipu, Haiku, Niimalu, Nawiliwili, Kalapaki, Hanamaulu (7)</i>
Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau)	Kona	<i>Kaikane, Mauuloa, Nonopapa, Halo, Pauahula, Pu'uwai, Kaumuhonu, Keanauhi, Pohueloa, Nianiau, and Lehua. (11)</i>
	Koolau	<i>Koolaukani, Apu, and Oki'i. (3)</i>
	Puna	<i>Koahi, Haialii, Honuaula, Kalaoa, Nomilu, and Pueo. (6)</i>

SUMMARY

ISLAND	MOKU	AHUPUA'A
Moku O Keawe (Hawaii)	6	197
Moku O Piilani (Maui)	13	142
Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	4	28
Nana'I Kaula (Lana'i)	2	11
Moloka'i Pule O'o	4	51
Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu)	6	88
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)	8	69
Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau)	3	20
Islands – 8	46	606

*The Honuaula Moku is listed on Piilani. But because it is directly connected to Kanaloa, it is listed there as a moku as well. It is the only Moku that is connected to two separate islands.

Note: No one living on the following moku

ISLAND	MOKU	AHUPUA'A
Moku O Kanaloa (Kahoolawe)	Kona	5
	Koolau	11
	Molokini	0
Manokalanipo (Kaua'i)	Napali	14
Islands – 2	4	30

Actual Working Moku (Less the Moku & Ahupua'a where no one lives in the district, and less the ahupua'a of Honuauia which is listed twice – once under Piilani and once under Kanaloa)

42

56

From: [Hoku Akana](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2: send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:03:50 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

My name is Michele Hōkū Akana, and I submit this testimony in **strong opposition** to the Department of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) draft rule package reopening Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.

This proposal is a **profound betrayal of public trust**. What began as a *community-led petition* to ban commercial aquarium collecting statewide—unanimously approved by this Board—has been turned on its head. Instead of protecting reef life, DAR's draft rules hand the trade nearly everything it asked for, allowing the capture of hundreds of thousands of reef fish every year.

Chair Chang's directive was clear: take *full consideration* of the petition to ban, and if not zero, create "something short of zero." Instead, DAR ignored those instructions, dismissed community-proposed solutions, and worked directly with the very industry it was tasked to regulate. What was meant to safeguard Hawai'i's reefs has been rewritten to exploit them for profit.

A RETURN TO SECRECY AND EXCLUSION

DAR now seeks to remove BLNR oversight entirely, shifting aquarium permitting behind closed doors—no public notice, no transparency, no accountability.

This repeats DAR's failed 2024 attempt to bypass BLNR, which was withdrawn after widespread outrage and promises to maintain public oversight. Fourteen months later, that promise is broken. The timing is not accidental—it comes right after BLNR affirmed its authority to deny aquarium collection permits. DAR's response? Strip that authority away.

This isn't management—it's manipulation. It undermines democracy, public participation, and the very idea of stewardship.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Institutional Betrayal

The rule no longer reflects community intent or conservation ethics. It's a permitting framework for large-scale commercial extraction—nothing more.

Obscene Greed

Proposed annual catch limits are *400% higher* than what collectors reported taking over the past 20 years. That's not sustainable—it's opportunistic.

Ecological Collapse

DAR refuses to set local or species-specific limits, leaving every reef across Hawai‘i open to depletion. We’ve already seen the damage—devastated reefs in leeward O‘ahu and West Hawai‘i.

Fiscal Irresponsibility

Estimated permit revenue: *\$700 per year*.

Estimated management costs (excluding enforcement): *\$300,000–\$500,000*. That’s a public giveaway to private industry, not resource management.

Scientific Contradiction

Marine scientists agree: reef fish populations must *increase* to help reefs survive climate change. Removing herbivorous species—the reef’s natural cleaners—undermines ecosystem resilience and biodiversity.

Overwhelming Public Opposition

A recent poll found *84%* of O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island residents support permanently ending aquarium collection. Only *10%* support reopening. The public has spoken.

THE ‘AHUPUA‘A SYSTEM: A MODEL OF BALANCE

An *‘ahupua‘a* system is guided by a simple truth: every action has a consequence, and every choice must consider its impact across the entire ecosystem—from the mountain to the sea.

This traditional model of governance didn’t separate the land from the ocean, or the human need from the earth’s capacity to give. It demanded restraint, reciprocity, and respect. In an *‘ahupua‘a*, no one took more than was needed because doing so caused harm to other parts of the system—harm to water, to limu, to fish, to families.

By contrast, DAR’s proposed rule centers greed over balance. It prioritizes commercial gain over ecological integrity, ignoring the interconnected nature of our environment. Healthy reef systems protect our shorelines from erosion, feed our fisheries, and sustain our cultural practices. They anchor the health of our **limu**, our fisheries, and our communities.

When native reef fish are stripped away, invasive species take over—fish that have no predators, cannot feed our people, and displace native species critical to our food sovereignty. Reef degradation leads to shoreline collapse, as coral systems no longer buffer the coast against storms and rising seas. For island communities already losing land to erosion, this is not abstract—it is existential.

An *‘ahupua‘a* approach would never permit such harm. It demands that policy serve the collective good, not individual or corporate greed. It insists that our choices honor the full circle of life within the system, not just the part that yields profit.

THE CORE ISSUE: TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This rule is not just a technical misstep—it’s a moral one. It disregards public process, silences community voices, and betrays the foundational principle of stewardship that defines Hawai‘i’s identity.

When agencies entrusted with protecting our resources instead enable their depletion, they fail both their mission and their mandate. When leaders break their word to the people, they erode the very foundation of governance.

CONCLUSION

DAR's proposal represents a **step backward**—scientifically unsound, fiscally reckless, and ethically hollow. It ignores the will of the people, undermines public trust, and threatens the living systems that sustain our 'āina and our culture.

Our reefs are not commodities—they are part of the living body of these islands. To sell them off for short-term gain is to trade our future for someone else's profit.

BLNR must reject this rule in full. Restore transparency. Uphold your unanimous decision. Reaffirm the principle that Hawai'i's natural resources belong to the people—not to those who exploit them.

Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono.

Let us act in that truth—not in the shadow of greed, but in the light of responsibility.

Me ka Pio'ole,

M. Hōkū Akana

Waimānalo, O'ahu Resident, Community Member, and Stake-Holder/Constituent

808-330-3147

From: [Hiram Akima](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:47:29 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Hiram Akima. I come from a long line of fisherman and I love the ocean. I am a 5th grader at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa

Hiram Akima
kanu o ka Aina charter school

From: [Iris Alfons](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:39:11 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Iris Alsfon. I am a 5th Grader at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School in Waimea, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,

Iris Alfons
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Loke Aloua](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24, 2025 BLNR Meeting; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:00:31 PM

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony for agenda item F.2 regarding DAR aquarium fishery permitting rules. My name is Loke Aloua I am a kia'i loko at Kaloko Fishpond in Kona and a member of Hui Kaloko-Honokohau. I am writing as a kia'i loko for this fishpond and as a lineal descendant of Kona on Hawai'i Island.

I am in opposition to opening the fisheries for aquarium fishing permits and collection. The state has an obligation and legal duty to protect our fisheries as it is a public trust resource. Potentials to open the fisheries to aquarium collection neglects the ecological balance, health and wellbeing, and needs of our delicate fisheries. Today, the state fails at enforcing the spotty regulations that do exist and then the idea of opening the fisheries for aquarium collection when the government is incapable of actually enforcing what does exist really is where you folks should be starting. Time and time again fishers are exiting the water taking species out of season, smaller than the required catch size, in excess and where is the enforcement? Absent. Night time mooring on the moors offshore, where is the enforcement? Absent. The amount of shoreline you folks have to care for exceeds what you are actually capable of doing. This is not an argument for more money for enforcement and funds for increasing state operations but a point that you cannot maintain what you are responsible for and need to put Hawaiians back on the land. Let Hawaiians live on the land again and take care of their places. Oversee and give them the legal arm to enforce for the health of their places. No need money, need Hawaiians. Hawaiians need land. Hawaiians need homes. Hawai'i needs Hawaiians. The idea of having all these shorelines unoccupied by Hawaiians of the place when fishing villages are part of who we are as Hawaiians.

Beyond enforcement where is the pilina to place for these fishers? Is pilina a requirement in your folks fishing regulations? How about reciprocity and giving back to a place? Does the state have these regulations in existence? How about the tourists who come out fishing on their vacations and fish from our waters? Does the state require permitting for out of state fishers? There are also species whose catch size, take seasons, and amount either need revisions or actual listing in the current fishing regulations. There are issues with current fishing regulations that need revisions to help protect our fisheries and ensure life for future generations. Can you folks actually look into this instead of opening fisheries to aquarium collection? How about you folks go survey each ahupua'a and talk to the kupa of the place and ask them what the fisheries need and what would be helpful? Make goals that the community made for you and do what they actually ask.

Time and time again the state extracts the most precious parts of our Hawai'i for capital gain. Decisions guided by money and profits are taking away life from our islands. Communities have spoken across the islands and even here in our own district in Kona asking for more restrictive fishing regulations that would be favorable toward cultural and subsistence fishing since early statehood. Decades later the ask remains the same center cultural and subsistence fishing.

Ke aloha 'āina,
Loke Aloua

--

Cocoa cracka butta morning, hāloa till high noon, dry fish poi will meet you.

From: [Andrea Anixt](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:36:56 PM

Aloha ,

I support a continued ban on reef fish collection being a commercial industry in Hawai'i. The reasons for the ban have not changed. The crisis worldwide for reefs is well known. Please do the right thing to keep us on the side of survival of the species here now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrea Anixt
P.O.Box 646
Ka'a'awa, Hawai'i
96730

From: [Harvey Arkin](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:14:34 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Harvey Arkin
Manoa

From: [Cara Artman](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 5:18:57 PM

Hello,

Hawai'i's splendor is the reason people visit and move there. There should be no reef wildlife trafficking for the aquarium trade. I want Hawai'i's reefs intact, I want coral cover and biodiversity, not the shambles rendered on aquarium decimation!

Cara

From: [Ryan Asa](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Agenda Item F.2 – Protect Hawai‘i’s Reefs
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:51:23 PM

Dear Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing to respectfully urge the Board to reject the Division of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) proposed rule change under Agenda Item F.2 for the October 24, 2025, meeting. This proposal would shift authority over commercial aquarium collection permits from BLNR to DAR, effectively reopening West Hawai‘i’s reefs to potentially harmful extraction levels that undermine the stringent protections established after the 2023 Supreme Court ruling.

As someone who has lived and worked on Maui, where thriving reefs support our dive tourism and cultural practices, I am deeply concerned that this change would erode public trust in DLNR's commitment to sustainable management. The 2023 BLNR directives emphasized keeping collection "short of zero" to safeguard fish populations, yet the proposed rules allow take limits that DAR's own reports suggest could lead to long-term declines, even if mitigated. Reopening these areas risks irreversible damage to biodiversity, which directly threatens the ecosystems our communities rely on for food, heritage, and economic vitality.

Protecting Hawai‘i’s reef life matters personally to me because it strengthens our local communities by preserving the natural wonders that draw visitors and sustain traditional practices. Allowing DAR to oversee permits without BLNR's oversight could invite conflicts of interest and weaken enforcement, betraying the public's faith in balanced stewardship.

I implore the Board to maintain BLNR's authority over these critical decisions, reject Agenda Item F.2, and prioritize the health of our reefs for generations to come. Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,
Ryan Asa
Maui



22 October 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources
Department of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i

Re: Board Agenda Item F.2 for 24 October 2025 Regarding Aquarium Collector Rules

I write as a resident of Volcano, HI on Hawai'i Island, and as a director of the Hawai'i Marine Education and Research Center (HawaiiMERC). HawaiiMERC supports marine education, conservation, research, and enforcement throughout the South Kona region.

I ask that the Board send the proposed Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) rules regarding aquarium (AQ) fish collection back for redrafting based on an **insufficient enforceability** plan lacking properly scaled at-sea monitoring of the AQ collector operational location and reef impact.

Specifically, the proposed rules lack critical supply chain tracking requirements, methods, procedures, and infrastructure needed to properly regulate the AQ industry, particularly while at sea. As a result, it is not possible for the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement (DOCARE) or any agency or organization to effectively enforce the rules.

For example, there is no proposed method for DAR or DOCARE to monitor whether the AQ collectors illegally enter areas that prohibit aquarium fish collection such as Community-based Subsistence Fishing Areas (CBSFA), Marine Life Conservation Districts (MLCD), and other designated restricted zones. This can happen any time of day or night, and the reef area in question is far too large for DLNR to provide vessel-based monitoring.

This fatal flaw in the proposed rules stems from the fact that there is no requirement for AQ collectors to provide realtime vessel positioning and movement data to DAR or DOCARE via standard, off-the-shelf tracking technologies such as Automated Identification System (AIS) or Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) systems. AIS and VMS systems are cost-effective and in use worldwide by fishers and fisheries enforcement agencies. As equally problematic, neither DAR nor DOCARE maintain AIS or VMS receivers to track vessel positions in West Hawai'i.

A related problem with the lack of vessel movement tracking in the proposed rules is that DLNR cannot assess potential ongoing, dynamic, and episodic reef damages caused by standard AQ collection processes. HawaiiMERC has mapped past coral damage, assisted



by former AQ collectors, which has revealed two types of reef damage: (i) Smashing and/or degradation of coral covered areas, particularly in the highly fragile finger coral habitats, which was caused by the use of large fish corralling nets, drums, and divers crawling and finning along the seafloor; and (ii) Smashing of corals with fish collection pens, underwater moorings, anchors and other gear. Both AIS and VMS technologies can be used to monitor areas of persistent use by AQ collectors, thereby assisting in continuously assessing damages to coral beds incurred during fish trapping and removal activities.

For these reasons, the proposed rules are insufficient to ensure the ecological integrity of the coral reef system under a resumption of AQ collection activities. The proposed rules fall well short of ensuring that restricted areas remain inaccessible to AQ collectors and their collaborators, and that corals are not damaged in the process of fish collection.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory P. Asner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gregory P. Asner PhD

From: [Janet](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24, Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:44:58 AM

Please do not re-open Hawaii's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting. Doing so would be a profound betrayal of the public's trust and environmentally destructive.

Please send the rules back to be redrafted so that they reflect the community's call to protect reef life and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full accountability and transparency.

Thank you,
Janet Babb
Volcano
Island of Hawaii

From: [Nāpua Barrows](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:05:57 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, My name is Alyson N Barrows, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time. Today, I respectfully ask you to: 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability. 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE. 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes. 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary. 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance. 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice! 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export. The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation. It is fiscally responsible irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change. Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them. Thank you for your time, Alyson N Barrows, Wailuku, Maui.

From: [Barbara Barry](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 4:54:30 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Please do not allow this to happen.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so.

Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,
Barbara Barry

From: [Gordon Beebe](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:07:00 AM

Hello,

My wife and I have visited the Hawaiian Islands twice: once to the Big Island, and once to Kauai. On both trips, we snorkeled the wonderful reefs around each island. It is my only experience with seeing the beautiful fish and other creatures that live in the water.

Please do not allow collecting of any reef fish in the Hawaiian Islands; they are precious, a part of the allure of visiting Hawaii.

Gordon Beebe
Santa Rosa, CA

From: [Jim Beets](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:38:18 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please **REJECT** the staff recommendation for the **Hawai'i-wide aquarium collection rules**. The proposed rules will not protect the Hawai'i's natural resources. In fact, they will support the re-establishment of commercial aquarium collection activities in West Hawai'i.

With the continuing decline in nearshore reefs and associated resources, we need strong protection of species that maintain reef balance and ecosystem function. Fishes conduct a vital roles in this balance, especially the herbivores that help control nuisance algae growth. Fish harvest for community consumption is vital to our community integrity and health, but selling off our natural resources is very poor resource management and leads to increase in resource overexploitation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jim Beets
Pepeekeo, HI 96783

From: [kara bernarda](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 24 Oct agenda item f.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:32:29 AM

Do not allow the commercial capture of our reef fish!
mahalo, kara bernarda, kapa'a, kaua'i

From: [ted bohlen](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:55:04 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)!

I am Ted Bohlen, a former Deputy Attorney General, from Manoa, Oahu, testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to the staff recommendation on an aquarium fishing rules package.

With due respect to DAR, **the proposed rules should be sent back for redrafting**. They need redrafting for procedural, practical, and substantive reasons.

-Procedurally, it is inappropriate to remove the BLNR's oversight of aquarium collection permits by transferring that power to DAR. This issue has generated so much community outrage, it should be resolved only by the Board, with full transparency.

-As a **practical** matter, transferring the power from the Board to the DAR in contravention of prior decisions will ensure even more contentious litigation and increase the odds of successful legal challenges.

-Substantively, the draft rules are environmentally destructive; they allow **much higher catch limits** than what the seven collectors have taken previously. Reefs are under increasing stress because of ocean heating and acidification. Reefs with increased herbivore populations suffer less coral mortality following heat stress. Gove, J.M. et al., [Nature](#) 621, 536-542 (2023). Allowing hundreds of thousands of herbivorous aquarium specimens to be taken will harm the coral reefs that our shorelines, recreational economy, and fisheries depend upon. Allowing such rules runs counter to the mission to "enhance, protect, conserve, and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural, and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations."

Please send the rules back for redrafting, with proposed decision-making remaining with the Board and, if any aquarium fishing is to be permitted, with much lower catch limits that protect the coral and other marine resources rather than allowing the exploitation of those resources for private gain.

Mahalo,

Ted Bohlen

From: [Farshad Bonakdar](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:49:53 AM

I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back!

Thank you
Sent from my iPhone

From: jo808@hawaii.rr.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] OCT 24 Agenda item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:29:03 PM

Dear BLNR,

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard Reef Life-rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end-and restore the publics trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Josephine Bonaparte
2460 A Kolo. Rd
Kilauea, HI 96754
808-652-0808
Jo808@hawaii.rr.com
Mailing address: P.O. Box 62d8
Anahola, HI 96703

Island Of Kauai

From: [Steve Boreri](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:44:02 PM

Aloha My name is Richard Steven Boreri ,I live on the Big Island of Hawaii , at 73-1149 Hamanamana St. Kailua Kona HI.

I am Totally Against , re-open Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting..I have been working as a dive instructor and boat captain along the Kona Coast and kohala Coast of the Big Island. For over 40 years I've seen the reef come to life back in the 80s ,then all the marine life and tropical fish were doing so well. The tropical fish collectors starting gathering in numbers and you could see the impact . The schools of fish started diminish and then you could see the reef being crushed where they had to do their net sets.

Then we had the biggest bleaching on the reef ,and the reef is still struggling to come back ,and you want to let the tropical fish collectors come back put more negative impact on our Coral reefs in Hawaii. The herbivores keep the limu down so the reef can grow and prosper if you let the collectors take thousands of them away ,the reef will struggle to survive.We need to remove the Kole, Yellow Tang,Potters Angelfish,and Umaumalei from the Whitelist for the health of the reef and its future. So our grandchildren have something to see.

Who Prophets from collecting tropical fish a few, but not many, but if you let the schools of fish growing numbers the amount of dollars from the tourists who come to enjoy those big schools of yellow tangs etc, will outweigh the amount of money that you will collect from the tropical fish collectors .

And if you let this go through who is going to watch over the tropical fish collectors, the state does not have the money or the resources to watch over the few or maybe the many there is no controlling what goes on when you give them the green light.Add we need detail clarity around permits terms conditions and accountability to prevent abuse and Ensure ecologically balance.

You need to keep the permitting authority with the department land and natural resources to ensure full transparency and accountability.

Also send these rules back to redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.

And finally we need to align with Hawaiian public trust doctrine as a legal principle to protect our state constitution. DLNR must hold all public natural resources and trust to benefit the people of Hawaii present and future. Public trust resources are not privatized for commercial export.

Thank you for listening to me . Hope is the last resource that humanity has so please they consideration of our ecosystem our lifestyles and the future of the Hawaiian people hopefully there will be a beautiful reef with plenty of fish for our grandchildren to enjoy.

From: [Betsy Bowen](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:55:30 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that defies your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would **prohibit commercial aquarium collection** of our reef fish to the fullest extent possible. These recommended rules will only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for Hawaii residents and visitors.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. **Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.**

I appreciate your consideration of this vitally important matter.

Sincerely,

Betsy C. Bowen
15 Kulanihakoi Street
Kihei, HI 96753

From: [Kaylee Braun](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F-2 BLNR Meeting, Aquarium Fishing Testimony
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 6:33:04 PM

Aloha e BLNR,

I am from the ahupua'a of Nāwiliwili in the moku of Puna on the mokupuni of Kaua'i, Hawai'i.

In relation to the rules introduced by DAR pertaining to Aquarium Fishing Permits I am requesting that the rules be sent back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life, rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end. By doing so, they may restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting and authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

In relation to species, Kole and Umaumalei should be REMOVED from the whitelist entirely, they are culturally food fish that were harvested for sustenance, and are vital herbivores that clean our reefs. Yellow Tang and Angelfish should also be REMOVED from the list as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU)--wild harvest is unnecessary.

BLNR must add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance. They MUST align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice, and in fact, THREATENS the cultural practice.

They MUST align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for commercial export.

Native Hawaiian cultural practice and perpetuation should be of the utmost importance to BLNR. It MUST be of the utmost importance to BLNR. You must do right by your people. Your 'ohana, your hoa, your lāhui are depending on you to do what is right by them. Please think about what our kūpuna would do, how they would feel. How each generation after us will feel and be affected. Please, listen to lāhui. Listen to your community.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Kaylee Anuheaokamaunalani Braun

From: [teamsoil \(null\)](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aquarium fishing
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:47:16 AM

As a resident of Hawaii and waterman that swims regularly I have seen an increase in yellow tangs since the closure of aquarium fishing. I am 100 percent against aquarium fishing. Please stop an industry that doesn't respect the ocean from taking fish out of the sea for aquarium fishing. 100 ton Captain Ryan Brennan Holualoa Hawaii

Thank you,
Ryan Brennan
949 735 7487

From: [Shantee Brown](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:05:20 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Shantee Brown
Kailua-Kona

From: [Bill Bugbee](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) rule package vote
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:25:40 AM

VOTE NO – as to the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) drafted a rule package to re-open West Hawaii’s reef system to commercial aquarium fish extraction, absent of oversight, due diligence and management. The out-of-sight, out-of-mind extraction of one of Hawaii’s most vital marine assets – its reef fish supporting near shore marine ecosystems -- does not serve the interests of the state, its economy, and certain not the communities impacted by an unregulated global aquarium trade and its unsustainable extraction of Hawaii’s near shore fish population.

Anything short of shutting-down this destructive and non-sustainable fish extraction trade in Hawaii (specifically Hawaii County) falls short of preserving West Hawaii's fragile and long under-stress near shore marine ecosystem through the unregulated extraction of its coral reef fish vital to preserving the health of West Hawaii’s reef systems.

The reef fish extraction trade is an extinction business model in practice, operating without oversight and rules enforcement. The State's past and future oversight failures only enable an extraction trade's legalization, and the continuing destruction of Hawaii’s reef fish population.

The approval of this proposal to operate without accountability and enforceable marine impact rules is no more and no less than enabling the destruction of a key asset vital to Hawaii’s tourist trade and an irreplaceable marine asset to maintaining a healthy West Hawaii’s marine ecosystem, and by extension, bad policy and directly impacting the state and its residents.

The before and after effects of this unregulated reef fish-extraction industry on West Hawaii's reef are stark, compounding a marine ecosystem already under stress from global heating and bleaching impacts. Permitting this reef fish extraction trade to operate in our local waters does not serve the State and County's economic interests, and lacks common sense in any consideration in the management and preservation of one of Hawaii's important economic and environmental assets, it's coral reef systems.

W.M. Bugbee
Kailua-Kona 96740

From: lisa@lisabunge.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:55:16 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Lisa, and as a 40 year resident that has spent much of that time on and in our waters I am in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our REEFS are our LIFE SUPPORT system. PLEASE UPHOLD YOUR DUTY TO PROTECT THEM.

Thank you for your time,
Lisa Bunge
Kailua Kona, Hawaii

From: [Joan Campbell](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:10:50 AM

I am Joan Campbel from the Big Island of Hawaii in Waimea/Kamuela Town and a Reff Advocate. I urge you to please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Thank you,

Joan Campbell

Kamuela/Waimea Town Resident

Big Island

From: [Bruce Carlson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support F2 Oct 24 2025
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:54:12 AM

I want to register my support for item F2 on the BLNR agenda: rules package for the Aquarium fishery, October 24, 2025.

Bruce Carlson Ph.D.
Director emeritus, Waikiki Aquarium

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Elias Cayetano](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:43:43 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Elias Cayetano. I am a fifth grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina charter school and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,

Elias Cayetano
KANU O KA AINA CHARTER SCHOOL
Waimea Hawai'i

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm submitting testimony in support of the aquarium fishery and reopening West Hawaii to the fishery. There is current and sound science that backs this fishery and it is the only fishery in the State to have completed the HEPA review process. The aquarium fishery should be recognized as an important example of how a sustainable fishery should be managed. Many peoples livelihood rely deeply on this both in Hawaii and outside. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,
Ryan Cessna

From: [Willow Chang](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] f-2 testimony
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:49:28 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only **further** facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Willow Chang

From: mia.nykoluk
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:34:06 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

While working my way through college, I once applied for a job as an aquarist in Florida. The facility was filled with small tanks containing fish from around the world, many of which I recognized as species that play vital roles on coral reefs. These fish, especially herbivorous species, help corals by keeping algae in check—a crucial balance for reef health. Corals already face severe stress from warming waters, and when algae overtake them, entire reef ecosystems suffer. **Healthy coral reefs are not only essential for marine biodiversity but also for Hawai'i's tourism and fishing industries.** Reef fish depend on corals for shelter, and larger fish in turn depend on these reef species for food. It is all part of an interconnected chain that benefits the broader community and environment.

It should also be noted the majority of fish don't even make the journey to their new artificial homes and when they do get there they don't last long. On top of it look at what happens when people who can't manage their home aquarium release fish from other areas into the ocean near them. I think the lionfish in Florida is a good example of this. Just to recap lionfish arrived in Florida waters from the release of unwanted specimens from the aquarium trade, with the first sighting near Dania, Florida, in 1985. Now they are highly invasive.

I respectfully urge you to reject the staff recommendation for rulemaking that contradicts your prior directive to the Division of Aquatic Resources—to develop rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the fullest extent possible. The proposed rules would instead enable the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and across our islands, undermining your earlier guidance and the protection of our reefs.

Collecting live reef fish places further pressure on already stressed wild populations, which are struggling against the impacts of overfishing, pollution, and climate change.

I commend the BLNR for previously standing with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and community organizations in supporting a ban on commercial aquarium collection. I urge you to remain steadfast in that position. **Please do not allow the Division of Aquatic Resources to disregard your past decisions in favor of industry interests. I respectfully ask that you reject the proposed rules before you today.**

Warm regards,
Mia Charleston

"The Sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever."

— Jacques Cousteau

From: [Nina Cherry](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PLEASE Do not let them take our reef fishes
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:55:55 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and BNLR Board Members,

PLEASE DONT DO IT, BLNR!!

My name is Nina Cherry. I used to eat ophihi and see crabs and little fish in the tide pools and in the reefs. They are all mostly gone. If I want to find fish, I will have to go to Samoa or Fiji. Or Lana‘i. This picture was taken in Manele Bay, Lana‘i. Nothing like it on Maui. . .



I was born and raised with parents who taught me to love the ocean and the ‘aina. My father took me snorkeling when I was a toddler — about age 3 or 4. The ocean was teeming with wildlife then. I wonder if you have been in the water and seen the devastation lately —I mean there are very few fish left and the corals are mostly dead. You might not be from here, and you might not care about the health of the reefs.

The proposal to allow aquarium collecting, the taking of live fish off of Hawaii’s reefs for profit, is in direct conflict with the Department of Aquatic Resources’ (DAR) mission:

The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawai‘i to manage, conserve and restore the state’s unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

The permit fee schedule is a joke. There are hardly any fish left to take. Please let them live with us, in their homes instead of dying on a plane somewhere.

With love for our fish, reefs and land,
Nina Cherry

From: [Kennidee Mock Chew](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:45:03 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kennidee Nohea Mock Chew. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Kennidee Nohea Mock Chew.
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Ashley Ciccarello](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Agenda Item F.2 – Protect Hawai'i's Reefs
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:33:31 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the BLNR,

My name is **Ashley Ciccarello** and I live on **Maui**. As someone who fishes responsibly to feed my 'ohana, I've seen how healthy reef ecosystems directly support our local food sources. When herbivores and reef fish are overharvested, everyone suffers — from families who rely on local catch to future generations who deserve thriving reefs. Please reject Agenda Item F.2 and keep reef protection under BLNR oversight. The aquarium trade does not benefit our communities or our oceans long term.

Mahalo for protecting Hawai'i's reef life.

Ashley Ciccarello
Maui

From: [ALAN COHEN](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aquarium Fish Harvesting
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:19:00 PM

As a retired Ichthyologist, I have witnessed the destruction of the coral fish population on Maui for many years. I understand that a proposal to increase the quota on harvesting for aquarium fishes is on the table. this is a terrible ecological move. Populations have been devastated and increasing the harvest will be cataclysmic. Please reconsider any modification to the status quo. I am firmly against this.

Mahalo, Al Cohen
28 Hauwahine lane
Kihei

From: [Julia Costa](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:40:13 AM

Aloha,

I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back! Mahalo and have a great day!

--



JULIA COSTA RS-79937
Your Kaua'i to Hawai'i Island ConneXtion

☐ (808) 431-7511 ☐ jcosta.hirealty@gmail.com
☐ 6600 Kalaniana'ole Hwy Suite #114, Honolulu, HI 96825 RB-21841
☐ <https://juliacosta.exprealty.com/>



IMPORTANT NOTICE: Never trust wiring instructions sent via email. Cyber criminals are hacking email accounts and sending emails with fake wiring instructions. These emails are convincing and sophisticated. Always independently confirm wiring instructions in person or via a telephone call to a trusted and verified phone number. Never wire money without double-checking that the wiring instructions are correct.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information protected by law. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

October 23, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources
PO Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96809
Via Email Only: blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

RE: Opposition to Item F-2 – Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of HAR Chapters Relating to Aquarium Life Management (Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1 and Amendments to HAR 13-75 and 13-60.4)

In my capacity as an individual member of the Kaua'i County Council, I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to Item F-2 on your October 24, 2025 agenda, regarding the request for approval to hold public hearings on the proposed consolidation of Hawai'i Administrative Rules relating to aquarium life management into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1 ("Aquarium Fishery Management"), along with proposed amendments to HAR Chapters 13-75 and 13-60.4.

While I appreciate the Department's stated goal of consolidating and clarifying aquarium fishery regulations, the scope and timing of this proposal raise significant concerns regarding environmental compliance, cultural integrity, and procedural transparency.

Concerns and Considerations

1. Environmental Review Still Required. The Hawai'i Supreme Court has made clear that any resumption or expansion of aquarium collection requires a full environmental review under Chapter 343, HRS. Proceeding with these rule amendments before completing such a review risks undermining environmental safeguards and public confidence in state resource management.
2. Loss of West Hawai'i's Community-Based Protections. The proposed repeal of the West Hawai'i Aquarium Permit and transfer of its provisions into a statewide framework could erode region-specific protections built through decades of community collaboration. Localized management systems have been essential for adaptive, culturally rooted stewardship — a model that should be strengthened, not replaced.

OPPOSITION TO ITEM F-2, REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF HAR CHAPTERS RELATING TO AQUARIUM LIFE MANAGEMENT (PROPOSED HAR CHAPTER 13-77.1 AND AMENDMENTS TO HAR 13-75 AND 13-60.4)

October 23, 2025

Page 2

3. Enforcement and Oversight Concerns. A statewide expansion of aquarium permits, vessel registration, and commercial dealer regulations would require significant increases in enforcement capacity. DOCARE and DAR are already resource limited. Without adequate staffing and monitoring, such changes risk widening compliance gaps.
4. Conflict with Broader Conservation Priorities. As coral reefs face compounding stress from warming seas, sedimentation, and invasive species, continued extraction for the aquarium trade — even under limited species “whitelists” — runs counter to Hawai‘i’s long-term conservation and sustainability goals.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to defer approval of Item F-2 until:

- A comprehensive Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addressing the proposed rule changes is completed.
- Meaningful consultation with Native Hawaiian practitioners, scientists, and affected island communities has taken place.
- A clear, enforceable compliance and monitoring plan is presented for public review.

Our marine life is a precious public trust resource. Decisions that affect its management must prioritize ecological health, cultural values, and public accountability over administrative expedience.

Mahalo for your dedication and the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 241-4188.

Sincerely,

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kaua‘i County Council

LMY:

From: [terry.cox](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:56:08 PM

I support this fishery because of solid scientific research and very strong management practices.

From: [Jai Cox](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:40:32 PM

I am in support of this fishery because of sound science and the amount of management going into the fishery.

From: [nora coyle](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:49:08 PM

Dear Official,

Please do everything to protect Hawaii's pristine land, ocean and all wildlife. They can not speak for themselves. Your tourism depends on it.

Sincerely,

Nora Coyle
Anaheim Hills, CA

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: [Hiedi Culbertson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda items F1 and 2 for tomorrow's hearing
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:13:10 AM

To the members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources:

I own a home in Waikoloa Village on the Big Island and frequently enjoy all ocean activities on the beautiful west coast of the Island. I am deeply concerned to learn that you are considering what the catch limits should be for companies wanting to take wild fish from the ocean for the purpose of commercial sale for aquarium use. This is a reversal of the 2017 ruling which made this illegal, a ruling that was welcomed by at least 84% of Hawaii residents. The oceans and coral reefs are currently under siege from ocean acidity, ocean warming, and the harmful effects of human sewage flowing into the ocean from the 50,000 cess pools present on the Big Island alone. These fish are key to a healthy coral reef ecosystem and the coral reefs are so incredibly important for their contributions to ocean health, the Hawaiian economy, and the coastal buffer they provide during storms. Based on these facts, I would like the number of coral reef fish caught for the aquarium trade to be 0 but if that isn't an option because of the 2023 ruling, I would implore the Board to make that number be a tiny fraction of the 200,000 per permit holder being proposed. The world's coral reefs need a break; half of them have died in the last 50 years. You have the power to help our state do what can be done to protect this critically important ecosystem in Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration,

Hiedi Culbertson
68-3625 Haena St.
Waikoloa Village, Hawaii
96738

From: [Scott CULBERTSON](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aquarium Fishing Permits
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:44:54 AM

Hello BLNR Representatives,

We are taking this opportunity to express our great concern with the re-establishment of aquarium fishing in Hawaiian waters. We note the following reasons:

1. Reef fish are critical in maintaining coral health that is already threatened by climate change and cess pool sewage. The fish are critical in keeping algae growth under control. If we lose the fish and we lose the entire ecosystem. We put no trust in the idea that aquarium fishing is a sustainable practice.
2. It has been demonstrated by survey (84% opposed) and by your past public input process that the vast majority of the Hawaiian residents oppose the effort to re-introduce aquarium fishing. These are the people you represent.
3. It is an affront to the Hawaiian culture to make money from the process of supplying wealthy aquarium owners at the expense of our environment. Your first call of duty should be to protect not destroy our natural environment.
4. The reefs are a source of food for the local community as well as a buffer against rising sea levels.

Do the right thing. Deny aquarium fishing permits. Malama Kai!

Scott Culbertson

68-3625 Haena St.

Waikoloa Village, Hi 96738

From: [Joe Culbertson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:25:23 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Joe Culbertson, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Joe Culbertson

Keaau, Hawaii

From: [Kehaulani Custino](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:41:05 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kehaulani Custino, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Kehaulani Custino

Kahala, Oahu

From: [Sylvia Dahlby](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in `Support of Item F2: Rules relating to Management of Aquarium Life
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 4:52:41 PM

Aloha BLNR Members,

Please vote YES on the proposed consolidation of Hawaii Administrative Rules relating to Aquarium Life and return the aquarium fishing permits to local small businesses immediately.

This return has been delayed two years, and the aquarium fishers are still waiting for their rightful permits. These small business owners have an approved Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), so what's the hold up?

I understand that the permits were challenged by Earth Justice. After considering the facts, the Supreme Court upheld the aquarium fishers rights – and ordered that the permits be granted.

Any further delay makes a mockery of the EIS system. Fishing business owner-operators and their families have been needlessly punished long enough.

The EIS clearly shows that Hawaii's fisheries are one of the best-managed fisheries in the world. Aquarium fishing is a sustainable business that has been wrongfully vilified by tourist-driven interests and persecuted by misguided environmentalists who have not done their homework.

As a kama'aina resident of Hilo, I urge you to support the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) relating to Aquarium Life Management and the rights of local small businesses.

Respectfully,

Sylvia Dahlby - Hilo, Hawaii

From: [Judy Dalton](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect our reef fish by ban on collection by aquariums
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:51:50 AM

Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Judy Dalton

From: [Brett Danger](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Agenda Item F.2 – Protect Hawai‘i’s Reefs
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:27:14 PM

Dear Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing today to respectfully urge you to **oppose Agenda Item F.2**.

This proposal to reopen Hawai‘i’s reefs to harmful aquarium collection is deeply concerning. Our reefs are not just an abstract concept; they are a **fragile and valuable resource that affects the daily lives of every local and tourist**.

Allowing this rule change to proceed would undermine public trust and go against the overwhelming public desire to protect our marine ecosystems for future generations.

I urge the Board to **reject this rule change** and keep reef protection authority with the BLNR, where it belongs. Please do not delegate this essential kuleana. The health of Hawai‘i’s reefs depends on your leadership.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Verily,

Brett Danger - Maui

From: [Sarah Dobson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reef query
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:45:48 AM

Good morning Hawaii Gov team,

please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard the reef and its beautiful fish ... for the sake of ignorant fools who want to put them in tank to die a premature, sad death. I fail to understand why, other than for monetary reasons, why given what you know about the delicate balance & destruction of the sea life.... why making it worse is something to even entertain?

Many thanks,

A frequent tourist & sea lover

Sarah Bailey-Dobson
UK England

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [Taylor Doherty](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:15:52 PM

To the Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Taylor Doherty, and I am writing from Kona, Hawai‘i. I strongly oppose the Division of Aquatic Resources’ (DAR) proposed rule package to re-open Hawai‘i’s reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.

This proposal represents a serious breach of the public’s trust and a direct contradiction to the intent of the original community-led petition that called for an end to this industry. The rule, as written, prioritizes commercial exploitation over reef protection and public accountability. It would allow the large-scale removal of reef fish (hundreds of thousands each year) while stripping the BLNR of its oversight role and silencing public input.

Our reefs in Hawaii are already struggling under the pressures of climate change, pollution, and overuse. Allowing the mass extraction of herbivorous fish, which are vital to reef health and resilience, flies in the face of both science and common sense. The fact that this rule would generate less than a thousand dollars in revenue while costing hundreds of thousands to manage is both fiscally irresponsible and environmentally reckless.

I urge you to send the draft rules back for redrafting so that they truly reflect the community’s call to safeguard reef life, uphold the principles of transparency, and keep permitting authority with the BLNR—not DAR.

Please stand with the people of Hawai‘i in protecting our reefs for future generations, not reopening them for profit.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,

Taylor Doherty

Kona, Hawai‘i

From: danhieux18@icloud.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:42:40 AM

Aloha board members of BLNR,

I'm testifying to not weaken the current ban and urge stronger protections for Hawai'i's coral reefs by addressing the decline of grazing fish — particularly species targeted by the **aquarium trade**.

Herbivorous fish such as parrotfish, surgeonfish, and tangs are vital to reef health. They graze on algae that would otherwise overgrow and suffocate corals. When these species are removed, algae quickly dominate, blocking sunlight, reducing coral growth, and preventing reefs from recovering after bleaching or storms.

The commercial aquarium industry has significantly depleted local populations of these key species. By removing large numbers of herbivores for export, the industry disrupts the natural balance that coral ecosystems depend on. This has led to widespread coral decline, biodiversity loss, and diminished fish stocks.

These ecological losses also harm **Hawai'i's tourism economy**, which relies heavily on healthy, vibrant reefs for snorkeling, diving, and coastal recreation. As reefs degrade, visitor satisfaction declines — threatening one of the state's most important economic sectors and sources of local employment.

Protecting grazing fish through stronger restrictions on aquarium collection, catch limits, and managed reef zones is a proven, cost-effective way to safeguard both our reefs and Hawai'i's tourism future.

With respect and aloha,

Bob Douglas
Pana'ewa
Hilo, HI 96720

danhieux18@icloud.com
[Instagram.com/danhieux](https://www.instagram.com/danhieux)
808 333-0402

From: [Kristine Dunker](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony regarding aquarium collection permitting
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 4:51:45 PM

Greetings to the Chair and Board of the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources.

My name is Krissy Dunker. I am not yet a Hawaii resident, but I am a frequent visitor to Hawai'i Island and regularly volunteer with two island-based organizations (365 Hawaii Island Community Fund and the ReefTeach Program). I wish to submit testimony in **opposition** of the request to re-establish aquarium collection permits in West Hawaii and to **oppose** delegating authority for aquarium permit decisions to the Chair.

As a visitor, I am particularly drawn to west Hawaii's marine habitats. While on island, most of my family's time is spent snorkeling, diving, and observing the incredible marine life that Hawai'i is so fortunate to harbor. Over the last ~10 years, however, I have watched the condition of west Hawaii's coral reefs decline, especially following the recent bleaching events. With the decline I have observed in coral health over time, I have also perceived a notable decrease in nearshore fish abundance, particularly of surgeonfish that are so vital to balancing algal growth on the reef. With the abundance of dead and dying coral structure now present, algae, including invasive forms, can more easily establish themselves. Without sufficient stocks of surgeonfish, algal colonization can happen before new coral recruitment can take hold. Also, as bleaching events become more common with climate change, corals that might otherwise survive a bleaching event can be covered with algae in the absence of sufficient grazing by surgeonfish, thereby guaranteeing their mortality.

I strongly believe in DLNR's mission to 'enhance, protect, conserve, and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural, and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors', though I question how well re-authorizing aquarium permits in west Hawai'i fits this mission. I believe these rules should be sent back for re-drafting to reflect the views of the west Hawaii community and its visitors. As a ReefTeach volunteer, I have had many conversations with visitors asking where all the fish are. This question typically comes from people who are visiting for the first time in many years, and the differences to them are stark.

Tourism contributes greatly to Hawaii's economy. West Hawai'i is a world-renown destination for observing endemic fish found nowhere else. I firmly believe that people care more about marine conservation when they have direct experience observing healthy marine ecosystems. Residents and visitors alike will notice reductions in fish populations that result from aquarium collections. They will see coral reefs in poor condition with fewer fish. As a result, many will lose motivation and interest in protecting Hawai'i fragile nearshore environments and supporting the organizations that are dedicated to conserving them. In the end, this decision to re-issue aquarium collection permits would benefit only a few permit holders who stand to gain financially by taking public trust resources from the ocean with the intent of distributing them out of state. I understand that providing economic opportunity is an important consideration for the state, but I believe this proposal comes at great economic risk to tourism and the already established businesses that rely on visitors coming to observe these species in their natural habitats.

I can also directly attest to the fact that most of the fish collected will not survive. I am a salt-water aquarist where I permanently reside in Anchorage AK, and I have been for almost 20 years. In the beginning of my hobby, I purchased marine fish regularly, not understanding the ecological impact of doing so. As I have learned about the low survival of wild-caught marine fishes, experienced it myself, and extrapolated this across all salt-water aquarists, I have come to realize there is an *astronomical* amount of waste in the salt-water pet trade. The statistics on marine aquarium fish survival is grave. *Less than 10% survive more than one year in captivity.* I do still maintain a coral garden tank, but it is with the intent of offsetting this waste now. I grow coral frags as a means of providing them locally to reduce the demand here for corals that would otherwise come directly from the ocean. I no longer keep fish, and the few that my reef ecologically needs to remain healthy are only from aquacultured sources. Should Hawaii have greater economic interest in participating in the salt-water pet trade, I would recommend collecting brood and supporting a local industry that tank-raises these fish for export to distributors, rather than collecting them in the wild. Aquacultured fish are hardier, pathogens and parasites are controllable, and there is a substantial market for them. Aquarists, like me, tend to be ocean enthusiasts, but once they learn about the negative side of the industry, they overwhelmingly prefer tank-raised species when they are available. All of this is to say that there are better and more ecologically responsible ways of providing economic opportunity in this sector than permitting wild fish collections in west Hawaii once again.

Mahalo for your time in reading my comments and testimony. I truly admire and respect DLNR's work, and I trust the right decision will be made on this matter.

Krissy Dunker

Anchorage, AK



October 23, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

Attn: Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i
blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

Re: **Agenda Item F-1: Recommendation to Deny the Written Contested Case Hearing Request Filed by Ron Tubbs et al. Regarding the Board's Acceptance of a Petition to Initiate Rulemaking Filed by Rulemaking Petitioners Kalanihale, Kama'āina United to Protect the 'Āina (KUPA)/Friends of Hookena Beach Park, Moana 'Ohana, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and For the Fishes; and**

Agenda Item F-2: Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of Hawai'i Administrative Rules ("HAR") relating to Aquarium Life Management into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1: "Aquarium Fishery Management" and on Proposed Amendments to HAR Chapters 13-75: "Rules Regulating the Possession and Use of Certain Fishing Gear" and 13-60.4: "West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area, Hawai'i" for Clarity and Consistency with Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1.

Dear Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on agenda items F-1 and F-2, which both relate to the proposed commercial-scale extraction of native reef wildlife for export and sale as captive aquarium pets. As discussed below, Earthjustice (1) supports the Division of Aquatic Resources' ("DAR's") recommendation to deny a contested case request challenging a prior Board rulemaking decision, and (2) *opposes* DAR's recommendation to send out to public hearing its proposed rules to permit commercial collection of hundreds of thousands of reef fish from West Hawai'i waters every year.

I. Background

Hawai'i communities have long opposed commercial-scale collection of wild reef fish. Commercial collectors target juvenile indigenous and endemic fish species, surrounding schools or individuals with fine-meshed nets to trap the fish. Evidence suggests that at least half of all wild-caught aquarium fish die within the first year of captivity. Left in the wild, these species would live much longer, in some cases (like the Yellow Tang) for more than 40 years. Because of its harmful effects on fish populations, reef ecosystems, cultural resources, and other community interests, commercial aquarium collection has been and remains the subject of

intense public controversy and ongoing litigation and administrative proceedings, including the rulemaking and related proceedings summarized below.

On October 19, 2023, Kalanihale, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park, Moana 'Ohana, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club ("KPHCC"), and For the Fishes submitted a formal request to prohibit commercial aquarium collection via administrative rule (the "Rulemaking Petition")¹ and provided draft administrative rules and rule amendments that would effectuate the proposed ban. On December 8, 2023, the Board considered and unanimously approved the Rulemaking Petition.² After a motion to approve the Rulemaking Petition was made and seconded but before the final vote was taken, the Deputy Attorney General present at the meeting raised an alleged conflict between the proposed rule and HRS § 188-31.³ This purported legal issue was missing from DAR's submittals and, therefore, was not subject to any review or testimony by the public. As a result of the AG's belated input, the Board further instructed DAR to "proceed with rulemaking consistent with the statutory provisions," "taking into consideration the [Rulemaking Petition]" and the "sentiment . . . from the [B]oard,"⁴ which had just unanimously voted to approve the Rulemaking Petition. Following the Board's decision to approve and accept the Rulemaking Petition, several aquarium collectors requested a contested case to challenge the Board's rulemaking decision.⁵

On August 23, 2024, DAR staff presented for Board approval: (1) a proposed statewide aquarium collection permit application form; (2) proposed terms and conditions for West Hawai'i aquarium collection permits; and (3) a request that the Board delegate authority "to the Chair" (*i.e.*, to DAR staff itself) to review, approve, issue and renew up to seven West Hawai'i permits subject to those terms and conditions.⁶ In response to intense public opposition, DAR withdrew its request for the Board to delegate away its permitting authority. After a motion to approve the West Hawai'i permit terms and conditions in modified form was made and seconded, Charles Young of KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park orally requested a contested case opposing DAR's proposals on behalf of himself and a hui of Native Hawaiians and conservationists, including Kalanihale, For the Fishes, and Moana 'Ohana's Michael

¹ A copy of the Rulemaking Petition is attached hereto.

² DAR's October 24, 2025 Submittal F-2 ("F-2 Submittal") at 4.

³ HRS § 188-31 authorizes discretionary permits for the use of fine-meshed nets to collect fish for aquarium purposes.

⁴ BLNR December 8, 2023 video recording, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4xDtBo3ywU> (last visited Oct. 22, 2025), at 8:03:40; *see also* December 8, 2023 Board Minutes at 17, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Minutes-231207.pdf> (last visited Oct. 22, 2025).

⁵ DAR's October 24, 2025 Submittal F-1 ("F-1 Submittal") at 1.

⁶ DAR's August 23, 2024 Submittal F-1, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/F-1-1.pdf> (last visited Oct. 22, 2025).

Nakachi. Those contested case requests were later rendered moot when DAR withdrew entirely its August 23, 2024 recommendations regarding AQ permitting.

On October 10, 2024, on behalf of Kalanihale, KPHCC, For the Fishes, Charles Young, and Michael Nakachi, Earthjustice submitted to the Board a petition for declaratory ruling regarding the Board's legal authority to prohibit commercial aquarium collection via administrative rulemaking. More recently, on September 26, 2025, the Board issued its order denying the declaratory petition, asserting that an outright ban would conflict with HRS § 188-31, even though the statute does not authorize commercial collection or mandate issuance of permits. Last week, on October 16, 2025, the declaratory petition hui appealed to the circuit court to seek clarity on the extent of the Board's powers to protect natural resources from activities like commercial aquarium collection.⁷ The next day, October 17, the Board published its October 24 agenda, including items F-1 and F-2 discussed herein.

II. Item F-1. The Board Should Deny The Collectors' Contested Case Request.

The aquarium collectors' request for a contested case on the Board's December 8, 2023 rulemaking decision lacks any valid basis and must be denied. As discussed in DAR's F-1 Submittal, contested cases are quasi-judicial proceedings that by definition determine "the legal rights, duties, or privileges of specific parties . . . after an opportunity for agency hearing." By contrast, the Board's December 8, 2023 decision to approve the Rulemaking Petition was an exercise of the agency's quasi-legislative function, whereby it may promulgate administrative rules that apply broadly to the public. In short, contested case requests are not appropriate or applicable in the context of rulemaking, and the collectors' misguided request must be denied.⁸

III. Item F-2. DAR's Draft Rules Must Be Revised Before Sending Out For Public Hearing.

Nearly two years after the Board unanimously approved the Rulemaking Petition, DAR now proposes draft rules that run directly contrary to the Board's instructions to "tak[e] into consideration the [Rulemaking Petition]" — which sought to *prohibit* commercial collection — and the Board's sentiments regarding its unanimous approval of the Rulemaking Petition. DAR's proposed rules instead *give the aquarium pet industry nearly everything it wants*, including adopting the lion's share of the total allowable catch that the trade sought in its environmental impact statement ("EIS") for West Hawai'i commercial aquarium collection

⁷ *Kalanihale, et al. v. Board of Land and Natural Resources, et al.*, 1CCV-25-0001709.

⁸ See *Flores-Case 'Ohana v. Univ. of Hawai'i*, 153 Hawai'i 76, 82, 526 P.3d 601, 607 (2023) (distinguishing administrative actions "[w]hen agencies act prospectively, by promulgating rules, instead of retrospectively, by adjudicating individual rights or claims in contested case hearings").

permits.⁹ DAR provides zero rationale for proposing draft rules that are so far removed from the Rulemaking Petition, and that instead pander directly to commercial interests. Even if the Board believes that it cannot ban commercial collection outright (which remains an unresolved legal question), the Board expressly instructed DAR to draft rules *in consideration of the Rulemaking Petition*, not in collaboration with commercial collectors. DAR must bring its draft rules in line with the Board's prior decisions and instructions before sending the rules out for public hearing.

DAR's draft rules adopt the pet industry's preferred outcome, with only nominal reductions in total allowable catch and no viable safeguards to protect public trust marine resources. Although DAR's draft rules impose some slight reductions in the numbers of certain species slated for extraction,¹⁰ the draft rules by and large give the pet industry everything it wants and, most notably, would still allow the trade to extract a full **200,000** Yellow Tang from West Hawai'i reefs every year, despite the existence of viable alternatives to wild-caught fish, such as captive Yellow Tang breeding programs already operating in Hawai'i.

These catch limits, moreover, would be *unenforceable*. DAR's draft rules do not provide for any *per-collector* catch limits, meaning that any one permittee could exceed the total allowable yearly take without any other collector knowing that the quota had been exceeded. This is a recipe for disaster and would incentivize collectors to rush to take as many fish as possible before regional quotas are passed (assuming that the catch limits themselves can even be tracked or enforced). DAR's draft rules likewise do not contain any *place-based* limits on commercial collection. Under DAR's draft rules, nothing would prevent commercial collectors from attempting to take all of their quota from discrete locales, severely harming local fish populations and disproportionately affecting communities that rely on their local fisheries for subsistence and recreational nearshore fishing. Any rule that may eventually govern commercial collection must include *enforceable per-collector and place-based catch limits*.

Further, as emphasized in the written testimony of Dr. Greg Asner of the Hawai'i Marine Education and Research Center, submitted October 22, 2025, even if DAR's draft rules included per-collector or place-based catch limits, they lack any real-world procedure or mechanism for enforcing such limits or other regulatory requirements. Permittees would not be required to provide real-time vessel location or movement data, making it impossible for DAR or the Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement ("DOCARE") to effectively monitor whether collectors are staying within the bounds of permitted collection areas, let alone enforce against any incursions into protected areas. Moreover, given that commercial aquarium activities happen literally below the surface and out of sight, DOCARE would have no way to monitor or enforce against over-collection, reef damage, or other known practices of the

⁹ F-2 Submittal at 3, 8.

¹⁰ F-2 Submittal at 8.

commercial collectors, who have consistently exploited and abused the fact that their activities take place for the most part hidden from view.

DAR's draft rules strip the Board of its authority to review and render decisions on aquarium collection permit applications. In its draft rules, DAR grants itself the power to conduct "final review of all applications received."¹¹ Essentially, DAR would take for itself the ability to issue commercial aquarium collection permits behind closed doors and without any public scrutiny. Commercial aquarium collection and its impacts on our aquatic resources remain the subject of ongoing controversy, and final decisions on the issuance of aquarium permits should not be made absent an opportunity for the public to comment on or contest such permits. DAR recognized the importance of such transparency and public involvement in August 2024 when, in response to vehement public opposition, DAR withdrew its prior recommendation to delegate aquarium permitting authority to itself via the Board Chair.

The aquatic resources at stake, moreover, are public trust resources protected by article XI, § 1 of the Hawai'i Constitution. Ensuring Board scrutiny implements and upholds the Board's constitutional mandate to ensure that any decision potentially compromising public trust resources is made with the level of "openness, diligence, and foresight commensurate with the high priority these rights command under the laws of our state."¹² The Board must also apply a "higher level of scrutiny" in assessing private commercial uses of trust resources, like the commercial aquarium collection proposed here.¹³

Delegating permit approval to DAR staff would deprive the Board and public of a decision that considers and incorporates community input and the diverse expertise and specialized knowledge of all Board members. Without open public proceedings, the Board would lack critical input and dialogue to apply the scrutiny and oversight that Hawai'i's public trust resources command. To the extent that any degree of commercial aquarium take may eventually be permitted, the Board must remain the ultimate decisionmaker on whether and under what conditions to deny or issue such permits.

IV. Conclusion

In 2023, the Board approved the Rulemaking Petition to prohibit commercial aquarium collection and, although the Board has suggested that some amount of collection may be permitted, it never directed DAR to disregard the Rulemaking Petition and adopt the pet industry's preferred outcome. As expressed repeatedly in the public testimony *overwhelmingly opposing* DAR's draft rules, the Board should exercise its power to protect public trust natural

¹¹ See § 13-77.1-7(a)(4) of DAR's draft rule.

¹² *In re Waiāhole Ditch Combined Case Hr'g* ("Waiāhole"), 94 Hawai'i 97, 143, 9 P.3d 409, 455 (2000).

¹³ See *id.* at 142, 9 P.3d at 454.

Board of Land & Natural Resources
Testimony on Agenda Items F-1 & F-2
October 23, 2025
Page 6

resources and re-direct DAR to draft rules in accordance with and in the spirit of the Rulemaking Petition.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

He Ali'i Ka 'Āina,

/s/ Mahesh Cleveland

Mahesh Cleveland

Kylie Wager Cruz

Dru Hara

EARTHJUSTICE

Attachment

Kalanihale
89-1831 Miloli'i Rd.
Captain Cook, HI 96704

KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park
PO Box 141
Honaunau, HI 96726

Moana 'Ohana
PO Box 4454
Kailua Kona, HI 96745

Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club
PO Box 664
Kaneohe, HI 96744

For the Fishes
PO Box 1894
Kihei, HI 96753

Before the Board of Land and Natural Resources

State of Hawai'i

Kalanihale's, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena) Petition
Beach Park's, Moana 'Ohana's,)
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club's, and)
For the Fishes' Petition for Rulemaking to)
State of Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural)
Resources)

KALANIHALE'S, KUPA FRIENDS OF HO'OKENA BEACH PARK'S, MOANA 'OHANA'S, KO'OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB'S, AND FOR THE FISHES' PETITION FOR RULEMAKING TO PROHIBIT THE TAKE OF MARINE LIFE FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM PURPOSES (WITH EXEMPTIONS)

To ensure protection of public trust resources, Kalanihale, KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park, Moana 'Ohana, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and For the Fishes (hereinafter "Petitioners") hereby petition the Board of Land and Natural Resources (hereinafter "Board") to initiate rulemaking to prohibit the take of marine life for commercial aquarium purposes. This petition is filed pursuant to Article IX section 8, Article XI, §§ 1, 6 and 9 and Article XII, § 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution; HRS §§ 91-6, 190-3, and 190-4; and HAR § 13-1-26.

I. Petitioners' Interests

Petitioners are comprised of native Hawaiian organizations and cultural practitioners, and non-profit environmental and marine protection organizations. Petitioners are among the 1.4 million Hawai'i residents whose way of life depends upon Hawai'i's coral reefs, which provide economic, structural/protective, educational, social, recreational, cultural, spiritual, physical, biological, and ecological benefits.

Petitioners include those who are descended from the aboriginal people that inhabited the Hawaiian Islands in 1778 and who engage in traditional and customary practices that are inextricably linked to coral reefs and their marine life, which are both a natural and a cultural resource. Commercial aquarium collection activities harm these Petitioners' ability to conduct these traditional and customary practices.

All Petitioners are beneficiaries of public trust resources, which government agencies and officials, including members of the Board, are obligated to protect.

Moreover, Petitioners are among the 83% of Hawai'i residents polled in 2017 who want to see an end to the destructive commercial take of marine life for aquarium purposes due to its negative environmental impacts and conflicts with cultural and local values.¹

Petitioners thus have significant interests in preserving and increasing the abundance of coral reef marine life for subsistence fishing, food security, native Hawaiian traditional and cultural practices, recreational use, and aesthetic value.

II. Reasons for Rulemaking

Hawai'i's way of life and food security are tied to coral reef health which is severely and imminently threatened by climate change.² The immediate need to mitigate against catastrophic climate change impacts on Hawai'i's coral reef ecosystems by increasing herbivore abundance is well understood and supported by the Board and by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), as evidenced by DAR's December 2022 herbivore management rule proposal and presentation to the Board, and by the Board's vote to send those rules out for public hearings.³

Despite massive historical take (millions of herbivores removed to date) and proposed future take of herbivores for commercial aquarium trade purposes, however, the burden to increase reef herbivores in the proposed herbivore management rule proposal falls nearly entirely on Hawai'i's subsistence food fishers who rely upon coral reef fishes to feed their families and communities.

These food fishers are being asked to significantly reduce their take for the greater good of current and future generations who depend upon coral reefs, while under the aquarium pet trade's current proposals in their environmental impact statements (EISs), the trade would be subject to minor take reductions and would still be allowed to take more herbivores from West Hawai'i reefs than are taken by all food fishers, *combined*. See Section III, *infra*, for details.

Allowing commercial take of herbivores for the aquarium pet trade, which sends 99 percent of marine life out of the state, contradicts the Board's intent to protect herbivores for Hawai'i's reefs and people. Conversely, prohibiting the commercial take of herbivores and other marine

¹ Anthology Research [Hawaii Reef Fish Poll](#) (2017) at pg. 4

² DAR [Zoom presentation](#) to BLNR (Dec. 8, 2022) at 1:35

³ BLNR approval to hold public hearings on revised amendments to Chapter 13-95, Hawaii Administrative Rules, "Rules Regulating the Taking and Selling of Certain Marine Resources," May 12, 2023

fishes for aquarium purposes would firmly prioritize our marine life as essential natural and cultural resources, and prevent disposing of them as mere commodities for the profit driven aquarium pet trade, which sells the overwhelming majority of these important fishes outside of Hawai‘i.

Aquarium Collecting Conflicts with Native Hawaiian Values

The need for this rulemaking is further demonstrated by decades long and ever-increasing opposition to commercial aquarium collection within the native Hawaiian community. The opposition, in large part, stems from the trade’s irreconcilable conflicts with native Hawaiian values, traditions, customs, and practices. For example, the Hawaiian values of mālama ‘āina and the practices involved in pono fishing include asking permission prior to fishing, taking only what is needed for immediate personal and family use without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, being accountable, and having respect for the sacredness of the process.⁴

The aquarium trade violates core principles of mālama ‘āina and pono fishing by taking juvenile fishes purely for economic gain and before they can reproduce. Fishes taken are then starved and shipped in plastic bags to the continent and beyond on a long journey that results in premature mortality and waste.⁵

DAR asserts its understanding of the importance of incorporating Hawaiian values and perspectives into marine management. For example, DARs Herbivore Management Plan also includes a pillar pertaining to native Hawaiian values. Entitled “Pono Practices,” the path laid out by DAR is summarized as follows:

“Pono Practices encourages responsible behavior guided by Hawaiian values and perspectives through. . . statewide rules. . .to encourage sustainable behaviors and practices in nearshore waters. The Pono Practices pillar is a call to action for resource users to interact with nearshore resources in a pono way.”⁶ .

Additionally, in response to legislation introduced to end the trade earlier this year, DLNR’s written testimony, while defending the aquarium trade, closed with the recognition that there may be reasons to “prohibit commercial aquarium collection based on cultural or social values.”⁷

Unfortunately, year after year and across numerous rule proposals, DAR has failed to apply the concepts contained within the Pono Practices pillar to its own internal policies by continuing to support commercial aquarium collection, despite decades of direct pleas from the native

⁴ Kohala Center, Uncle Mac Poepoe, [Spawning Guide/Pono Practices](#)

⁵ Tissot (2005). Integral Marine Ecology: [Community-Based Fishery Management in Hawai‘i](#), Washington State University at pdf. pg. 12

⁶ DAR [Sustainable Herbivore Management Plan](#) (2021)

⁷ DLNR [testimony on SB505 Relating to Environmental Protection](#) at pdf pg. 15

Hawaiian community and thousands of others to prioritize reefs and culture over the profits of the mainland aquarium pet trade.

In recent years, voices in opposition to the trade have grown even more. For example, in 2023, the Hawai‘i State Aha Moku Advisory Committee, representing all 46 moku statewide, strongly supported a legislative bill ending commercial aquarium collection.⁸ The Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council (chaired by DAR Administrator Nielson), the Kai Kuleana Network representing 15 communities working to restore coral reefs and fish populations on the west coast of Hawai‘i Island, the West Hawai‘i group Kalanihale, and other cultural practitioners from West Hawai‘i have all sent letters to DLNR urging statewide rulemaking to permanently end commercial aquarium collecting in Hawai‘i.^{9, 10} In addition, in 2023 the Association of Native Hawaiian Civic Clubs joined the Ko‘olaupoko Native Hawaiian Civic Club and the Kahalu‘u, Kāne‘ohe, Kailua and Waimānalo Neighborhood Boards (2021) in urging a prohibition on commercial aquarium collection.¹¹

Aquarium Trade’s HEPA Review Has Dismissed Public Input

Rulemaking is also necessary because environmental review under the Hawai‘i Environmental Policy Act (“HEPA”), HRS chapter 343, as undertaken by the aquarium pet trade, has grossly failed to disclose and analyze known environmental impacts and has moreover failed to address the vast majority of the thousands of public comments in opposition to virtually every aspect of the trade’s plans for reopening Hawai‘i’s reefs to collection. Significant comments related to the proposals’ scientific unsoundness, poor environmental stewardship, conflicts with Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, major enforcement challenges, unethical and inhumane treatment of marine life, and a cost/benefit analysis showing no benefits to the people of Hawai‘i from the trade, were for the most part ignored or dismissed in each of the *ten* rounds of early consultation and general public comments submitted thus far.

Furthermore, the trade minimized and dismissed important findings in the Cultural Impact Assessments (CIAs) it commissioned and included in the EISs for Hawai‘i Island and O‘ahu, such as the physical, cultural, and socio-economic connections between the unique places found throughout Hawai‘i.

Decades of aquarium collection have directly impacted more than 200 species and indirectly impacted an unknown number of additional vertebrate and invertebrate species found in Hawai‘i’s coral reefs, one of the most complex ecosystems on Earth, where the fate of each species is determined by the existence, abundance and diverse actions of a multitude of other species that inhabit or otherwise rely upon these unique places.

⁸ Aha Moku Council [testimony on SB505 Relating to Environmental Protection](#) at pdf pg. 1 – 7

⁹ Kāne‘ohe Bay Regional Council [letter to Chair Chang](#)

¹⁰ Additional examples of [letters to Chair Chang](#)

¹¹ Neighborhood Board [examples of resolutions urging aquarium trade ban](#)

The CIA provided an extensive history of native Hawaiians and their symbiotic relationship with the ocean and its animal inhabitants. The CIA also included summaries of interviews conducted with individuals from multiple user groups, all of whom “expressed some degree of ongoing cultural attachment to the ocean.” More than 80 percent of the interviewees noted how the trade both directly and indirectly impacts their cultural resources, beliefs, practices and values. Unfortunately, the CIA essentially dismissed those oral testimonies by concluding that commercial aquarium collection would result in a cultural impact *only* if the EISs biological assessments indicated significant depletion of species or habitat disruption.¹² Equating cultural impacts with fish population counts is a false equivalency which, when combined with the fatally flawed biological assessments contained within the EISs, ultimately served to silence the voices of all those who had voiced strong opposition to aquarium trade practices and impacts. *See* Section III, *infra*, for examples.

The public has not benefited from the aquarium trade’s HEPA review process, which the trade has twisted to serve and promote its own interests. A new public rulemaking process is required in order to promote and protect the *public’s* interests in restoring abundance of critically important fishes and finally addressing the cultural and ethical conflicts that are inherent in this trade.

Authority to Prohibit Commercial Aquarium Collecting

In 1955, the legislature constituted all of Hawai‘i’s waters as a marine life conservation area where, via rulemaking, DLNR can prohibit activities even *potentially* harming the marine environment.^{13, 14} Under HRS 190-3, the legislature empowered DLNR with the authority to prohibit via rulemaking any activity that *may* disturb, degrade, or alter the marine environment.¹⁵ Furthermore, the legislature provided that rules adopted under this statute “supersede any state laws inconsistent therewith.”¹⁶

Petitioners provide in Section IV, *infra*, examples of facts and data contained in peer-reviewed literature, and reports, including DLNR’s, describing the extent to which, from decades past to the present, aquarium collection *already has* disturbed, degraded, and/or altered the marine environment.

Petitioners note that this formal petition to the Board comes after years of good faith efforts to work directly with DAR to address aquarium trade impacts since at least 2008.¹⁷ Most recently, beginning in February of 2022, petitioner, For the Fishes, was asked by DAR to engage in

¹² PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 362

¹³ HRS §190-1

¹⁴ HRS §190-3

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ DAR (2009). [Report to the Legislature on the Progress for the Adoption of Rules to Regulate the Ornamental Reef Fish Fishery Industry in South Maui and Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, to Confer with Geographical Stakeholders, and to Propose Appropriate Legislation](#)

“informal communication directly with DAR” instead of via a formal petition to the Board to initiate rulemaking to prohibit commercial aquarium collection. Despite petitioners’ months long, good faith efforts at informal engagement, DAR inexplicably stopped responding, despite multiple requests to continue moving forward.

DAR’s often-used claim in the face of growing public opposition to commercial aquarium collection has been that the trade is “sustainable.” Yet, DAR biologists have described the activity as “a major cause of coral reef degradation,” as “having a major impact on yellow tang and Achilles tang,” and have reported depletion rates in excess of 80% in many collected areas, over many years.^{18, 19, 20}

Conclusion

Petitioners urge the Board to exercise its policy and rulemaking authority to adopt rules to prohibit commercial aquarium collecting statewide.

Petitioners have presented a sampling of existing evidence substantiating that commercial aquarium collection meets the threshold for an activity that may be prohibited by the Board under HRS 190-3 because it “may disturb, degrade, or alter the marine environment.”

The rulemaking sought in this petition is the *only* process that will provide the opportunity for the public’s long and strongly held thoughts and desires to be truly heard and ultimately integrated into marine management policy.

It’s time to right the imbalance in prior management decisions that put commercial interests before the public’s, and apply DLNR’s Hierarchy of Priorities adopted by the Board in 1998. That policy clearly states that when DLNR considers management actions, the highest priority goes to natural and cultural resources, and that commercial activities should be considered last, and only if they do not impinge on those resources.²¹

Petitioners have demonstrated the broad community support for prohibiting aquarium collecting statewide, and that rulemaking to prohibit commercial aquarium collecting benefits all of Hawai‘i. Petitioners further note that no one has *legally* taken fish for commercial aquarium purposes for nearly 6 years.

III. Supplemental Facts and Data Regarding Dismissal of Public Input in HEPA Review

- One community member interviewed on Hawai‘i Island for the West Hawai‘i CIA in 2019 identified himself as a former long-time aquarium collector.²² When asked whether aquarium

¹⁸ DLNR (1998). [Hawai‘i’s State of the Reefs, 1998](#), pg. 15

¹⁹ DAR (2010). [Long-Term Monitoring of Coral Reefs of the Main Hawaiian Islands Final Report](#) at pg. 112-113

²⁰ DAR (2013). [Long-Term Monitoring of Coral Reefs of the Main Hawaiian Islands Final Report](#) at pg. 64-65

²¹ DLNR Hierarchy of Use Policy (1998). [The policy](#) clearly states that when the Department considers management actions, the highest priority goes to natural and cultural resources, and that commercial activities should be considered only if they do not impinge on those resources.

²² PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 335, 336

collecting could result in cultural impacts, he responded that “aquarium collecting methods can have a damaging effect on the reef, which in itself, is considered a valued cultural resource.”²³ He then described the method used to capture and take certain fish species and eels, explaining that “these species often conceal themselves deep within the coral reefs and . . . removing them requires significant damage to the reefs.”²⁴

- Although this CIA was included in the trade’s draft, final and revised final EISs for West Hawai‘i, each of which included the proposed take of at least one of the species whose capture involves significant coral damage, in no version of the EISs did the aquarium trade include a discussion of these often used and destructive practices, nor propose any measures to mitigate the damage such practices cause.
- The trade’s EISs dismissed all cultural concerns, stating “[aquarium collecting] may impact cultural practices, but the extent of the impact is unknown,”²⁵ and in doing so, effectively dismissed the findings and purpose section of Chapter 343 which makes clear that environmental review necessitates integrating citizen concerns into the planning process.²⁶
- Despite the above, for each of three aquarium trade EISs brought to the Board for determination of adequacy and acceptability in 2020 and 2021, DAR made the recommendation that the Board accept them. In doing so, DAR continued its own decades-long dismissal of the strongly held and frequently voiced public concerns surrounding the take of Hawai‘i’s marine life for the mainland aquarium pet trade.

IV. Supplemental Facts and Data Regarding Degradation of the Marine Environment

- In a 1998 DLNR report, commercial aquarium collecting was shown to be among the main causes of Hawaiian coral reef degradation, with major impacts on O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island.²⁷
- In the decade leading up to that report, the volume of marine fishes annually taken by the trade (i.e. the main cause of that coral reef degradation) closely resembled the volume proposed in the trade’s most recent EIS Preferred Alternatives for both O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island.^{28, 29}
- From 1998 until aquarium collecting was shut down by court order in 2017, data shows continuing and, in some years, increasing degradation of reef fish assemblages in West Hawai‘i for many aquarium-targeted species, most of which are herbivores.³⁰ As recognized by scientists, DAR, and the Board, because herbivorous fishes are the primary factor

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 17, 202, 204,

²⁶ Hawaii Office of Environmental Quality Control (2012). [Guide to the Implementation and Practice of the Hawaii Environmental Policy Act](#), pdf pg. 10

²⁷ DLNR (1998). [Hawai‘i’s State of the Reefs, 1998](#), pg. 15

²⁸ PIJAC (2021). [FEIS Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits and Commercial Marine Licenses for the Island of O‘ahu](#) at pdf pg. 131-133

²⁹ PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 164-166

³⁰ DLNR (2019). [Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area \(WHRFMA\)](#) at pdf pg. 34, 36, 45, 56

determining algae cover on our slow-grown coral reefs, the abundance and diversity of the herbivore fish community is a critical factor determining the ability of Hawai‘i’s coral reefs to persist in our changing climate.^{31, 32}

- In most years from 2003 to 2017, the areas open to aquarium collecting, encompassing the majority of West Hawai‘i reefs, had the lowest herbivore biomass, the lowest coral cover, and the highest level of algal overgrowth.³³
- In 2000, on the West Hawai‘i reefs open to aquarium collecting, the most heavily collected herbivore, the lau‘īpala (yellow tang), was depleted by approximately 30%. By 2008, the level of depletion had increased to more than 120%.³⁴
- The level of depletion fluctuated from year to year, and in many years the depletion rate was upwards of 80%, including 2017, the last year legal aquarium collecting occurred in West Hawai‘i.³⁵
- Notably, 2017 was also the year in which the trade most recently reported taking a number of lau‘īpala (237,000) similar to the total catch proposed in their 2021 EIS (200,000) which was approved and supported by DAR and accepted-by-default by the Board in 2021.^{36, 37} **This alone reveals the inadequacy of HEPA analysis, as undertaken by the aquarium trade, in preventing degradation to Hawai‘i’s coral reefs, and underscores the urgent need for rulemaking.**
- Paku‘iku‘i (Achilles tang), another heavily targeted aquarium species, is also a favorite food fish. According to DAR, the aquarium trade had a major impact on the species, taking upwards of 80% of their populations on the majority of West Hawai‘i reefs (i.e. the areas open to aquarium collecting).^{38, 39}
- Since at least 2006, DAR documented paku‘iku‘i population declines due to aquarium impact but took no action to protect paku‘iku‘i for food fishers. It wasn’t until December 2022 that DAR finally took action to mitigate the severe paku‘iku‘i population decline. Unfortunately for local fishers, DAR waited until populations were so critically low that a complete prohibition that included food fishing was required. The mainland aquarium pet trade profited for decades, and now Hawai‘i reefs and residents, especially local fishers, pay the price.⁴⁰

³¹ DAR [Sustainable Herbivore Management Plan](#) (2021)

³² Asner et al. (2020). Analysis of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement Regarding Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits and Commercial Marine Licenses for the Island of O‘ahu Submitted by the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council in PIJAC (2021) [FEIS Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits and Commercial Marine Licenses for the Island of O‘ahu](#) at pdf pg. 996

³³ Gove et. al (2019) West Hawai‘i integrated ecosystem assessment ecosystem status report at pg. 745, 750 in PIJAC (2021) [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#)

³⁴ DLNR (2019). [Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area \(WHRFMA\)](#) at pdf pg. 36

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ DLNR catch reports

³⁷ PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 52

³⁸ DAR (2010). [Long-Term Monitoring of Coral Reefs of the Main Hawaiian Islands Final Report](#) at pg. 112-113

³⁹ DAR (2013) [Long-Term Monitoring of Coral Reefs of the Main Hawaiian Islands Final Report](#) at pg. 64-65

⁴⁰ DAR (2022). [Board submittal requesting a 2-year moratorium of taking paku‘iku‘i across West Hawai‘i](#)

- The trade’s West Hawai‘i revised EIS, which is currently under review on appeal, proposed the take of nearly a quarter million fish annually from West Hawai‘i reefs, which would exceed the amount of reef fishes taken by all food fishers, *combined*, and would total 1.23 million fish over the five-year period covered under the revised EIS.^{41, 42}

Average Reef Fish Catch Numbers 2008 - 2011				2021 AQ EIS	
	Non-commercial	Commercial	Total Non AQ	Aquarium	Proposed Total Annual
West Hawai‘i	146,176	48,498	194,674	343,729	246,560

- For seven of the eight proposed catch quotas in that West Hawai‘i EIS, take levels are higher than in most of the last 20 years; and for Potter’s angelfish and Thompson’s surgeonfish, in particular, the proposed catch quotas represent three and ten times the average reported historical catch, respectively.⁴³
- Data from DAR and elsewhere show significant ongoing impacts on O‘ahu, as well. A white paper by DAR and UH researchers documents the devastating impacts of commercial aquarium collecting on vulnerable lau‘īpala populations between Honolulu Airport and Ka‘ena Point, and their subsequent collapse after Hurricane Iwa, which to this day, have not recovered.⁴⁴ The paper documents that “In the weeks following the storm, . . . many fish had migrated to areas that escaped major damage . . . With the loss of collecting habitat, collectors concentrated their efforts in those sites still economically utilizable . . .” “The net result was that storm effects combined with overfishing resulted in the collapse of the aquarium fishery along [the leeward] portion of the O‘ahu coastline.”⁴⁵
- As a result, collectors shifted their focus to invertebrates or to collecting in places such as to Kāne‘ohe Bay, which became the most heavily collected area, while others moved to Hawai‘i Island.⁴⁶
- Prior to 1983, aquarium collectors reported taking upwards of 23,000 lau‘īpala a year from O‘ahu’s leeward reefs. Within three years of Hurricane Iwa, reported catch had dropped by more than 90%. Since 1986 reported lau‘īpala catch from those areas has ranged from 2,000 – 6,000 per year.⁴⁷
- The lack of oversight by DAR, combined with constant collection pressure, has prevented any former abundance from returning to O‘ahu’s leeward coast, because aquarium collecting takes juvenile fish that are years from maturity. A sufficient number left on the reefs would have contributed to the repopulation of the lau‘īpala that were at least four times more

⁴¹ DLNR (2019). [Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area \(WHRFMA\)](#) at pdf pg. 73

⁴² PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 52

⁴³ PIJAC (2021). [Revised FEIS Hawaii Island Commercial Aquarium Permits](#) at pdf pg. 164-166

⁴⁴ Walsh et al. (2004) [The commercial marine aquarium fishery in Hawaii 1976-2003](#) at pdf pg. 11-14; DLNR catch reports

⁴⁵ Ibid. at pdf pg. 12

⁴⁶ Ibid. at pdf pg. 12-14

⁴⁷ Ibid. at pdf pg. 14; DLNR catch reports

abundant four decades ago, before commercial aquarium collecting nearly wiped them out completely.

- In areas long-protected from aquarium collecting, lau‘īpala are one of the most abundant herbivores on the reef. However, on O‘ahu reefs where collecting has occurred, research shows they are depleted by 93%.⁴⁸ Other heavily targeted aquarium species are harmed, as well: kole and umaumalei (orangespine unicornfish) are each depleted by 90%.⁴⁹
- Kāne‘ohe Bay has been particularly impacted. In 2008, 8,604 of the top four herbivorous surgeonfishes were taken by the trade.⁵⁰ In 2019, it had jumped to 25,745 of those same species.⁵¹ From 2000 - 2020, for the entire island of O‘ahu, the annual average reported aquarium catch was 71,983 fish, 29% - 60% of which was taken from Kāne‘ohe Bay, which had become the most heavily collected area in recent years.⁵²
- The O‘ahu EIS, which is currently being revised by the trade after having been rejected by the Board in October of 2021, proposed the take of more than 92,000 fish annually from O‘ahu’s reefs (totaling more than 460,000 fish over the five-year period covered under the EIS), an amount that is more than 20% greater than the average reported historical take of less than 72,000 fish annually.
- For 28 of the 31 proposed catch quotas, take levels are higher than the average reported historical levels, including for lau‘īpala (35% higher) and kole (18% higher).
- The EIS also proposed take of more than 200,000 invertebrates, e.g., hermit crabs, annually (totaling more than 1 million invertebrates over the five-year period covered under the EIS), substantially exceeds the average reported historical take of around 165,000 invertebrates annually.
- As discussed above, the take of several species involved the intentional destruction of coral in order to reach species known to seek shelter deep within the reef structure. One such species, the endemic Potter’s Angelfish, was taken by the trade in very high numbers with over 139,000 reported by O‘ahu aquarium collectors from 2000 – 2017.
- DAR has only recently begun taking seriously the coral damage done by the aquarium trade when collecting this species. In a Special Activity Permit to collect Potters angelfishes as broodstock for aquaculture, which was reviewed by the Board in June 2023, DAR included a permit condition requiring the videotaping of the collection of each and every fish to prove that no coral was damaged or broken when attempting to capture the animals.

V. Text of the Proposed Rule

Petitioners urge the Board to initiate rulemaking for a new section of the Department’s administrative rules to read:

⁴⁸ Grabowsky & Thornhill (2020). [Abundance of AQ-Targeted Fish on Oahu](#) at pdf pg. 20

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ DLNR catch reports

⁵¹ DLNR catch reports

⁵² DLNR catch reports

HAWAII ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

TITLE 13

DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBTITLE 4 FISHERIES

PART IV FISHERIES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 78

COLLECTION OF MARINE LIFE FOR AQUARIUM PURPOSES

General Provisions

§13-78-1 Applicability and scope

§13-78-2 Definitions

§13-78-3 Exemptions

§13-78-4 Penalties

§13-78-5 Severability

§13-78-6 Prohibited activities

General Provisions

§13-78-1 Applicability and scope. This chapter shall apply to the collection of marine life for aquarium purposes. While governing the taking of marine life intended for live aquarium displays, this chapter shall not apply to the take of marine life for food, bait, or other consumptive purposes. (Auth: HRS §§187A-5, 188-31)

§13-78-2 Definitions. As used in this chapter unless otherwise provided:

"Aquarium purposes" means to hold marine fish, fresh water nongame fish, or other marine life alive in a state of captivity, whether as pets, for scientific study, for public exhibition, for public display, or for sale for these purposes.

"Commercial purpose" means the taking of marine life for profit, gain, sale, purchase, barter, exchange, to offer for sale, or upon any offer to purchase.

§13-78-3 Exemptions. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter, the department may issue the licenses or permits which exempt persons from the provisions of this chapter.

(b) Section 13-75-14(7) exempts the use of small mesh hand nets or scoop nets to take fish or other marine life for non-commercial purposes. (Auth: HRS §§187A-3.5, 187A-6, 190-4)

§13-78-4 Penalties. A person violating any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a petty misdemeanor and penalized as provided by section 187A-13, HRS. In addition to any criminal penalty, any violation of these rules shall also be subject to civil and administrative penalties, as provided by section 187A-12.5, HRS. (Auth: HRS §§187A-5) (Imp: HRS §§187A-12.5, 187A-13)

§13-78-5 Severability. The provisions of these rules are declared to be severable, and if any portion, or the application thereof, to any person or property is held invalid for any reason, the validity of the remainder of these rules or the application of the remainder to other persons or property shall not be affected. (Auth: HRS §§187A-5, 188-31)

13-78-6 Prohibited activities. (a) It is unlawful for any person to take marine life for commercial aquarium purposes.

VI. Proposed Amendments and Repeal

AMEND: §13-60.4 to read as follows:

§13-60.4-4 Activities prohibited within the West Hawai'i regional fishery management area. While within the West Hawai'i regional fishery management area, no person shall:

~~(4) Possess or use any net or container employed underwater to capture or hold aquatic life alive for aquarium purposes, that is not labeled with the commercial marine license number or numbers of the person or persons owning, possessing or using the equipment;~~

§13-60.4-6 Lay net registration and use requirements.

~~(g) This section shall not apply to panel mesh nets with a stretched mesh size of less than two and three-fourths inches that are marked with commercial marine license numbers as required under section 13-60.4-4(4), and permitted for use and possession under an aquarium permit and a West Hawai'i aquarium permit issued under section 13-60.4-7(a).~~

§13-60.4-7 Aquarium collecting permit and vessel registration requirements.

~~(d) Control date. A control date was established in August 1, 2005 to possibly limit participation in the West Hawai'i regional fishery management area commercial aquarium fishery. Persons who begin fishing in the West Hawai'i regional fishery management area commercial aquarium fishery on or after the control date will not be assured continued participation if the department establishes an aquarium limited entry program in the future.~~
~~(e) Nothing in this chapter shall prevent the department from establishing another control date.~~

AMEND: §13-75 to read as follows:

§13-75-14 Nets, generally. It is unlawful for any person to use nets made of or using netting with a stretched mesh of less than two inches, except that:

(1) Pond owners or operators who hold a valid license issued under section 13-74-40, may use nets of smaller mesh to take young mullet or pua for stocking their fish ponds;

(2) Commercial marine licensees who hold a valid bait license issued under section 13-74-22, may use nets of smaller mesh to take nehu, `iao, marquesan sardine, gold-spot herring, or any other species for which an open season may be declared by the department for use as bait;

(3) All persons may use nets of smaller mesh to take shrimp or `opae, `opelu, makiawa, or mikiawa;

~~(4) Aquarium fish collectors with a valid aquarium fish permit issued pursuant to section 188-31, HRS, may use traps and nets for aquarium fish and other aquatic life in conformance with the conditions of the permit, provided that non-commercial aquarium fish collectors shall be limited to a combined total of five fish or aquatic life specimens per person per day.~~

REPEAL IN ENTIRETY: §13-77 OAHU AQUARIUM LIFE MANAGEMENT

Respectfully submitted with a request for a public Board hearing to respond to this petition.

Dated: November 9, 2023



U'ilani Naipo
Kalanihale



Charles Young
KUPA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park



Mike Nakachi
Moana 'Ohana



Elena Bryant
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club



Rene Umberger
For the Fishes

From: [Joell Edwards](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oppose Item F-2 October 24 , 2025
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:43:02 PM

Board of Land and Natural Resources

P.O. Box 621

Honolulu, HI 96809

RE: Opposition to Item F-2 – Proposed Consolidation of HAR Chapters Relating to Aquarium Life Management (Proposed HAR 13-77.1 and Amendments to HAR 13-75 & 13-60.4)

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

I respectfully oppose Item F-2 on your October 24, 2025 agenda, concerning the proposed consolidation of aquarium fishery rules. While the intent to clarify regulations is appreciated, the proposal raises serious concerns about environmental compliance, cultural protections, and enforcement capacity.

Environmental Review:

The Hawai'i Supreme Court has affirmed that any aquarium collection activity requires a full environmental review under Chapter 343, HRS. Advancing these amendments before such review would undermine both compliance and public trust.

Community Protections:

Eliminating the West Hawai'i Aquarium Permit risks dismantling region-specific safeguards developed through decades of community effort. Localized management rooted in cultural and ecological knowledge should be strengthened, not replaced by a one-size-fits-all approach.

Enforcement Capacity:

DOCARE and DAR remain under-resourced. Expanding statewide permitting without adequate staffing or oversight will widen compliance gaps and weaken sustainability.

At a time when our coral reefs face severe stress from climate change and invasive species, continuing to extract reef life for the aquarium trade — even in limited form — conflicts with Hawai‘i’s conservation priorities.

I urge the Board to defer approval of Item F-2 until a full EA or EIS is completed, meaningful community consultation occurs, and a clear enforcement plan is made public.

Our marine life is a public trust resource that must be managed with integrity, caution, and respect for place.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Joell M. Edwards

From: [Eric Edwards](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:34:39 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Eric Edwards, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time. I cannot believe we are still discussing this. **THERE IS ABSOLUTLY NO REASON TO ALLOW AQARIUM FISHING IN HAWAII!**

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Eric Edwards
Miloli'i, Hawai'i Island

From: [Ursula Eisenpress](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:51:52 PM

Our planet is dying due to decisions like the aquarium fishing bill under consideration. The green decision would be to leave as much of nature untouched as possible. Aquarium fish are just a self indulgence and shouldn't be involved in decisions about our environment at all. No reef fishing for this industry. Put our planet first. Leave it alone.

Ursula eisenpress
8082829283

From: [Gillian Eitel](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PROTECT HAWAII FISH
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:17:28 AM

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end, and please keep the permitting authority with BLNR.

My name is Gillian Eitel and I am a humble resident of Wailuku, HI and I would be appalled and devastated to see this pass and bring harm to a piece of what makes our home so great - the ocean and its wildlife. Aquarium trade is not for Hawai'i. Do what is pono.

Regards,

Gillian Eitel

SKA Studio
Architectural Designer
eitellgillian@gmail.com | 443-534-3546

From: [Cierra Elise](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Agenda Item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:41:07 AM

I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back!

Thank you,

Cierra M.

From: [Aionalu Emmsley](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:43:58 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Aloha my name is Aionalu emmsley I am a 5th grade student strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo new loa,
Aionalu emmsley. I am a 5th grade student

Kanu o ka aina Charter school
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Joselito Enovejas](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 6:14:54 PM

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jose Enovejas. I am an avid aquarium enthusiast. I have been interested in the aquarium hobby ever since I was a little boy. At one point, I was purchasing quite a bit of saltwater aquarium fish from my commercial aquarium fish collecting friend Tyron Terazono in order to off balance my hobby expenses. I would buy and sell fish so that I would acquire the fish I like the most and sell whatever my customers requested for.

Ever since the commercial aquarium fish collecting ban got put in place, the prices of saltwater aquarium fish have skyrocketed! Local Hawaii saltwater fish like flame angels and yellow tangs that I used to purchase for \$10-\$25 each are now being sold by captive bred companies like The Biota Group for \$185-\$275 each. The saltwater aquarium hobby is already an expensive hobby due to the price of synthetic salt, and required sustainably aquarium equipment. Then to spend ridiculous amounts of money for local Hawaii saltwater fish is like a slap in the face!

Another reason why this ban should be lifted is because in the study that was conducted, there was no significant impact to the aquarium fish population due to commercial aquarium fish collecting. This was the bread and butter for my friend Tyron & his wife Casey. Their livelihood got taken away for no logical reason. They have been collecting saltwater aquarium fish for years. Although, due to this ban, they had to resort to other forms of fishing just to pay their bills. They gave up their hearts passion because of someone else's poor decision making!

I am writing this email in agreement of re-opening Hawaii's reefs to commercial aquarium fish collecting. I thank the Division of Aquatic Resources for drafting a rule package, and I ask the Board of Land and Natural Resources to approve the lifting of the ban and consider all the testimonies in favor. Please take my words to heart, and allow me to continue to enjoy my childhood hobby by allowing me to purchase saltwater aquarium fish at a reasonable price. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jose Enovejas

From: [Eric](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:07:27 PM

To whom it may concern,

I strongly support the issuance of commercial aquarium fishery permits for West Hawai‘i. The Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement (RFEIS) and subsequent scientific reviews show no significant environmental impacts, and the data clearly indicate that the fishery operates sustainably—with healthy populations and stable ecosystems. The science supports reopening this well-managed, low-risk fishery under the preferred alternative.

-Eric

From: [Randy Fernley](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Rules package
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:43:08 AM

Aloha committee members,

As a former aquarium fisher, **I strongly support the rules package** being submitted by the DAR.

However, I feel that a safety diver must be included in the proposal for the issuance of permits. Diving alone is a recipe for disaster.

I'd also like to add that tropical aquarium collection in the state of Hawaii has been unfairly targeted by animal rights activists and misinformed legislators. If not passed, many of our local people will never get the chance to see and educate themselves on the sea life that surround our islands. Please pass this rules package.

Randy Fernley
Past owner of Coral Fish Hawaii

From: [Doug Fetterly](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:32:58 AM

Have you no shame. Apparently not. Your decision to go back on your word and allow the destructive practice of fishing out our reefs for the aquarium trade runs counter to Hawaiian values, to caring for the environment. Is BLNR taking guidelines from the US Republican Congress—money first! I, along with my colleagues, urge you to do the right thing and vote against the aquarium trade.

Doug

Doug Fetterly

From: [David Fleetham](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:58:10 AM

Aloha Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly oppose Agenda Item F.2, which seeks to reopen Hawai‘i’s reefs to commercial aquarium collecting. Our coral reef ecosystems are already under immense stress from warming oceans, pollution, and habitat degradation. Allowing commercial extraction of reef fish and invertebrates will further destabilize an ecosystem already fighting for survival.

These species play vital ecological roles—cleaning algae, maintaining coral health, and sustaining balance within the reef community. Removing them for the aquarium trade not only disrupts these natural relationships but also weakens the resilience of the entire reef system. The loss of even small, colorful fish has a cascading effect on biodiversity, coral vitality, and local fisheries that depend on healthy reefs.

Hawai‘i’s reefs are not a resource to be mined; they are a living heritage central to cultural identity, ecological stability, and sustainable tourism. Reopening commercial collection would serve short-term profit at the expense of long-term ecological and community well-being.

I urge the Board to protect Hawai‘i’s reefs by rejecting this proposal and prioritizing conservation, education, and sustainable, non-extractive uses of our marine ecosystems.

Respectfully submitted,
David Fleetham
Makawao, Maui, HI.
dfleetham@gmail.com

From: [Breanne Fong](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:09:18 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the board,

My name is Breanne (Bree) Fong from Niu, Kona, O‘ahu.

I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to Agenda Item F.2 on DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules.

I ask that the permitting authority be kept with BLNR to ensure FULL transparency and accountable.

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community’s call to safeguard reef life and are in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end.

Please remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reeds. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.

Please remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai‘i Pacific University (HPU) in O‘ahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.

Please add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.

Please ensure that it aligns with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!!!

Please also align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT privatized commercial export.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,
Breanne Fong

From: [Alexandra Fong](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] KEEP PERMITTING WITH BLNR
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:52:18 PM

Hello,

My name is Alexandra Fong and I am from San Diego, California.

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end and please keep the permitting authority with BLNR. I just got back from North Shore O'ahu at Turtle Bay this week and my husband and myself went night snorkeling. All we could see was urchins during a night dive and it was upsetting to both ourselves and our snorkel instructors that there wasn't as big of a variety of fish that we could observe and admire. We need to replenish these reefs rather than taking fish out for meaningless aquariums.

Warm Regards,
Alexandra Fong
916-838-0312



**Board of Land and Natural Resources
October 24, 2025, 9:00 am, Room 132**

RE: STRONG OPPOSITION – Item F.2 Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Commercial Aquarium Collecting Rules, as proposed.

Dear Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

For the Fishes, a Maui-based nonprofit organization, has worked since 2008 to protect Hawai'i's marine life from the destructive aquarium pet trade. Working alongside dozens of community and conservation partners, we helped close commercial aquarium operations in Maui County (2010), end collection in West Hawai'i (2017) and statewide (2021) through litigation requiring compliance with the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA), and in 2023, secure unanimous Board approval of our petition to prohibit the take of marine life for commercial aquarium purposes

For numerous reasons – most notably the radically changed conservation intent of the community petition that now functions as a blueprint for the large-scale commercial capture of reef fish for the aquarium trade, **we urge the Board to:**

- (1) Send the rule package back for redrafting in close collaboration with the 2023 petitioner hui.
- (2) Maintain its current authority to review, issue, and deny aquarium permits. This authority is essential to ensuring public oversight, accountability, and adherence to the conservation intent of the rule.

The current draft rule represents an **institutional betrayal of both public trust and the Board's own commitments**. What began as a community-led proposal to end the aquarium trade has been rewritten by DAR into a plan that prioritizes the trade's interests over the public's. DAR ignored the petitioner hui's proposed solutions, disregarded the Board's instruction to "take full consideration of the petition to ban," and now seeks to remove Board oversight entirely — just months after the Board formally acknowledged its authority to deny aquarium collection permits. This reversal undermines transparency, accountability, and the Board's duty to act in the public's interest.

DAR's proposal also runs directly counter to overwhelming public sentiment. A recent **scientific poll** conducted by Anthology | FINN found that **84% of O'ahu and Hawai'i Island residents favor a permanent ban** on commercial aquarium collection, and only **10%** support the large-

scale capture now proposed by DAR. Public trust resources should not be sacrificed for an activity so clearly opposed by the people of Hawai'i (see top-line results in Appendix 1).

The many conservation, cultural, ethical, and social concerns stated in the petition remain unaddressed in the current draft. While we continue to hold fast to our belief that DLNR has the authority to ban commercial aquarium collection by rule – and while that remains an open legal question – over the years we have identified and proposed solutions in testimony, EIS comments, and meetings with DAR staff. These proposals, though short of a full ban, would meaningfully address our concerns. Yet the aquarium trade, in its EIS revisions, and DAR, in this proposal, have **summarily dismissed them – either with silence or by claiming they were unnecessary or infeasible.**

Examples of solutions we've proposed to ensure the critical protections we strongly believe are necessary for our reefs and marine life:

- a. **Limiting collection** to non-native species (i.e. roi, ta'ape, to'au).
- b. **Limiting collection** to 'White List' native species not yet commercially aquacultured for the aquarium trade (i.e. deleting yellow tang and Potter's angelfish); and, not important as subsistence food fish (i.e. deleting kole and umaumalei); and, not endemic (i.e. deleting chevron tang).
- c. **Prohibiting inhumane capture and handling practices**, including rapid surfacing that causes barotrauma, organ piercing with hypodermic needles (aka "venting"), fin/spine cutting, and extended starvation, all of which violate Hawai'i's animal cruelty statute which is applicable to all non-human animals; and,
- d. **Establishing local, place-based catch quotas** to prevent dangerous depletion in heavily collected areas
- e. **Requiring transparency and public reporting** on catch data, permit activity, and species mortality; and
- f. **Implementing stronger enforcement measures** to ensure compliance with rules and penalties for violations.

Some of the facts driving our strong opposition to the current rule proposal are summarized below, and discussed in more detail in the following pages. They include:

- December 2023 unanimous Board support for our formal petition for rulemaking to prohibit commercial AQ statewide;
- Multiple DAR Board submittals affirming that the Board, not the Chair, will determine whether to issue any AQ permits; and Brian Neilson's statement in August 2024 that "DAR will leave permitting up to the Board;"
- Overwhelming benefits of leaving Hawai'i's marine life on Hawai'i's reefs, which far outweigh the monetary gains of a handful of individuals who sell our marine life to the AQ pet trade outside Hawai'i;
- Extremely high mortality rates of captive marine life and the inhumane capture and transport practices that are unethical, illegal in many cases, and incompatible with local and cultural values.

Some of the facts supporting our recommendations reflecting the spirit and intent of the original rule petition, include:

- Limiting collection to non-native species: Most of the proposed White List species are herbivores. Best available science from the Hawai'i Island-based Asner lab and others shows that far more herbivores are needed on West Hawai'i reefs in order to increase our coral reefs resilience to deadly and potentially catastrophic coral bleaching from climate change in the near future.¹ Non-native, introduced species, are predators, two of which (roi and toau) are known to consume important herbivorous fishes.
 - Many of those consulted in the West Hawai'i EIS Cultural Impact Assessment noted that a reduction in the population of non-native, introduced, species is potentially beneficial for improving the overall health of the reef and food fishery because these non-native species can out compete native species.²
 - These species are in demand by aquarium hobbyists with the ta'ape exhibiting the bright yellow color yellow tangs are famous for, in addition to electric blue lines (see Appendix 2 for examples).
- Limiting AQ collection to species neither food fish, aquacultured, nor endemic: Kole and umaumalei are essential herbivores important food fish. Yellow tang is also an essential herbivore, and Potter's Angelfish and chevron tang are among Hawaii's most beautiful endemic species.
- Prohibition of inhumane practices: The AQ trade engages in practices that result in serious injuries to fishes and contribute to their high premature mortality rates in captivity. These practices are conducted solely to save collectors time, money, or both. In recognition of these facts, Maui County enacted Ordinance 3809 in 2011 which prohibits the inhumane treatment of marine life captured for AQ purposes. This ordinance led former Maui aquarium collectors to move their operations to Hawai'i Island, where such practices are not prohibited.
 - We urge the Board to protect Hawai'i's marine life from unnecessary harm by prohibiting the practices detailed below beginning on page 6.
- Evenly distribute catch quotas for native species between AQ collection report sub-zones: The fact that commercial AQ exerts extreme pressure on some reefs and less so on others, is undisputed. It is a fact that requires mitigation to guard against localized depletion, or worse, such as the collapse of targeted species from AQ over-harvesting that occurred on leeward Oahu reefs 40 years ago, and which have yet to recover. This was also observed with paku'iku'i in West Hawai'i which were severely depleted by the trade, as admitted by

¹ Foo, S.A., Asner, G.P. Depth-dependent indicators of algal turf herbivory throughout the Main Hawaiian Islands. *Coral Reefs* **40**, 1397–1408 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00338-021-02162-2>; and, Gove, J.M., Williams, G.J., Lecky, J. *et al.* Coral reefs benefit from reduced land–sea impacts under ocean warming. *Nature* **621**, 536–542 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06394-w>

² WH FEIS pdf pg. 361

DAR's own biologists more than a decade ago, but not afforded any protection from collecting until the court order closed the trade.

- DAR is aware of this significant potential for harm given they require those collecting under Special Activity Permits (SAPs), such as public for-profit and non-profit aquariums and aquaculture facilities, to ensure they are collecting no more than 20% of a target species on any given reef. DAR also requires SAP holders to video-document their collection of certain species, such as the Potter's Angelfish, given that these fish hide within coral reefs that are often damaged by collectors when taking these species.
- The potential for harm from collection under commercial AQ permits is exponentially greater than for collection under SAPs given SAP holders are typically permitted to take only a dozen or so individuals of a single species per year, whereas commercial AQ would take over 224,000 fishes.
- If commercial AQ of native species is to resume, which we again strongly oppose, it is imperative that the Board require limits that are place-based, at the local reef level, and at the very least, at the AQ collection report sub-zone, which is how AQ catch is reported to DLNR.

Discussion of Supporting Facts and Reasons for Redrafting the Rule Prior to Any Public Hearings:

A. Unanimous Board support for a new rule aimed at ending commercial AQ

In December 2023, hundreds of voices from communities across the entire State went on the record in staunch opposition to the AQ trade which seeks to profit from an activity that degrades the abundance, biodiversity, and health of coral reefs and marine life – all important public trust resources – with zero benefits going to those who depend upon that same ecosystem in myriad ways.

The Board is on the record in support of those communities seeking a permanent end to the degradation of the resource, AQ's major conflicts with social and cultural values, and its related costs, all of which are borne by the public, yet without any public consent.

As you know, the Board's duty is to first prioritize the resource itself (our coral reefs and marine life) then to ensure the environmental, cultural, and social benefits that flow from coral reefs to the public. There is no disputing that in the absence of AQ, our reefs and marine life are healthier, more abundant and biodiverse.

B. DAR Board submittals and statements affirming that the Board will determine whether to issue any AQ permits

Community members have long been alarmed at the potential for DAR to issue aquarium permits and for the destructive trade to reopen. In what we thought was a genuine reassurance

that the public's voices would always be heard, three earlier DAR submittals to the Board recommending approval of AQ EISs in 2020 and 2021 included the statement, “**the Board will make a separate determination at a later date regarding whether to issue any [AQ fish] permits and what permit terms and conditions may be necessary to mitigate environmental impacts.**”

Alarming, just weeks after the Board affirmed in a legal document that issuing aquarium permits is discretionary, DAR proposes to remove Board oversight and the ability for the public to have a voice, and place that authority with itself, where AQ permits would be issued without the public even being notified, let alone given an opportunity to provide any input. There is no justification for this recommendation by DAR.

It appears that the approach under this new recommendation aims to further silence community voices that have long opposed this activity; and, shield potential AQ permittees from further public scrutiny. The latter is an especially grave public disservice given that a prior list of potential AQ permittees included a collector that had been exposed on the front page of West Hawai'i Today for extensive coral reef damage during his collection operation and another who had been convicted of terroristic threatening for assaulting a SCUBA diver who was filming the collection activity that he and his partner were engaged in. Several years later that same partner and another diver he was working with were convicted of illegally taking hundreds of fish for their AQ business in a single day. They had been at it for months, yet DOCARE apparently lacked the resources to fully investigate.

Therefore, we urge the Board to maintain its oversight of AQ permit issuance and denial and not turn over this critical oversight and responsibility to DAR.

C. Benefits of leaving Hawai'i's marine life on Hawai'i's reefs

A peer-reviewed cost-benefit analysis shows that the aquarium trade provides no benefits to any person in Hawai'i except those who are directly profiting from it.³ DAR's April 2024 presentation to the Board included the economic value of aquarium collecting, but not the economic value of non-collection (leaving fish in the ocean).

DAR's 2020 report to the legislature documents that in the year following the court-ordered prohibition, yellow tang abundance increased by a *significant* 29% in the formerly collected (open) areas. **This increase is solely due to the closure of the AQ trade**, a fact that is proven by the absence of *any* increase during that same year in the areas long closed to AQ.

In addition to increased fish abundance and biodiversity, the benefits of leaving as many native fishes on the reefs as possible, include:

- Enhanced coral reef resiliency to ocean heat waves caused by climate change, and increased ability to survive;

³ Schaar and Cox (2021). AQ Cost Benefit Analysis: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104429>

- Reduced taxpayer costs attributed to administer/manage up to 20 AQ permits (in the event there is ever a completed EIS for O'ahu AQ permits) which, by DAR's own estimates, costs **\$300,000 - \$500,000 annually**, NOT including any enforcement costs. The revenue of just \$100 per AQ permit yielding a paltry \$700 for the 7 West Hawai'i permits at issue today, and leaving DLNR and taxpayers to subsidize the trade at the rate of hundreds of thousands of dollars every year;
- Reduced DOCARE enforcement expense: poaching is currently occurring but would significantly increase under any AQ permitting scheme as any legal activity simply provides cover for illegal activity;
- Sparing many thousands of fishes from the inhumane treatment inflicted by the trade in capture, holding, and transport, including barotrauma, organ piercing, fin/spine cutting, starving, and shipping in small plastic water-filled bags;
- Prevention of the premature deaths suffered by nearly 100% of those fishes within one year of capture;
- Increased ability to aquaculture Hawai'i species for AQ; demand for aquacultured species will increase when there is no wild caught alternative.

D. Unethical, inhumane treatment and high mortality rate of Hawai'i's marine life

A shockingly high marine life mortality rate was recently exposed at the Maui Ocean Center, a foreign-owned, for-profit aquarium attraction, that confirmed the difficulty of keeping Hawai'i's marine life alive in captivity. The information was revealed during reviews of collection reports required in the Terms and Conditions of a state-issued Special Activity Permit (SAP) required for capturing marine life for the aquarium's display tanks.

The fishes and other marine animals taken under Maui Ocean Center's SAP were captured locally and transported a short distance to the facility. They were cared for by expert aquarists with decades of experience in a well-established facility that's been operating for 26 years. **However, despite that expert care, the Maui Ocean Center reported that over half of the marine life they captured under their 2022 and 2023 permits died within a year of capture –** with the majority of those deaths occurring within one month of captivity.

Keeping wild marine animals alive in captivity is so challenging that even the experts struggle to do so. This reveals the travesty of shipping out over 224,000 of these marine animals to novice aquarium hobbyists around the globe.

On the reefs, the natural lifespans of many species taken by the AQ trade are measured in decades (a wild Yellow Tang can live for over 40 years), but captured for personal hobby aquariums around the world, lifespans of captive fish are measured in days, weeks, or months.

Consider Hawai'i's endemic Potter's Angelfish and Chevron Tang, both of which are among the proposed White List species and both of which are known to be especially fragile and challenging to keep alive in captivity. For example:

- Potter's Angelfish is known to develop a stress-induced parasite infection known as gill flukes with poor survival outcomes. A Hawai'i aquaculture facility recently reported the loss

of 30% of its recently captured Potter's Angelfish broodstock due to gill flukes within 10 days of arrival at the facility.

- DAR is proposing to allow collectors to take **1,086** endemic Potter's Angelfish.
- Chevron Tang have very delicate mouths that are easily damaged in capture. According to one trade expert, "hobbyists have not had much luck historically in keeping these tang species alive. The principal reasons for this are damage in capture and handling, and starvation once the hobbyists get them."⁴
 - DAR is proposing to allow collectors to take **3,152** endemic Chevron Tang.

Both Potter's Angelfish and Chevron Tang were sold through online outlets to hobbyists and shipped without live arrival guarantees (See Appendix 2 for difficulty ratings and no live arrival guarantees). Hobbyists who care little about Hawai'i's marine animals were willing to take the chance, as were the business entities that profit from the sale of marine life in the aquarium trade—the collectors, Hawai'i wholesalers, mainland wholesalers, and the retailers—because all that any of these entities require in order to make their individual profit is for the fish to survive just long enough to be transported and sold to the next buyer.

The 2011 Maui County law requiring the humane treatment of marine life taken for aquarium purposes prohibited intentionally or knowingly:

- Causing injury to marine life including piercing a fish's swim bladder, a practice AQ collectors use to save time and money, and to allow for rapid surfacing without adequate decompression. Those fish whose eyes are forced from their sockets or with other signs of barotrauma injuries are simply "tossed," as one collector seeking a permit openly states;
- Cutting or trimming the fin or spine of any fish, a money saving practice used in lieu of using heavier plastic inserts to prevent the shipping bag from being punctured; and to prevent injury to other fishes while kept in cramped tanks awaiting shipment; and
- Withholding food for more than twenty-four hours for transport purposes, a practice used to reduce the amount of water needed in a shipping bag, and thus reduce weight costs, despite the fact that most of the animals shipped are herbivores who must constantly graze to receive adequate nutrition.

See Appendix 2 for pictures.

A study confirmed that AQ trade practices contribute to 80% of the fish deaths in home hobby aquariums.⁵ Although humane alternatives exist for all of the above unethical and inhumane practices, they are rejected by the trade as either unnecessary or economically unfeasible.

The same study also found that the AQ trade actually profits from the high mortalities via sales of replacement fish so in fact has a *disincentive to reform* its harmful practices, and shows the urgent need for the Board to put protections in place before ever reopening Hawai'i's reefs to AQ trade profits.

⁴ Bob Fenner, Wet Web Media: <http://wetwebmedia.com/tangshi.htm>

⁵ Cartwright et al. 2012. Saving Nemo: Mariculture and Market-based Solutions to Reform the Marine Ornamental Trade, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, UCSB (pdf pg. 25, 26, 34)
Available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/lzlfhrkqsyih33s/Cartwright%202012.pdf?dl=0>

Conclusion:

Given all of the above, we respectfully urge the Board to reject DAR's proposal to allow the aquarium trade to annually take over 224,000 reef fishes to ship to the continent's disposable ornamental pet market. Hawai'i's marine life is too vital – socially, culturally, and ecologically – to be wasted in such a way.

Instead, we ask the Board to honor both its prior commitments and the clear will of the people of Hawai'i by directing DAR to redraft the proposal in close collaboration with the 2023 hui petitioners. That revision should: **allow commercial aquarium take only of non-native species or native species not yet available through aquaculture; prohibit inhumane practices; and require local, place-based catch quotas for the take of any native species.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rene Umberger".

Rene Umberger
For the Fishes

HAWAII RESIDENT ATTITUDE STUDY

FEBRUARY 2025

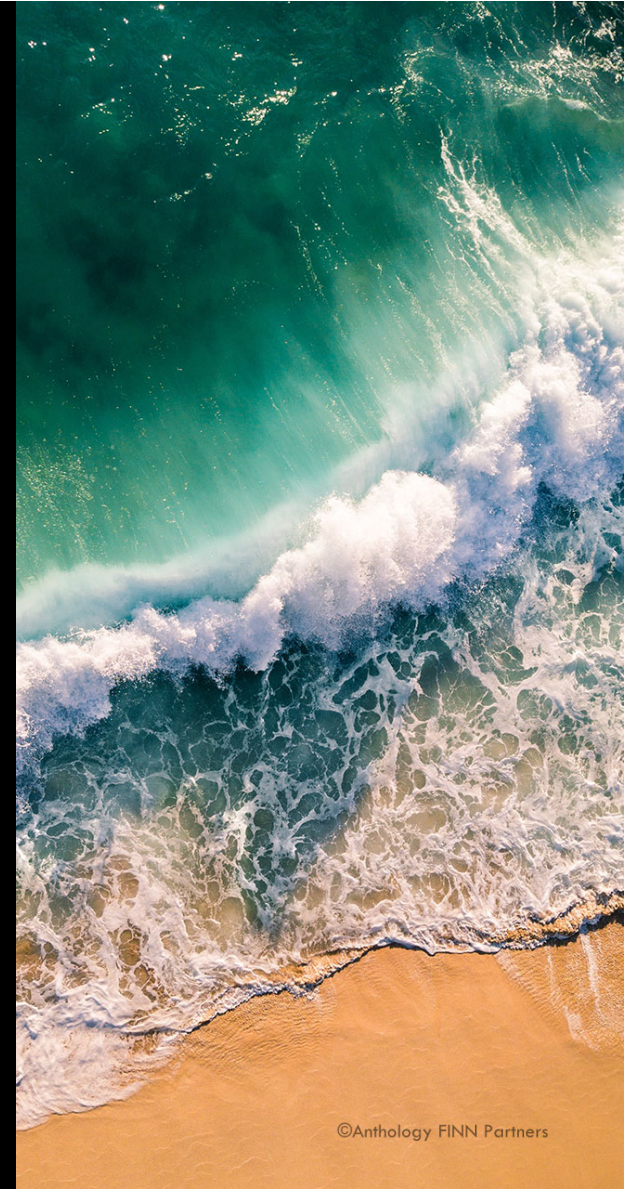
METHODOLOGY

- For the Fishes has contracted Anthology Research to conduct a quantitative study in the form of an online survey of Hawaii residents.
- A total of 407 respondents statewide took part in the study with fieldwork beginning on January 31, 2025, and ending on February 21, 2025.
- The margin of error for a sample this size is +/- 4.86 percentage-points with a 95% margin of error.
- The sample was culled using a combination of sources that included Anthology Research's panel of respondents along with other third-party sample providers.
- The data was weighted to reflect population estimates of adults 18+ by ethnicity by island.

BACKGROUND

Some people want to permanently end the commercial capture of Hawaii's marine life for the mainland aquarium pet trade because it threatens Hawaii's reefs and unique fish species. Those people believe the science showing the trade has depleted fish abundance and reduced biodiversity. They also believe the evidence showing that upwards of 40% will die within a month of capture and most of the rest will likely die within a year, including those known to live for decades in the wild.

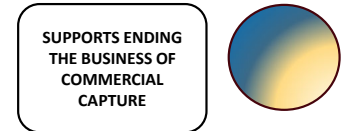
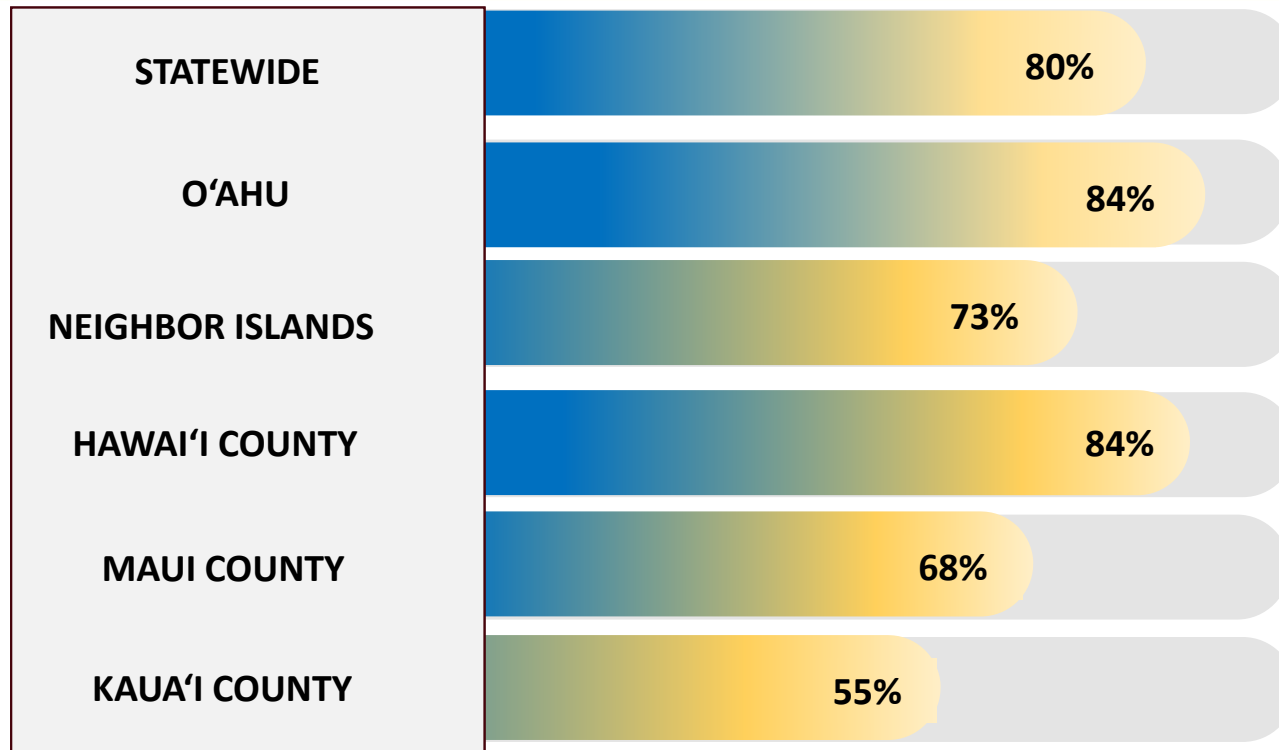
Some people support the commercial capture of Hawaii's marine life for the mainland aquarium pet trade because it provides a few dozen part-time jobs in Hawaii. Those people believe there are plenty of fish on Hawaii's reefs. They also believe that limits on the aquarium trade are not necessary because the impacts are insignificant and so concerns are unwarranted.



SUPPORT FOR ENDING COMMERCIAL CAPTURE



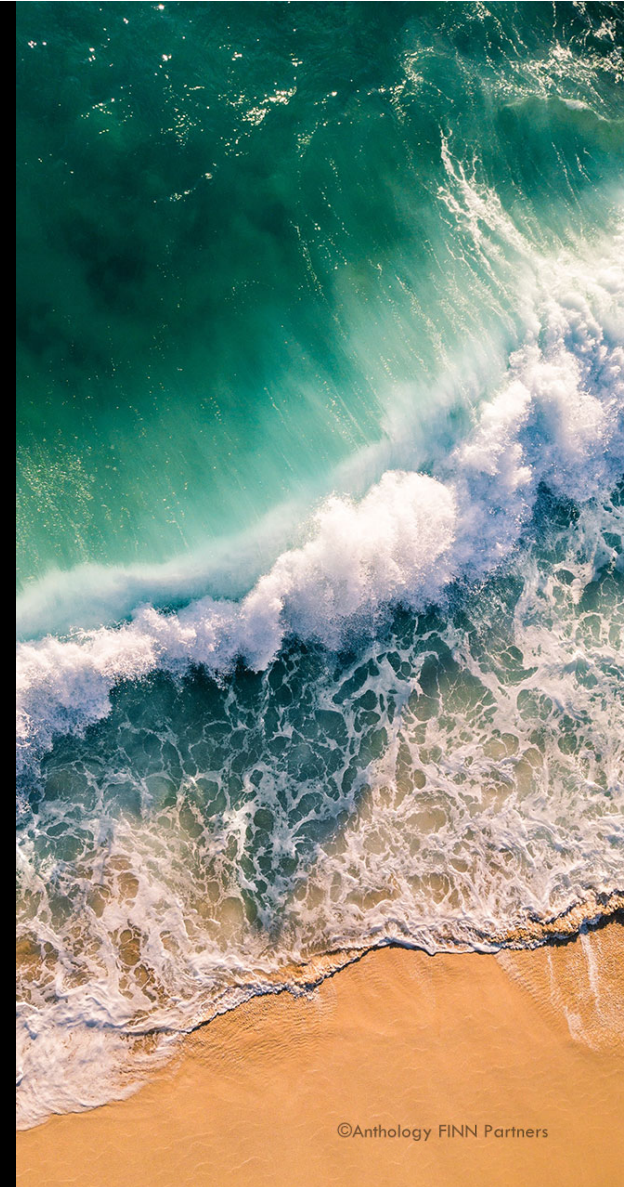
Support for ending the practice of capturing Hawaii's marine life for personal aquariums is statistically higher on O'ahu than it is on the Neighbor Islands. 81% of registered voters supports ending commercial capture.



Q: Would you support or oppose ending the commercial capture of Hawaii's reef fish for the mainland aquarium pet trade? Capture for local, scientific and educational use would still be allowed.

BACKGROUND

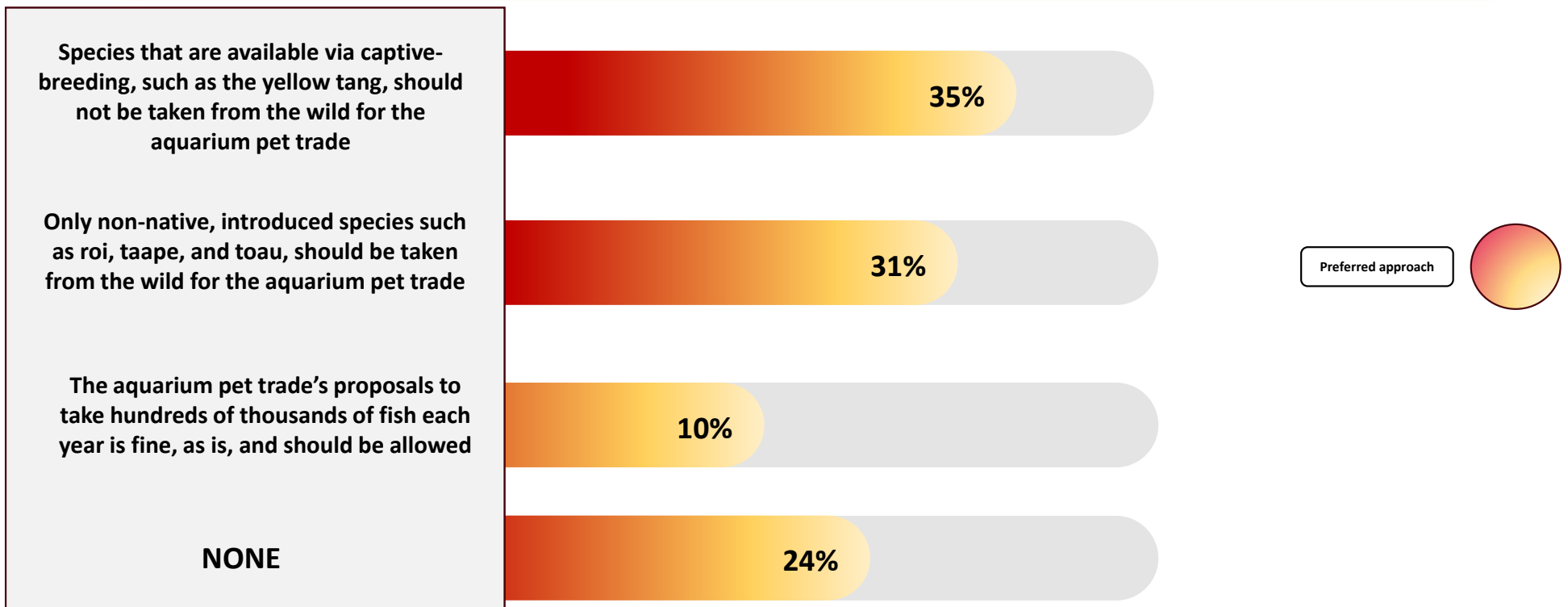
For decades, the commercial capture of Hawaii's tropical reef fish for sale to the mainland aquarium pet trade significantly depleted Hawaii's important reef species. Court orders halted the practice in 2017, but the aquarium pet trade seeks to once again take Hawaii's wild coral reef fishes by the hundreds of thousands each year, even though those fishes are now aquacultured on Hawaii fish farms for the aquarium hobby.



PREFERRED MANAGEMENT APPROACH



Local residents are split as to the management approach they prefer most with 35% choosing to restrict the harvesting of species that are captively bred while 31% would like to see only non-native fishes available for harvesting.



Q: If the commercial capture of reef fishes for the aquarium pet trade ever resumes, which of the following management options would you support?

Appendix 2.

Ta'ape, roi and to'au offered thru online aquarium stores:

LiveAquaria
QUALITY AQUATIC LIFE DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR

Search site...

FREE SHIPPING
on aquatic life orders \$29 & up*

DIVER'S DEN | FRESHWATER FISH | FRESHWATER PLANTS | FRESHWATER INVERTS | POND | FOODS | AQUARIUM SUPPLIES
SALE CENTER | MARINE FISH | CORAL | REEF CLEANER PACKS | MARINE INVERT PLANT | REEF ROCK | CAPTIVE-BRED

up to 50% OFF Big Deal Days [SHOP NOW](#)

Home > Marine Fish > Miscellaneous Fish > Bluestripe Snapper

Bluestripe Snapper
(*Lutjanus kasmira*) Item: CN-82386
\$ 69.99

Select Product
Indonesia
Small Out of Stock

Additional locales and sizes may be available!
[Email me when available >](#)

7-Day Guarantee [Learn more >](#)

Ships from our California Facility [Shipping Info >](#)

REWARDS PROGRAM
EARN 5% REWARDS! [Learn more >](#)

Please Note: Due to variations within species, your item may not look identical to the image provided. Approximate size range may also vary between individual specimens.

Quick Stats

Care Level	Temperament	Color Form	Diet	Reef Compatible
Easy	Peaceful	Blue, Yellow	Carnivore	With Caution
Water Conditions 72-78° F, dKH 8-12, pH 8.1-8.4, sg 1.023-1.025	Max. Size 10"	Family Lutjanidae	Minimum Tank Size 300 gallons	Compatibility View Chart

LiveAquaria
QUALITY AQUATIC LIFE DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR

Search site...

FREE SHIPPING
on aquarium supplies orders \$47 & up*

DIVER'S DEN | FRESHWATER FISH | FRESHWATER PLANTS | FRESHWATER INVERTS | POND | FOODS | AQUARIUM SUPPLIES
SALE CENTER | MARINE FISH | CORAL | REEF CLEANER PACKS | MARINE INVERT PLANT | REEF ROCK | CAPTIVE-BRED

up to 50% OFF Big Deal Days [SHOP NOW](#)

Home > Marine Fish > Groupers > Blue Dot Grouper

Blue Dot Grouper
(*Cephalopholis argus*) Item: CN-39787
\$ 299.99

Select Product
Sri Lanka
Medium Out of Stock

Additional locales and sizes may be available!
[Email me when available >](#)

7-Day Guarantee [Learn more >](#)

Ships from our California Facility [Shipping Info >](#)

REWARDS PROGRAM
EARN 5% REWARDS! [Learn more >](#)

Please Note: Due to variations within species, your item may not look identical to the image provided. Approximate size range may also vary between individual specimens.

Quick Stats

Care Level	Temperament	Color Form	Diet	Reef Compatible
Moderate	Aggressive	Blue, Tan	Carnivore	With Caution
Water Conditions sg 1.020-1.025, 72-78° F, dKH 8-12, pH 8.1-8.4	Max. Size 1' 4"	Family Serranidae	Minimum Tank Size 250 gallons	Compatibility View Chart

Upscale Aquatics

Freshwater v Saltwater v WYSIWYG v Supplies v

Home / Snappers & Fusilier /
Blacktail Snapper (Lutjanus fulvus)

\$69.99
Shipping calculated at checkout.

SIZE
Medium

Inventory on the way

SOLD OUT

[Email me when available](#)

✗ Pickup currently unavailable at Upscale Aquatics

SHIPPING INFORMATION v
ASK A QUESTION v

No Live Arrival Guarantee for Two White List Species:

Fresh Marine
www.freshmarine.com
Live Stats: 681 Live Stock and 6268 Dry Goods

Salt Water Fish A-G | Salt Water Fish H-Z | Invertebrate | Corals | Clams / Bivalve | Reptiles | Reptile Supplies | Aquarium Supplies | Bird Supplies

Please enter your search term here

Home > Popular Category > Salt Water Fish A-G > Angelfish, Dwarf > **Potter's Angelfish - Centropyge potteri - Potter's Angel Fish**



Aquarium suitability:	
Care level:	Expert Only!!! Not Cover Under Arrive Guaranteed
Behavior:	Semi-aggressive
Minimum tank size:	20 Gallon
Maximum size:	5.1 inches
Reef compatibility:	Yes, with Caution
Diet:	Omnivore, Greens, Pellet, Flake
Origin:	Hawaiian Islands, Johnston Atoll
Family:	Pomacanthidae
Manufacturer Name:	FreshMarine
Regular Price:	\$129.98
Purchase size:	Dwarf Angel Size From 2" - 4"
Our Price:	\$109.98


fresh marine chevron tang

Fresh Marine
www.freshmarine.com
Live Stats: 681 Live Stock and 6268 Dry Goods

Salt Water Fish A-G | Salt Water Fish H-Z | Invertebrate | Corals | Clams / Bivalve | Reptiles | Reptile Supplies | Aquarium Supplies | Bird Supplies | Small Animal | Dog and Cat Product | Shop By Brand


Please enter your search term here

Home > Popular Category > Salt Water Fish H-Z > Tangs > **Chevron Tang - Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis - Hawaiian Bristletooth - Hawaiian Surgeon fish - Black Surgeonfish**



Aquarium suitability:	
Care level:	Expert Only!!! Not Cover Under Arrive Guaranteed
Behavior:	Peaceful
Minimum tank size:	100 Gallon
Maximum size:	11 inches
Reef compatibility:	Yes
Diet:	Herbivore, Greens, Pellet, Flake
Origin:	Central Pacific
Family:	Acanthuridae
Manufacturer Name:	FreshMarine
Regular Price:	\$199.99
Purchase size:	Small 1" - 2" Medium 2" - 3" Large 3" - 4"
Our Price:	\$185.98

You May Also Like

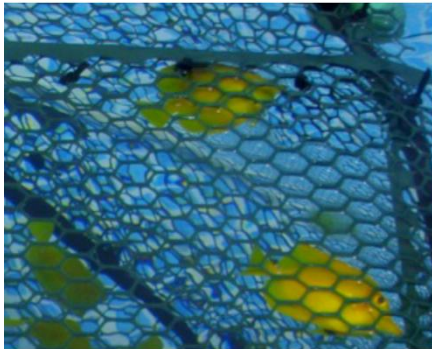


Achilles Tang (Adult) - Acanthurus achilles - Red-tailed Surgeon - Achilles Surgeonfish

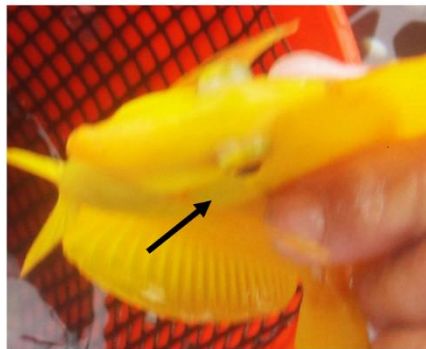
Freshmarine: **\$249.99**
You Save 37.50%

roll over image to magnify.

BAROTRAUMA INJURIES:



Bloated belly/positive buoyancy



Bulging eye



Distended intestines

Hawaii was the world's third largest supplier of reef fish for mainland personal aquariums. The trade depleted wild populations. Many fish are captured as replacements for those that died because of harmful treatment: 80% of fish deaths in home aquariums are due to supply chain practices.



Rapid surfacing at capture causes barotrauma. Piercing expanded swim bladders comes next. Fins & spines are cut to avoid extra packing materials. Stressed & injured fish are then starved and bagged for shipping: stress + starvation causes the highest mortality rates.



Fish are starved for several days in preparation for shipment in minimal water, saving on freight costs.



Fish are cramped in these bags and boxes for up to 48 hours during transport. Thousands will arrive dead. Thousands more will die within the week.



Wasting wildlife is not *pono*.

Respect. Restore. Protect.



ForTheFishes.org

From: [Flora Freeauf](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:09:15 AM

Aloha,

My name is Flora Freeauf and I have been a Kauai resident for 24 years. I am opposed to aquariums in general a request for you to please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability. Hardly any residents heard about this and it deserves more ears and voices.

Thank you for your consideration.

Flora

Dr. Flora Freeauf L.Ac., DACM
Dakine Hands Acupuncture
4270 Kilauea Rd, Kilauea HI 96754
Anahata Health Kaua'i
PO Box 931 Kilauea HI 96754
808-631-6889

From: [Sharde Freitas](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda Item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:47:58 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sharde Freitas

From: [Dee Fulton](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DAR and fish collecting
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:24:23 PM

Aloha Chairperson Chang and Members Smith, Canto, Ono, Yoon, Iseri-Matsubara and Young:

I visit the reefs of West Hawaii regularly as an avid scuba diver and snorkeler. I have also assisted in conducting REEF fish counts. Our reefs are not in good health. The warming spell of 2015 and 2016 took a heavy toll, and more challenges lie ahead in the way of ocean acidification, ocean warming, and increasingly high and powerful king tides.

I assure you there is no abundance of yellow tangs or any other species. All species need protection. The fishes already endure the stresses of the aforementioned issues, and then layer on cesspit pollution, soil runoff, and chemical assault via sunscreen and pharmaceutical pollution.

“Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community’s call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public’s trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.”

Member Riley Smith, I am looking to you to fight this attempt to resuscitate fish collecting with everything you've got.

Mahalo,
Dee Fulton
Holualoa, HI. (Hawaii Island)

To: Board of Land & Natural Resources

Re: New rules allowing commercial aquarium fishing in West Hawai'i
Agenda item F-2, October 24, 2025

Chair Chang and Member of the Board:

The Hawai'i Fishing & Boating Association stands in **opposition** to proposed regulatory changes that would allow any commercial aquarium fish harvesting in the West Hawaii Fishery Management Area (WHFMA).

We would argue that it is time for the Department of Land & Natural Resources and its Division of Aquatic Resources, to more fully embrace the precautionary principle, which is fundamental to fishery management.

The WHFMA was established in 1996 because the citizens of West Hawaii, and the scientific community, recognized the need for proactive conservation to assure that our nearshore waters were more fully protected. Since then, ocean acidification; sea level rise; warming seas; increasing storms and storm intensity; the shifting of major ocean current systems; and more, have increased scientific uncertainty, making proactive conservation even more essential.

Never in the history of this State has it been more important to maintain protections to assure that entire ecosystems are protected and conserved so that they can continue to provide all of the services required by a healthy ocean.

The 140 miles of nearshore waters currently under the protections of the WHFMA include a wide variety of habitats and species, all of which contribute to the overall health of our extensive nearshore ecosystem. Allowing the harvest of large numbers of select species threatens the

overall health of that ecosystem, especially in light of the many other impacts facing our ocean environment 29 years after the creation of the WHFMA.

Protected ecosystems maximize their productive capacity, spill-over into surrounding waters, and assure us that every contributor to the functioning of that ecosystem is able to thrive and make their unique contributions.

We don't fully understand the contributions of all of the inhabitants of Hawaii's unique marine ecosystem, much less how they contribute to the overall health and productivity of the ocean, but by refusing to allow aquarium fish collection, we can be assured that all of the fish are delivering necessary services toward the overall health of our nearshore ocean environment, and that's good for our wellbeing, and for our economy.

An article published in the journal *Science* in September 2025, warns that cumulative human impacts on the ocean will double or possibly even triple by mid-century—that's just 25 years away—and that resulting declines will be worse in the tropical Pacific.

It is time for the BLNR and the DLNR-DAR, to fully embrace the precautionary principle, support more complete ecosystem management, and to deny any suggestion that the West Hawaii Fishery Management Area be opened to any form of commercial aquarium fish collection.

Mahalo,
Hawaii Fishing & Boating Association
Rick Gaffney, President
Rick.pacific@gmail.com
808 960-6767

From: [Paula G](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No one F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:35:52 PM

In Opposition to Agenda item F.2

My name is Paula Gandolfo. My livelihood depends on robust and healthy reefs. Lifelong ocean swimmer, spear fisher and teacher.

Protect the Water and Watersheds. 1/2 the oxygen on earth comes from the phytoplankton in the Oceans. Do No Harm.

Mahalo for Protecting the Islands and ocean.

Paula Gandolfo
Upcountry Maui

From: [Barry](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:51:34 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so.

Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

James Di Giambattista, Ph.D.

George Dixon, Ph.D.

From: [Inga Gibson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] BLNR Testimony 10-24 Oppose F2 AQ rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 6:46:13 PM

Re: Opposition to Item F. 2 Relating to Rules request to resume Aquarium Collection in West Hawaii.

Dear Chair Chang and BLNR Members,

For decades the most impacted communities and local peoples have spoken out in opposition to aquarium collection activities in West Hawaii. However, once again, DAR is ignoring community voices in favor of allowing a handful of commercial collectors to take hundreds of thousands of reef animals annually.

What is the point of holding additional public hearings on a proposal that the community adamantly opposes when DAR has made it clear that public input will simply again be ignored?

We trusted DAR to work with us in good faith, and to carry out the Board's earlier direction to DAR to prohibit collection short of zero. The proposed limits are not limits at all, and fly in the face of all of those who entrusted DLNR throughout the process. We proposed numerous compromises to DAR that were also dismissed, not on scientific grounds, but because it may not have been as lucrative to the commercial profiteers. DAR must be reminded that it's mandate, along with the Board, is to prioritize the protection of resources for the public, not for commercial profits.

We urge the Board to uphold its earlier position and oppose the currently proposed rules, and instead direct DAR to amend the proposal to only allow for the collection of invasive species, which would benefit our reefs and all marine life.

Thank you.
Inga Gibson
Pono Advocacy LLC
ponoadvocacy@gmail.com
808.922.9910
www.ponoadvocacy.com

From: [Dan Gordon](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:12:38 PM

Aloha

My name is Dan Gordon, I live on the Big Island of Hawaii.

I have been a scuba diver for 53 years. I dive three or four times a week here in Hawaii. In that time I have seen a terrible degradation of our reefs. The reefs are under tremendous stress from climate change, over fishing, loss of large predators such as sharks, and cesspool runoff.

It is inconceivable to me that the BLNR would even consider allowing reef fish to be collected for aquarium use. Haven't we devastated our ocean enough? It doesn't make sense on any level, the people are against it, please, please help us to protect our fragile ecosystems!

Mahalo Nui Loa
Dan Gordon

From: [William Greenleaf](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:30:17 AM

Aloha Chair Chang:

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

DLNR is the Dept of Land and Natural Resources. As such, you are responsible for protecting Hawaii's Natural Resources. Allowing commercial interests to take from our Natural Resources is harmful to Hawaii's Eco System. Hawaii's Eco System that developed over millions of years was vibrant and thriving. Hawaii's Natural Resources are part of the balance of life, the fabric of life so to speak. Your roll is to protect. Taking is not protecting.

Please protect our Natural Resources...any talk of taking reef fish to sell in stores as sustainable is BS...humans do not know how to share our lives with Nature...we are always taking. The staff is obviously being influenced by something other than care for Natural Resources.

Bill Greenleaf
Makawao

From: [Harper Pada](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:41:49 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My na and I amne Harper Pada. I am a 5th Grader at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Harper Pada
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [nan harter](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:13:55 AM

Subject line: Testimony for agenda item F-2
Testimony

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Nancy Harter, Lahaina, Maui, HI

From: [Wendy](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:32:02 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Wendy Haun

From: [Todd Shiraki](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please support Agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:27:43 AM

Please support Dars recommendation and give the fishermen their permits back. They have been patient long enough.

Hawaii Tropical Fish Company
808-936-5709

From: [Jameson Hawes](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: airell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:44:38 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Jameson. I am a fifth grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina charter school and I am testifying in opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rule and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa ,

Jameson Hawes
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter school
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Joshua Heffron](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:59:07 AM

"Hawai'i is in my heart, no reef wildlife trafficking for the aquarium trade, I want Hawai'i's reefs intact, I want coral cover and biodiversity, not the shambles rendered on aquarium decimation!"

From: [Stephen Holmes](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject line: Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:54:06 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Steve Holmes
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

Chairperson and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl St. Room 132
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

21 October 2025

Subject: Opposition to agenda item F-2 to Hold Public Hearings on changes to Hawai‘i Administrative Rules related to permits for commercial aquarium collection

Aloha e Chairperson Chang and Members:

Hui Aloha Kiholo respectfully opposes agenda item F-2 to Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of Hawaii Administrative Rules (“HAR”) relating to Aquarium Life Management into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1: “Aquarium Fishery Management” and on Proposed Amendments to HAR Chapters 13-75: “Rules Regulating the Possession and Use of Certain Fishing Gear” and 13-60.4: “West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area, Hawai‘i” for Clarity and Consistency with Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1 as proposed in agenda item F-2.

As conveyed in our prior opposition to similar proposals, we continue to welcome the opportunity for consultation with the Division of Aquatic Resources to share the significance of the proposed coral reef fish species to traditional and current practices at Kiholo, which has been a fishing village providing seafood to our community for at least 400 years. In the absence of this consultation, we anticipate negative impacts from the removal of sustenance fish species, and likely damage to live coral habitat through collection methods, likely contributing to negative impacts to additional culturally and socially significant species.

We contend that the proposed re-establishment of the aquarium fishery requires clear conditions prohibiting any benthic habitat damage from fishing methods or fishing gear, prohibiting nighttime fishing, prohibiting holding fish at sea overnight, prohibiting take of endemic species¹ and sustenance species², increasing fines for non-compliance, ensuring benthic habitat monitoring, establishing a permit fee structure sufficient to fund the additional enforcement and data analysis necessary for sound fishery management, requiring consultation with and consent from fishers and practitioners with lineal ties to harvest areas prior to engaging in fishing activities, determining an adaptive species abundance trigger to close the fishery when coral habitat or fish population level impacts occur, and geographically prohibiting the harvest of species with genealogical, spiritual, or ceremonial ties to lineal families in opposition to the proposed action as identified by the complete consultations conducted during the Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) and additional consultation specific to the measures proposed. After provisions that are respectful of public trust resources and responsible fishing practices are in place, we look forward to participating in consultation prior to any fishing in the waters of Pu‘uanahulu and Pu‘wa‘awa‘a ahupua‘a and are happy to make connections to other engaged communities in these storied lands of west Hawai‘i.

On behalf of the people of place, based on a preponderance of traditional ecological evidence of coral habitat and cultural harm caused by commercial aquarium collecting here, Hui Aloha Kiholo believes there is ample evidence to inform our opposition to the proposed actions.

¹ Potter’s angelfish, *Centropyge potteri*; Yellow-eye kole, *Ctenochaetus strigosus*

² “Chevron Tang”, Black kole, *Ctenochaetus hawaiiensis*; Umaumalei (Orangespine Unicornfish), *Naso literatus*;



Hui Aloha Kīholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kīholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

Since our formation in 2007, Hui Aloha Kīholo has diligently partnered with State Parks to steward the public lands and waters of Kīholo Bay. Through our curatorship agreement, we manage camping, maintain facilities, and lead education and conservation actions within the Kīholo State Park Wilderness Reserve which extends from Waikoloa to Ka‘ūpūlehu. We work hard to ensure a safe place for our community to camp, recreate, and engage in cultural practice. Fishing is in Kīholo’s DNA, and we partner with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) through the Makai Watch program to ensure our community is engaged and knowledgeable about fishing rules and best practices. When we fish here, we follow lawai‘a pono (responsible fishing) practices based on the traditions and knowledge of Kīholo lawai‘a. We share those practices freely with learners of all ages and at multi-generational camps. Our field staff talk story with fishing community members every day – we listen, we share, and we learn. We value fishing observations as important data to inform our actions. We also value institutional science. With support from partners, we have led creel surveys, invasive fish removal events, habitat enhancement efforts, and monitoring important food fish populations. We continue to support water quality, coral health, intertidal species, and fish research.

Our organization is deeply rooted in the traditions of Pu‘uwa‘awa‘a ahupua‘a and guided by the invaluable knowledge passed down through generations through the families with ancestral ties to the Kīholo. In academic circles, tacit and explicit knowledge from 50+ years ago is akin to “Traditional Ecological Knowledge,” or TEK. More recent observational ecological knowledge constitutes EK and we refer to both evidentiary datasets as ‘ike.

The profound connection to the land and sea confers a continuous responsibility to mālama lands and waters.

As stewards of this long history of careful observation, we respectfully ask two questions and share our perspective based on ‘ike.

1. How was the multi-generational observational data of coastal community members, or ‘ike, incorporated into the proposed rules consistent with consultation requirements for regulated activities impacting cultural resources?

The Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement (RFEIS) states that risk evaluation must consider ecosystem impacts and mitigation. From the submittal to BLNR page 5:

“2) Do the data examined suggest that the proposed take will result in impacts to the ecosystem that would result in *measurable declines in ecosystem health* or the ability of the ecosystem to sustain itself?

3) Do current management measures mitigate potential negative effects of the fishery or provide safeguards against unforeseen changes?” (*emphasis added*)

We contend that the data examined to date are inadequate to determine ecosystem impacts at Kīholo, and that better data are readily available. ‘Ike from kūpuna, lawai‘a, kama‘āina, and experienced divers held in west Hawai‘i communities is vital to fill in aquarium fishing data gaps. Our community has observed *declines in ecosystem health* through coral reef habitat damage by commercial divers engaged in aquarium fishing.

Our observations begin with habitat and fish and extend to fishing. In the Kīholo Bay area, the species proposed for permitted collection are generally collected from live coral habitat at depths



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

of 5-30m. At Kiholo, as in much of west Hawai‘i, prime coral habitat is dominated by fragile fields of finger coral (*Porites compressa*). Potter’s angelfish (*Centropyge potteri*) reside in finger coral or other complex coral forms, and by virtue of their size, can be targeted at any life stage. Four of the species proposed for collection - lau‘ipala (*Zebrasoma flavescens*, or Yellow Tang), yellow-eye and black/king kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus* and *hawaiiensis*), and umaumalei (*Naso literatus* or orange-spine unicornfish) recruit preferentially to finger coral reefs and mature in the shelter of these complex habitats before moving into other areas. All four are primarily targeted in their initial life phase in finger coral - they grow too large for the primary market before they aggregate in other marine habitats. They hide and do not easily emerge when disturbed. They must be hazed or herded into nets for collection which inevitably damages live coral.

Kūpuna TEK informs us that, beginning in the 1960’s, chemicals were used to flush target species from complex reef habitat for commercial sale in the consumptive and aquarium markets. Some toxicants, such as bleach, damaged habitat. Others, such as rotenone, targeted reef fish and invertebrates, leaving habitat intact. Either way, fish mortality was elevated from current methods.

Around fifty years ago, some financially motivated collectors adopted tools such as crowbars to break, dismantle, and ultimately destroy living coral reefs, creating rubble fields. At Kiholo, the coral reef at Nawaikulua has yet to recover from these destructive fishing practices. This reef is in an area with zero development, relatively little other fishing, clean water, and good currents. Yet anyone can go diving there today and see firsthand the impact of destructive aquarium fishing.

In addition to intentional damage, our community has pulverized swaths of coral from collector’s anchors and chains. Community members also observe illegal fishing at night and poaching inside the Kiholo Fishery Management Area. Bad actors aside, even relatively conscientious collectors cannot help but damage coral when deploying barricade nets and driving fish into them, or when compelling Potter’s Angelfish to emerge in fragile finger coral habitat. Coral breaks. Broken coral acts like a hammer, moved by surge to impact intact colonies and causes them to break as well. Once the base is broken, the coral “fingers” fall off, roll around, and die, creating rubble fields from formerly healthy reefs.

Once a finger coral reef turns to rubble, most of the sustenance fish depart and the physical motion of the coral rubble reduces the ability of new corals to recruit, become established, and grow. It is a chain reaction that impacts *ecosystem health and the ability of the reef ecosystem to sustain itself*.

These destructive practices happen out of sight of most and beyond the scope of scientific surveys, but our community sees the impact firsthand and can show others who do not.

We know that firsthand observation and *traditional knowledge are the best available data for the Kiholo Bay area* because:

- The West Hawai‘i Aquarium Project (WHAP), designed for fish, is unable to detect any fishing-related coral damage that occurs outside of the straight line between well marked pins with floats on the reef
- No WHAP site was established or surveyed at Kiholo Bay
- No studies have been designed and conducted to test coral habitat damage associated with aquarium fishing
- We have seen the damage firsthand, and can show others



This is not intended to criticize the important work of institutional scientists in monitoring the corals and fishes of west Hawai‘i, only to emphasize what these scientists already know about the imperfect utility of data for purposes other than that for which it was collected.

At Kiholo, we are fortunate to have such rich observational knowledge upon which to draw. We have seen the damage and seek to prevent it from continuing.

2. How was the information in the DFEIS Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) interpreted to adapt the proposed action so that it constitutes no significant impact on native Hawaiian practice?

Although most contributed statements were not reprinted in their entirety, the CIA document is a records ample cultural impact related to the aquarium fishery. As the CIA states, *the significance of cultural properties should be determined by the community that values them* – in this case the commercial fishers, teachers, former enforcement officers, aquaculturists, divers, and cultural practitioners with deep ties to place. From page 111-115, many of the place-based ‘ike holders of west Hawai‘i consulted for the report shared that commercial aquarium fishing is:

- Inconsistent with the reciprocal nature of sustainable Hawaiian fishing methods – “There’s no tending process only [taking fish].”
- Accountable for growing fish for commercial harvest - “...the aquarium industry should consider raising their own fish to supply its industry.”
- Responsible for an additional enforcement workload – “With the aquarium industry potentially adding to the workload, he recommended that aquarium industry should help to supplement DOCARE’s efforts so they can be productive in enforcing rules and regulations.”
- Responsible for benefitting public trust resources from which they derive financial gains – “She questioned what the aquarium fish industry’s contribution to the public trust, that includes the aquatic resources of Hawai‘i.”
- Inconsistent with traditional fishing rights – “She strongly opposed the proposed issuance of commercial aquarium collection permits because this action is not aligned with the current efforts to restore physical and cultural aspects of the fisheries in West Hawai‘i.”
- Inconsistent with cultural relationship of fish as sustenance – “...aquarium collection is disrespectful to the fish and that when we capture fish without having the intent to consume them, then we lose the function of the fish.”
- Deserving of stronger penalties for violations – “She hopes that DLNR considers having more rigid fines and serious repercussions to those who violate the law.”
- Inappropriate for species unique to Hawai‘i – “...there should be no collection of fish for the aquarium industry outside of Hawai‘i, especially for any endemic fish...”
- Beneficial for local educational purposes – “...[DLNR] should allow established institutions in Hawai‘i, those that show a perpetual responsibility for fish and food sustainability, the opportunity to responsibly collect fish under a Special Activity Permit.”
- Unaware of the kinship bonds shared by families who care for fish – “She stressed that familial bonds to our oceans must be considered as an important cultural tradition.”
- Wasteful – “...there is so much death with aquarium collection and spoke of instances when bags of dead fish were found in Kona.”



Hui Aloha Kiholo

Our mission is to protect, perpetuate and enhance the cultural and natural landscape of the Kiholo Bay area through collaborative management and active community stewardship.

- Unnecessary – “...why should people take our fish just for pleasure?” He emphasized that we should be encouraging people to come to the ocean and view our marine life first hand.”
- Disrespectful – “Many stated that the practice of catching fish without intending to consume it goes against traditional belief and that this act is not *pono* (proper, morally fitting, beneficial).”

While other perspectives on the broad definition on Hawaiian Traditional and Customary Rights were shared, the input from the lineal descendants of the communities that will be directly impacted by the proposed action must be prioritized. This line the CIA summarizes a position consistent with the sharing of west Hawai‘i community members, “They expressed that all fish are part of the public trust and that removing fish to supply a “lucrative” industry undermines traditional practices and beliefs associated with the ocean.”

Some specific concerns raised in the CIA, and not addressed by this action include:

- Requiring higher penalties for violations,
- Providing more resources for enforcement
- Punishing wasteful behavior,
- A giveback to public trust resources and communities with kinship connections to species proposed,
- Acknowledgement of the kinship connection between some families in west Hawai‘i and some species on the list approved for harvest.
- Preferential protection of endemic wild species, found only in Hawaiian waters
- Exclusion of prime sustenance fish species
- Exclusion of fish associated with significant life events and ceremonies

The current proposed rules **do not** *mitigate potential negative impacts of the fishery or provide safeguards against unforeseen changes.*

This proposal seeks to proceed without proper consultation or mitigation for the harm it will inflict on the Kiholo community and our neighbors in west Hawai‘i. This includes ecological, cultural, and social harm. Ignoring prior input and not soliciting place based perspectives from fishing communities is disrespectful to kama‘āina knowledge holders and practitioners.

We urge the Board of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to reject this proposal and direct the Division of Aquatic Resources initiate meaningful consultation with Hui Aloha Kiholo and the Kiholo community to understand anticipated impacts between Waikoloa and Kalaemanō.

Thank you for considering the lessons learned through experience. We look forward to working together to find a solution that respects Kiholo traditions and honors people of place.

Respectfully Yours,

Chad Wiggins
Executive Director



October 24, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Re: F-2 Testimony in Opposition for Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules Updating and Consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a new Chapter

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Hui Kahuwai **strongly opposes** item F-2 Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules Updating and Consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a new Chapter. We urge the board to deny this request and instruct DAR to start over in their rulemaking process with more alignment to their mission and with input from the West Hawai'i community, 2023 petitioners, WHFC, and other interested parties.

Our nonprofit organization Hui Kahuwai, and its predecessor, the Ka'ūpūlehu Marine Life Advisory Committee (KMLAC) remain steadfast in our efforts to protect and manage our biocultural resources. Currently, no person may take or attempt to take any specimen of aquatic life while within the Ka'ūpūlehu Marine Reserve (§13-60.4-5(d)(1)).

Prior to becoming the Ka'ūpūlehu Marine Reserve, collection of aquatic life for aquarium purposes and the possession of aquarium collecting gear was prohibited within Ka'ūpūlehu, which was designated as both a Fish Replenishment Area and Netting Restricted Area ((§13-60.4-5(b)(1-2)&(c)(2)). We have witnessed the increase in fish populations and the subsequent revitalized health of our nearshore waters as a result of our community-led management and rulemaking. It remains our intention to encourage and work with other communities across the pae'āina to similarly protect and manage their waters to provide a sustainable resource for their tables, recreational enjoyment, and spiritual enrichment.

As the KMLAC, we provided testimony in May 2023 recommending to remove commercial exemptions for aquarium collection of kole less than 5 inches. We were glad to see the board remove those exemptions then, and ask the board to apply the same logic and hierarchy of use principles again now. We continue to stand in opposition to commercial exemptions for kole smaller than 5 inches to be harvested for any reason, but particularly not for commercial aquarium collection. We would recommend species caught for food, like kole and umaumalei, to be removed entirely from any rules being proposed for commercial aquarium trade.

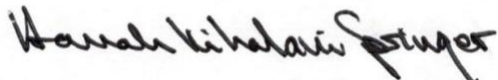
As the KMLAC, we provided testimony in December 2023 supporting rulemaking to prohibit the take of marine life for commercial aquarium purposes. While we were disappointed in the late justifications for not banning the commercial aquarium trade, we were glad to see the board instruct “DAR to take in full consideration the petitioner request and proceed with rulemaking.” Unfortunately, what is being proposed by DAR today has had no input from the petitioners. Instead of rules to regulate this industry, the framework being proposed opens the floodgates for hundreds of thousands of fish to be removed from our reefs every year.

We recommend this entire proposal be sent back to DAR to start over by actually engaging the petitioners as previously instructed, and to much more carefully and methodically design a plan that truly regulates this industry. We would also support legislation to amend the HRS to allow the industry to be banned as well.

Many communities, including our own at Kūki‘o and Ka‘ūpūlehu, that have been engaged in community-based fisheries management with DAR have been instructed to do extensive years long outreach prior to initiating the rulemaking process. The framework and proposal being requested today has had zero input from the public, zero input from the petitioners of 2023, and zero input from the many communities in West Hawai‘i that would directly be impacted by these rules if passed, including Kūki‘o and Ka‘ūpūlehu. We expect the same standard applied to the various communities across the pae‘āina needs to be applied to this proposal, especially considering the history of contention regarding this issue.

We therefore recommend the board to deny this request and to instruct DAR to start over in their rulemaking process. We ask for the same high standard being asked of community-based management be applied here. We ask the board to note the various communities, organizations, and individuals from multiple ahupua‘a across the pae‘āina who are testifying in opposition to this rule package. We ask the board to instruct DAR to go back and listen to these people, their constituents, and to amend this rule package with our feedback before bringing it back to the BLNR for consideration.

‘O mākou nō me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,



Hannah Kihalani Springer,
Hui Kahuwai President



Kaikea Nakachi,
Hui Kahuwai Vice President

From: [Ilisha R](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony RE: Agenda Item F.2 — DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:43:57 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules under Agenda Item F.2. These rules are dangerously vague and fail to ensure ecological balance, cultural respect, and transparency in managing Hawai‘i’s marine life.

Please:

1. Keep permitting authority with the BLNR to maintain accountability and public oversight.
2. Send these rules back for redrafting in genuine collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
3. Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely. These are culturally significant food fish and vital reef herbivores that should not be commercially extracted.
4. Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist. They are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute and Hawai‘i Pacific University, making wild harvest unnecessary.
5. Ensure detailed clarity around permits, terms, and enforcement to prevent abuse and protect reef ecosystems.
6. Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy—prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs over commercial extraction.
7. Uphold Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine by managing marine resources for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, not private commercial interests.

Our reefs are living systems, not commodities. Please put the health of Hawai‘i’s ecosystems and cultural values before profit.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Ilisha
Kihei, Maui

From: [Bianca Isaki](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony against Agenda F-2, 10/24/2025
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:52:25 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Yours,
Bianca

--

Bianca Isaki, Ph.D., Esq.

From: [Jerry Isham](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aquarium rules package
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 4:02:51 AM

Aloha, I would like a link to testify in person via zoom.

My name is Jerry Isham and I support the rules package but with a couple of issues.

1st there needs to be a change to the 1 diver rule that is insane! Due to obvious safety concerns the permit holder should have the right for a safety diver. Having a safety partner on the boat does nothing for safety he would only be a body retriever because by the time the safety guy on the boat realizes something a wrong its already to late.

2nd. When it comes to the bag limits it should be equally applied. The method being considered is derby style fishing. Derby fishing is the worst way to allow these permits to go forward. It does nothing but only hurt the environment. We should be encouraging fisherman to spread out their fishing over the course of the year not first one back to the Harbor. The whole point of an eis is for the Land board to make the best decision it can to protect the environment from unsafe practices like hurry catch all you can before the next Guy.

Mahalo!

Jerry Isham

From: [Dan J](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24 Agenda Item F.2 West Hawaii Aquarium collecting
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:15:20 PM

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

My name is Daniel Jackson, I have been a resident of the Big Island for over 20 years. I am a UH Hilo marine science and conservation biology graduate and have been working in aquaculture at various companies at Nelha since 2006.

I strongly believe that the ban on personal aquarium collection in west Hawaii is unscientific and only harms local aquarium hobbyists.

It would be simple to regulate commercial aquarium collection and sales in order to protect the resource. It would also be simple to impose catch limits on personal collection just like there are species, size, and number limits on fishing and hunting. I understand that we do not have enough enforcement officers to efficiently cover the island, but you should not use that as an excuse to completely ban personal collection for home aquariums for the entire west side of the island. I think it would be completely reasonable to start selling fishing licenses just like you sell hunting licenses, you can even make them free for residents and just charge tourists who come out to go on fishing charters, many states have tiers of licenses such as annual, monthly, weekly, or weekend passes for out of state visitors.

If there is data showing that aquarium hobbyists collecting small numbers of marine life for their aquariums at home are damaging or threatening the resources, they should be published prominently on the DLNR website alongside the restrictions to explain and justify the actions being taken by the government. However I would be interested and surprised to see that because friends who have worked for DAR for years all say that the West Hawaii Aquarium Collection Ban was politically motivated on someones feelings, and was NOT based on any research data showing that non-commercial collection for home aquariums posed any threat to our natural resources.

Please base legislation on facts and empirical data, not on your feelings of "oh the fish are pretty in the ocean, we don't want people to have them in tanks at home".

Also for the record, www.petakillsanimals.com has data that is self reported by Peta due to legal requirements, which shows that Peta as an organization euthanizes more animals than they help to get adopted, and that Peta spends more money on paying its executives and celebrity endorsements than they spend on helping animals. Please don't be hypocrites like Peta.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter that concerns many of our Islands residents.

Daniel Jackson

From: [Jeff Mullen](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony RE: Agenda Item F.2 — DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:55:57 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules under Agenda Item F.2. These rules are dangerously vague and fail to ensure ecological balance, cultural respect, and transparency in managing Hawai‘i’s marine life.

Please:

1. Keep permitting authority with the BLNR to maintain accountability and public oversight.
2. Send these rules back for redrafting in genuine collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
3. Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely. These are culturally significant food fish and vital reef herbivores that should not be commercially extracted.
4. Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist. They are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute and Hawai‘i Pacific University, making wild harvest unnecessary.
5. Ensure detailed clarity around permits, terms, and enforcement to prevent abuse and protect reef ecosystems.
6. Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy—prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs over commercial extraction.
7. Uphold Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine by managing marine resources for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, not private commercial interests.

Our reefs are living systems, not commodities. Please put the health of Hawai‘i’s ecosystems and cultural values before profit.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Jeff
Lahaina, Maui

From: [Lloyd Johnson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24, 2025 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 5:35:18 PM

I have been scuba diving on Maui 13 years and I've noticed a disturbing drop in fish populations. Why a conservation police force like BLNR would allow an increase in the taking of tropical fish is beyond me. Have we appointed another fox to guard the chicken coop? Other countries have made this mistake and are now struggling to restore their reefs. This is the time to act before we go over the precipice, but this change is exactly the wrong direction.

Your mission has changed dramatically. Now you're in the pocket of special interest groups instead of the people of Hawai'i. Now you're selling our resources to the highest bidder.

Lloyd Johnson

Letter of Support to Reopen the Aquarium Fishery

Attn: Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources

Please accept this letter to represent my support to reopen the Aquarium fishery.

The West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area is considered to be one of, if not the best and most successful regulated near-shore fishery in the world. DLNR found that the West Hawaii “no-aquarium collecting” Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs), implemented in 1999, have been very successful in protecting populations of specific species in demand by the aquarium trade.

DAR science, through data collection, analysis and research over the last 20 years or so concludes increases to the populations of those species.

Through these decades of restrictions on this resource, the Aquarium industry has worked diligently in good standing, and has been the only stakeholder to date to complete the HEPA review on the fishery.

The West Hawaii management plan should be a model to other fisheries in the State to explore and consider responsible fisheries resource intendance.

This is a proven, well managed, sustainable fishery. When these special circumstances align, when we can balance environmental health, while providing economic sustenance to your citizens at the same time, it should be described as an opportunity of the type that the world needs more of, not less.

Kevin Jones

From: [Susan skiman jones](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Harvesting of tropical fish
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:42:04 AM

Dear chair and Board members:

I am writing to oppose approval of taking Hawaii reef fish for commercial use. Hawaiian resources should stay in Hawaii. These fish are an integral part of the reef habitat which is constantly being eroded by humans and climate change.

Regards,

Susan Skiman Jones

Holualoa, Hawai'i 96725

8084948744

From: [Devin Jones](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commercial tropical fish harvesting
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:46:10 AM

Dear Chair and Board members,

I write to express my strong opposition to reopening commercial tropical fish harvesting in Hawaii.

Please send this motion back for redrafting so that it represents the consistent support for reef fish conservation expressed by the people of Hawaii on this issue.

The take of a public resource for commercial exploitation of a few has no place in safeguarding Hawaii's reefs for future generations.

Mahalo you consideration of my view on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Devin Jones
Holualoa, Hawaii
Hawaii Island

From: [kamaka silva](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:48:38 PM

Name: Roblynn K Silva
Town: Kaneohe
Island: Oahu

Please send rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life - rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end -restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Mahalo
Roblynn K Silva

From: [Kaikua Kaaihili](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:45:59 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kaikua Kaaihili. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu O ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kaikua Kaaihili
Kanu O ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Ezekiel Kahoopii](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:45:33 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Ezekiel Kahoopii. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Ezekiel Kahoopii
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter school
Waimea,Hawaii

October 24, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Re: F-2 Testimony in Opposition for Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules Updating and Consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a new Chapter

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the BLNR. I applaud the returning members from years past who have read thousands of pages of testimony on this issue over the years, and I welcome the two new members and hope you find the same patience for today's hearing.

My name is Kaikea Nakachi, I am first and foremost a Native Hawaiian child of the land born and raised in North Kona on Hawai'i Island. I am a student and a steward of the kekahawai'ole region of North Kona and proud supporter of place-based management of wahi pana in West Hawai'i and across the pae'āina. I am also a researcher with a bachelors of science degree in biological oceanography and a masters degree in tropical conservation biology and environmental science. I come to you today with my lenses of science, culture, and stewardship in **strong opposition** to this request.

I recommend the board to **deny this request** and **instruct DAR to start over in their rulemaking** process and to re-iterate and even expand your instructions from December 2023 for them to engage the petitioners from 2023 and to engage communities from West Hawai'i, the West Hawai'i Fisheries Council, and other interested individuals and organizations while crafting potential rules. As written, this framework and proposal has had zero input from any of the people and organizations noted above.

I stand on my testimony from December 2023 when I supported the petition made to the board to ban the commercial collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium pet trade. The heirarchy of priorities policy for the DLNR regarding commercial activities in state waters ranks the conservation of the resource as the highest priority. If, and only if, the commercial activity can be done in a way that does not unduly damage the resource, should it be allowed. If so, then the next priority is for the use/activity of the general public. A commercial activity should only be considered if it does not impinge on the resource or use by the general public. Every fish that is removed from the reef by aquarium collectors is a fish that cannot contribute to conserve its own population, a fish that cannot fulfil its role in its ecosystem either as an herbivore or prey item, and is a fish that cannot be seen or fished for by Native Hawaiian subsistence fishers or any other member of the general public. Now multiply that impact by the hundreds of thousands of fish that are removed by aquarium fishers and it is evident that this commercial industry greatly impinges on the resource as well as the use by the general public.

The precautionary principle policy is used to develop laws for a healthier and more just Hawai'i by looking at a wide variety of alternatives and the best available science to select the option that presents the least potential threat to the states's natural systems. The best available science shows

several things. First it shows that palces with community-led management have higher fish biomass than even fully protected areas without community-led management (Friedlander et al. 2013; <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/files/2023/01/Friedlander-et-al.-2013-Customary-marine-resource-knowledge-and-use-in-contemporary-Hawai%E2%80%98i.pdf>). Part of this is due to the prohibiting of aquarium collection by communities in their managed areas. Our best available science also shows the various and dangerous declines in the entire ecosytems and in species targeted and in areas open to aquarium collection (The large majority of West Hawai‘i was open to aquarium collection and found to have the lowest total fish biomass, lowest herbivore biomass, least amount of juvenile lau‘īpala, lowest coral cover, and highest algal cover in West Hawai‘i in 2003, 2017, and most years in between – Gove et al. 2019: <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/19771>; 93% depletion of lau‘īpala in areas open to aquarium collection on O‘ahu – Grabowsky & Thornhill 2020: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/bnbxjpi617a1gnx/Aquarium%20Fish%20Paper%20Grabowsky%20and%20Thornhill.pdf?dl=0>). Finally, the best available science is also developing methods for captive breeding. This method could provide more jobs than a mere handful of collectors while also preventing wild fish from being removed from our reefs. According to the precautionary principle policy, the state should be focused on expanding captive breeding and prohibiting collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium industry, since it is the alternative with the least potential threat to the state’s natural systems. Aquaculturist in Hawai‘i have demonstrated their ability to farm raise lau‘īpala/yellow tang and potter’s angelfish and therefore those species should be removed from this proposal entirely to uphold the precautionary principle and heirarchy of priorities policies.

I have heard many attempts to define the aquarium collection industry as “sustainable” over the years, most of them voiced by foreign-born collectors. Here in Hawai‘i we have a unique and incredible definition of sustainable that is just as much of a lifestyle as it is a benefit to every animal in Hawai‘i, including us humans. This definition of sustainable is the cultural practice of lovingly taking care of your home and its resources to achieve ‘āina momona, where the environment is able to produce so much abundance that our human needs can be met from the generated excess. The definition of sustainable as the maximum amount of fish that can be killed or removed and still sustain a population is unacceptable and just as dangerous to our culture and way of life as it is to the resources that feed it. Not only does this false idea of sustainability ensure that ‘āina momona can never be acheived and all of the cultural practices associated with it impossible to do, but it also directly takes away from the health and wellbeing of subsistence Native Hawaiian fishermen while simultaneously increasing the burden on them to lovingly take care of the resources being so heavily impacted by others.

Me and my family made time to be interviewed for the Cultural Impact Statement (CIS) for the Hawai‘i Island Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the pet trade. My grandfather was still alive then and spoke passionately on the need to protect our marine resources due to the declines

he had witnessed since his birth in 1932. He, like me and my family as well as many others, stated that the removal of fish from the ocean by aquarium collectors goes against cultural practices and has no place in Hawai‘i. While my grandfather is no longer alive, his legacy is continued by me and my family, and through our cultural practices he lives on in the ocean in different forms. The burden of kuleana falls to me to uphold his values that were ignored and left out of the summarization of the CIS by the pet trade in their EIS. It is why I will continue to fight to defend the unique, beautiful, and life-giving marine life of Hawai‘i because it includes my grandfather and numerous other ancestors.

The mission of DLNR is to “enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawai‘i’s unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawai‘i nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors.” As I have described in my testimony I wholeheartedly agree on how unique and limited our natural, cultural and historic resources are. The paragraphs above describe why I supported the 2023 effort to enact a rule to prohibit the collection of reef wildlife for the aquarium industry in Hawai‘i, and it is why I so strongly oppose this request today.

At the December 2023 meeting I remember being hopeful when the board unanimously voted in support of the petition. When HRS § 188-31 was brought up there was a change from rulemaking for an outright ban to somewhere between the current rules and an outright ban. The board also instructed “DAR to take in full consideration the petitioner request and proceed with rulemaking.” What is being requested and proposed by DAR does not fall within current rules and an outright ban, it further expands permitted commercial aquarium harvest, even after the board and the vast majority of Hawai‘i have not supported their previously proposed EIS and CIS, and it has not taken ANY consideration the petitioner request. I recommend the board to deny this request and instruct DAR to start over in their rulemaking process.

I strongly question the conclusion made that HRS § 188-31 prevents the prohibition of commercial aquarium collection. As was discussed in December 2023, HRS § 188-31 states that the board **may** issue an aquarium fish permit, not **shall**. The word **may** would give the board the decision-making power issue or not issue permits. I remind the board of their desire to support the petition in December to initiate rulemaking to end commercial aquarium collection, and would argue that it would have been a decision that still aligns with the language of **may** issue a permit, but choosing not to.

Moreover, the board would still be able to satisfy HRS § 188-31 by the issuance of **non-commercial** aquarium permits by any applicant, which also aligns with the exceptions written in the petition heard in December 2023. I stand by my December 2023 testimony and strongly urge the board to proudly stand by their values shown in December 2023.

I also stand by my testimony from August 2024 where I humbly asked that the board hold DAR responsible. I believe the best way forward for Hawai‘i and its resources is for no AQ collection to occur. I kaka‘o the sentiment shared on August 9th 2024 by board member Kaiwi Yoon on being “against personal aquariums” and am against a permit system to catch hundreds of thousands of fish for personal aquariums. We have seen the greed of even a small handful of collectors taking enormous amount of fish, sometime illegally. We cannot award that bad behavior and we cannot allow legal channels for that greed to continue. The public trust doctrine of Hawai‘i calls on DLNR to hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. If the past is any indication, this industry and this rule package would violate that doctrine by allowing privatized commercial export of fish at the expense of the resource itself and the present and future people of Hawai‘i that would otherwise benefit from the fish being removed for profit,

During the August 2024 BLNR meeting I was particularly disturbed with DAR asking for the shortcut of delegating decision-making power solely to the chair. In this proposal they go a step further and cut the entire board out of the process by seeking their own authority to issue permits, which not only opens the door for more than 7 collectors in West Hawai‘i, it would also open the door for permits across the state. I hope you are as offended as I am to think such a dangerous and impactful industry would circumvent your authority. I am proud to see how the board has stood with our communities in protecting our treasured i‘a in the past, and know that we will not stand for these various harmful actions proposed by DAR. I will continue to stand on my previous testimonies and their accompanying studies, heirarchy of priorities principle, precautionary principle policy, definitions of sustainable, lack of kapa‘akai analyses, issues with CIS, and general concern over Native Hawaiian cultural practices that rely on ‘āina momona. I will remind the board of the disrespect shown to many of the ocean stewards and to the board itself by AQ collectors in past meetings. Of particular concern was one malihini claiming that being born on O‘ahu and living in Hawai‘i for 50 years made her just as Hawaiian as us. How shameful to hear, and how disrespectful.

I also stand on my testimony made in December 2023 on the Herbivore Rule Package. I was dismayed to see the weakening of the herbivore rule package allowing for commercial carveouts. We cannot allow any more commercial interests to supercede our cultural and ecological needs in Hawai‘i. If this permit system is allowed we will only succeed in lining the wallets of a handful of collectors and the foreign hobbyists in the industry, while harming ourselves. I am grateful to the board for hearing us then and removing the proposed exception to the 5inch minimum for kole for those collected by the aquarium trade. I hope you are also dismayed to see that same proposed exception once again being proposed by DAR today. There are several recommendations I would make on the proposed framework and rules that would vastly improve them, however I will note that the most justice and best case for Hawai‘i would still be NONE of these rules being needed with a ban on the commercial collection for aquarium fish. That being

said, I hope the board stands by their decision to remove exemptions to the kole minimum size. Food fish such as kole and umaumalei should not be proposed to be commercially extracted for aquarium purposes at all. Neither should endemic species such as Kole or the Potter's Angel.

In summary, I do not support kole minimum size exemptions, the fact that food fish are on this proposal, the fact that endemic fish are on this proposal, the sheer amount of fish to be removed on this proposal, the failure to consider and involve the 2023 petitioners, the lack of input from the WHFC, the lack of input from the communities of West Hawai'i that this would directly impact, the circumvention of BLNR by attempting to give authority to DAR to issue commercial permits with no oversight, misalignment with the heirarchy of priorities policy, misalignment with the precautionary principle policy, and misalignment with the public trust doctrine of Hawai'i.

I humbly ask the board to **deny this request** and **instruct DAR to start over in their rulemaking** process and to re-iterate and even expand your instructions from December 2023 for them to engage the petitioners from 2023 and to engage communities from West Hawai'i, the West Hawai'i Fisheries Council, and other interested individuals and organizations while crafting potential rules. I would also recommend those rules to consider the banning of commercial aquarium collection while fulfilling HRS § 188-31 with a permit process for non-commercial aquarium take at an acceptable ecologically and culturally appropriate ammount to be determined by input from the parties listed above.

Mahalo nui,

Kaikea Nakachi

From: [Jenny Kalmbach](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:45:59 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to urge you to **send the proposed aquarium trade rules back for redrafting** so they truly reflect the community's long-standing call to **safeguard reef life**, not revive the very trade these rules were meant to end. Restoring the public's trust requires keeping **permitting authority with the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)** itself—for full transparency and accountability.

As written, the proposal represents **institutional betrayal**. It no longer reflects conservation intent—it creates a **permitting framework for large-scale commercial extraction** of reef fish.

The proposed **annual catch limits are 400% higher** than the average take reported by collectors over the past 20 years—an act of **obscene greed** that puts profit over protection.

The rules also **contradict science**. Researchers agree reef fish populations must *increase* to help reefs withstand climate change. Allowing mass extraction of herbivores defies both science and common sense.

DAR's refusal to set local limits leaves every reef in Hawai'i vulnerable to **degradation and collapse**, as seen decades ago in leeward O'ahu.

Meanwhile, there is **overwhelming public opposition**. A recent poll shows **84% of O'ahu and Hawai'i Island residents support permanently ending commercial capture of reef fish**, while only **10% support the large-scale take proposed in DAR's draft rule**.

Our reefs are living systems essential to Hawai'i's culture, food security, and resilience. The community's intent is clear: **protect and restore**, not exploit.

I've personally witnessed the return of fish populations and species during the 10-year closure at Uluwewe Bay—it's been incredible to see the reef come back to life. It would be heartbreaking to see all that recovery thrown away just for a few commercial outfitters looking to make money. **The ocean belongs to everyone for their enjoyment not exploitation.**

Please return these rules for redrafting to uphold conservation, reflect community will, and ensure accountability through the BLNR.

Mahalo,

Jenny Kalmbach

Holualoa, Hawaii

From: [kimeona kane](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:51:16 AM

Aloha mai,

Kimeona Kane of Waimānalo, O‘ahu, a coastal community where our i‘a stand no chance against illegal take without rules and enforcement. Having spent my entire life in this ocean, I can attest to the declining of fish and other populations. We need more protections, added education and outreach and critically important, enforcement.

Do not accept the rules as written and send them back for redrafting WITH public interface and integrity. Additionally, these matters must stay within the oversight of BLNR and not solely with DAR. Public trust is important and must be valued.

‘O wau nō me ka ha‘aha‘a a me ka mahalo,

Kimeona Kane (he/him)

Waimānalo

808 398 8989

kimeonakane@gmail.com

Confidentiality Notice: This message is for the designated recipient only and may contain privileged, proprietary, or otherwise private information. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original. Any other use of this message by you is prohibited.

From: [Elizabeth Kilpatrick](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:47:16 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is [Elizabeth], and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
[YOUR NAME]
[TOWN, ISLAND]

From: [Earl Kim](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:42:47 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Earl J. Kim

From: ecologickimo@gmail.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of F 2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 5:16:35 PM

To
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DATE: FRIDAY, November 24th, 2025
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
LOCATION: 1151 Punchbowl St., Room 132
blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

Testimony By Kimo

Please pass Agenda Item F. 2. I stand in support of the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) relating to Aquarium Life Management and the return of aquarium fishing permits.

Testimony In Support F2 Rules Package Introduction

blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

BLNR Meeting 10-24-25 9 am

I am sharing a past testimony by researchers who correctly stated that the shutdown of the aquarium fishery was based on false information. Please read.

By William Walsh Ph.D., Ivor Williams Ph.D., [Brian Tissot Ph.D.](#); Leon Hallacher Ph.D.; Bruce Carlson Ph.D.; Charles Birkeland Ph.D.; Jeremy Claisse Ph.D.; Mark Christie Ph.D.; Richard Pyle Ph.D.; Leighton Taylor Ph.D.; Randy Kosaki Ph.D.; Cynthia Hunter Ph.D.; Brian Bowen Ph.D.; Brian Zgliczynski Ph.D.; Jeff Ebel Ph.D.; Alan Friedlander Ph.D.; Kosta Stamoulis Ph.D.; Delisse Ortiz Ph.D.; Jan Dierking Ph.D.; Rob Toonen Ph.D.; and Jim Beets Ph.D. My Turn | Thursday, June 25, 2020, 12:05 a.m. Quote:

"We are concerned with the **level of false information** and lack of data these individuals have used to support their assertions, and the havoc they have created over a well-managed aquarium fishery that has benefited from the aforementioned goodwill partnerships".

Meetings with DAR scientists, combined with 20 years of management experience, the passage of the 2014 and 2015 Rules package, and the implementation of new laws, ensure that the fishery was and will remain sustainable.

The highest management possible for a fishery, with decades of fish counts, is considered by many scientists as a sustainable "Model Fishery". No other fishery in the world had this kind of management!

Please pass F.2. And support sustainable fisheries.

Thanks, Kimo

From: [Billy Kinney](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:43:54 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is William "Billy" Kinney and I am from Hanalei and Hā'ena on Kaua'i. I am currently the Assistant Director of the Hui Maka'ainana o Makana (the "Hui") - a nonprofit organization of lineal descendants stewarding and co-managing Hā'ena State Park, and Hā'ena nearshore fisheries. In 2015 we became the first Community-based Subsistence Fishing Area with a management plan and rules package signed into law. On behalf of the Hui, our cofounders and members, who are also lawai'a and ocean advocates - such as Presley Wann and Kelii Alapai - we urge you to remember that the ocean is not just a place for detrimental commercial activities, extractive exporting of species from a place we have been trying to co-manage into balance. In the sum of its parts we, our "icebox", our fisheries and our communities, need your help to maintain and restore structural balance and health.

Commercial aquarium collectors have devastated reef ecosystems around O'ahu and Hawai'i Island, extracting hundreds of thousands of fish and invertebrates each year in hotspots including West Hawai'i and Kāne'ohe Bay. Collected species include lau'ipala (yellow tang), kole (goldring surgeonfish), pāku'iku'i (Achilles tang), among many other native and endemic species that are critical for maintaining healthy reefs and supporting Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing and cultural practices.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people

of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation. Generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

As a hui / organization advocating for the proper co-management of our environment, with government and community stewarding in trust, true co-management here needs to include a principled community approach and process to rules creation - the science-conservation, permit revenue, industry voices should not drown out the people.

Mahalo,
Billy Kinney, Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana
Hā‘ena, Kaua‘i

October 23, 2025

Testimony - Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules

Aloha mai kākou e Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is **Malia Kipapa**, and I speak on behalf of my Kipapa 'Ohana of Pahoehoe, Kona. We are a lawai'a family, fishing people, who have lived along this coastline for generations. The ocean has always fed us, taught us, and cared for us. From the reef to the deep sea, from the limu and 'opae that cling to the rocks to the fish that travel the currents, these are the foods that sustain our 'ohana. They are part of who we are.

To us, the ocean is like a kupuna, an elder who holds knowledge, sustains life, and deserves care and respect. As a Kanaka Maoli, it is our responsibility to mālama and steward our resources the way we would care for a kupuna or a keiki. If we all treated everything we hold with this same care, we would not be here today debating what is right or wrong, or who has the most money. Instead, it would be clear: we act for what is best for those who sustain us, in complete reciprocity with the life around us.

We are in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask that you do not move these rules forward or approve public hearings at this time.

We ask that you:

1. **Keep permitting authority with the BLNR**, so decisions remain transparent and accountable to the people of Hawai'i.
2. **Send the rules back** for redrafting with true collaboration, with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE, so our community voices are part of the process.
3. **Remove Kole and Umaumalei** from the whitelist. These are respected food fish and vital herbivores for reef health.
4. **Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish**, now successfully bred in captivity, making wild harvest unnecessary.
5. **Protect our reefs** by honoring Hawai'i's Hierarchy of Use Policy and Public Trust Doctrine, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs over commercial extraction.

When I look at our reef today, I see my kūpuna who gathered there and our keiki who swim there now. What will be left if we take without care or reciprocity?

Our reefs are our Kupuna and lifeline, and caring for them is our kuleana as Kanaka Maoli and good humans. Please protect these waters for the future of Hawai'i and our people and may we continue to be steadfast and mindful of how our decisions today will impact those around us now and in the future.

Mahalo nui for listening to the voices of our 'ohana.

Malia Kipapa

On behalf of the **Kipapa 'Ohana of Pahoehoe, Kona, Hawai'i**

From: [Klayton Kubo](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F 2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:21:14 AM

Aloha Board Members,

Please approve Agenda Item F 2 to go to Public Hearings. West Hawaii Aquarium Collectors went through the EIS Process. They have an Approved EIS.

I'm sorry that I will not be able to testify via Zoom I have a prior engagement.

Klayton Kubo
Waimea, Kaua'i

From: [Kevin Kohen](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of F2 opening the Hawaiian Fishery
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:45:58 AM

Good day,
My name is Kevin Kohen and I'm emailing to express my support of F2 and opening the Hawaiian Aquarium fishery managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,
Kevin Kohen



October 22, 2025

ATTN: Ms. Dawn Chang, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)
Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)
1151 Punchbowl St., Room 132
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Submitted *via Email* at blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

SUBJECT: Opposition to Agenda Item F2 Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Rules Allowing for Statewide Aquarium Collection, BLNR Meeting, October 24, 2025, 9:00 a.m., Kalanimoku Building

Aloha pumehana kākou:

Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA) respectfully **opposes** the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR's) request for public hearings on proposed rules establishing statewide aquarium (AQ) fishing in Hawai'i waters. We believe the greater focus and intent of this permitting process is to circumvent long-term community opposition and open up the reef fisheries of West Hawai'i to commercial extraction.

[Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo](#) (KUA) means “grassroots growing through shared responsibility,” and we serve as a facilitator, consultant, trainer, liaison, and tool-builder for grassroots community stewardship networks and place-based efforts. We work to increase our communities' resiliency, adaptation, and transformation through community-based biocultural resource management, currently supporting three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or “that which feeds”) community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a (“caretakers of fishponds”); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things “limu” or locally-grown “seaweed.” **Our shared nu'ukia (vision) is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'āina momona – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our communities' resilience and well-being.**

KUA opposes the agenda item at issue today based on a foundation of long term place-based opposition by traditional fishing communities in West Hawai'i. Several of our E Alu Pū members are based in West Hawai'i and have long opposed AQ collection in their region. Their opposition to AQ collection is based on their Native Hawaiian cultural philosophies, values, and traditions of lawai'a pono and place-based fishery management. In 1998, the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) was created along with the West Hawai'i Fishery Council (WHFC), largely in response to the AQ trades' decimation of their fishery. WHRFMA and WHFC were built upon the strong community efforts to make fishery governance more local and pertinent to the communities most dependent on the fishery. Further, the litigious history of the AQ trade shows the strong West Hawai'i pushback to this



commercial industry that nearly eradicated entire fish species before the communities started taking formal action.

We also question how this push for AQ rules aligns with DAR's overall [Holomua Marine Initiative](#). From our understanding, and the DAR website, the Holomua initiative is “a way to work with communities to effectively manage our nearshore marine resources around each main Hawaiian island so that our local resources are available and plentiful, today and for future generations.” The process claims to be “a new community-based planning approach to ensure local knowledge is guiding marine resource management planning at every step in the process.” Although these are framed as “statewide” AQ rules, and indeed pave the way for statewide AQ collection, the immediate threat and focus has always been to open up West Hawai'i which is the only “geographically endorsed” community so far.

How and when was the West Hawai'i community involved in informing and “guiding” these proposed AQ rules to “ensure local knowledge...at every step in the process”? None of the West Hawai'i community members that KUA knows and works with were involved in creating these rules, and likewise none are in support of holding public hearings on them as currently drafted. Furthermore, when questioned in recent discussions about these rules, DAR could not answer why these rules are being submitted *now* before the Hawai'i Island Holomua initiative process is completed. Hasn't the West Hawai'i community worked for decades now to do just that? DAR said at this recent meeting that each community could work to prevent AQ fishing in each of their areas, but if that is true, then **it seems like this push for public hearings on AQ rules is indeed premature – putting the cart before the horse, or in this case, seven AQ collectors before an entire community.**

The Holomua website also professes “**I ola nā kai o Hawai'i i ka nui i'a...So the waters of Hawai'i thrive with abundance.**” Does allowing for extraction of over 200,000 i'a for non-essential, non-food use add to the abundance of Hawai'i's nearshore waters? How does this align with DLNR's overall mission to “Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawai'i's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei...”? Furthermore, how does allowing for statewide AQ fishing, at the very least before completing the Holomua process for all islands, align with our Hawai'i State Constitution Article XII, Section 7 to protect all rights, customarily and traditionally, for Native Hawaiian ahupua'a tenants, as well as the public trust doctrine in Article XI, Section 1? We cannot see how it does. **We question further why this push for AQ collection rules is being prioritized over other longstanding community efforts and management needs, especially those in West Hawai'i by Native Hawaiian and local communities in Ho'okena and Ka'ūpūlehu.**

Besides the conflicting purpose and timing of this request, and although our focus at KUA has never been the economic value of our i'a, **it is hard to ignore the flagrant economic imbalance at play** between DAR's proposed fee of just \$100 *per AQ permit* and the retail price \$100+ *per AQ fish*. It also seems imprudent and irresponsible as a management decision. With the only seven known potential AQ permittees, that would mean **a mere \$700 annually going back to the state – for the care of 'āina and kai on behalf of Native Hawaiian and local people.** Meanwhile, it is our understanding that the state management costs (excluding enforcement of the rules) is estimated at \$300,000 - \$500,000 annually. The AQ collectors on



the other hand would stand to profit, as a conservative estimate, over \$20 million dollars annually (\$100 x 224,166 Annual Catch Limit).

We urge you to **deny** this request for public hearings on rules that were not properly vetted and informed by Native Hawaiian and local communities (particularly those in West Hawai'i), do not align with DAR and DLNR's own initiatives and mission, and make entirely no sense economically. Mahalo nui for considering our testimony in opposition.

Me ka mahalo a me ka 'oia'i'o nō,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Chang".

Kevin K.J. Chang
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olan Leimomi Fisher".

Olan Leimomi Fisher
Kua'āina Advocate

From: [Kulia-Kaulele Purdy](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:45:23 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kulia Purdy. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu o Ka Aina Charter school. and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kulia Purdy.
Kanu o Ka Aina Charter school
Waimea,Hawaii

From: [Kassidy Kulukulualani](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:45:19 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kassidy Kulukulualani. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Kassidy Kulukulualani
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii



Kūpeke Ahupua'a

P.O. Box 1687, Kaunakakai, Hawaii 96748
kupekeahupuaa@gmail.com
(808) 646-0793

kupekelokoia.com

October 22, 2025

Attn: Board of Land and Natural Resources

Re: Agenda Item F-2 BLNR Meeting, October 24, 2025 DAR Aquarium
Fishery Permitting Rules

Dear Chair Chang and Board members,

Kūpeke Ahupua'a stands with our partner organizations in **OPPOSITION** to the proposed statewide aquarium fishing rules.

Kupeke Ahupua'a is a Molokai-based Native Hawaiian organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the ahupua'a of Kupeke, a traditional land division of over 300 acres from mountain summit to nearshore reef fishery, with a mission of restoring and preserving cultural resources and native ecosystems, reinforcing environmental health and cultural identity for future generations.

We strongly urge the BLNR to uphold the public trust doctrine in administering to our collective responsibility over shared resources by exercising the precautionary principle as the minimum standard of care for our environment.

Mahalo nui,

La'a Poepoe
Executive Director

From: [Nahla Kurap](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:44:30 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Nahla Kurap. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu o ka Aina Charter school and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahlao nui loa,

Nahla Kurap
KANU O KA AINA CHARTER SCHOOL
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Alena Lagaret](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:43:30 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Alena Lagaret. I am 5th grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Alena Lagaret
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawai'i

From: [Sunny LaPlante](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:40:21 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **REJECT** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands. The proposed rule no longer reflects the **community's conservation intent**.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates,

and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely, Michael La Plante

From: [Susan L](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect reef fish, not open up more commercial harvesting for aquariums.
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:08:26 AM

We the people have already spoken on this. Respect it. Do your given job to represent the overwhelming public desire to protect our dwindling resources.

Get a spine. Even the fish have them,

Thank you.
Susan Laughlin
Big Island

Sent from Proton Mail for iOS

From: [Michelle Lazuka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24, 2025 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:19:00 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and BNLR Board Members,

My name is Michelle Lazuka. My livelihood depends on robust and healthy reefs. The proposal to allow aquarium collecting, the taking of live fish off of Hawaii's reefs for profit, is in direct conflict with the Department of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) mission:

The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

The permit fee schedule is a joke.

The harm caused by removing so many fish far outweighs the financial agenda of a handful of selfish 'entrepreneurs'. The fish on our reefs belong to everyone. Don't allow this proposed wholesale reef rape to undo years of good faith conservation that has taken place over the last decade.

With warming seas and extreme water quality issues, the fish that remain are already challenged to survive. Plucking fish off of our reefs for export to hobbyist fish aquarium enthusiasts is a betrayal to all who love Hawaii and to our tourism economy. Geopolitics has harmed our small businesses enough, let's not exacerbate our economic strife by decimating our reefs that will be devoid of live fish.

What about our boating industry? Statewide, our snorkel tourism sector represents millions in state revenue, and hundreds of amazing jobs. I beseech you all to reconsider this ill-conceived proposal. Follow DAR's mission to preserve our precious marine resources.

Mahalo,
Michelle Lazuka M.ed
Maui Educator: Grade1-4
808-500-8881

From: [Michelle Lazuka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] testimony
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 6:38:10 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and BNLR Board Members,

My name is Michelle Lazuka. My livelihood depends on robust and healthy reefs.

The proposal to allow aquarium collecting, the taking of live fish off of Hawaii's reefs for profit, is in direct conflict with the Department of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) mission:

The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

The permit fee schedule is a joke.

The harm caused by removing so many fish far out weighs the financial agenda of a handful of selfish 'entrepreneurs'. The fish on our reefs belong to everyone. Don't allow this proposed wholesale reef rape to undo years of good faith conservation that has taken place over the last decade.

With warming seas and extreme water quality issues, the fish that remain are already challenged to survive. Plucking fish off of our reefs for export to hobbyist fish aquarium enthusiasts is a betrayal to all who love Hawaii and to our tourism economy. Geo politics has harmed our small businesses enough, let's not exacerbate our economic strife by decimating our reefs that will be devoid of live fish.

What about our boating industry? Statewide, our snorkel tourism sector represent millions in state revenue, and hundreds of amazing jobs. I beseech you all to reconsider this ill-conceived proposal. Follow DAR's mission to preserve our precious marine resources.

I have been a dedicated teacher here on Maui, Please preserve!

Michelle Lazuka
Santa Rosa Tutoring
808-500-8881
santarosatutor.com

From: merrymiller1@icloud.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:34:10 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Lee R. Miller

From: [Marlies Lee](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:06:51 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Marlies Lee, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) **Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.**
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Marlies Lee

Kailua-Kona HI

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kevin Leib](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Agenda Item F.2 – Protect Hawai'i's Reefs
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:01:58 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the BLNR,

My name is Kevin, and I'm a teacher on Maui. I take pride in helping my students understand how our island's ecosystems connect to our way of life. When they see the reefs up close, they're amazed, but I also have to explain why some areas no longer have fish or color.

Opening our reefs to aquarium collection again teaches the wrong lesson. Please reject Agenda Item F.2 and keep protecting the reefs that inspire and educate our keiki.

Mahalo for your time and leadership,

Kevin

Maui

From: [Julie Leonard](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] re-open Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:53:46 PM

Aloha,

Please do not open Hawaiian waters to aquarium trade collection. The fish populations off the Kona coast have dramatically diminished over the last twenty years and with more frequent coral bleaching events our reefs are struggling.

Most of the fish collected will die in transport and the remaining fish often die within a year of captivity. There is absolutely no reason to harvest fish from the ocean to live the rest of their lives in a small aquarium. Fish belong in the ocean, on the reef playing their role in the ecosystem.

There is not one reason that we should do this. In fact the cost of oversight is greater than the revenue from permits but money is the least important factor. Saving our reefs and fragile ecosystem is the most important.

Please do not betray the people of the Big Island.

With warm Aloha,

Julie Leonard
Juliecat42@yahoo.com
Kona, Hawaii
Sent from my iPad

From: [Ariel Lindsey-Emeliano](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:51:11 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Ariel Lindsey-Emeliano. I am a 5th grade kumu ma Kanu o ka 'Āina Public Charter School, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them and help to leave our future generations with an abundant reef, not a dead one.


Me ka ha'aha'a,
Ariel. Lindsey-Emeliano

--


| Ariel K. Lindsey-Emeliano



**Papa 5 Kumu, Kanu o ka 'Āina
NCPCS**

 808-890-8144

 ariell@kalo.org

 <https://kanuokaaina.org/>

 [64-1043 Hiiaka St., Kamuela, Hi. 96743](#)



"He waiwai nui ka lokahi"

From: [Spectrum](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DAR - Opposition to opening aquarium collecting permits
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:38:27 PM

BLNR,

Please so not allow DAR to get away with re-opening Hawaii's Reefs to commercial aquarium collecting .

We must continue to protect our precious reefs and tropical fish that are so diminished as it is .

I do not want to see this happen.

Sincerely

Patrick C Locey
P.O. Box 628
Anahola HI 96703

808-823-0503

From: [Brenna Lonergan](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:59:57 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Brenna Marie Lonergan and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Brenna Marie Lonergan

Kona HI

From: [Anne Lorenzo](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:36:45 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Lorenzo

"Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind."

~John F. Kennedy, Speech to UN General Assembly, 25 September 1961

J. HAU'OLI LORENZO-ELARCO
jacobyelarco@gmail.com

KENIKA LORENZO-ELARCO
kenikamakana.lorenzo@gmail.com

October 22, 2025

Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)
Board of Land & Natural Resources
blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

Subject: Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules

Aloha 'āina, aloha moana,

We are J. Hau'oli & Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco from Waimea, Hawai'i and Waiialua, O'ahu. We are submitting testimony in **strong opposition** to the proposed Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules under Agenda Item F.2.

These rules, as currently drafted, fail to uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and public trust required under Hawai'i's constitution. The proposal prioritizes commercial aquarium trade interests over the cultural, ecological, and subsistence values that must come first in the stewardship of our marine resources.

As saltwater aquarium hobbyists ourselves, we understand the desire to create and own a slice of a pristine ecosystem conveniently at home. However, this desire does not outweigh the cultural and ecological value of these species in their natural habitat. As Native Hawaiians, we understand fish to be kin, in fact, they are some of our eldest ancestors. The proposed idea to remove important Hawaiian fish from Hawaiian waters for ornamental purposes and profit is in direct violation of cultural values. This act must be likened to the forceful removal of our grandparents from their homes and sold to live in artificial spaces in distant spaces.

The vast removal of these wild fish will cause detrimental effects and imbalances in Hawai'i's reefs systems, causing harm to the entire food chain. Any person with intimate knowledge of the oceans is familiar with stories from elders who reminisce about times gone by, sharing that fish populations, distribution, and sizes today are nowhere near the abundance it once was. This is due to bad fishing and extraction practices. To permit the removal of these fish on such a large scale would further emphasize the disparity. What then becomes of the reef systems we leave for our children, and our children's children?

We are not against the aquarium industry; we are against commercial level exploitation of wild species, especially without proper protocols, care, consideration, and consultation. The aquarium industry must instead think creatively and intentionally to develop a sustainable hobby. In this consideration, we implore you to head the following points—

1. Protecting Culturally Important Species

Species such as Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) are not ornamental commodities—they are culturally important and continue to be a major source of seafood for Native Hawaiians. In fact, kole is yet another example noted by elders on dwindling populations and shrinking sizes. These fish are vital herbivores that maintain reef health and the entire food system. Allowing them on a “whitelist” for aquarium collection double-counts them for both subsistence and ornamental purposes, which is ethically, ecologically, and culturally irresponsible.

2. Eliminating Unnecessary Wild Harvest

Lā'īpala (Yellow Tang) and Potter's Angelfish are already successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute at Hawai'i Pacific University. Continued wild extraction of these species is unnecessary and contradicts the principle of sustainable use.

3. Invest In Research, Captive Breeding, and Educational Efforts

As pointed out in the examples above and as seen in various kinds of examples within the global aquarium industry, many beautiful reef fish have been successfully studied and cultivated. This has completely negated the need to remove them from the ocean. Additionally, captive breed species have a higher survival rate than wild caught, carry less diseases, and are also cheaper for hobbyists. Thus, rather than providing permitting for fish removal, permitting and funding should be directed towards research to better understand the captive breeding potential of these fish. Additionally, funds should be appropriated towards developing educational programs that allow the public to appreciate the beauty of these fish without removing them from the ecosystem.

4. Aligning with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy and the Public Trust Doctrine

The aquarium fishery does not meet the standards for cultural or subsistence practice. Rather, it is purely commercial and recreational. DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy requires that cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs be prioritized over commercial extraction. Likewise, the Public Trust Doctrine obligates DLNR to protect public trust resources for the benefit of all people of Hawai'i, not private export.

5. Ensuring True Collaborative Redrafting

The rules should be sent back for redrafting in genuine collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE, ensuring that enforcement, ecological knowledge, and Native Hawaiian perspectives are fully integrated into the process.

6. Upholding Accountability and Transparency

Permitting authority must remain with the BLNR—not delegated away—to ensure public oversight and prevent abuse. Vague permitting language benefits industry interests, not the public good.

In closing, we urge the Board to **reject these proposed rules and reaffirm Hawai‘i’s commitment to protecting our marine ecosystems and cultural heritage.** Our reef fish are not for ornamental export! They are vital to the health of our reefs, our culture, our communities, and our future generations.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

He marae te moana,

J. Hau‘oli & Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco
Waimea, Hawai‘i & Waialua, O‘ahu

=====

J. Hau‘oli Lorenzo-Elarco is from Waimea, Hawai‘i. He is an Assistant Professor of Hawaiian Language the Honolulu Community College, and on the leadership team of the Papahānaumokuākea Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group (CWG) as the coordinator.

Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco is from Waialua, O‘ahu. He is a faculty member at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and a member of the CWG.

BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DATE: FRIDAY, November 24th, 2025

Item F2

Testimony by: Jim Lovell

I am in support of Item F2

We have spent literally years kicking this item around. We have had multiple meetings where we have taken public testimony again and again and again. The fishermen have given up virtually everything. Giving up any more would make it impossible to make a living with what is left. Our opponents have not given up anything to compromise. It is time to let people go back to work!

Thanks You for your time

Aloha,

Jim Lovell

From: [Israel Lyman](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:42:32 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Israel Lyman. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Israel Lyman
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Vyvyanne Mackey](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:58:09 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Vyvyanne, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and asking you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine.

As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export. The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation. It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. PLEASE uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,

Vyvyanne Mackey, Big Island of Hawai'i

From: maloneyd001@hawaii.rr.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:16:13 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Paula Maloney

From: [Taryn Manago](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Agenda Item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:03:07 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back.

Thank you,

Taryn Manago

From: [S.A. Marek](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hawaii's reef fish are WILDLIFE, not pets
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:38:45 AM

Aloha,

Wildlife, not pets.

Folks who live in West Hawaii are justifiably angry about having to fight (again!) to protect the ocean ecosystem and reef fish from the outdated Aquarium trade. Hawaii's Yellow Tang can live for 20 years — but only in the ocean.

Do not issue AQ permits.

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek
Big Island resident

“Our priority should be to understand the fragile wonders of life on Earth and do our best to ensure that we do not damage the ecosystem even further.”

-Matthew Cobb, zoologist, from the essay “Alone in the Universe: The Improbability of Alien Civilisations”

From: [Henry Matsuo](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:25:16 AM

Aloha I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back!

Thank you

From: [Robin Mazor](#)
To: [DLNR, BLNR Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oct. 24 Agenda Item F.1 and F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 4:16:06 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and Board Members,

We are concerned about the accuracy of a study that says an annual take of more than 200k fish is sustainable from a fairly small geographic area. Even if the fish population is currently large and healthy, having such a large take seems excessive and wasteful. These are long lived fish and each is an important part of a thriving reef ecosystem. Our reefs are under so many threats, is it really wise to add yet another extractive pressure on them? If our reefs are declining not due to one cause, but “death by a thousand cuts” why add more cuts? Especially for an industry that is so minuscule in terms of jobs or economic impact.

DAR’s stated mission is to “work with the people of Hawai’i” to manage and preserve our aquatic resources. It’s hard to reconcile that mission with a regulatory action that is so deeply unpopular. Recent opinion polls on the matter found the vast majority of residents do not want the aquarium fishery reopened. And certainly not expanded orders of magnitude beyond what it was before.

We hope the board will also “work with the people” rather than favor a small number of commercial interests.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Best wishes,
Robin Mazor

--

Robin Mazor

Executive Director

Reef Guardians Hawai’i | Nā Kia’i Āpapa

(808) 482-7263

www.reefguardians.org

Reef Preservation Through Research, Restoration and Education



From: [April McCormack](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2 — Please Protect Hawai'i's Reefs from Commercial Aquarium Collecting
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:53:03 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

My name is April McCormack, and I live in Kula, on the island of Maui. I am writing with deep concern and heartfelt opposition to the Division of Aquatic Resources' proposed rule package to reopen Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.

I am a former Survey Diver for DAR on the island of Kaua'i, a PADI Regional Manager and Course Director, and professional scuba instructor with decades of experience.

This proposal is not only a step backward—it is a breach of public trust. What began as a community-led effort to protect reef life for future generations has been twisted into a framework that once again prioritizes commercial extraction over conservation. The people of Hawai'i came together, across islands and backgrounds, to call for an end to this destructive trade. That effort was heard, honored, and unanimously approved by this very Board. Yet today, DAR's draft rules betray that mandate by giving the trade everything it asked for, while silencing the public who fought so hard to protect these waters.

Our reefs are not warehouses for profit—they are living, sacred ecosystems that sustain Hawai'i's people, culture, and identity. To strip them of their fish for aquarium displays thousands of miles away is both morally and ecologically indefensible. Science tells us that reef fish populations must *increase* if our reefs are to survive the accelerating impacts of climate change. Yet DAR's proposal allows for massive extraction—up to 400% higher than historical take levels—with virtually no local safeguards.

Even more alarming, DAR now seeks to remove BLNR oversight entirely, allowing permits to be issued behind closed doors without public notice or accountability. This is the very definition of institutional betrayal—silencing communities, erasing transparency, and placing our shared ocean resources back into private hands. And for what? A few hundred dollars in annual permit fees? At a cost of hundreds of thousands to manage and monitor? This is not stewardship—it's fiscal irresponsibility and ecological negligence.

The overwhelming majority of Hawai'i residents—84% according to recent polling—want this harmful practice ended for good. The people have spoken clearly. Please honor their voice.

I urge the Board to reject this proposal and send it back to DAR for redrafting. The new rules must reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life, not revive the very industry that depleted it. Keep permitting authority with BLNR to preserve transparency, accountability, and the public's trust.

Please, stand with the people of Hawai'i. Stand for our reefs, our culture, and our future.

Mahalo nui loa for your time, your kuleana, and your commitment to protect the life of our ocean.

With aloha and gratitude,
April

April McCormack
Regional Manager | Hawaii & Pacific

T +1 949 858 7234 ext. 2060

C +1 808 346 6100

Join: [PADI Pacific Facebook Group](#)

Join: [PADI Pacific WhatsApp Group](#)

*This email may contain confidential and/or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient (or have received this email in error) please notify the sender immediately and destroy this email. Any unauthorized copying, disclosure, or distribution of the material in this email is strictly forbidden.

This email may contain confidential and/or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient (or have received this e-mail in error) please notify the sender immediately and destroy this email. Any unauthorized copying, disclosure or distribution of the material in this email is strictly forbidden.

From: [Mary McNellie](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] safegaurd our reefs
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:32:10 PM

We need to end commercial capture of reef fish. We need to safeguard reef fish reef life

Mary McNellie
1330 Kauhikoa Rd
Hiaku, HI 96708

From: [Sanjana Mehra](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hawaii Reef Fish Protection
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:55:12 AM

To Hawaii Government,

I recently read about rules proposing to remove the Hawaii reef fish from the ocean ecosystem to be sold for Aquarium trade

I am deeply saddened to hear about this, every fish is important for the oceans health
Our reefs are dying and so is our planet, Mother Nature is asking for our help and we must do whatever we can to help
We must give back to this beautiful earth

I have complete trust in the Hawaii Government that they would do their best to protect the Hawaii Reef Fish
We all are in this together, we must save our beautiful planet

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reel life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end— and please keep permitting authority with BLNR

Thank you

From: [Annie Mendoza](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aloha DAR, The Division of Aquatic Resources
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:36:01 PM

Aloha DAR!!

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Here are some reasons why you need to do the right thing and redraft to SAFEGUARD Reef life!!

- **Overwhelming public opposition.** A recent scientific poll found **84%** of O'ahu and Hawai'i Island residents support **permanently ending** the commercial capture of reef fish
- **Institutional betrayal:** The proposed rule no longer reflects the **community's conservation intent.**
- **Greed.** The proposed annual catch limits are outrageous; **400 percent higher** than what seven collectors reported taking annually for 20 years.
- **Extreme fiscal irresponsibility.** The economic gain would be miniscule compared to costs - not to mention cost to the health of the ocean - one of Hawaii's most valuable resources.
- **Environmentally destructive.** Every reef would be **vulnerable to degradation and collapse**
- **Contradicts science.** Allowing mass extraction will cause extreme dysfunction and escalation of the effects of global warming. **HOW WILL YOU FEEL WHEN YOURS OR YOUR FRIENDS OCEANFRONT HOMES IS INUNDATED BY THE SEA???**
- **Overwhelming public opposition.** A recent scientific poll found **84%** of O'ahu and Hawai'i Island residents support **permanently ending** the commercial capture of reef fish. Only **10%** support the large-scale capture proposed in DAR's draft rule.

*Wishing you continued prosperity, well being & aloha,
Annie*

Annie Mendoza, R(S)
808.557.5831 (cell)

From: wfmiddle@gmail.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:10:27 PM

I would like to express my opposition for any increase in aquarium fish collection activity, especially in West Hawaii. These fish are a critical natural resource for preserving reef health and local subsistence, not for commercial greed.

William (Billy) Middleton, Waimea, Hawai'i Island

Moana Ohana
PO Box 4454, Kailua Kona, HI 96745 e
mike@moanaohana.com



October 22, 2025

Aloha Chair Chang and Honorable Board Members,

My name is Mike Nakachi, I am from Kekahawaiole, on Moku o Keawe. I come to you all humbly and with aloha! I bring into this conversation and testimony the legacy of my 'ohana, my kūpuna, my 'aumakua, with my steadfast love for our pae 'āina. I am a dive professional with over 40 years of experience, a practitioner of traditional Native Hawaiian customary rights and principles of aloha 'āina to mālama this 'āina and try as best as we can to restore the abundance of 'āina momona. I am blessed to have a mo'okū'auhau that has guided me in the lineage as Kahu Manō. Through these practices it has allowed me the privilege and the honor to be blessed by forms of akua and kinolau in the realm of Kanaloa throughout our pae 'āina.

I have extensively dived our home waters for well over 15,000 scuba/ rebreather dives with the majority of this experience conducted within the West Hawai'i regional fisheries management area. With pure intent to be as one with Kanaloa, dives are always conducted with proper protocol, asking permission of people, communities place or wahi pana. Some practices are so remote that only forms of akua know. However, in these practices with 'aumakua, marine life, mega fauna uplifting our na'au and elevating our mana, we are ma'a and always maka'ala or vigilant to look for stress, damage or behavioral traits within our ecosystem that are out of balance and do not align with anything pono in our environment.

When I started in the 1980's abundance was different with many fish along West Hawai'i. Despite a seemingly flourishing abundance a lot of damage was already inflicted by tropical aquarium fishermen from the 1960's when it first really got going in West Hawaii. Aquarium collectors used destructive and self-serving methods to collect fish such as breaking corals and making flat trenches along the reef to create barriers and dividing sections of the reef to lay their nets flat and herd the fish to be collected. Continue harmful method in the 1990's and 2000's,

we saw significant change to our home waters with an drastic increase of the number of collectors with no regulation and an unlimited catch limit. The invasive nature of humans not of place, in search of Aquarium fish caused millions of fish to leave their home. The practice of greed and being for themselves driving the high take of fish and ecological damage. This irreparable harm to coral, fish, ecosystems over the last few decades is glaring and polarizing, this is NOT sustainable. It should NOT be acceptable that these non pono ways of fishing are allowed. I have engaged in this process every step of the way through the Aquarium trade's EIS, REIS and CIS. The most glaring thing for us as Kānaka Maoli in the CIS complete for PIJAC was that our voices were silenced by their word smithing. This document was completed in a Western way of thinking highlighting the pet trade's benefit of profit over 'āina within the realm of Kanaloa.

I have been member of the original fish working group in the early 90's, that later became the West Hawai'i Fisheries council by Act 306. This particular rule package put forth by DAR here today. The rules set were not even consulted with stakeholder groups within the WHRFMA and is a continued breach of Public trust in this process with the public only finding out on 10/17/2025 by the WHFC. These rules are driven simply by the aquarium industry and the pet trade of America. This proposed rule package has NOT even been consulted with our local DOCARE officers and Officers of Fish and wildlife or OLE, who resoundingly say these rules as written are unenforceable.

As a 12/2023 petitioner that asked this honorable board to BAN Aquarium trade, that was voted unanimously in our favor of a ban short of 100%, 99.9% I believe was Chair Chang's words or something short of zero. Chair Chang and the board later instructed DAR to move forward with rule making and deal with the concerns of the petitioners. That NEVER happened. DAR instead said they do not know what their directive was by the BLNR. We only found out about this rule package a couple weeks ago and were told we were not able to discuss any potential changes. The process is driven by the Aquarium trade. Not one of our petitioner requests in this meeting with DAR on 10/2/2025 could be addressed to alter these proposed rules and we were instructed by DAR to bring our concerns before this BLNR hearing.

Aquarium fish can be raised by other entities and sold to the industry without taking the 200,000 plus fish from Kanaloa. I would support the Aquarium trade taking all the invasive fish off of our reefs such as Roi, Taape and Toau as a manner to feed our people of the pae 'āina to mālama 'āina and show aloha again. These rules are premature, they need to be sent DAR for scoping. Stakeholder groups like the Community groups who come forward with CBSFAs, FMAs or any mālama 'āina work for years, to work with DAR,

DOCARE, & communities to collectively agree on a rule package as best as they can before coming to this board. That process has taken years and even decades. The collaborative and community engaged process was not done here. The rules proposed seem to have skipped any form of public engagement.

I humbly ask that you oppose these rules as they are proposed, instruct DAR to deal with our petitioner request from the hearing on 12/2023. Please do NOT allow any of these proposed rules to go to a public hearing because this plan is not in alignment with public trust. Many of our Lāhui have spoken here today and DO NOT want Aquarium fish removed from our pae ‘āina anymore. Please honor these voices of our public trust who have voiced their concerns here today, with Aloha Always,

Mālama pono,

mike nakachi

Michael Nakachi,
Moana Ohana LLC

From: [Diana Miller](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] : Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:29:18 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai‘i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau‘ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka ‘Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,
Diana Miller
USAF(ret)
Kurtistown, Hi

From: merrymiller1@icloud.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:31:49 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the

belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Meredith Miller

From: [GinnyJo Minamishin](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:02:51 AM

Aloha ,

My name is GinnyJo Minamiahin of Kailua-kona. I am in awe that we have to go through this again ! Hawaii needs our fish !

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community’s call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public’s trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.”

Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.

3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.

4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu-wild harvest is unnecessary.

- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawaii's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawaii, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

Sincerely,
Ginny Jo Minamishin

From: [Kim Miner](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: [Makuakane](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:31:37 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

My name is Paul Kahale-Miner, and I reside in Kona. I worked for Hawaiian Airlines for over 28 years, much of that time in cargo, where I personally watched thousands of our reef fish being shipped out, first to Honolulu, then to the mainland and even around the world.

It breaks my heart to see our local fish, the same ones that our children and grandchildren should be able to enjoy in our own waters, being taken away for profit. I have nine grandchildren, and I want them to grow up being able to see, catch, and appreciate the colorful fish that make Hawai'i so special.

It doesn't make sense that local families are being told we can't catch certain fish, while at the same time, those same fish are being caught and shipped out for sale elsewhere. That's not right.

I strongly oppose this bill (or any similar proposal) that allows the continued export and depletion of our reef fish. Please protect our local waters and keep our fish here in Hawai'i, where they belong, for our keiki, our culture, and our future generations.

Mahalo for hearing my voice.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state

constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Paul Kahale-Miner
paulie7873@gmail.com
Kona, Hawaii

From: [Jennifer Mitchell](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:06:29 AM
Attachments: [Facebook.png](#)

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Mitchell
Aloha 'Aina



From: [Eric Moennich](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in `Support of Item F2: Rules relating to Management of Aquarium Life Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of Hawaii Administrative Rules ("HAR") relating to Aquarium Life Management into Proposed ...
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:51:23 AM

To whom it may concern:

My name is Eric Moennich.

I am in support of Item F2: Rules relating to Management of Aquarium Life Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of Hawaii Administrative Rules ("HAR") relating to Aquarium Life Management into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1: and the return of aquarium fishing permits.

I would like to add that while I am in support of these rules, I believe there should be an edit to these rules to allow for permit holders to have another diver with them in the water for safety even if the second diver does not have a permit. The purpose of allowing a second diver in the water with the permit holder is for safety. It is a well known rule that all scuba divers should always have another diver with them in the water. It would be unsafe to restrict permit holders to dive alone simply because they do not have another permit holders available to dive with.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this important safety issue.

Sincerely,

Eric Moennich
Eric.Moennich@yahoo.com
808-772-3101

From: [Karima Morgan](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oct 24 Agenda item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:36:38 PM

Aloha

I am shocked to learn that the Department of Aquatic Resources is proposing to remove DLNRs oversight of aquarium-collecting permits, making it easier for decisions about aquarium trade to be made without public scrutiny. It is essential that there be very strong limits on the procuring of fish from our waters for sale for aquariums, putting our coral reefs and fisheries at risk as has been shown by research. Please send rules back for redrafting to include community concerns about safeguarding our reefs.

Katharyn Morgan
Kihei, Maui

From: kalaefarm@cs.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2 - save our reef fish
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:20:50 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. I have watched the commercial aquarium industry's taking of our reef fish since the early 80's when it all began. The once vibrant near shore environment was once teeming with schools of different reef fish. It has been systematically decimated. No colorful butterfly fish remain, no wrass, no manini, no octopus, no parrot fish (Uhu)... a landscape no longer healthy with biodiversity. No wonder there is no more sand. 40 plus years of reduced reef fish. It is so tragic and sad.

I feel it is also my right to be able to view these beautiful fish. How can a commercial entity be able to take our fish for their own profit. These fish belong to the ocean and are there for a purpose to keep the ocean environment healthy.

I urge you to ban the taking of our reef fish. Set aside more of our shoreline as marine preserves. Create areas of no fishing for a few years and rotate this around each island to help our marine ecosystem.

I applaud the BLNR for calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Patricia Morine
81 Ahuwale Pl
Makawao, Hi 96768

From: [william.morris](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:35:39 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is William Morris, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to: 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability. 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE. 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes. 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary. 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance. 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice! 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine.

As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export. The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry.

It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
William Morris
Captain Cook Hawaii Island

From: [Cambria Moss](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO NO NO NOI!!! Plucking fish off of our reefs for export to hobbist fish aquarium enthusiasts is a betrayal to all who love Hawaii and to our tourism economy.
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:53:09 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and BNLR Board Members,

In Opposition to Agenda item F.2

My name is _____. My livelihood depends on robust and healthy reefs.

(I put: My name is Susan Douglas and over the 42 years of snorkeling on Maui I have seen the fish dwindle in numbers and variety, and the reefs bleach. Our lives and livelihoods depend on robust and healthy reefs.)

The proposal to allow aquarium collecting, the taking of live fish off of Hawaii's reefs for profit, is in direct conflict with the Department of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) mission:

The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

The permit fee schedule is a joke.

The harms caused by removing so many fish far outweigh the financial agenda of a handful of selfish 'entrepreneurs.' The fish on our reefs belong to everyone. Don't allow this proposed wholesale reef rape to undo years of good faith conservation that

has taken place over the last decade.

With warming seas and extreme water quality issues, the fish that remain are already challenged to survive. Plucking fish off of our reefs for export to hobbyist fish aquarium enthusiasts is a betrayal to all who love Hawaii and to our tourism economy. Geopolitics has harmed our small businesses enough, let's not exacerbate our economic strife by decimating our reefs that will be devoid of live fish.

What about our boating industry? Statewide, our snorkel tourism sector represents millions in state revenue, and hundreds of amazing jobs. I beseech you all to reconsider this ill-conceived proposal. Follow DAR's mission to preserve our precious marine resources.

Mahalo,

Cambria Moss

Kihei, Maui

808-283-6945

October 24, 2025

To: Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) State of Hawai'i Honolulu, Hawai'i

Re: F-2 Testimony in Opposition for Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules Updating and Consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a new Chapter

Aloha,

I strongly oppose item F-2 Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules Updating and Consolidating Aquarium Fishery Regulations into a new Chapter. I urge the board to deny this request and encourage the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to do outreach to the public prior to rule making, in the same standard that they have encouraged communities to do for place-based fisheries management, especially given its statewide scope of impact. It is shocking that there has been no outreach by DAR done on this proposal to the numerous community members that have been consulted, advocated, and depend upon the health of these resources for food and overall health of the reef.

The aquarium industry has a long contentious history in West Hawai'i, and time and time again the communities of West Hawai'i have voiced their opposition to the commercial aquarium trade that is harmful to traditional and customary practices of pono fishing. I have over 20 years of scientific diving experience in West Hawai'i and have directly witnessed the damaging effects of aquarium fishers on the coral reef, including zones of broken coral that were incurred when they harvest the species for their profits. The practices by aquarium fishers to collect juvenile fish before they have had a chance to reproduce further harms the sustainability of the fishery for all.

In addition, the profits for just a few businesses do not justify the damage and impact to this public trust resource. This proposal represents a failure to effectively manage these resources in a way that protects and prioritizes the food security of the community and health of the coral reef. The Hawaii State Constitution clearly states that marine resources are a public trust resource in Article XI, Section 6:

MARINE RESOURCES

Section 6. The State shall have the power to manage and control the marine, seabed and other resources located within the boundaries of the State, including the archipelagic waters of the State, and reserves to itself all such rights outside state boundaries not specifically limited by federal or international law.

All fisheries in the sea waters of the State not included in any fish pond, artificial enclosure or state-

licensed mariculture operation shall be free to the public, subject to vested rights and the right of the State to regulate the same; provided that mariculture operations shall be established under guidelines enacted by the legislature, which shall protect the public's use and enjoyment of the reefs. The State may condemn such vested rights for public use. [Ren and am Const Con 1978 and election Nov 7, 1978]

The proposal before you directly causes harm the public trust resource for the profits of few, and will continue to damage the reef and fishery which has already been impacted by overharvest, pollution and climate change, as has been documented in numerous court cases and prior consultation about the aquarium trade.

At a minimum, this proposal should omit species caught for food, like kole and umaumalei. Now, more than ever, we need to be strengthening protections on our marine resources, so that the important herbivores remain to control algal overgrowth of our corals, and for food security for our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Most". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Rebecca Most
PO Box 190541
Hawi, HI 96719
rebeccamost@gmail.com

From: [Stephen Munkelt](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for Agenda Item F-2 on 10/24
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:35:59 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing to oppose the adoption of rules proposed by the Division of Aquatic Resources, which would open West Hawai'i and the islands to commercial collection of aquarium fish. Commercial collection would have a devastating impact on fish populations, the health of our reefs and corals, and our ocean ecosystems.

I applaud your previous stand seeking to end commercial taking, and your direction to DAR to propose rules for a ban. I can't imagine why the proposed rules are so far outside that direction, unless DAR has been totally captured by corporate interests. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Mahalo for your consideration of this important matter.

Stephen A. Munkelt

Kailua-Kona, HI. 96740

Cell: 530-277-8508

ATTN: Ms. Dawn Chang, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
DLNR Main Office Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl St.
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813
Submitted via Email at blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

SUBJECT: **Testimony** for BLNR October 24th 2025 Agenda Item F.2

Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Nā Kai ‘Ewalu is a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi-led collective dedicated to subsistence fishing and ocean stewardship, focusing specifically on reef fish since 2021. Our collective represents kanaka ‘Ōiwi lawai‘a, fisheries managers, and doctoral researchers from five islands who are committed to sustaining Hawai‘i’s native fisheries. Named for the eight ocean channels connecting our pae ‘āina, Nā Kai ‘Ewalu embodies our responsibility to ocean stewardship and our strong foundation in traditional practices rooted in the teachings of Uncle Mac Poepoe of Moloka‘i, who has studied reef fish for decades. Guided by our kūpuna and the places we come from, we affirm our kuleana to ensure healthy, abundant fisheries for our keiki and future generations.

We submit this letter in **FIRM OPPOSITION** to the draft rules proposed by DAR to reopen commercial aquarium fish collection under this regulatory package.

Our Opposition Is Rooted in Kuleana to the Resource: As a collective that conducts long-term monitoring of spawning cycles, seasonal migrations, and reef dynamics of culturally important species such as moi, **we know abundance is not guaranteed, it is maintained through pono relationships.** Many reef fish targeted by the aquarium trade, such as kole, umaumalei, lau‘īpala, and other herbivores, play critical roles in reef health and food security. For us, these species are not commodities. They are indicators of balance, knowledge carriers, and in many places, ‘aumākua and kin.

These Rules Do Not Protect Cultural and Subsistence Relationships: Under *Ka Pa‘akai o ka ‘Āina*, the State must identify how Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices may be impacted and apply measures to protect them. **This rule package does not provide for cultural impact review at the site, species, or community level, nor does it prioritize lawai‘a knowledge, konohiki systems, or island-specific pilina with reef species.**

The Hierarchy of Uses Is Ignored: BLNR policy places ecosystem health, Native Hawaiian customary use, and subsistence above commercial extraction. **Aquarium collection is a for-profit export industry involving the removal of live fish for global display tanks, not food, not community sustenance, not ‘ike.** It is among the lowest-priority uses, yet this rule proposes to elevate it above cultural practice, reef resilience, and public trust responsibilities.

TACs Were Industry-Derived, Not Based on Pono Science or ‘Ike Lawai‘a: The draft rules rely on TACs that were not produced through independent stock assessment or community-based evaluation. Instead, **DAR adopted take estimates proposed by collectors themselves, using past catch history or a rough “1% of population” approximation.** DAR then used generalized population estimates and stable trends to label extraction “low risk” but low risk is not the same as sustainable, nor does it address cumulative cultural or ecosystem impacts.

We Have Already Proven That Lawai‘a- and ‘Ike-Informed Research Works: Our moi work, which has been shared in both academic and community spaces, **demonstrates that fishery knowledge must emerge from direct relationship, seasonal observation, and collaborative verification over time.** Any management framework that overlooks ‘ike lawai‘a and community observation risks making decisions that damage long-standing marine relationships.

A Path Forward Must Be **Rooted in Aloha ‘Āina, Not Extraction.** We urge BLNR to defer this rulemaking and require a process that:

- Centers Native Hawaiian lawai‘a knowledge, konohiki lineages, and generational stewards;
- Keep permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability;
- Applies the *Ka Pa‘akai* framework to ensure cultural impacts are fully assessed and mitigated;
- Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction.
- Aligns with the Holomua vision of restoring abundance through community-based management;
- Redraft with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE
- Ensures ocean governance decisions emerge from kuleana, not industry demand.

We recognize that BLNR and DLNR carry a kuleana not just to process permits but to prioritize protecting Hawai‘i’s marine life as a public trust. Protection must be grounded in pono, not popularity, because majority support does not always mean what is best for the ‘āina and kai. We stand ready to engage in a pono, place-based, culturally grounded fisheries framework that honors our kūpuna and ensures abundance for future generations. We ask that you carry this responsibility with ‘ike, courage, and aloha for our moana, now and for those yet to come.

Me ka leo ha‘aha‘a,
Nā Kai ‘Ewalu

Kelson “Uncle Mac” Poepoe
La‘a Poepoe
Kahaku Poepoe
Keli‘i Alapai
Kanoë Alapai-Hashimoto
Pekelo & Kamalei Lind
Kane Lind
Will Mae-Huihui

Laila Kaupu
Makani Gregg
Nakoa Goo
Mikey Kyser
Kēhau Springer



22 October 2025

Aloha Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am U'ilani Naipo, submitting this testimony in strong opposition to the proposed rules package and urge you to not approve public hearings at this time.

I am a lineal descendant of the "Last Hawaiian Fishing Village" of Miloli'i in South Kona, Kapalilua. My ancestry also connects me to Kohala, where my Naipo 'ohana were generational lawai'a, mahi'ai, and mea ulana lauhala.

As a marine advocate, my place-based governance work involves collaboration with community organizations, partners, and agencies of West Hawai'i as well as throughout the pae 'āina. In West Hawai'i, Kai Kuleana is comprised of 15 community organizations that manage our nearshore and marine ecosystems. Our collaborative work keeps us focused on community stewardship while keen to regional matters of West Hawai'i and DAR initiatives, including commercial aquarium (AQ) collection.

Miloli'i and neighboring fishing villages of Kapalilua felt the impact of AQ collection long before the Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) was established in 2005 or when new regulations were passed in 2022. The commercialization of resources that we harvest for sustenance, for any purpose other than feeding our people, is a practice that is incompatible with our life ways.

I have included as attachments to give historical context on AQ in West Hawai'i:

- an article I co-authored with Charlie Young, which details the negative impact of aquarium (AQ) activities on our reefs. Charlie, along with Uncle Damien and my Uncle Willy, has firsthand experience fending off collectors and witnessing the loss of once-abundant marine life. This lived experience serves as a powerful testament that cannot be replaced by scientific data from the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) and its researchers.
- my testimony, submitted for the August 23, 2024, hearing, detailing the ongoing challenges and considerations for managing an aquarium fishery for particularly West Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the BLNR to direct DAR in providing a viable rules package based on the following principles:

Uphold Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine – DLNR must manage all public natural resources under the authority of Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine, a constitutional principle enshrined in Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution. This doctrine establishes that these resources are held in trust for the public's benefit, now and in the future, and are subject to the highest level of scrutiny when considered for private commercial use. In cases of conflict, the doctrine prioritizes public uses, Native Hawaiian practices, and environmental protection over private commercial ventures. Therefore, the commercial export of these public trust resources for private gain is inconsistent with the state's fiduciary duty and DLNR's mission.

Uphold DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy.

This aligns with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine by prioritizing activities on state lands and waters based on their impact, placing resource protection first, followed by public use, and finally commercial use, which is only permitted if it does not harm the resource or interfere with public access.

Modify the Whitelist

- Remove food fish – Kole and Umaumalei. The precedence set by once allowing pāku'iku'i to be taken is still being felt in West Hawai'i. Subsistence fishers harvested mature adults for sustenance and AQ took the juveniles. Today, we still have a moratorium on the take of pāku'iku'i.
- Remove Lau'ipala and Potter's Angelfish as these have been proven to be cultured successfully at Oceanic Institute, sold out of Biota Hawai'i.
- Endemic species, kole and Potter's Angelfish shall not be on the whitelist.

I strongly urge for an aquaculture alternative that will allow the Board to consider issuing a permit to take a brood stock amount of lau'ipala instead of 200,000 every year!

Provide an Aquaculture Alternative that greatly reduces the take off of our reefs.

biota
 Proud Partner of the United Nations
 A SUSTAINABLE OCEAN ECONOMY

100% Cultured in aquariums for aquariums
 All Biota marine life is sustainably cultured in captivity. By purchasing aquacultured marine species, you are ensuring long-term jobs to remote locations and directly contributing to restoring fisheries from the wild.
 Find Your Closest Biota Pet Store →
 #WILDORCACAPTURED

Hawaii Pacific University Oceanic Institute
 Since 2018 Biota has established a public private partnership with the Hawaii Pacific University to culture the famous Yellow Tang.

We are proud to announce that we are now in full commercial production of the species which took us about 3 years to go from the research results and numbers in 2017 to where we are now. This is a prime example how a very important species can be cultured instead of being taken from the wild.

<p>Biota Hawaii Hawaiian Yellow Tang from \$165.00 USD \$165.00</p>	<p>Biota Hawaii Blue Streak Cleaner Wrasse \$160.00 USD \$250.00</p>	<p>Biota Hawaii Sydney Seahorse \$500.00 USD</p>	<p>Biota Hawaii Hawaiian Potter's Angelfish \$900.00 USD</p>	<p>Biota Hawaii Flame Angelfish \$275.00 USD</p>	<p>Biota Hawaii Milletseed Butterflyfish Each \$80.00 USD</p>	<p>Biota Hawaii Hawaiian Cleaner Wrasse \$650.00 USD \$900.00</p>
--	---	--	--	--	---	--

Other concerns regarding the rules package:

Lacks Compliance and Enforcement Resources for Aquarium Fishery During DAR's briefing of the rules package, there were no plans for a dedicated compliance officer for AQ (verifying at sea and landing catch) and there had not been any discussions yet with DOCARE for additional enforcement resources.

The rules package does not prohibit the take of ACL within any singular ahupua'a. This could decimate areas easy to access - for take as well as impact other resources users such as snorkelers.

There is no proposal to use tracking devices on vessels that could be remotely monitored to remain outside of prohibited areas. As well, no tracking of cages that assures cages are not left for later retrieval in the dark.

Rules do not prohibit PIJAC from selling entries for permit applications. Every year PIJAC will identify the applicants that it will endorse under its EIS. DAR confirmed they would not be able to prohibit back-door bidding activity to obtain an endorsement from PIJAC.

December 8, 2023 BLNR Directed DAR to take into full consideration the Petitioner request and proceed with Rule making consistent with the statutory provisions. The

Petition was for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes.

The current rules package does not reflect of this direction (even considering they could not do a total ban). The (above) concerns were not incorporated and are not sufficiently addressed in this package. Keep in mind, a portion of this package are statewide rules - so they must go out to each county for public hearing. With West Hawai'i being the geographical endorsement, a public hearing must be held in West Hawai'i.

Hawai'i has too much to risk if these rules are the starting point to take to public hearings. We can do better, we must do better. As Holomua is looking to arrive on the shores of West Hawai'i very soon, this rules package does not reflect the careful consideration of restoration and protection that our marine ecosystems deserve and conflicts with the mission of DLNR.

I am in strong opposition to the proposed rules package and urge you to not approve public hearings at this time.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "U'ilani". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

U'ilani

Ke Welina Aloha iā Chair Chang a me Board Members,

I am U'ilani Naipo, a lineal descendant of both Miloli'i - Kapalilua and Kohala Loko, the near boundaries of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA).

As lineal descendant and hoa'āina of the thirteen ahupua'a 'o Kīpahoe, Alikā, Pāpā, Ho'ōpūloa, Anapuka, Miloli'i, Omoka'a, Kalihi, Honomalino, Okoe, Kapu'a, Kalaunamauna, and Manukā, 'āina kumu wai in the 'okana (district) of Kapalilua.

At the North, in the district of Kohala Loko, my kūpuna served upon and their wailua rests within the ahupua'a of Honopueo, Kapa'au, 'Āinakea, Makapala, and Niuli'i. Today, my pilina to Kohala as a wa'a and 'āina crew member with Nā Kālai Wa'a Moku o Keawe, I serve as a hoa'āina at Hāwī 'āina ma'ū, Māhukona (drydock for our wa'a, Makali'i), and Kawaihae (mooring).

He kauwā wale nō wau a he hoa'āina o Kohala a me Kona Hema.

My kūpuna were staunch servants when it came to our waters (fresh, brackish, and ocean) and natural resources of our land and ocean because they had to. It meant survival. For many of us in South Kona, its not too different today – we were raised that way, our values innate in our traditional practices. Our struggles to hold onto these values are synonymous with the effort it takes to deter foreign practices that leave us indelibly depleted of our natural resources and depleted of our culture.

My role for my community of Kapalilua is that of advocacy for our traditional and customary practices, promoting place-based governance of our natural resources as these reflect our traditional practices to mālama and aloha 'āina. I continue to maka'ala and engaged in matters pertaining to West Hawai'i and my community. The impact aquarium collection has had on my community began long before our efforts to secure Miloli'i CBSFA designation in 2005, and the promulgation of rules in 2022, however it was a motivating factor.

The Exploiting Hawaiian Reef Fish article reveals an abridged history of how West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) was created – for the privatized commercial extraction and exploiting practice of Hawai'i's public trust assets. Allowing commercialization — by placing a monetary value on our fish and enabling this fishery, allows the erasure of our cultural practices to mālama and aloha 'āina.

DLNR's mission is to protect and preserve cultural and natural resources. This mission is compromised for considering this practice, just as it compromises our values and lifestyle to have it happening in our waters.

Chair, you've said "our [DLNR's] mission is not to look for economic opportunities, that's DBEDT." Our reef fish can no longer be commodified into a privatized industry, much less for a handful of collectors. Collectors that have been belligerent in BLNR meetings during December 2023 and April 2024 feel very strongly that they have a right to Hawai'i's public trust resources. They do, however not for their extractive, unfairly privatized and exploitative commercial practice. EIS consultation with traditional practitioners and fishermen strongly voiced that if permits were allowed, (the traditional practice of) give back should be done. Since back then, thru the six years of injunction being in place, I'm not aware of any sincere give-back. A sincere give-back would be received by collectors as a condition of terms, not in the spirit of reciprocity in how we live by. When we place these in the form on conditions on an activity that otherwise would be prohibited, we are forcing them into actions that does not have any sincerity. The Draft EIS has been long been available with these sentiments made clear in the documented interviews and still there has not be any actions to act upon good faith. The Board's decision shall not be sympathetic to collectors who purchased a lottery ticket (in the form of an EIS) in hopes to get a key to our icebox! We, the tenants of our ahupua'a do not agree to this.

Poaching continued during the period that an injunction was placed on AQ. No remorse to unethical, egregious behavior and violations, collectors continue to demand their access to our precious cultural and natural resources with such arrogance. This is Hawai'i Nei, the only home we have, the resting place of our kūpuna and the ea of our ancestral lands and seas, and our lāhui. Our culture is unlike any – we simply can not promote the erosion of our culture, values, and disciplines so that in just one or two generations, Hawai'i will only be reading about and not practicing these disciplines of mālamā and aloha 'āina.

Those of us who stand in strong opposition to AQ stand separately from AQ collectors for more than the opinion of the practice itself as it is not a Hawaiian cultural practice. Many of us are the stewards of our nearshore waters and do so because it is our kuleana.

June 2023, BLNR member Barnes queried EcoHarvest (three times) if they would consider to restock our reefs as part of their their aquaculture work, and in reciprocity for their SAP request to harvest reef fish. Ultimately for their investment into the Pet Industry Trade, an adamant no was announced because

they were not going to make a money. That demonstrates arrogance towards commodifying our culture assets that even member Barnes tried to appease the permit applicant.

White List AQ has a long history of having a very liberal and privileged access to our reef fish. Supported since 1953 in legislation, “these ornamental fishes have little or no value as food fish” and “the specie of fish for aquarium purposes is not edible”. Both erroneous statements revealed in contradictory to the whitelist of 40 species that included reef fish we eat and today the proposed whitelist of 8 species still includes food fish!

As for the pāku'iku'i, collectors took the young, subsistence and commercial fishers harvested the adults for sustenance. The competing pressure on the species resulting in a dramatic decline, and we now have a two year moratorium on pāku'iku'i take. DAR has and will say that they cannot see concrete evidence that the depletion of pāku'iku'i was due to AQ collection, but as will not say that it was not due to AQ collection or how much it contributed to the depletion. The inability to answer that question does not dismiss AQ of its role in the depletion. We can not have a repeat of this incident for any other food fish on the white list.

Collectors received special privileges in the prolonged survival of this extractive and exploitative activity – poaching of excessive take, take from restricted areas, illegal gear use, and this fishery lacks a trusted accountability system. **So, at what cost** will DLNR serve this fishery and maintain this privatized commercial practice for one or a few AQ collectors. What is the budget line item that the Department requires to support this fishery and where does it exist in its current budget? The Application Form and Terms & Conditions fall short of addressing the prior issues that plagued West Hawai'i in its attempt to serve up this fishery.

Terms & Conditions

It is my understanding that the Board may be required to issue a permit and DAR is to advise on Terms and Conditions to manage the fishery. It is a heartfelt struggle to consider that a legal barrier prevents the Board to follow-through on the its discretionary authority to unanimous approve our petition (back in December) to end commercial aquarium take. It is also a struggle to carefully consider how to best make recommendations on Terms and Conditions on short notice and before DAR does proper and comprehensive Ka Pa'akai Analysis.

DAR should be required to conduct a proper comprehensive Ka Pa'akai Analysis. When properly done, it would identify (perceived and real) issues that could be mitigated by Terms & Conditions for both the Department and permittees.

The Ka Pa'akai Analysis significantly draws from the EIS, which are summaries of the interviews conducted in 2018. Six years is significant time that has lapse, that an update should be required and moreso, DAR still has its duty and obligation to conduct its own outreach to tenants of West Hawai'i ahupua'a. Similarly, a trusted accountability system (chain of custody) should be scoped.

These preliminary terms and conditions recommended to address the unacceptable conditions that occurred while aquarium collection was permitted, poaching that occurred during the injunction and now. It also addresses the lack of a trusted accountability system or chain of custody.

- Aquarium species white list shall not have any food fish or endemic species. Allow non-native invasive species - roi, ta'ape, to'au.
- In addition to the recommended white list species, excluding food fish and endemic species, no Total Allowable Catch of any White List Species shall exceed 1,825, derived from take of no more than 5 per permit, per day (unless further restrictive). These take allowances are still generous over those in SAPs for education and research take. Special circumstances for particular species should also be considered to derive TAC such as the Thompson's Surgeonfish. This proposal TAC also aligns with the Board Hierarchy of Use Principles.
- No aquarium activities (collection and verification of chain of custody) are to be conducted in the hours after sunset and before sunrise.
- Detailed chain of custody be signed/confirmed by the Department and Cultural Monitor(s)
- Cultural Monitors History repeats itself In the most contentious events impacting our environment – Mauna Kea, Lahaina recovery, and Red Hill. Most immediate actions taken are (1) put in place a working group such as West Hawaii Fishery Council, and (2) have cultural monitors oversee the activity during the recovery efforts and ongoing. Have we learned a lesson yet?
- Cultural Training – Approved permittees shall complete Known Indigenous Perspectives & Alignment (KIPA) training and certification conducted by Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation.
- DLNR to conduct AQ facilities / holding tank inspections before issuing any permit.

- Legislation - DLNR to secure budget for managing this fishery to include these Terms & Conditions before issuing any permit.

And still, how does DLNR manage any significant take from any one concentrated area of the WHRFMA or an area that is already depleted?

Application Form

The **Application Form should not be approved** at this time as it is premature to having a comprehensive Ka Pa'akai Analysis conducted.

Preliminary recommendations for the Application Form are:

- Include form fields for Commercial Marine License, Marine Vessel License(s), and AQ Facilities Location/License
- All violations should be identified for both DAR and DOBOR, and over the past 10 years. Violations are so severe that if legislation does not support recovery of fines, violators must be denied re-entry.
- No aquarium permit use activities conducted during the hours after sunset and before sunrise.
- Permits are non-transferable or additionally allowed to replace a permit that is revoked.

Statue & Administrative Rules

HRS §133-81 Section 1.2.1 (a), "may issue an aquarium permit". The Board is being advised they are not allow to fully exercise their discretionary authority to deny aquarium permits.

In (b), "satisfy the department that they possess facilities to and can maintain fish and other aquatic life alive", yet DLNR does not inspect such facilities.

In (d) (2), "Aquarium fish permit" means a permit issued by the board identifies the Boards authority.

HAR §13-60.4-2-b,c 10-5 4-2 (last updated March 2023) requires an be update to reflect 13-60.10-5 area of Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area, as well added to the Table of Reference Coordinates to Marine Reserve and Fish Replenishment Area Boundaries.

Delegate Authority to the Department Chair to issue Aquarium Fish Permit

HRS §133-81 Section (d)(2) defines Aquarium fish permit with discretionary authority of the Board to approve (or deny) issuance of a permit.

"Aquarium fish permit" means a permit **issued by the board** for the use of fine mesh nets and traps to take salt water fish, freshwater nongame fish, or other aquatic life for aquarium purposes. [L 1953, c 124, §§1, 2, 3; RL 1955, §21-64; am L 1961, c 30, §§1, 2 and c 132, §2; HRS §188-31; am L 1979, c 154, §1; gen ch 1985; am L 1992, c 96, §2]

Delegating authority:

- **Removes sound discretion** of the Board to act as a body reflecting island community perspectives and its special knowledge to weigh in on each permit application. The Board has recently made informed decisions on SAPs and permits similar to this agenda item that were complexed. That same rigor of discussions are needed to vet each permit application.
- **Removes public privilege** to weigh in, with the subset of the public being the hoā'aina (tenant and/or caretaker) of areas being directly impacted from the take of marine life.
- **Removes transparency** to evaluating each permit application. Special Activity Permits (SAPs) that are requested for activity that otherwise would be prohibited, are given terms & conditions, and evaluated for its research and educational merits against impact to cultural and natural resources. SAPs are evaluated far more stringent and transparent than what is being proposed for this highly contentious activity.

Please oppose the delegation of authority and retaining it with the Board.

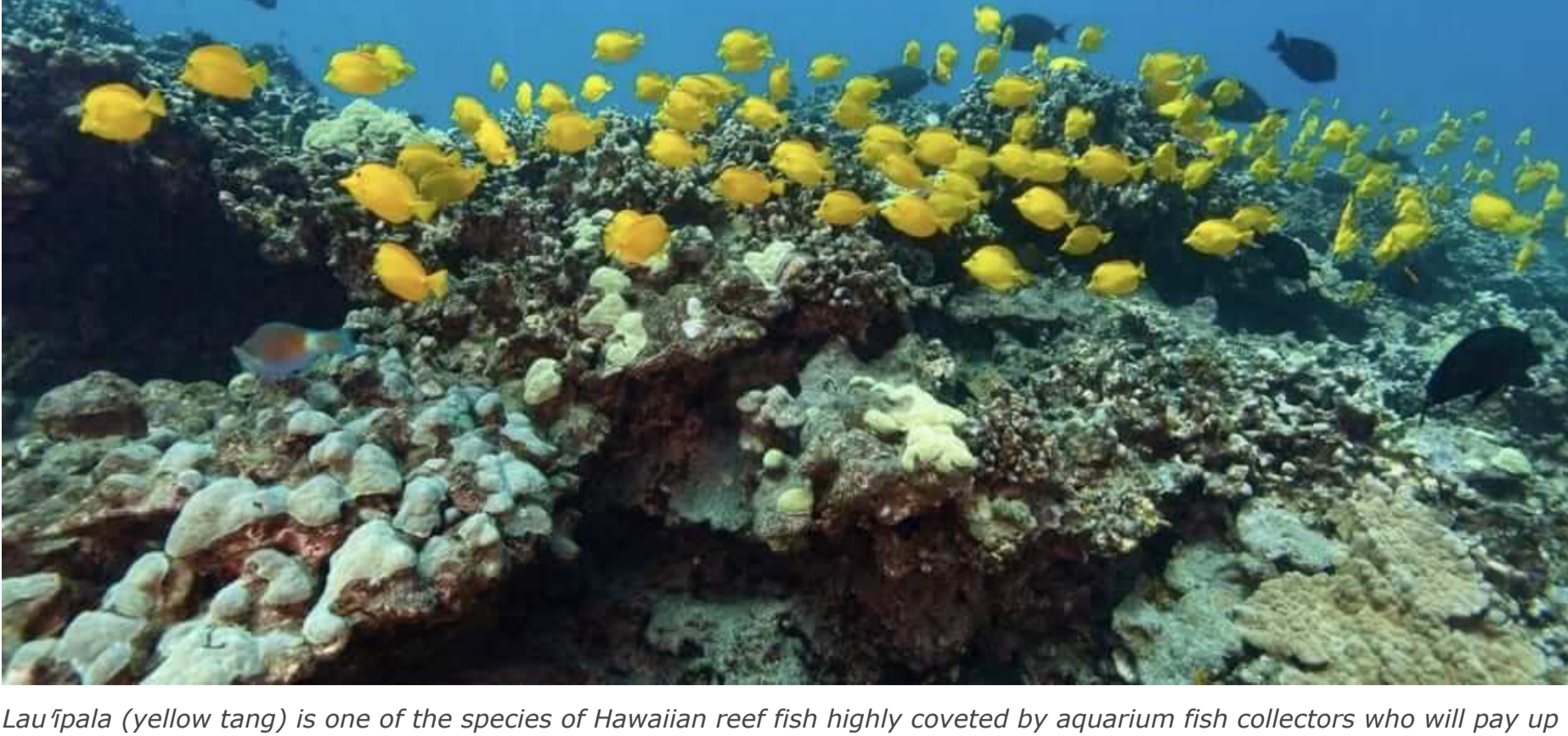
No mākou ka luhī,


Ulani Na'ipo

Exploiting Hawaiian Reef Fish

By **Guest Author** · June 1, 2024 · 285 · 0

Like 46



Lau'apa'a (yellow tang) is one of the species of Hawaiian reef fish highly coveted by aquarium fish collectors who will pay up to \$250 for a single fish. Over the past four decades, millions of fish have been taken from West Hawai'i waters by the aquarium pet trade industry and, according to environmental law firm Earthjustice, fewer than 1% survive beyond one year. - Photo: Kaikea Nakachi

The Extractive Aquarium Pet Trade Industry Threatens West Hawai'i Fisheries

By *U'ilani Naiipo*

Auē, aloha nō e nā i'a Hawai'i.

Aloha is not good enough for the world; the world wants even more of Hawai'i.

Hawai'i continues to be exploited and sold off piece by piece: our 'āina, our culture, our identity. And the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is determined to, once again, support the exploitation of Hawai'i's reef fish.

Displaced from their function and vital role in Hawai'i's marine ecosystem, our reef fish have been – and could once more be – extracted from our reefs and sent off to become personal museum pieces all over the world.

A *Honolulu Civil Beat* article (June 1, 2020) notes that, "Between 1976 and 2018, more than 8.6 million fish were taken from West Hawai'i waters for use in aquariums around the world."

Hawai'i's cultural and natural marine resources were repurposed and retitled "Hawaiian Tropical Fish" for the international pet trade industry. West Hawai'i has been directly and heavily impacted by the taking of millions of fish and the abrupt disturbance to the social norms of places like the traditional fishing villages of South Kona.

"Once the Department of Land and Natural Resources got involved [in this issue], the negotiated solution was to create the 'West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area' with 'Fish Replenishment Areas,' giving a carveout (at the time) of more than 50% of West Hawai'i nearshore reefs for aquarium trade collectors," said Charles Young, a cultural practitioner and ho'a'āina (tenant/steward) from Keālia.

Today, Hawaiian kole (tang) are sold for \$180 to saltwater aquarium enthusiasts, thus the pet trade industry competes with subsistence and commercial fishers who provide sustenance for themselves and others.

The same competing harvest pressures – aquarium collectors take the young fish, while fishers harvest mature adults for sustenance – give species little chance to reproduce and replenish their stock. This contributed to the severe depletion of pāku'iku'i (Achilles tang) in West Hawai'i waters, resulting in the current two-year moratorium on pāku'iku'i harvest.

Meanwhile, highly coveted lau'pala (yellow tang) sell for as much as \$250. The proposed total allowable catch of lau'pala alone (200,000 fish), has a market value of \$33-\$50 million.

Ināheha lākou i oli komo ai?

If the Division on Aquatic Resources (DAR) can confidently say the proposed allowable take for the aquarium pet trade is sustainable then they, and the permit applicants, must inform and answer to those directly impacted.

Yet ho'a'āina of West Hawai'i marine managed areas have not been informed of the revised environment impact statement, DAR's proposed recommendation, or the aquarium collection permit applications. Nevertheless, DAR plans to bring permit applications before the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR), requesting approval to once again issue aquarium collection permits.

An injunction against issuing commercial aquarium collection permits was in place for more than six years. Now that it has been lifted, DAR and the permit applicants have an obligation to conduct community outreach to the communities that make up the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area.

The cultural, ecological and subsistence value these marine resources have to Native Hawaiians – and the four decades of contentious, unethical extraction of fish from West Hawai'i waters – demands a sincere outreach effort to the communities being directly impacted to hear their mana'o on these activities.

"DLNR has authority over public trust lands which also includes its oceans. Using this authority the DLNR leases thousands of acres of public trust land and issues hundreds of permits for all manner of ocean activities from commercial fishing to tour boating," Young said.

DLNR's stated mission is to "Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawai'i's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawai'i Nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors."

Inherent in DLNR's mission is its duty to mālama. "This duty must also bind all to whom access and/or use of the Public Land Trust through the DLNR's leases and permits," Young added.

At issue is whether issuing permits for aquarium fish collecting meets that duty.

"This 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, who are being denied access to the millions of fish taken from their waters," Young pointed out.

"Although aquarium fish collecting has been permitted for many years – during which time the industry has realized untold profits – I believe that DLNR erred when it granted the very first permit. Hawai'i's lands and oceans are to be shared and accessed fairly by all its beneficiaries. Aquarium trade permits allow a few individuals to profit by granting them limited and exclusive access. South Kona communities agree that aquarium fish collecting is unacceptable."

Pēia ka nohona Hawai'i? Minamina wale kā ho'i.

As noted, Hawai'i does not benefit from the billion-dollar international pet trade industry, yet at the expense of our taxpayers and natural environment, DLNR is proposing the most highly managed – and doubtless the most costly – privatized fishery in Hawai'i.

DLNR's support of this extractive fishing industry exceeds its fiduciary duties to protect fisheries for the subsistence and commercial fishers who feed the people of Hawai'i, and calls into serious question the motives of DLNR leadership in supporting this industry – given its stated mission to preserve Hawai'i's cultural and natural resources.

Extracting reef fish for the exploitative pet trade industry is not consistent with Native Hawaiian subsistence, cultural, or religious practices. Permitting others, without the consent of the greater Native Hawaiian communities and ho'a'āina of West Hawai'i, is disrespectful and hewa (wrong).

Article XII Section 7 of Hawai'i Revised Statutes reads: "The State reaffirms and shall protect all rights customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes and possessed by ahupua'a tenants who are descendants of Native Hawaiians who inhabited the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778, subject to the right of the State to regulate such rights."

Therefore, the state has an obligation to protect the resources that Native Hawaiian customary and traditional practices depend upon. And DLNR's mission is to preserve and protect Hawai'i's cultural and natural resources.

In December 2023, BLNR approved a petition by ho'a'āina to enter into rulemaking regarding commercial aquarium collection – specifically to prohibit taking marine life for commercial aquarium purposes. As of press time, the petitioners are still awaiting DAR's rulemaking.

Commercial aquarium collection unfairly commercializes public trust resources and exploits Hawaiian cultural and natural resources at the expense of our cultural values and our inherent subsistence rights.

Issuing aquarium collection permit(s) privatizes the extraction of our reef fish to benefit a few aquarium collectors and a small handful of local players, providing no economic benefit to Hawai'i.

U'ilani Naiipo is a lineal descendant to the ancestral lands and seas of Miloli'i Fishing Village, Kapalilua. As a ho'a'āina of Kapalilua, she is a strong advocate of place-based traditional and customary natural resource governance and management. She serves as administrator for the Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area.

TAGS: mana, kapa, culture, war, oli, tour, boat, marine life, produce, Hawaiian, Native Hawaiian, December, public, Hawai'i, STEM, awa, oha, fishing, Honolulu, USA, lua, state, fish, ocean, ulu, exercise, 'āina, art, island, water, sand, community, Community Outreach, traditional, land

Like 46



Previous article

Next article

Elevating Indigenous Voices is Critical to Global Conservation Efforts

Diving Deep to Fulfill Their Kuleana

Guest Author

RELATED ARTICLES MORE FROM AUTHOR

'Āina | Land & Water
Bothered by Brown Water Advisories?
Fix Cesspools Now

Economic Stability
Kāko'o Maui Offers Housing
Programs for Wildfire Survivors

OHA
OHA Discusses Mauna'ala
Stewardship with Other Stakeholders

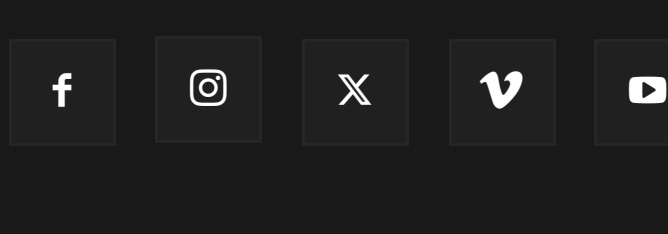


ABOUT US

FOLLOW US



Ka Wai Ola o OHA - The Living Water of OHA is a free, monthly newspaper of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Ka Wai Ola effectively serves the Hawaiian community by reporting on critical issues that impact not only Hawaiians, but the community at-large, and is posted online.



Contact us: kwo@oha.org

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board,

My name is Namele Naipo-Arsiga, and I am submitting testimony in **strong opposition** to the proposed aquarium fishery management rules and to **any continuation of aquarium fishing in Hawai'i's waters**.

1. Aquarium fishing has no place in Hawai'i

Our reefs are living ecosystems that sustain communities, culture, and life across these islands. Collecting reef fish for ornamental display in tanks thousands of miles away is **not consistent with protecting and upholding the public trust** in managing our ocean resources.

Removing these animals from their native reefs for profit is not a “fishery”; it is **extraction for entertainment**. It provides no food security, no subsistence value, and no cultural benefit to Hawai'i's people. The only beneficiaries are a handful of commercial collectors and mainland retailers.

2. The proposed “statewide permit” weakens community-based protections

By replacing the West Hawai'i-specific rules with a single statewide permit system, this proposal **erases hard-fought local protections** that were established through decades of community engagement, scientific research, and legal action.

The **West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA)** rules were designed precisely to reflect the unique biological and cultural importance of that region's reefs. Repealing those provisions and replacing them with a generic endorsement dilutes the accountability and site-specific management that have made West Hawai'i a model for community-driven conservation.

Moreover, the Department already **struggles to manage and enforce the regulations currently in place**—including monitoring permits, tracking catches, and preventing illegal take. Expanding those responsibilities under a new statewide system will only **spread enforcement thinner and reduce accountability**.

3. Hawai'i's reefs and fish populations are already under severe stress

Climate change, coral bleaching, pollution, and overuse are threatening our nearshore ecosystems. The **last thing our reefs need** is renewed or expanded pressure from aquarium collectors targeting herbivorous and reef-dependent species—fish that play critical ecological roles in maintaining coral health.

Allowing aquarium take, even with so-called “whitelists” or catch limits, **further destabilizes fragile reef systems** that are already struggling to recover. **Put a stop to aquarium fishing.**

4. The public has spoken — the aquarium trade is not supported

For years, the people of Hawai‘i have shown overwhelming opposition to the aquarium trade through testimony, protests, and petitions. Court rulings have repeatedly stopped the issuance of aquarium permits due to inadequate environmental review.

Rather than trying to revive or repackage this industry through new rulemaking, the BLNR should listen to the will of the community and **end aquarium fishing once and for all.**

5. The proposal benefits commercial collectors, not reef health

Consolidating and simplifying aquarium fishing regulations under the banner of “clarity and consistency” primarily serves the **commercial aquarium trade**, not Hawai‘i’s coral reefs or nearshore fisheries.

Establishing statewide permits, dealer registrations, and whitelists effectively **normalizes and legitimizes** an extractive industry that has long faced justified public opposition. It sends the wrong message—that the State intends to revive and streamline a trade that is **unsustainable.**

These fish belong in the ocean, not in tanks. Their removal represents a cultural and ecological loss — a breaking of the relationships that connect our communities to the natural world. The Board’s duty under the public trust doctrine is to **protect Hawai‘i’s natural resources for future generations**, not to manage their commercial exploitation.

I respectfully urge the Board to **deny this request** to move forward with public hearings and to instead take a clear position that **aquarium fishing will not be allowed anywhere in Hawai‘i’s state waters.**

Let us end this harmful and outdated practice once and for all. Hawai‘i’s reef life should be protected, not packaged and sold.

No more aquarium fishing. No more permits. Protect our reefs.

From: [Alohi Nakachi](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:57:16 PM

Aloha e Chair Chang and honorable members of the board,

My name is 'Alohi Nakachi, I was born and raised on moku o keawe. Some of my first memories of civic engagement were attending legislative and community meetings about the aquarium trade in the late 90s when I was around 5 years old. This has been a contentious and ongoing issue for my entire life. Growing up with the aquarium issue along with community-based management efforts continuously made me feel like the Native Hawaiian voices were not well recognized in management and research. This motivated me to pursue degrees and credentials recognized and accredited by dominant management and research institutions. I now hold a PhD from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management. As an Indigenous Scientist, in my dissertation I sought to better recognize Indigenous Knowledge and Values in research, management, and academia through the discipline of Cultural Ecosystem Services. I hope to continue to raise an awareness and understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and Science so that we can continue to ensure they are better acknowledged in research, management, and academia.

I have commented on the aquarium issue throughout my whole life. The last time I urged the board as a PhD candidate finishing up my degree to oppose issuing commercial permits in West Hawai'i and to oppose delegating authority to the Department Chair. Today, I urge the board to send the rules back for redrafting so that they can reflect the community needs to safeguard reef life and to build 'āina resilience. Do not go to public hearing, honor the last petition in 2023 heard before the BLNR to ban the trade and honor the decision made there to get as near a ban as rules can allow. Do not revive the trade when the board already agreed for the trade to end or get as close to an end as legally possible. Help restore our trust in the BLNR and state institutions with full transparency and accountability.

Throughout my academic research and my career it has long been apparent that management agencies in Hawai'i do not acknowledge and uphold Native Hawaiian Knowledge and Values. This is evident as issues like the aquarium trade continuously prevail and are revisited and supported by state institutions. I hope as members of these state institutions you can recognize the history of harm that state institutions have upheld and continue to uphold by reinforcing values and practices that continue to harm and impact the Native Hawaiian community. It is your responsibility to recognize this and work together with those asking your help and understanding to undo and prevent continued harms to Native Hawaiians and our cultural practices and values.

The aquarium trade is not a pono practice and should not be continued. We continue to perpetuate harm to 'āina and to the pae 'āina if we only recognize 'āina as natural resources for human benefit. These harms are particularly pervasive if it is for the benefit of just a select few humans. Being in Hawai'i we must understand or at least acknowledge, he ali'i ka 'āina, the 'āina as our chief. While there are no perfect or direct translations for many words of the Hawaiian language, āina can be understood as the land or that which feeds. 'Āina and all that composes it, including Native Peoples, elements, i'a (fish), and our other more than human relatives must live in reciprocal relation to nourish and be nourished to thrive together. All of us of 'āina are born in place and are of place. Our mo'okū'auhau as 'āina has been shaped by all those that came before us and are with us now.

The aquarium trade is not pono because it does not nurture 'āina and does not support a reciprocal feeding. In the aquarium trade, collectors take i'a of place and remove them from 'āina. If these i'a survive along all the traumatic and increased mortality risk stages of collection, removal, holding, shipping, and storage, their mo'okū'auhau is still disrupted. I'a are removed from 'āina throughout the entire process and even if they survive they are used to serve a hobbyist industry that exists almost completely (estimated at least 95%, Schaar and Cox, 2021) outside of the pae 'āina. Any practice that does not remain in 'āina or continue to feed 'āina will not be okay to Kānaka Maoli and to the People of Hawai'i that uplift Hawaiian value systems. As Kānaka, we understand 'āina as ourselves, our relatives, and that which feeds and must be fed. We do not support our 'āina, ourselves, our i'a being removed from their home and shipped off for a hobbyist industry. Their mana and their life should be in place, in 'āina where they can continue to be part of 'āina and be fed from 'āina and in turn feed 'āina throughout their life.

I have only spoken of some of the ongoing harms and cultural impacts of the aquarium trade. The cultural and economic harms are similar. The economic benefits of this trade exist only to those few residents of Hawai'i that are collectors, wholesalers, or ship the fish. The main beneficiaries of this trade are the sellers and hobbyists that purchase and sell these fish outside of the pae 'āina. Meanwhile the impacts are those cultural harms from the trade, the economic and ecological impacts from this trade of declining fish populations and harms to the reef ecosystem. The removal of i'a from 'āina not only removes their energy and disrupts their mo'okū'auhau but in turn impacts all those human and more than human entities that rely on their energy and existence to feed, be fed, and be part of 'āina.

While rules are proposed to allow take, we have also seen continued breaching of trust from collectors with poaching events with the trade closed, mass deaths and disposal of fish as well as coral damage from irresponsible collecting and holding. Even if we had faith in collectors and wholesalers to uphold rules, there are continuing and compounding ecological stressors and threats that we need to address to continue to build 'āina resilience. Allowing the take of hundreds of thousands of herbivorous fish off of the reefs for a hobbyist industry that exists outside of the pae 'āina is irresponsible. We need to continue

to build our 'āina resilience in the face of increasing storms and intensity, warming and bleaching events, king tides and sea level rise, and increasing and prevailing fires to name a few threats. The aquarium trade is a completely unnecessary practice that does not benefit or feed 'āina and is disrespectful to 'āina and all that 'āina entails. Keep our 'āina in 'āina, keep our people and our i'a of place in place.

Send the rules back for redrafting and do not go to public hearing. This process of drafting rules and coming before the board did not even acknowledge the petition to ban the aquarium trade where that was voted on unanimously by the BLNR to reduce the trade by 99%. Instead DAR now proposes rules to give the aquarium trade 100% of what was asked in the flawed REIS. I hope you reflect on your own responsibilities and history as state institutions and acknowledge these Native Hawaiian voices and values. Do not continue betrayals to 'āina and to Native Hawaiian Peoples, Knowledge, and Values. Do not perpetuate and uphold continual harms of state institutions. Help us to promote 'āina momona and build 'āina resilience, do not support wasteful and disrespectful practices.

Mahalo nui,
'Alohi Nakachi, PhD

Reference:

Schaar, S.I., Cox, L.J., 2021. The future for Hawai'i's marine aquarium fishery: A cost benefit analysis compared to an environmental impact assessment. *Mar. Policy* 127, 104429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104429>

From: [Zara Nicholson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oct 23 agenda item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:55:20 AM

Aloha,

I want to express my opposition to aquarium fishing in Hawaii. As someone who is Native Hawaiian and born and raised in Kona Hawaii, I have a deep connection to this land, waters, and wild life. I have witnessed the reefs and amount of fish decrease since my childhood. I feel we must do everything we can to prevent the loss of more fish that are so vital to our ecosystems.

Mahalo for the opportunity to speak out on this issue!

Thank You,

Zara Nicholson, CPA

808-938-9749
zara.naia.nicholson@gmail.com

From: [nikki m](#)
To: [DLNR.BLR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support item agenda F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:59:32 AM

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Becca Nutsch](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:02:28 AM

I would like to express my opposition for any increase in aquarium fish collection activity, especially in West Hawaii. These fish are a critical natural resource for preserving reef health and local subsistence, not for commercial greed.

Mary Nutsch, Holualoa, Hawaii Island

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii.

Aileen Eduardo

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits. All fisheries need good management and DAR's scientific studies clearly show that management of this fishery has been highly effective. It's sustainable and the data showing increasing aquarium fish populations demonstrate how well proper management works.

Thank you,
Jaye Tiongco

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Elliana Reeves

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the aquarium fishery, it has successfully been through HEPA and proven a sustainable fishery. I support permitting and opening West Hawaii for fishing.

Mahalo,
Kaori Coloma

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Support issuing permits!

Thank you...

Aera Kim

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits and managing this fishery by science as provided by DAR.

Thank you,
Cal Gomez

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Roger Stuart

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. It has passed HEPA and it's always been well managed by science with growing fish populations as proof.

Thank you!
Leslie Fermin

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits to reopen the West Hawaii Aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,
Philip Whedon

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support opening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing by
issuing permits.

Thank you,
Stan Valken

TO: Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing.

Thanks very much,
Lisa S.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and opening West Hawaii aquarium fishing. I support sustainable fisheries!

Mahalo,
Maris Wolfe

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,
B. Harris

Chair Chang and Board Members-

I support issuing permits for the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

Kevin Cervantes

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I'm testifying in support of reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. I believe all the data and the entire process that this fishery has gone through proves it is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Vilma Diaz

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Tracey Dublin

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Leilani Dailo

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support permitting for West Hawaii and opening the aquarium fishery again.

Thank you,
Allie Magno

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mark Fryer

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

The aquarium fishery is the most heavily managed nearshore fishery in the State of Hawaii. Because of this, I SUPPORT issuing permits and reopening this fishery.

Thank you,
Gabriel N.

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Philip King

Chair Chang and Board Members,

The aquarium fishery passed the HEPA process and is proven sustainable. Permits should be issued and I support reopening this fishery.

Mahalo,
Vivien Francisco

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Marni Hughes

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. I support fisheries managed by science and DAR has done a good job of this with the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
B. Samson

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

My testimony is in support of issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. It successfully went through HEPA and is a sustainable fishery.

Mahalo,
Jael Mai

I support issuing permits and opening the West Hawaii Aquarium fishery. It has successfully been through HEPA and is the most heavily regulated fishery in the State.

J. Getty

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits.

Thank you,
Bob Ilagan

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I fully support the aquarium fishery as well as issuing permits for West Hawaii fishing.

Mary Capiz

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm testifying in support of issuing permits for aquarium fishing and reopening this fishery in West Hawaii.

Thank you,

Grace Salas

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery because it's the only fishery in Hawaii to complete the HEPA process. Science based management of the fishery includes catch limits, permit limits, and restrictions on the types of fish that can be caught. This a model fishery that the State should be proud of.

Mahalo,
Monica R.

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Anton Nguyễn

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Waren Aquino

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly support the aquarium fishery and believe permits should be issued so fishing can resume.

Thank you,
Marisa Kane

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. It's been through the HEPA process and is proven sustainable.

Mahalo,
Ken Kauhane

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Adam Sloan

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm in support of issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island.

Mahalo,

Jef McGreggor, Kona

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits because the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii has been the best managed fishery in the state with years of scientific data showing sustainability.

Thank you,
Jasmine Ngo

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I absolutely SUPPORT issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Becky Allen

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island.

Mahalo,
Cord Sanchez

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm supporting the aquarium fishery and issuing the permits necessary to reopen fishing in West Hawaii on the Big Island.

Mahalo,
Donna Modesto

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm in support of reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii.

Paul Monroe

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources-

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii on the Big Island.

Mahalo,
Adan Morris

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the aquarium fishery, please issue permits and
reopen West Hawaii fishing.

Eze Martinez

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii.

Connie Samonte

Chair Chang and Board Members,

**I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing and
managing resources by science.**

**Mahalo,
Liz Flores**

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. It's proven sustainable.

J. Baldua

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

My testimony is in support for re-opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. Please consider the science that backs this fishery and proves it is sustainable.

Mahalo,

Brian Lee

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,
Rex Winstanley

To Chair Chang and Board Members:

Support issuing permits, support opening the aquarium fishery.

MaryAnn Reyes

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly support reopening West Hawaii aquarium fishing and issuing permits.

Mahalo,
Brian Salazar

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and issuing permits.
I support fisheries using science based management.

Ruth Turner

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I'm writing in support of reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits.

Robi Morgado

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Josh Brecka

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. The aquarium fishery is now the only fishery to have completed the HEPA review and has the scientific data to prove its sustainability. It remains the most studied and well managed fishery in Hawaii, with two decades of scientific data showing increasing population trends for aquarium species. We need to support sustainable fisheries and look to implement similar effective management plans for other fisheries in Hawaii.

Thank you,
Luci Price

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support opening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,
Isaiah Brewer

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for the West Hawaii aquarium fishery. The fishery went through the HEPA process and is clearly healthy and viable.

Mahalo,
Steve Belasco

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits and reopening West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Jenny Giron

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. The fishery has been through the HEPA process and is sustainable and well managed.

Thank you,
Dave Guillermo

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii. I oppose a ban.

Mahalo,
Summer Bentley

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the Aquarium Fishery.

Mahalo,
Cathie Roberts

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am supporting the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii fishing.

E. Wise

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii again.

Andrei Dion

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and I hope you'll vote in favor of issuing permits. The aquarium fishery is the only fishery in Hawaii to have completed the HEPA process and West Hawaii should be open for fishing again.

Thank you,
Adrien Madison

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the issuance of aquarium fishing permits as well as opening West Hawaii for fishing.

Charlie Keis

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery.

Thank you,
Parker Wise

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Marco Santenello

Chair Chang and Board Members-

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

K. Dowdle

Dear Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits for West Hawaii. It has completed the HEPA review and has been well managed based on science.

Sam P.

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Karla Gurat

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you
Owen Hammond

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing the permits needed to open West Hawaii for fishing.

Mahalo,
Cheyanne Zamora

Support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits
for West Hawaii.

M. Brass

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Denise Waller

Chair Chang and Board Members-

In support of reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Joan Monroe

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and I support issuing permits.

Patsy T.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Mel Diep

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support opening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Stephen Poulos

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm testifying in support of issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Eugene E.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,

T. Sung

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support allowing the aquarium fishery to reopen under the continued management and guidance of DAR. I support issuing permits.

Mari Solner

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Amber Hopkins

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Laverne Rivera

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reissuing permits and opening West Hawaii to aquarium fishing again.

Thank you,
Phil Walker

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits for West Hawaii.

Thank you,

Terri Walker

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR. This is the only fishery in the state to go through the HEPA process.

Thank you,
Kenzi White

Chair Chang and Board Members -

SUPPORT for issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Greg Deves

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

P. Westin

I support issuing permits to allow aquarium fishing in West Hawaii and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Penny Pudiquet

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm in support of issuing permits and reopening the Aquarium Fishery in West Hawaii. It's proven to be sustainable and is the most studied and best managed fishery in Hawaii.

Thank you,
Kris Burgard

I support issuing permits.

I. Jacobs

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Kelly Mooney

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Nikki Vermillion

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits and reopening West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Andrea Makori

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and believe it should be reopened. I support issuing permits and allowing this HEPA approved fishery to operate again.

Mahalo,
Kelly Ramos

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,
George Tapu

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Ruth Jahan

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii fishing. I believe that resources should be managed by science and DAR has done a good job of this for this fishery. It is still the most heavily regulated fishery in Hawaii.

Thank you,
Jamie Murack

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits to reopen West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Jennifer Sullivan

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm testifying in support of issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island. Scientific data gathered from DAR studies done over the years do support that this is a sustainable fishery.

Mahalo,

Maile Steele

I support the aquarium fishery and I support issuing permits.

Mahalo,

Ava Brennan

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. I support issuing permits. Numerous studies and numerous experts have demonstrated with clear scientific data that this is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,

Lee Ashford

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Alika H.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii fishing.

Mahalo,

Sandy Kovace

Kona

I'm supporting the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for west Hawaii.

Mahalo,

L. Levi

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I'm in support of reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. It's well managed, well studied, has completed the HEPA review process.

Mahalo,

Claye Boute

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support managing fisheries based on science, not rhetoric. The aquarium fishery should have permits reissued and West Hawaii reopened as long as the scientific data continues to support that this is a sound and sustainable fishery.

Mahalo,
Dana Myers

Aloha,

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery and re-opening West Hawaii.
And I support science based management of all fisheries.

Mahalo,
Margaret Stone

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits to allow fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,

V. Shaylor

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support permit issuance and opening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island.

Mahalo,
Nathan Jarvis

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support giving permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii and believe this fishery has been well managed using scientific data.

Mahalo,

Giesel Ramel

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery. It's proven sustainable and well managed.

Mahalo,

S.C. Poole

Strongly SUPPORT issuing permits for the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

B. Flatmann

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and believe permits should be issued. It's been a well managed fishery and it should be reopened.

Mahalo,
Kalei Hall

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits to allow aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Gannon Landry

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits...the aquarium fishery has completed the HEPA process and I support reopening the fishery. Studies have shown increasing fish populations, it has been well managed by the state and is proven sustainable.

Thank you,
Mitchell Freye
Kona, Hawaii

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Deloris Kaur

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery. Please vote in favor of issuing permits. The scientific data proves this is a sustainable fishery with effective management ensuring proper protection and growth of fish stocks.

Thank you,

C. Han

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Greg Haim

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits. The aquarium fishery in West Hawaii is the best managed and most studied fishery in the State. Populations of aquarium fish species have risen over the years, showing how powerful good management can be. In addition, this fishery has completed the HEPA review process and is proven sustainable.

Mahalo,

Raine Moralez

Kona

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Angel Lucas

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery. After completing the HEPA review, and being the only fishery to have done so, it's been proven to be sustainable and deserves to be in operation again.

Mahalo,

Sammy Byron

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support re-opening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Alison Black

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing as well as fishery management based on sound science. I support re-opening the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,

Fredo Salas

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for fishing in West Hawaii.

Thank you.
Erin Westin

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Russel Tan

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits. This is the only fishery in Hawaii to have gone through and completed the HEPA review and is proven sustainable. Thank you for your time.

Kealoha R.

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island.

Myra Jacildo

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Regina Lim

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I strongly support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing. The fishery has gone through the court ordered HEPA review process in order to determine if it was sustainable and environmentally safe to continue. The HEPA process was completed and accepted and the fishery still has the best management plan of all fisheries in the state.

Mahalo.

Edna Anderson

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the issuance of permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Tevita B.

I support issuing permits to reopen the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.
This fishery completed the HEPA review.

This fishery is sustainable, as identified in the HEPA review. This fishery is well managed with multitudes of studies by DAR showing an increase in aquarium fish populations. Management does work and this fishery should be open.

Mahalo,
O. Charles Byron

I support issuing permits and managing resources by science as provided by DAR.

**Thank you,
Garett Beseir**

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and re-opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery.

Sebastian Poe

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii. Resources should be managed by science provided by DAR.

Bruce Stanford

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishers and believe the fishery has been proven sustainable and should be re-opened in West Hawaii. This fishery has been very well managed and now has an accepted environmental impact statement. The West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery should be allowed to resume activity now.

Mahalo,
Aki Tolentino

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island.

Mahalo,
Sven Green

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Claire Shi

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Tandy Galanis

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and opening west Hawaii for aquarium fishing. DAR has done a great job of implementing effective, targeted management of the fishery over the years and the scientific data supports that it's a healthy fishery.

Mahalo,
Dawn Porter

I support opening/permitting the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Ethan Gray

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. Thank you very much.

Mercy Battung

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing. The fishery is backed by years of research and data supporting it's sustainable.

Mahalo,

Dane Washington

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery reopening in West Hawaii.

**Thanks,
Aaron Nyquist**

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits to re-open the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Derek Adams

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural resources,

I strongly support sustainable fisheries and as the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery is such, I support issuing permits and re-opening. The fishery has also been through the HEPA process and no other fishery in Hawaii has done so. It's a great documentation of how well managed the fishery has been and it should be allowed to operate.

Mahalo for your time,

Dana Littlefield

I support issuing permits and opening the aquarium fishery, as well as managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Kip Olson

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and re-opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Linda Burroughs

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii and I support managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Andy Tieger

I support opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Bill Mangkhut

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the aquarium fishery and believe it is time to reopen the fishery in West Hawaii. It's a model fishery in Hawaii and serves as a great example of how a sustainable fishery should be managed.

Mahalo,
Cal Chui

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery.

Doug Kane

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the aquarium fishery. I support allowing aquarium fishing in West Hawaii and believe this fishery has proven itself to be sustainable.

Tim Inoke

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Thank you,
Becca Bronner

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

M. Hauata

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm in support of issuing permits for the aquarium fishery, I do NOT support a ban. This is the only fishery that has been through HEPA and been properly managed to ensure sustainability.

Mahalo,
Warren Herrera

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support opening the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii.
Resources should be managed by science provided by DAR.

Thank you,
Tammy Latham

To-
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources

From-
M. Anderson

I support the aquarium fishery, please issue permits for West Hawaii fishing.

Thank you very much.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii!

Harry Torr

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources-

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Haukea Marques

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits for West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Amy Lauchengco

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I believe the aquarium fishery has been proven sustainable and has always been well managed, so I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing and West Hawaii should be reopened.

Thank you,
Fetu Moss

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery on the Big Island and managing resources according to science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Carmen Ewalt

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery and I support finally issuing permits for fishing West Hawaii.

Thank you,
Trini Stotch

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Andrew Alleje

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for the aquarium fishery.

*Mahalo,
Brad J.P.*

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the Aquarium Fishery. The fishery deserves to have permits issued and resume operation because it has cleared the HEPA process and is a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Mariann Kopilec

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support re-opening the aquarium fishery and managing resources by science provided by DAR.

Mahalo,
Elijah Hamaguchi

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Thank you,
Muriel Walsh

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening West Hawaii and issuing permits for
aquarium fishing.

Joel Gibson

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Chad Palfrey

Chair Chang and Board Members,

Please issue permits and reopen the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Josie Hilaw

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I'm supporting the aquarium fishery and encourage you to consider issuing permits for west Hawaii fishing. This fishery is proven sustainable with effective management ensuring it will remain that way.

Mahalo,
Jack Enkamp

Dear Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing. I support issuing permits.

Mahalo,
Bret Baci

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery, specifically issuing permits for West Hawaii waters.

Thank you for your time.

Andrea Duran

Chair Chang and Board Members,

The aquarium fishery is the best managed near shore fishery in the state and it has been through the HEPA review, therefore I support issuing permits to reopen the fishery in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Sabrina Vick

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and opening West Hawaii to
aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,
P. McIntyre

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery.

Thank you,
Somchai Anong

Dear Chair Chang and Board Members,

I'm testifying in support of issuing permits and reopening the Aquarium Fishery in West Hawaii. It's proven to be sustainable and is the most studied and managed fishery in Hawaii.

Thank you,
Z. Seale,
Hilo

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and support issuing permits.

Mahalo,
Maya Limbu

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Mike Pires

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Charline Smith

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the aquarium fishery and issuing permits for West Hawaii.

June Franko

Chair Chang and Board Members-

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. Please issue permits, it is a sustainable fishery that Hawaii should be proud of.

Mahalo,
Keola Reis

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
I support opening the Aquarium Fishery in West Hawaii.

Bobby Pearl

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits to allow fishing in west Hawaii waters. All cumulative scientific data supports that this is a sustainable fishery that should be open and not banned.

Thank you,
Steven Balik

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery on the Big Island.

Thank you,

Eva Kaizer

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for Aquarium fishing in West Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Rubilyn Gurat

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii. Fish stocks have been very well looked after and management has done a good job of protecting resources. There is no reason based in science to consider bans or keep the fishery closed.

Thank you,
Kiley Aurora

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing aquarium fishing permits.

Thank you,

Diane Fanning

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support opening the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii.

Rita Lawrence

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and opening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

Thank you,
Will Palmer

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits. The aquarium fishery has fulfilled the court ordered HEPA review and has catch limits in place to ensure fish abundance on the reefs. I support opening West Hawaii for aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
Dom Chaichana

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and reopening West Hawaii to aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,

Wagner Alfaro

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits. The Aquarium fishery has been through the HEPA review and is Hawaii's most heavily managed near shore fishery. Scientific studies show fish stocks trending up. It's a sustainable fishery and should be re-opened.

Thank you,
Niklas Meier

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,
Rowan Kenerly

I SUPPORT ISSUING PERMITS AND REOPENING WEST HAWAII.

MAHALO,
JACKSON SCHNELL

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii. The aquarium fishery has cleared the HEPA process and is sustainable.

Drew Santos Jr.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for opening the aquarium fishery.

Thank you,
Jacob Ballen

Chair Chang And Board Of Land And Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits and re-opening the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery. DAR has managed it well and it remains a sustainable fishery.

Thank you,
Zeny Saquing

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits and opening west hawaii for aquarium fishing.

Mahalo,
Daniel Nash

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support opening the aquarium fishery because it is a model fishery that has been through the HEPA process and is proven sustainable.

Thank you,
Lena Peterson

I support issuing permits for aquarium fishing.

Nate Smallhorn

Aloha Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing. The aquarium fishery has been Hawaii's most heavily managed and the data supports that there are healthy fish stocks.

Mahalo,
Brian Teixeira

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support issuing permits for West Hawaii aquarium fishing. This fishery completed the HEPA process and should be reopened.

Mahalo,
Kurt Chan



Board of Land and Natural Resources

Testimony Opposing Agenda Item F-2: Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of HAR Relating to Aquarium Life Management into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1 “Aquarium Fishery Management”

October 24, 2025

9:00 a.m.

DLNR Boardroom

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend that the Board of Trustees oppose the current proposal to take draft rules reopening commercial aquarium extraction in West Hawai‘i and other areas statewide to public hearing. The proposed rules directly conflict with a community-led rulemaking petition to ban commercial aquarium collection and directions provided by the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) when considering that petition during its December 8, 2023, meeting. The proposed rule in agenda item F-2 is premature¹ and ignores community concerns and priorities, including the rights and interests of OHA’s beneficiaries who live, work and exercise their traditional rights in the West Hawai‘i area. **The rule should be sent back to staff to redraft consistent with community demand to ban the aquarium trade and the prior directions of this Board.**

OHA strongly supported earlier community efforts to initiate rulemaking and hold public hearings on the community-led proposal to end the commercial aquarium pet trade. Article XII section 7 and Article XI section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution protect Native Hawaiian rights to subsistence, cultural, and religious practices, and prioritize the exercise of such practices over commercial activities. Localized depletion and coral degradation within community fishing grounds by removal of herbivorous fish for commercial profit directly impair the exercise of those rights, contravening constitutional mandates. Moreover, the ongoing commercialization of living reef organisms for ornamental purposes fundamentally conflicts with Hawaiian cultural perspectives that hold marine life as kinolau—manifestations of divine and ancestral forces—rather than commodities.

Even assuming there is some level of commercial aquarium extraction that is compatible with sustaining the nearshore ecosystem and Native Hawaiian rights, the current draft rules proposed by Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) neither justify nor establish an enforceable and protective regulatory regime. Rather, the proposed annual catch limits create perverse incentives for permittees within highly sensitive areas like West Hawai‘i to engage in a race to extract the maximum number of allowable fish in the shortest time before any closures are triggered, thereby wreaking havoc on the ecosystem and targeted fish populations. As

¹ The community proposed ban was unanimously approved by the Board at its December 8, 2023, meeting but the Attorney General intervened suggesting that a statute allowing use of fine mesh nets as a gear type divests this Board of the authority to ban commercial aquarium extraction. Related litigation is still pending.

commercial aquarium collection has already been prohibited for the past seven years, there is no locally based economic reason to rush to a conclusion now, particularly when litigation is outstanding. Moreover, the rules touching HEPA compliance suggest a closed monopoly system where past PIJAC members will have priority access to permits, creating further opportunities for conflicts of interest and misalignment of incentives. Finally, OHA is concerned that the community rulemaking petition has not been formally denied; however, advancing a contradictory rulemaking package operates as an informal denial of the petition and disregards the Board's procedural obligations under HAR section 13-1-26(c) and its prior direction to staff.

OHA supports the community's call for DAR to revisit its rulemaking related to commercial aquarium fishing. This aligns with OHA's mission to improve the conditions and wellbeing of Native Hawaiians and OHA's Strategic Plan "Mana i Maui Ola" (Strength to Wellbeing) and the following three foundations: 'ohana (family), mo'omeheu (culture), and 'āina (land and water).

Mahalo for the opportunity to present testimony.

From: [Lory Ono](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:02:23 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to the Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Lory Ono

From: [Mia Pada](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:44:47 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Mia Pada . I am a 5th Grade student at Kanu o ka Aina charter school and I am testifying. in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.
Mahlo to you
Mia Pada

Kanu o Ka Aina Charter school
Waimea, Hawai'i

From: [Makoa Pascoe](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:41:56 AM

Aloha,

My name is Makoa Pascoe and I am currently residing in Hilo, Hawaii. I strongly oppose DAR's proposed rule to reopen Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting. This rule betrays the community's intent to protect reef life and puts profit over conservation. Please send the rules back for redrafting and keep permit oversight with BLNR to ensure transparency and accountability.

Mahalo,
Makoa Pascoe

From: [Bal Patterson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:25:21 AM

Dear members of the BLNR,

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community’s call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public’s trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability. It is outrageous that what began as a community-led petition to ban commercial aquarium collecting statewide—which was unanimously approved by BLNR—has been turned upside down. The rule was supposed to “take full consideration of the petition to ban” and create “something short of zero,” per instructions from Chair Dawn Chang. Yet DAR ignored those directions, worked closely with the aquarium trade, and dismissed every solution offered by the petitioner hui. A plan meant to safeguard Hawai‘i’s reefs has been rewritten to once again empty them for profit. Instead of protecting reef life, DAR’s draft rules package gives the trade everything they’re asking for and would allow the capture of hundreds of thousands of reef fish every year.

I urge you to send the rules back for redrafting in keeping with your stated mission.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Bal Patterson,
Honolulu, Oahu

From: [Hiilani Perez](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:44:55 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Hi'ilani, I am a 5th grade student at kanu o ka Aina charter school and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo Nui loa

Hi'ilani Perez
kanu o ka Aina charter school
Waimea,Hawaii



October 23, 2025

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Conservation Council for Hawai'i, a non - profit conservation organization celebrating its 75th anniversary, **strongly urges you to reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction made by the Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Our reef fish, including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. **Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.**

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,


Jonee Kaina Peters
Executive Director

Ko Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu
Hawai'i's voice for wildlife

Telephone/Fax: 224.338-6511 | email: info@conservehi.org

web: www.conservehawaii.org | P.O. Box 2923, Honolulu, HI 96802

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

Directors: Puanani Anderson-Fung, Steven Lee Montgomery, PhD, Emily Sarasa, Les Welsh, Sunshine Woodford |

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

From: [Mimi Pickering](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:36:35 AM

To the Board of Land and Natural Resources --

My family has owned a home on Puako Beach Drive on the Big Island since 1978. We are right on the shoreline and during these years have seen a dramatic decline in fish and coral. It is your responsibility to do everything possible to improve the health of Puako Bay and the reef running along the coast line, that includes protecting the fish that keep the ecosystem alive. Safeguarding this reef is extremely important for the long term health of the ocean, and is a natural resource that attracts local folks and tourists (who spend money in Hawaii). Allowing commercial aquarium collecting will destroy this reef and all those statewide that are so critical to Hawai'i's future. Do not approve the Division of Aquatic Resources draft rules package to re-open our reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.

Sincerely,

Mimi Pickering
69-1598 Puako Beach Dr
Kamuela, HI 96743

--

From: toni.pinn@icloud.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Do not allow our reefs to be fished out! Toni and Al Pinn
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:20:27 PM

ALOHA
TONI PINN 408-218-9020

From: [Erika Pless](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Barren reefs? Stop plans to reverse aquarium fishing ban in Hawaii
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 5:19:12 PM

This needs to be banned. Our oceans should All be protected by now.
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Moani Pomare](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:58:11 AM

Name: Moani Pomare
Town: Kaneohe
Island: Oahu

Subject:

Please send rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life - rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end -restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Mahalo.
Mahalo nui loa,
Moani P.

From: [Musie Poulivaati](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reef Fish
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:53:30 AM

Aloha,

I am in 9th grade and a student at Kua O Ka Lā online Hīpu‘u program. I have attached written testing for Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules.

Mahalo,

Musie Poulivaati

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Musie Poulivaati, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for

privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Musie Poulivaati
Hilo, Big Island



KE ALA PONO

Kua O Ka Lā New Century Public Charter School
345 Makalika, Hilo HI 96720
Office: (808) 981-5866 Fax: (808) 981-5860

Email: info@kuaokala.org

This message is the property of Kua O Ka Lā Public Charter School and any attachments are confidential to the recipient of the email address to which it has been addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not copy, forward, disclose or use any part of this message or its attachments. If you received this transmission in error please notify the sender immediately by email or contact Kua O Ka Lā PCS at techsupport@kuaokala.org and then delete this message from your system.

Continuous Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) and its schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion in its programs and activities. Please direct inquiries regarding HIDOE nondiscrimination policies as follows:

Beth Schimmelfennig Director

Rhonda Wong Compliance

Aaron Oandasan Title VI

Toby Yamashiro Title VII

Nicole Isa Iijima Title IX

Krysti Sukita ADA/504

Civil Rights Compliance Branch Hawaii State Department of Education

P.O. Box 2360 Honolulu, Hawaii 96804 (808) 586-322 or relay CRCB@k12.hi.us

Letter of Support to Reopen the Aquarium Fishery

Attn: Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources

I support the reopening of the aquarium fishery on the Big Island. This fishery is the most heavily managed near shore fishery in the State. Catch limits are in place and it is no longer open to endless permit issuance. This fishery is proven sustainable by years of scientific studies.

The West Hawaii Regional Fishery Management Area is considered to be one of, if not the best regulated near-shore fishery in the world. DLNR found that the West Hawaii “no-aquarium collecting” Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs), implemented in 1999, have been very successful in protecting populations of specific species in demand by the aquarium trade.

DAR science, through data collection, research and analysis over the last 20 years or so concludes increasing populations of those species.

Through these decades of restrictions on this resource, the Aquarium industry has worked diligently in good faith, and has been the only stakeholder to date to complete the HEPA review on the fishery.

The West Hawaii management plan should be a model to other fisheries in the State to explore and consider responsible fisheries resource intendance.

This is a proven, well managed, sustainable fishery. When these special circumstances align, when we can balance environmental health, while providing economic sustenance to your citizens at the same time, it should be described as an opportunity of the type that the world needs more of, not less.

Sincerely,
Missy Poznaniak

From: [Kilia Purdy-Avelino](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:02:59 PM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is **Kilia Purdy-Avelino**, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai’i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
Kilia Purdy-Avelino

Ho'olehua, Moloka'i

From: [Martha Randolph](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re new DAR rules re increasing Aquarium reef fish allowances in State of Hawaii
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 5:32:32 PM

I am horrified that once again , we are having to continue this fight , especially under the current federal government , which has removed all protections from the special waters in the northern hawaiian oceans , where so many fish breed.

Now you want to give free rein to the aquarium fishing industry. And they have already shown that they don't care. If the fish die while they're being shipped they have no concern to limit what they're taking they just want to grab them and ship them off.

This is so contrary to the native people of Hawaii, who would always take only what they need and if you destroy these reefs, you better remember that there's no federal aid to help you put them back. And when the oceans come waving in and destroying the coastal area, because you took the fish that kept the reefs clean and the reefs die, what the heck are you gonna do?

Just stop it. If the state and state agencies do not protect our fragile environment , I promise you , you will have disasters and no way to repair them and you will have to look in the mirror and live with yourself.

Sincerely

Martha E Randolph
District 27 Council Treasurer
DPH Environmental Caucus SCC Representative
Member of the DPH Kupuna Caucus
Member of Legislative Priorities Standing Committee and
Member of Rules Standing Committee of the
Democratic Party of Hawaii
808-284-0264

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support the reopening of the aquarium fishery on the Big Island. This fishery is the most heavily managed near shore fishery and should show as an example of how sustainable fishery should be achieved. The DAR studies have shown aquarium fish species populations have increased over the year and the fishery is proven sustainable by years of scientific studies. Please accept this letter to represent my support to reopen the Aquarium fishery.

Thank you for your time,

Rebecca Rauchle



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hale o nā Luna Makaʻāina

STATE OF HAWAII

STATE CAPITOL

415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

October 23, 2025

Chairperson Dawn Chang
Board of Land and Natural Resources
Department of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

Re: Opposition to Item F-2 – Request to Hold Public Hearings on Draft Administrative Rules for Aquarium Fishery Management, HAR Chapter 13-77.1

Dear Chairperson Chang and Members of the Board,

I am writing in **opposition** to agenda item F-2, **the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) request to hold public hearings on draft administrative rules that propose to update and consolidate aquarium fishery regulations.**

As proposed, the draft rules fail to uphold Hawai‘i’s public trust obligations, depart from DAR’s conservation mission, and place an unfair burden on the public to engage with a flawed and inequitable framework.

Violation of Public Trust Obligations

Under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution, marine life and aquatic resources are held in trust for present and future generations. The State, as trustee, must manage these resources for public benefit, not private profit.

The proposed rules would permit seven commercial permittees to harvest up to 200,000 Yellow Tang and thousands of other reef fish annually, generating millions in private profits. Meanwhile, taxpayers would bear hundreds of thousands of dollars in management and enforcement costs, while the State collects minimal revenue—likely less than a few thousand dollars—in fees.

In effect, the draft rules would transfer significant ecological and economic value from the public trust and the people of Hawai‘i to a small group of commercial operators. This shift risks violating the State’s constitutional duty to manage public resources for collective benefit and long-term sustainability, and it lacks any compelling justification. The result is an inequitable giveaway of public resources at great cost to the State and the public, enabling substantial private profit with negligible public return and increasing the potential for ecological harm. Such an arrangement contradicts the core principles of stewardship embedded in both the Constitution and DAR’s mission.

DAR’s mission is to manage, conserve, and restore Hawai‘i’s unique aquatic ecosystems for present and future generations. This proposal contradicts that mission by proposing to institutionalize extensive commercial extraction of reef fish for the aquarium trade, an activity that offers no food security, cultural or environmental benefit, or measurable public benefit.

Representative Mahina Poepoe
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 331
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-6790 reppoepoe@capitol.hawaii.gov

On its face, the proposed rules appear to prioritize private commercial gain for a handful of individuals over ecological protection for the benefit of present and future generations, undermining DAR's stewardship and conflicting with its conservation mandate.

Unfair Public Process

The proposed rules assume large-scale extraction is acceptable, setting inflated catch limits (e.g., 200,000 Yellow Tang) as the starting point for public input. The public is then invited to "negotiate down" those numbers, which suggests a predetermined outcome intended to maximize benefit to commercial extraction.

This approach reverses the proper precautionary order and is inconsistent with the public trust doctrine. An approach that would align with the public trust doctrine would be to start from zero extraction, requiring justification of any permitted take with clear evidence of no harm and demonstrable public benefit. Beginning with maximum exploitation privileges private interests and forces the public to defend resources that already belong to them.

The Precautionary Principle and Ecological Responsibility

Hawai'i's environmental laws embed the precautionary principle, requiring the State to err on the side of protection amid uncertainty or risk.

DAR's own analysis acknowledges ecological uncertainty and ongoing threats to reef health. In an era of coral bleaching, habitat loss, and climate stress, "low risk" is unacceptable. Once damaged, these ecosystems cannot easily recover. Furthermore, significant resources are being invested in reef restoration. The success of which is dependent on healthy reef fish populations.

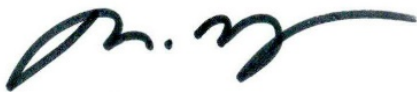
Proceeding with hearings on this deeply unbalanced proposal would contradict the precautionary principle and the State's fiduciary duty to safeguard public trust resources, while legitimizing an inequitable and environmentally unsound process that conflicts with the Constitution and the public interest.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to:

- Reject Item F-2 and deny approval for public hearings on these draft rules.
- Reaffirm DAR's mission to conserve and restore Hawai'i's aquatic resources.
- Apply the precautionary principle by requiring DAR to propose draft rules that start for a baseline of zero or minimal take and reflect DAR's obligation to uphold the public trust.
- Pursue rule making aligned with the petition to prohibit commercial aquarium collection statewide.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to protecting public trust resources.

With aloha,



Representative Mahina Poepoe

Hawai'i State House of Representatives, District 13

Portion of Kahului, Pā'ia, Ha'ikū, East Maui, Molokai, Lāna'i, Kaho'olawe, Molokini

Representative Mahina Poepoe
415 S. Beretania Street, Room 331
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 586-6790 reppoepoe@capitol.hawaii.gov

From: [Jamie Robinson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:55:37 AM

Hi my name is Jamie and I live in Kaimuki O'ahu. I am a dive instructor and value our reefs immensely. The fish deserve to be left in their natural environment. Malama 'aina!!!!!! Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

From: [Marley Rose](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony Opposing Reopening Hawai'i's Reefs to Aquarium Collecting
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:34:16 AM

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Marley Taufmann and I live in Kamuela, Hawaii. I am writing in strong opposition to the Division of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) proposed rule package that would reopen Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.

This proposal represents a serious breach of public trust and disregards the community's clear call to protect our reefs. What began as a community-led petition to **end** the commercial aquarium trade has been twisted into a framework that would once again **exploit** our reef life for profit.

Hawai'i's coral reefs are living treasures that support our culture, our fisheries, and our future. They are already under immense pressure from climate change, pollution, and overuse. Allowing mass extraction of reef fish—especially herbivores essential to reef health—would further weaken these fragile ecosystems and contradict both science and common sense.

Please **send the rules back for redrafting** so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and **restore the public's trust** by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Reef protection is not just an environmental issue; it is a moral one. The overwhelming majority of Hawai'i's people have spoken clearly: our reefs must be protected, not sold. Please honor that vision and reject the proposed rule package.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and for your dedication to protecting Hawai'i's marine life for future generations.

With respect,
Marley Taufmann
Kamuela, Hawaii Island

From: [Christy Schuerch](#)
To: [DLNR, BLNR, Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; OPPOSE: Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:20:17 AM

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Thanks! Christy Schuerch, Resident Volcano, Hawai'i Island and longtime reef-lover

From: [Faith-Ann Schutte-Loyola](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:43:32 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Faith Ann Schutte. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu o ka Aina charter school and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa.

Faith ann Schutte
Kanu o ka aina charter school
Waimea,Hawaii

From: [Pam Scott](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:09:06 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Pamela Scott

From: [Scuba Shack](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Agenda Item F.2 – Protect Hawai‘i’s Reefs
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:02:59 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

On behalf of Scuba Shack Maui, we are writing to express our strong opposition to Agenda Item F.2 on the October 24 BLNR meeting agenda.

Our business depends on the health and vibrancy of Hawai‘i’s coral reef ecosystems. Every day, we see how thriving reefs support not only marine life but also Hawai‘i’s people — from local families who fish sustainably, to visitors whose experiences directly fuel our island’s economy.

The proposed DAR rule would open the door once again to commercial aquarium collection. This would jeopardize years of progress in reef recovery and threaten the long-term sustainability of the very ecosystems that underpin Hawai‘i’s tourism and dive industries. Short-term exploitation of reef wildlife is not compatible with the long-term health of either our oceans or our economy.

We urge BLNR to reject this proposal and maintain permitting authority within the Board. Hawai‘i’s reefs are a shared public trust, not a resource to be extracted for private gain.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s marine life for future generations.

With respect,
Scuba Shack Maui
Lahaina, Maui

From: [Angel Seery](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:55:31 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am Angel Seery, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to **NOT** approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary. Wild animals should not be collected for the pet trade whatsoever ever.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,

Angel Seery
Kailua-Kona, HI

From: [Maile Shannon](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 24 October 2025 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:34:19 AM

Aloha e Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I kindly ask that you accept this email as testimony for the above subject matter.

My name is Maile Shannon, I reside in the Moku of Hamakuapoko on the Island of Maui.

This agenda item F.2, is a profound betrayal of the public's trust. What began as a community-led petition to ban commercial aquarium collecting statewide, which was unanimously approved prior by THIS board, has been turned upside down. Instead of protecting reef life, DAR's draft rules package gives the trade everything they want, including the capture of hundred of thousands of reef fish each year.

This rule was supposed to "take full consideration of the petition to ban" and create "something short of zero" per Chair Dawn Chang. Although it seems that DAR has ignored the directive, and is proposing to remove the boards oversight of the aquarium collecting permits and transfer that power to DAR themselves. Allowing permits to be issued without public notice, scrutiny, or opportunity for input.

We ask that you please consider redrafting the rules, so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life, rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end. This action may restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

We look forward to a decision that protects our near shore resources.

Mahalo nu nui,

Maile Shannon

From: [Luana Aloha Shea](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 10/24 agenda item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:10:47 AM

Please keep the reef safe from over harvesting for profit! This is meant to keep the delicate ecosystem in balance! Send this back for redrafting so it protects the reef! We deserve accountability and transparency for the community to know that this isn't putting profits over the treasure of the natural world!

From: [Noreen Shiraki](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I Support F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:32:40 AM

I support dar and their recommendation. Please support the fishermen.
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Todd Shiraki](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:33:59 AM

I support the AQ fishery! Please give the fishermen their permits back. This fishery should be a role model for every other fishery.

Thank you

From: [Joseph Shockey](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:46:29 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Joseph Shockey. I am a 5th Grade student at Kanu O ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Joseph Shockey
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [John Shockley](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: [Rita Shockley](#); [Wayne \(O'ahu Sierra Club\) Tanaka](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] LIVE NOTE: Aquarium fishing industry activities harm the aina and our people. REJECT Item F-2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 5:54:31 AM

Aloha BLNR Chair, Chang, and All!

Please do NOT let our precious ecology turn Hawaii's reefs into wastelands. The beautiful reef fishes are one of the many things tourists come to Hawaii to see. Local people also consider the fishes a blessing to our land. We cannot denude our coastline of fishes that make up our vital coastline eco-system in favor of the destructive aquarium fishing industry.

The fishes removed for show-place aquariums often die in captivity. Their loss from our reefs is permanent. Please don't let this happen.

Mahalo for your time.

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



SIERRA CLUB

HAWAII ISLAND GROUP



October 23, 2025

Board of Land and Natural Resources
P O Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96809

Re: Agenda Items F.2.

Aloha Madame Chair and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

The eight hundred members of the Hawai'i Island Group of the Sierra Club of Hawai'i (HIG) would like to say again to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) “mahalo nui loa” for last December’s granting of Kalanihale’s, KUPA Friends of Ho’okena Beach Park’s, Moana ‘Ohana’s, Ko’olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club’s, and For the Fishes’ Petition for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes (With Exemptions) (“Petition”).

HIG would like to also provide the following comments on the agenda item F.2.

There has been widespread outrage by the general public since learning that the Department of Aquatic Resources ignored the Petition, as well as consistently overwhelming public testimony to the Board in support of a commercial ban, and instead has proceeded as if the Petition, public opposition, and the Board’s decision to accept it have never occurred.

As HIG stated in previous testimony, the “Background” section of the April 2024 submission from DAR for agenda item F.3. stated, in part, “During the meeting, the Board received guidance from the Department of the Attorney General that the Board could not adopt a rule completely banning commercial aquarium harvest due to a statute, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §188-31, which authorizes the Board to issue aquarium permits.” This interpretation of law is incorrect.

First, HRS 188-31 provides the DAR with the legal authority to ban permits for commercial aquarium fishing, while allowing permits for educational, research, and scientific purposes only because the text of §188-31 reads, “Permits to take aquatic life for aquarium purposes. (a) Except as prohibited by law, the department, upon receipt of a written application, **may issue an**

aquarium fish permit, not longer than one year in duration, to use fine meshed traps, or fine meshed nets other than throw nets, for the taking of marine or freshwater nongame fish and other aquatic life for aquarium purposes.” [*emphasis added*]

HIG believes that the language in the statute, “may issue an aquarium fish permit”, refers to a state Supreme Court ruling that clarified the difference between “may” versus “shall”. This clarification was sought because the County of Hawai’i was wrongly interpreting “shall” in the Kona Community Development Plan as “may”. The Court found that “may” allows for discretionary interpretations and decisions by administrative agencies and that “shall” does not. HRS §188-31 explicitly provides the DLNR with the option of “may”, that is, not issuing aquarium fish permits. It allows the DLNR to create rules that do not allow for the issuance of aquarium fish permits.

In fact, DLNR supported this position in its press release dated January 30, 2023 announcing the First Circuit Ruling lifting the injunction, which reads in part, “During the hearing lead counsel for the State, Deputy Attorney General Melissa Goldman, reminded the parties and the public that aquarium fishing in West Hawai’i is not allowed simply because the injunction regarding the issuance or renewal of aquarium fish permits to commercial collectors pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes § 188-31 is lifted as to West Hawai’i. D.A.G. Goldman stated “Today’s decision does not itself authorize any aquarium fishing. That question may now be taken up by the DLNR, which is the agency charged with managing the State’s aquatic resources.”

The question was taken up and answered by the Board at its December 8, 2023 meeting when the Board granted the Petition for Rulemaking to Prohibit the Take of Marine Life for Commercial Aquarium Purposes (With Exemptions), a decision for which HIG is very grateful and strongly supports.

Scientists are now warning that, given the lack of urgency and action to achieve a carbon neutral global socio-economic system, the Earth’s tropical coral reefs will likely be rendered completely lifeless in just 20 years.

The Department of Aquatic Resources is asking this Board to authorize the preparation of terms and conditions for commercial permits to enter the home of coral reef life and cause further harm to already stressed and degraded inhabitants. This action would result in irreparable and unconstitutional harm.

Further, delegating the Board’s discretionary authority to approve or deny permits to administrators of laws, rules, and regulations is of questionable legality, at best. It would alter what is currently a transparent discretionary approval in which the public has an opportunity to comment to a non-transparent ministerial approval.

The Hawai’i Supreme Court created legal precedent to guide the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) when it ruled that the Precautionary Principle is a duty under the Public Trust Doctrine. It further clarified that the Precautionary Principle is an inherent attribute of the Public Trust Doctrine and, therefore, the Public Trust Doctrine is a preventative doctrine, not a remedial one. In endorsing the precautionary principle, the Hawai’i Supreme Court rejected the

requirement of scientific certainty before acting to protect public trust purposes, noting that to do so will often allow for only reactive, not preventive regulation. Where scientific evidence is not conclusive regarding the management of public trust resources, it is prudent to adopt 'precautionary principles' in protecting the resource.

Documentation submitted by the DAR to the Board in April used the terms "does not find clear evidence to suggest" and "would most likely mitigate" in its Summary of Finding, explicitly stating there is no scientific certainty in its decision-making process. The word "mitigate", in and of itself, means to lessen the severity or impact of a problem, without necessarily solving the root cause. It implies a more temporary or partial solution, rather than a complete fix.

The only scenario in which there is a consensus of scientific certainty is in disallowing commercial aquarium fish harvesting. This is the only option that will result in an already endangered resource not being further harmed. Therefore, the Precautionary Principle empowers this Board to support a ban on the issuance of commercial aquarium fish harvesting permits.

The Purpose section of the DAR's submission for F.2 in April 2024 states: "While DAR recognizes that there are also ethical and cultural values that the Board must consider in any future aquarium permitting decision, a comprehensive discussion of those factors is beyond the scope of this briefing."

The F.2. submission should have expanded the scope of the briefing by referencing Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i constitution, which states: "The State reaffirms and shall protect all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes and possessed by ahupua'a tenants who are descendants of native Hawaiians who inhabited the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778, subject to the right of the State to regulate such rights."

The F.2. submission should have also referred the Board to the Cultural Impact Assessment of the Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement (RFEIS), which was only accepted through statutory default rules because the Board had a 3-3 split vote.

The Hawai'i Supreme Court has ruled that traditional and customary Hawaiian rights are a part of the public trust. As previously stated in this testimony, the Court along with the state legislature have taken the position that the precautionary principle should be applied when there are current or potential threats of serious damage to cultural resources, which include traditional and customary Hawaiian rights and practices.

The state Supreme Court has also ruled a permit applicant bears the burden of proof that their proposed activity does not result in harm or loss to the public trust. Where uncertainty exists, the State's duty to perform as a public trustee requires a presumption in favor of public resource protection. There is no scenario in which a commercial aquarium fish collection permit application can be presumed to be in favor of public trust resource protection when the resource is already facing imminent destruction from climate change.

In summary, the HIG respectfully requests that the Board will deny the DAR requests contained within agenda item F.2. in furtherance of the Precautionary Principle, Public Trust Doctrine,

state Constitution, scientific evidence, the rights, traditions, and practices of kanaka maoli, as well as overwhelming public support.

HIG also requests the Board will instruct the DAR to proceed with rule-making effectively banning the issuance of permits for commercial aquarium fish harvesting.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



Testimony to
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

October 24, 2025

In OPPOSITION to the Staff Recommendation in F-2:

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULES UPDATING AND CONSOLIDATING AQUARIUM FISHERY REGULATIONS INTO A NEW CHAPTER, HAWAII ADMINISTRATIVE RULES ("HAR") CHAPTER 13-77.1, "AQUARIUM FISHERY MANAGEMENT" AND AMENDING HAR CHAPTERS 13-75, "RULES REGULATING THE POSSESSION AND USE OF CERTAIN FISHING GEAR", AND 13-60.4, "WEST HAWAII REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT AREA, HAWAII", FOR CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

The Sierra Club offers testimony in **OPPOSITION** to the staff recommendation violating the Board of Land and Natural Resources' prior directives to the Division of Aquatic Resources, by proposing rules that would facilitate, rather than prohibit, commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i waters.

As a preliminary matter, the Sierra Club has grave concerns regarding the apparent statutory noncompliance of the BLNR's current composition. Per HRS § 171-4, at least one member of the BLNR who is not its designated expert in Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices must have expertise in conservation and natural resource management, as reflected in their educational background or work experience. Former BLNR member Barnes was the BLNR's designated conservation and natural resource expert; however, neither of the members who have been appointed since the end of her tenure appear to possess the statutory qualifications for this seat, and neither they nor any of the other BLNR members appear to have been designated as such. **The BLNR's noncompliance with this statutory conservation and natural resource expert requirement draws into question the procedural and substantive validity of its decisions on matters such as this, as well as its ability to fulfill its mission and kuleana to uphold the public trust.**

With regards to the rules at hand, the Sierra Club notes that they do nothing to prohibit commercial aquarium collection, as called for by the BLNR in its April 2023 approval of a rulemaking petition submitted by Kalanihale, KULA Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park, Moana 'Ohana, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, and For the Fishes. Instead, they lay out a roadmap for the resurrection of an exploitative and highly controversial industry that has been effectively shut down for the better part of a decade. The Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Division of Aquatic Resources must not be allowed to

ignore the direction of the BLNR for years, and then push forward a recommendation that contravenes the BLNR's direction.

The Sierra Club notes that Division of Aquatic Resources staff may be under the mistaken impression that HRS § 188-31 somehow requires the issuance of commercial aquarium permits. This is patently false: HRS § 188-31 explicitly gives the Board the discretion to permit, or not to permit, the collection of aquatic life for aquarium purposes. Per the express language of HRS §188-31(a), the Board "may issue an aquarium fish permit . . ." (emphasis added); had the legislature intended to require the Board to issue aquarium fish permits, it would have instead used the word "shall." **Legally and logically speaking, there is a major difference between "may" and "shall."**

Even if the statute did require the issuance of aquarium permits, HRS § 188-31 does not require that such permits be issued for the sale of aquatic life for ornamental purposes; permits could be issued for the taking of aquatic life for educational or research activities. Notably, the rulemaking petition that the Division of Aquatic Resources was tasked with implementing did not ask to prohibit aquarium collection entirely, but contained express exceptions for cultural and other purposes.

As the Sierra Club of Hawai'i Aquarium Trade Policy, which supports a ban on commercial aquarium collection, states:

Hawai'i's coral reefs and the wildlife dependent upon them are severely threatened and being degraded by human induced global warming, increasing marine pollution, and commercial harvesting of wildlife via the "aquarium fish trade". Thus far administrative attempts to regulate, enforce, and resolve community user conflicts around this industrial style activity have failed and have not diminished the increasing societal objections to this activity. Among these objections are the inhumane treatment by which collectors regularly inflict unnecessary and unusual harm and injury to these unique and varied forms of aquatic life (including incidental damage to the living corals from which they are hunted), in the pursuit of shipping them out of state to private aquarium collectors. This trade, rather than resembling the traditional forms of recreational and subsistence fishing, is in no way compatible with the local values and lifestyles of most of Hawai'i's residents and sport fishermen. And most importantly, with on-going research and appreciation of the ecological value and symbiotic relationships between all forms of life on the reef still in its infancy, the loss or degradation to any of these elements is having consequences few can anticipate, and certainly no longer be justified by their purely economic benefits for a few.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club respectfully urges the BLNR to **deny** the staff recommendation in agenda item F-2, and to direct Division of Aquatic Resources staff to **follow through** on the BLNR's over two-year old direction, to develop rules consistent with the petition for rulemaking that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection in Hawai'i waters. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

From: [Roblynn Silva](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:26:04 AM

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

From: [Sanoë Smith](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:46:14 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is [Your Name], and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
[YOUR NAME]

[TOWN, ISLAND]

From: [Sophia's Mom](#)
To: [DLNR, BLNR, Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] testimony on item F2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:04:56 PM
Attachments: [image1761202910847](#)

oha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

I have been snorkeling, the coast of the island of Hawaii since 1999 and I have witnessed the complete deformation of our tropical fish. **It is obvious to me that we need to stop this! My friends and family who used to come here to snorkel with me choose to go other places because the fish are gone. We are giving up the beautiful animal life that have made our place such a special place to be**

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may **have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.**

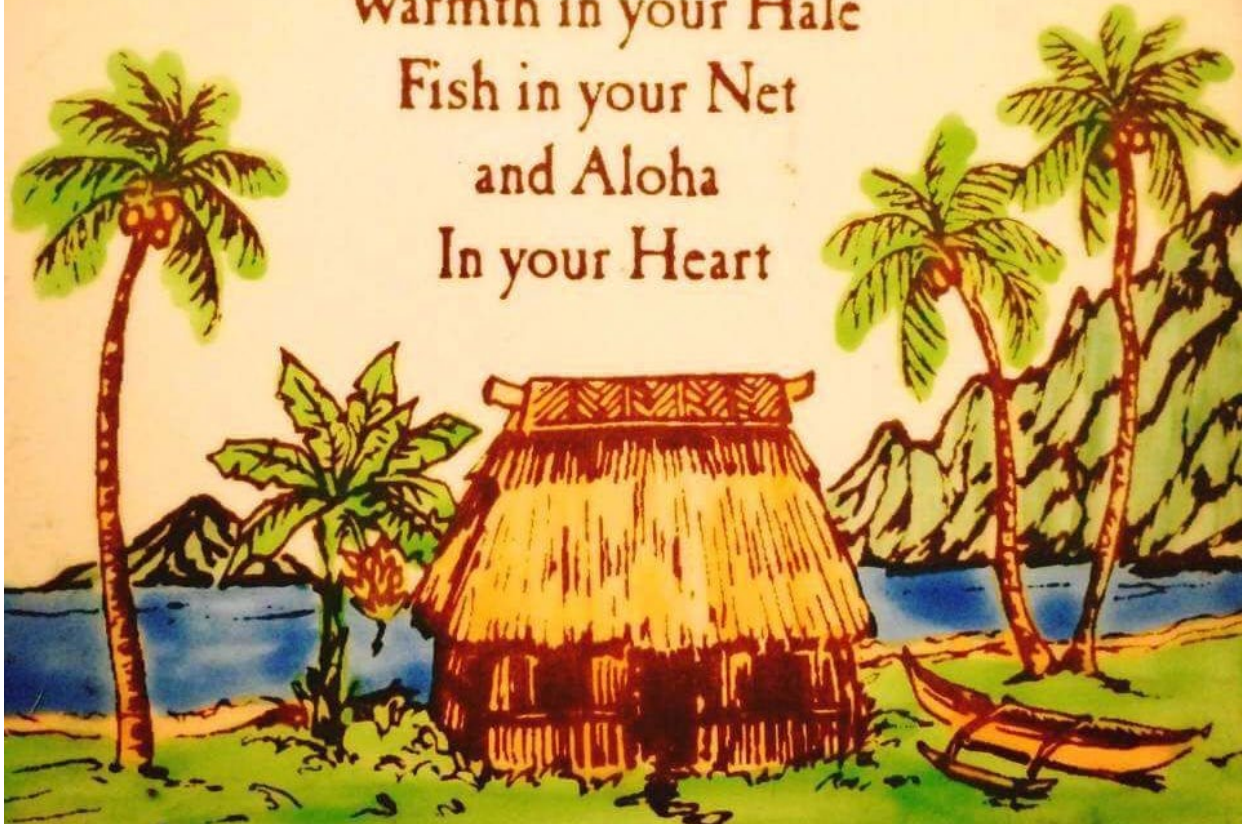
I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
April

Hawaiian Blessing:

May there Always be
Warmth in your Hale
Fish in your Net
and Aloha
In your Heart



Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

From: [William South](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opening up areas for collection of aquarium fish
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:58:33 AM

Aloha,

I do not believe it's in the best interest of the Hawaii and the health of our ocean ecosystems to open more areas and/or continuation of the rampant collection of fish. Not enough research has been done to determine whether or not removal of several key species will be healthy for our ocean ecosystems. For example, the Yellow Tang is instrumental in keeping coral algae free. You must remember that our environment is very fragile and the removal or decimation of even one key species can cause the entire ecosystem to fall apart. Please restrict aquarium collection even further. More rangers must be hired to police our shoreline. More research is an absolute necessity before any further discussions of increasing aquarium fish collection can be discussed.

*William Tovey South
47-657 Hui Ulili Street
Kaneohe, HI. 96744
Ph: 808-247-5588
E-Mail: mapinc@aloha.net*

From: [MARSHA SPECK](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Action on Re-Opening Hawai'i's Reefs to Commercial Aquarium Collection--Stop this NOW!
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:01:11 AM

Attention BLNR,

The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) has drafted a rule package to **re-open Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting** and, on **October 24**, will ask the **Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)** to approve it for public hearings. Please stop this action as it will harm our reefs and vital fish life.

As a full time Puako resident on Hawaii Island, I am very much against this new rule package that will do damage to our ocean fish and reefs. Please do not allow this to happen.

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

Mahalo to your attention to this vital matter of stopping commercial aquarium collecting.

Marsha Speck, Ed.D.
69-1927 Puako Beach Dr.
Kamuela, HI 96743
480-363-3586

From: [Makoa Spencer](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:44:39 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Makoa Spencer. I am a 5th grade student at Kanu o Ka aina charter school and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Makoa Spencer
Kanu o ka aina charter school
Waimea,Hawai'i

Ka Pa'akai Consulting
kapaakaiconsulting@gmail.com

Hoaka, Welehu - 23rd, 'Okakopa 2025

ATTN: Ms. Dawn Chang, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
DLNR Main Office Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Submitted via Email at blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

SUBJECT: **Testimony** for BLNR October 24th 2025 Agenda Item F.2

Aloha e Chair Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Kēhau Springer, I am kanaka 'ōiwi residing in Kea'au, Moku o Keawe. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am writing this letter in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to advancing the proposed Draft Administrative Rules authorizing commercial aquarium fish collection. These rules do not meet the constitutional, cultural, ecological, or public trust standards that BLNR is legally and morally required to uphold.

1. The State has a Constitutional Duty to Protect Native Hawaiian Rights and Public Trust Resources
Under Article XI, Section 1 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, marine resources are held in trust for present and future generations. Article XII, Section 7 further mandates the protection of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. In *Ka Pa'akai o ka 'Āina v. Land Use Commission (2000)*, the Hawai'i Supreme Court required state agencies to identify cultural practices, assess how proposed actions will affect them, and adopt protective measures.
The draft rules do not identify or protect lawai'a relationships, konohiki stewardship systems, or place-based cultural practices involving reef species. There is no cultural impact mitigation pathway. This fails the Ka Pa'akai standard and does not meet public trust protections.
2. The Draft Rules Violate BLNR's Own Hierarchy of Uses (1998)
BLNR policy prioritizes ecosystem protection, Native Hawaiian traditional practices, subsistence uses, and public access above extractive commercial activity. Aquarium fish collection is a for-profit, non-subsistence, export-based industry that removes living reef fish for ornamental purposes, placing it among the lowest priority uses.
Because peer-reviewed studies have show significant declines of targeted species in collection areas (Tissot & Hallacher, 2003), allowing further commercial take places a low-priority activity in direct conflict with higher-priority cultural, subsistence, and ecological uses.
3. DAR's "Low-Risk" Determination is Industry Driven, Not Science Based
DAR did not develop the proposed TACs from formal stock assessment science. Instead, DAR reviewed TACs proposed by collectors, which were based on past catch records or rough 1% of assumed population size. DAR then used broad population estimates and generalized risk comparisons to claim that projected removals would be small. They argue that data are "reliable"

because survey coefficients of variations are low and population trends appear stable. From this, they label the fishery “low risk,” but do not demonstrate it is actually “sustainable.”

This is not precautionary fisheries management. A “low-risk” assumption is not sufficient justification to authorize commercial extraction of a public trust resource. Especially when criteria were informed by industry proposals and not independent science.

4. The Rules Create Risks of Privatization and Quota Consolidation

Allowing discretionary Individual Catch Quotas (ICQs) without transparent criteria opens the door to quota consolidation among a few operators. Without safeguards in place, this can lead to privatization of access to marine life, excluding lawai’a and concentrating benefits in the hands of the industry.

5. Enforcement and Monitoring Remain Weak

Hawai’i’s aquarium trade has a documented history of underreporting. These rules rely on post-landing reporting without real-time verification, third party auditing, or mandatory community oversight. Without enforceable accountability and transparency measures, overharvesting is likely.

6. The Rules Conflict with the Holomua Marine Initiative and Community-Based Management

DAR’s Holomua initiative commits to rebuilding abundance through community-based, place-based management. Opening high-volume take of key reef species for global trade is inconsistent with restoration, climate resilience, and cultural based stewardship frameworks such as konohiki and ahupua’a management.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask BLNR to:

- Halt rulemaking in its current form,
- Require a FULL Ka Pa’akai Analysis - Compliant cultural and ecological impact review,
- Align future rules with the Hierarchy of Uses and public trust doctrine,
- Develop TACs using peer-reviewed, independent stock assessments - NOT industry proposals,
- Embed community and lineal descendants into decision-making
- Uphold constitutional responsibilities to Native Hawaiian rights and future generations.

Our reefs are more than commodities and ornaments, they are our ancestors, our teachers, and providers that sustain our identify and resilience as Kanaka ‘Ōiwi. I urge you to choose protection over profit and reaffirm BLNR’s kuleana to steward Hawai’i’s marine life according to the highest standards of pono.

Mahalo nui for your consideration!

Na’u



na Shauna Kēhaunani Springer

Kea’au, Moku o Keawe, Hawai’i

Founder & Executive Director, Ka Pa’akai Consulting

PhD Candidate, Te Whare Wānaga o Waikato (The University of Waikato)

From: [Leah Sproat](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariell@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:42:04 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Leah Sproat. I am a 5th Grade student at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Mahalo nui loa,

Leah Sproat
Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Robert Stahl](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ban AQ practice
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:18:10 AM

I Robert Stahl am in support of banning the AQ practice Ive lived in Hawaii area for 40 years and Ive seen the damage, and depletion of marine life.

Thanks Robert Stahl
808-895-6758

From: [Braxton Staudinger](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 1:43:42 PM

Aloha,

I am in 8th grade and a student at Kua O Ka Lā online Hīpu‘u program. I have attached written testing for Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules.

Mahalo,

Braxton

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Braxton Staudinger, and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai’i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit

of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

Thank you for your time,
BRAXTON STAUDINGER
[PAHOA TOWN, HAWAI'I]



KE ALA PONO

Kua O Ka Lā New Century Public Charter School
345 Makalika, Hilo HI 96720
Office: (808) 981-5866 Fax: (808) 981-5860

Email: info@kuaokala.org

This message is the property of Kua O Ka Lā Public Charter School and any attachments are confidential to the recipient of the email address to which it has been addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not copy, forward, disclose or use any part of this message or its attachments. If you received this transmission in error please notify the sender immediately by email or contact Kua O Ka Lā PCS at techsupport@kuaokala.org and then delete this message from your system.

Continuous Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) and its schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religion in its programs and activities. Please direct inquiries regarding HIDOE nondiscrimination policies as follows:

Beth Schimmelfennig Director

Rhonda Wong Compliance

Aaron Oandasan Title VI

Toby Yamashiro Title VII

Nicole Isa Iijima Title IX

Krysti Sukita ADA/504

Civil Rights Compliance Branch Hawaii State Department of Education

P.O. Box 2360 Honolulu, Hawaii 96804 (808) 586-322 or relay CRCB@k12.hi.us

From: [Amy Stephens](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please do not allow aquarium collection!
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 12:28:42 AM

Sample Testimony

Aloha Chair Chang and BNLB Board Members,

My name is Amy Stephens. Our livelihoods in Hawai'i depend on healthy reefs and near shore ecosystems which are vital to our beaches.

The proposal to allow aquarium collecting, the taking of live fish off of Hawaii's reefs for profit, is in direct conflict with the Department of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) mission:

The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

The death rate of collected fish nears 100% within a year of collecting. It harms our reefs and is inhumane.

The permit fee schedule is a joke.

The harm caused by removing so many fish far out weighs the financial agenda of a handful of selfish 'entrepreneurs'. The fish on our reefs belong to everyone. Don't allow this proposed wholesale reef rape to undo years of good faith conservation that has taken place over the last decade.

With warming seas and extreme water quality issues, the fish that remain are already challenged to survive. Plucking fish off of our reefs for export to hobbyist fish aquarium enthusiasts is a betrayal to all who love Hawaii and to our tourism economy.

What about our boating industry? Statewide, our snorkel tourism sector represent millions in state revenue, and hundreds of amazing jobs. I beseech you all to reconsider this ill-conceived proposal. Follow DAR's mission to preserve our precious marine resources.

Mahalo,
Amy Stephens

From: [bonnie.stevenson](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item f-2 fish collection
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:25:39 AM

I live in Kapaau Hi . I have swam at Mahukona
3-4 times a week fir 30 years.

The state of coral and fish in that time has seriously declined. Will fish collectors even be able
to make a living from such low fish stocks?

Why when a high amount of fish die in transport?

To allow this shows deciders have not even gone into water areas to view these conditions.

Tourists have already expressed their disappoint in reef conditions.

I go to Fiji and Palau they have very strict rules

On fishing as they understand .

This is all preventable by your vote.

Do we allow every last fish to go? No Island culture allows a free for all . The Hawaiian
calendar has purpose.

Bonnie Stevenson

Bx1193

808 896 5255

From: [Kainalu Steward](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:52:06 AM

Aloha,

My name is Kainalu Steward and I am originally from Lahaina, Maui but currently reside in Hilo, Hawai'i island. I am writing to address Agenda item F.2 and am in strong opposition to re-open Hawaii's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting. Please return the rules for redrafting to ensure they truly align with the community's urgent call to protect reef life, rather than inadvertently reinstating the very trade the original proposal sought to eliminate. To restore public trust, it is crucial that the permitting authority remains with BLNR, ensuring full transparency and accountability in the process.

mahalo nui for your time,
Kainalu

From: [Jeff Sutton](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2 : I OPPOSE REOPENING OF HAWAI`I REEFS FOR COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM COLLECTING
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 6:15:04 AM

My name is Andrew Sutton. I live on Hawaii Island in Volcano. **I am writing to say that I strongly oppose reopening of Hawai`i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.**

Please send the rules back for redrafting so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life—rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end—and restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability

The Division of Aquatic Resources drafted rule package would be environmentally disastrous, would threaten this very important ecosystem, and violates the expressed will of the people who live in Hawai`i and care for this beloved land and sea.

Respectfully-- Andrew J Sutton, POB 30 Volcano Hawaii 96785

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Board of Land and Natural Resources
October 24, 2025, 9:00 am
DLNR Boardroom, Kalanimoku Bldg. and via Zoom**

Dear Chair Chang and Members of the Board:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy Hawai'i and Palmyra (TNC) appreciates the chance to provide comments on agenda item F-2, the Division of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) relating to Aquarium Life Management into proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1: "Aquarium Fishery Management," and on proposed amendments to HAR Chapters 13-75: "Rules Regulating the Possession and Use of Certain Fishing Gear" and 13-60.4: "West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area, Hawai'i" for clarity and consistency with the proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1.

TNC works closely with dozens of communities and individuals leading community-based makai management efforts across five Hawaiian Islands. We carry kuleana to the places where we work and to the people and communities we work alongside, including those directly impacted by, and continuing to raise concerns about, the effects of the aquarium trade on their livelihoods, culture, and ways of life.

As a science-based organization dedicated to conserving the biodiversity that underpins all life on Earth, we are deeply aware that biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate. To reverse this trend, we must find better, more inclusive ways to manage humanity's footprint on land, freshwater, and sea. Addressing the twin crises of rapid climate change and biodiversity loss requires strong partnerships among communities, governments, and businesses—and above all, a foundation of Respect for Peoples, Communities, and Cultures.

As DAR's William Walsh (2014) noted, the rise of the aquarium trade in the 1970s sparked intense conflict among aquarium collectors, fishers, and community members. This led to the creation of Act 306 and the designation of Fish Replenishment Areas (FRAs) where aquarium collection was prohibited. Yet despite these measures, conflicts over the aquarium fish harvest continue today, appearing regularly before the Hawai'i State Legislature, in the courts, and here before the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

While DAR's proposed rules—and the request to advance them to public hearing—represent a step toward resolving this longstanding conflict, we believe this step comes prematurely. The concerns of West Hawai'i residents and Native Hawaiians have not yet been meaningfully considered.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Duke E. Ah Moo Kris Billeter Dr. C. Tana Burkert Anne S. Carter (Chair) Ka'iulani de Silva Daniel J. Dunn Dave Eadie
Jan Elliott Matt Emerson Hon. Judith Epstein Dr. Alan M. Friedlander Benjy Garfinkle Sean A. Hehir Puni Jackson
Brett MacNaughton Janet Montag Alicia Moy John R. Sabas Bradley E. Smith Julie Smolinski Vern Yamanaka

Ihupani Advisory Council: Christopher J. Benjamin Kenton T. Eldridge Eiichiro Kuwana Duncan MacNaughton
Jean E. Rolles Crystal K. Rose Nathan E. Smith

Founders: Samuel A. Cooke Herbert C. Cornuelle

To create rules that truly balance science, cultural values, and community needs, we respectfully recommend the Board consider the following process improvements:

1. Conduct community scoping meetings before public hearings. The current draft rules should undergo additional public scoping, through multiple meetings in West Hawai‘i and statewide, prior to being advanced for public hearing. These meetings should be led by a neutral, professional facilitator to ensure that cultural and community concerns are fully and fairly addressed. DAR regularly demonstrates excellence in community engagement and has wisely encouraged communities bringing forth fisheries proposals to do thorough public scoping, outreach and engagement to resolve controversial issues prior to requesting public hearing. In our experience working alongside DAR, we have seen how effective scoping can help bring people together, surface diverse perspectives, and lay the foundation for durable management solutions.
2. Complete a Ka Pa‘akai analysis prior to public hearing approval. As you know, the Ka Pa‘akai analysis is a legal framework that government agencies must follow when considering proposals that may impact the exercise of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights. Conducting a Ka Pa‘akai analysis prior to proposing a rule package is essential to make specific findings as to:
 - a. The identity and scope of valued cultural, historical, or natural resources in the area, including the extent to which traditional customary Native Hawaiian rights are exercised in the area.
 - b. The extent to which those resources, including traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights, will be affected or impaired by the proposed action; and
 - c. The feasible action, if any, to be taken by the State to reasonably protect such practices if they are found to exist.

When done properly, the analysis helps the State evaluate whether it has fulfilled its constitutional obligation to preserve and protect traditional and customary practices.

3. Ensure consistency with prior BLNR directives. The proposed rules should align with two standing Board directives:
 - a. The 1998 hierarchy of use, which prioritizes (a) natural and cultural resource protection, (b) general public use, and then (c) commercial activities only if it does not conflict with either resource protection or public use.
 - b. The Board’s previous guidance to regulate the aquarium industry at “something short of zero.” (December 2023)

Opposition to aquarium harvest and trade in West Hawai‘i is longstanding—spanning over 50 years. This opposition is not simply about resource use; it is about deeply held values. According to West Hawai‘i community partners that we deeply engage with, harvesting reef fish for commercial aquarium sale is not viewed as a culturally acceptable use of Hawai‘i’s fishery resources.

As a state, we rely heavily on the partnership and stewardship of communities that mālama ‘āina. These are the people with intimate, place-based knowledge of our nearshore ecosystems. That knowledge must inform and guide the management of our shared resources.

In that spirit, we urge the Board to take into account the need for meaningful community scoping, completion of a Ka Pa‘akai analysis, and alignment with the Board’s previous directives before moving a proposed rules package to public hearing. Addressing these concerns will help ensure that the final rules reflect the values of communities, the integrity of Hawai‘i’s ecosystems, and the intent of the Department of Land and Natural Resources’ public trust mission.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued commitment to thoughtful, community-based resource management.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kalani Quiocho". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "Q".

Kalani Quiocho

Hawai‘i Island Marine Program Director
The Nature Conservancy Hawai‘i and Palmyra

From: [Todd and Caelly Shiraki](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Agenda Item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:28:29 AM

I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back!

Thank you

Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and reopening the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.

Juana Lizano

Board of Land and Natural Resources:

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and reopening West Hawaii aquarium fishing.

Thank you,
B. Cowin

Chair Chang and Board Members,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management as well as the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Mark Fine

Dear Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management as well as the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Thank you very much,
Ross Faris

Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Mahalo,
Maryl Barcellano

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium fish management and reopening the aquarium fishery.

Mahalo,
Paul Fave

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Thank you,
Rebekah Calandrino

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Thank you,
Ashley Mathers

Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Thank you,
Jenn Villegas

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to
aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium
fishing permits.

Ricardo Pabre

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

**Thank you,
Rob Calandrino**

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources-

Aloha,

I support passing the new aquarium fish management rules package and issuing aquarium fishing permits.

Andy Streible

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management as well as the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Thank you,
Klarisse Swain

Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Austin Mcelveen

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

Mahalo,
Clayton Skoyles

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support passing the new rules package relating to aquarium life management and the issuance of aquarium fishing permits.

J. Dumlao

From: [Richard Townsend](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in `Support of Item F2: Rules relating to Management of Aquarium Life BLNR Meeting 10-24-25, 9 am
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:37:47 AM

Request for Approval to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Consolidation of Hawaii Administrative Rules (“HAR”) relating to Aquarium Life Management into Proposed HAR Chapter 13-77.1: and the return of aquarium fishing permits.

Aloha Distinguished BLNR Members,

My Name Is Richard Townsend, and I am testifying in support of Item F.2. Please pass rules to return permits to a fishery that was and will be sustainable. Below are facts supporting that statement.

Yellow Tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) Ecology

The Yellow Tang is one of the most popular aquarium species. Yellow Tang are found from shallow surge zones to a depth of 130 feet. The Yellow Tang is the only solid yellow fish common throughout Hawai’i. They occur in the Pacific Ocean: Ryukyu, Mariana, Marshall, Marcus, Wake, and the Hawaiian Islands. (Froese and Pauly 2020).

Due to the West Hawaii closure in 2017 as a result of the EIS requirement ruling, yellow tang catches for Oahu increased, but fish populations also increased (2017-2019, below). It is important to note that the Oahu Aquarium fishery operated between 2010, the first year of the fish surveys, and 2020 without an Aquarium Fish Permit but under CML license permits with two-inch mesh nets.

The fish population data shows an increase in fish populations during the fisheries' activities from 2010 to 2020. Notably, the greatest increase in the yellow tang population occurred during the highest catch years of the Oahu fishery.

DAR West Hawaii Reports Data from West Hawaii also shows no significant declines in fish counts associated with fisheries catches over decades of DAR fish surveys in West Hawaii, Big Island, and NOAA PIFSC fish counts for Oahu, indicating stable populations during the fisheries' open years. This stability also continues even in higher catch years.

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

despite increased take being done at a sustainable level.

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

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom

0-98 ft only. Currently done only every three years. Data is only available for the years of surveys listed above

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

Every 5 years, Fish and Wildlife mandates state agencies review species for vulnerability. Statewide Action Plans (SWAP) reviews gather scientists to combine research, create a species list, and suggest further actions based on this review. Currently, SWAP plan is under review for the 2025 SWAP with expected completion date March 2026. Only one species is listed from the preferred take currently in SWAP. Yellow Tangs are not Listed.

Factors included in reviews are endemism, ICUN, CITES, past SWAP, Deep Refuge, Fecundity, Biodiversity, Current Laws, and Catchability. Endemism is not always a factor, though, as nonnative-current-visiting species like Flame Angels (a Pacific ocean-wide species), and Morwong *Goniistius vittatus*, (New Caledonia, Lord Howe Island, Kermadec Island), are also included because of their low Hawaii nonnative populations. (<http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw/swap/>).

Least Concern (IUCN 3.1)[1]

A least-concern species is a species that has been evaluated and categorized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as not being a focus of wildlife conservation because the specific species is still plentiful in the wild. They do not qualify as threatened, near threatened, or (before 2001) conservation dependent.

Yellow tangs are an ICUN-listed fish of “least concern.” They are not listed in CITES as an endangered red listed species. They are not considered threatened or in further need of review as per the SWAP, State of Hawaii Wide Action Plan. Fish counts from 1999 to 2017 show an increase in fish counts; according to the 2020 West Hawaii report to the Legislature, Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30’-60’ depth range over the entire West Hawai’i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150%

increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish within this depth range alone.

Yellow tangs West Hawaii fish counts, fishery population recovery and Fish Base reports support high Resilience for yellow tangs. (Ref. 120179): High, minimum population doubling time less than 15 months ($K=0.25$; $Fec > 10,000$).

In 2015, laws enacted utilizing fisher's DAR scientist reviews placed further restrictions on Yellow Tangs with a lengthy rules package. These were done to address any future environmental effects and increased fishing pressure even though the Oahu fishery was considered stable at the time. In 2015, an administrative rules page, Part IV, Chapter 77, was passed into law. Many of the SWAP concerns were addressed during the creation of the Oahu Aquarium Fish Rules Package. Yellow tangs now have breeding slot size limits, gear restrictions, and daily size bag limits.

Oahu rules decreased net lengths to 30 feet in length and 6 feet in height. That reduces potential catch greatly. In addition, size limits for catch were imposed. No yellow tang less than 1.5 inches in length can be taken, and no yellow tang more than 5 inches in length can be taken. The total daily catch was also limited to 100 yellow tangs per day by law, which are still in effect.

Yellow Tang are broadcast spawners. Many broadcast spawners migrate to the edge of the reef drop off to spawn at dusk or dawn (Thresher 1984). Males and females simultaneously release eggs and sperm into the water column where the eggs are fertilized before floating to the surface until they hatch 20-30 hours later (Thresher 1984). Over time, the larvae develop the ability to adjust their depth and eventually become strong swimmers (reviewed in Christie et al. 2010).

Successful larvae dispersal data shows the main deeper depth habitat of larvae to be 100m, below PIFSC-ESD (2020) data depth count range of 30 m, and the larvae can travel from one end of the Main Hawaiian Islands to the other in 45 days. (Wren, Johanna LK. Reef fish connectivity in the Hawaiian archipelago: A biophysical modeling approach. University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2016.)

Christie et al. (2010) conducted a novel parentage analysis that matched post- settlement juveniles with their parents. This study demonstrated that larval yellow tangs disperse from 15 to 184 km from the place they were spawned (Christie et al. 2010). Over longer (evolutionary) time scales, yellow tang populations show signs of genetic connectivity across thousands of kilometers of ocean (Eble et al. 2009).

Yellow tangs have a lower reproductive fecundity at 1.14 million larvae per pair per year, estimated to be lower than other tangs. Still, that is an impressive number despite a less than one percent larvae survival rate to the adult breeding stage. (E.S.Munday, BN Tissot)

Yellow tangs produce 44 to 24,00 eggs per spawn two days in a row, mainly around the full moon. An estimate of annual fecundity (mean \pm s.e. $1,055,628 \pm 120,596$ eggs) was also generated using a simple model of the lunar variability in egg production. Females greater than 20mm in length are estimated to produce one million 55 thousand eggs per year, similar

to the reported 1.14 million reported in a different study. Yellow tangs as small as 2.6 inches 65mm have reproductive organs and oocytes in their ovaries.

Schemmel, Eva. "Size at maturity for yellow tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) from the Oahu, HI, aquarium fishery." *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 104.9 (2021): 1139-1147.

So with 12 full moons two days of spawning per full moon = 24 spawn days x 24,000 = 576,000 and 44,000 x 24 = 1,066,000 larvae per pair per year.

So per pair per year, depending on reproductive size, yellow tangs produce 576,000 to 1 million 66 thousand eggs per spawn per female per year. Females are the rate-limiting egg layers, as males can potentially produce much more sperm to fertilize many females.

Multiply the total range by times the number of estimated yellow tangs, 728,777 each on Oahu for the 0-98 foot survey range alone. To get potential renewal populations, we can now estimate renewal based on a low average of 1 % survival to the adult breeding stage.

So on Oahu alone, based on inaccurate projections for reference only; 414 billion 550 million new yellow tang fry <98ft times 1% survival adult stage per year, divided by two for one male and one female pair results in an estimated 4 billion 145 million potential new adult stage yellow tangs on Oahu reefs every year. The estimate does not include a reduced amount for size fecundity, male-to-female ratio, or increased populations deeper than 98 feet.

With a conservative maximum sustainable yield of 25%, catch equals 1 billion 36 million sustainable catches, with a current 2024 value of 169.00 per tank raised yellow tang.

That would mean a potential income of \$175 billion in highly renewable, sustainably caught fish for yellow tangs on Oahu alone.

Below is the raw data for the above charts.

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

Yellow Tangs *Zebrasoma flavescens* 2010-2019 Oahu Population Hard Bottom

0-98 ft only.

YEAR	Common	SCIENTIFIC	Estimated	Standard	LOWER_95CI
UPPER_95CI	cv	Name	Population	error	
2010	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	142507	87648.3432	0
314297.7527	0.61504533				
2012	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	42100	21170.1405	606.52462
83593.47538	0.502856659				
2013	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	158506	62575.02003	35858.9607
281153.0393	0.394779244				
2015	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	202817	96432.57772	13809.1477
391824.8523	0.475466056				
2016	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	245045	128527.4331	0
496958.7689	0.524506069				
2019	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	728777	443025.2708	0
1597106.531	0.607902644				

DAR Fish Catch Stats Yellow Tangs Zebrasoma flavescens 2009-2020

Year	Aquarium	Scientific	Sum of	Sum of Total
Fished	Name	Name	Number Caught	Value \$ Fisher
2009	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	278,624	1,190,054.78
2010	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	364,487	1,459,174.72
2011	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	304,322	1,191,356.44
2012	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	332,295	1,350,707.94
2013	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	311,524	1,268,577.87
2014	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	338,360	1,423,912.30
2015	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	337,017	1,376,098.96
2016	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	332,963	1,229,805.91
2017	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	269,553	990,102.77
2018	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	79,775	368,202.00
2019	Yellow Tang	Zebrasoma flavescens	124,670	699,154.00

2020 Yellow Tang Zebrasoma flavescens 95,157 592,358.50

Eble, J. A., Toonen, R. J., Sorenson, L., Basch, L. V., Papastamatiou, Y. P., & Bowen, B. W. (2011). Escaping paradise: larval export from Hawaii in an Indo-Pacific reef fish, the yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens*. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 428, 245-258.

References

Williams, I. D., et al. "Impacts of a Hawaiian marine protected area network on the abundance and fishery sustainability of the yellow tang, *Zebrasoma flavescens*." *Biological Conservation* 142.5 (2009): 1066-1073.

Claisse, Jeremy T., et al. "Habitat-and sex-specific life history patterns of yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens* in Hawaii, USA." *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 389 (2009): 245-255.

Claisse, Jeremy T., et al. "Habitat-and sex-specific life history patterns of yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens* in Hawaii, USA." *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 389 (2009): 245-255.

Bushnell, M. E., J. T. Claisse, and C. W. Laidley. "Lunar and seasonal patterns in fecundity of an indeterminate, multiple-spawning surgeonfish, the yellow tang *Zebrasoma flavescens*." *Journal of Fish Biology* 76.6 (2010): 1343-1361.

Yellow tangs reach sexual maturity at 4–6 years old and can live for at least 41 years (J.T. Claisse, unpublished data), individuals which reach adulthood have the potential to be reproductively active for decades.

—————End of Testimony—————

Mahalo,

Richard Townsend

Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: [Ann Tuomela](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DON'T DO IT
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:09:12 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and BNLB Board Members,

My name is Ann Tuomela,

DON'T DO IT!!!

Why do you bureaucrats continually sell Hawaii and our essential resources out? They belong to all the citizens of Hawaii.

My sustainable good health depends on robust, healthy reefs and ocean. The proposal to allow aquarium collecting, the taking of live fish off of Hawaii's reefs for profit, is in direct conflict with the Department of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) mission:

The mission of the Division of Aquatic Resources is to work with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

The permit fee schedule is a joke.

The harm caused by removing so many fish far outweighs the financial agenda of a handful of selfish 'entrepreneurs'. The fish on our reefs belong to everyone. Don't allow this proposed wholesale reef rape to undo years of good faith conservation that has taken place over the last decade.

With warming seas and extreme water quality issues, the fish that remain are already challenged to survive. Plucking fish off of our reefs for export to hobbyist fish aquarium enthusiasts is a betrayal to all who love Hawaii and to our tourism economy. Geopolitics has harmed our small businesses enough, let's not exacerbate our economic strife by decimating our reefs that will be devoid of live fish.

What about our boating industry? Statewide, our snorkel tourism sector represents millions in state revenue, and hundreds of amazing jobs. I beseech you all to reconsider this ill-conceived proposal. Follow DAR's mission to preserve our precious marine resources.

Mahalo,

Ann Tuomela
Resident of Kihei, Maui for 40 YEARS

From: [Jared2](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Agenda item F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 9:24:18 AM

I am in support of agenda item F2. This is a model fishery. Give the fishermen their permits back!

Thank you
Jared Ushiroda

From: [Jennifer Valentine](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24 Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 11:53:51 AM

Hawai'i is in my heart, no reef wildlife trafficking for the aquarium trade, I want Hawai'i's reefs intact, I want coral cover and biodiversity, not the shambles rendered on aquarium decimation!

From: [Paige Ventura](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: ariel@kalo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:42:20 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Paige Ventura. I am a 5th Grade student at Kanu o ka aina charter school and i am testifying and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

Today, I respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter’s Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai’i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance.
- 6) Align with DLNR’s Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 7) Align with Hawai‘i’s Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai‘i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system. Please uphold your duty to protect them.

mahalo to you

Paige Ventura
KANU O KA AINA CHARTER SCHOOL
Waimea, Hawaii

From: [Waimānalo Neighborhood Board](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 8:03:33 AM

Aloha kākou

The Waimānalo Neighborhood Board #32 stands opposed to the reopening of this destructive behaviors and notes its support for stronger rules reflecting the wishes of communities and its people, that have poured countless hours into ensuring this process sees the added protections and preservations be maintained to the highest levels.

A few years ago this topic was upon our doorsteps and a neighboring community put forth a resolution to address this issue. After considerable review and community discussion, the Waimānalo Neighborhood Board #32 adopted the attached resolution, to stand in solidarity and to take action against the threat of commercial take for aquarium fish. Our stance has not change, despite the time change. Same issue, different time. We unite again to stand against the commercial take of our i‘a for the aquarium trade.



[Reso AQ Ban #32 2021-05.pdf](#)

‘O wau nō me ka ha‘aha‘a a me ka mahalo,

Kimeona Kane (he/him)

Chair- Waimānalo Neighborhood Board

808 398 8989

kimeonakane@gmail.com

Confidentiality Notice: This message is for the designated recipient only and may contain privileged, proprietary, or otherwise private information. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original. Any other use of this message by you is prohibited.

From: [Karie Smart](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for agenda item F-2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:25:06 PM

Aloha Chair Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I urge you to **reject** the staff recommendation for rulemaking that flies in the face of your previous direction to Division of Aquatic Resources staff, to come up with rules that would prohibit commercial aquarium collection to the extent possible. These rules would instead only further facilitate the re-establishment of the aquarium collection industry in West Hawai'i and throughout our islands.

Reef fish - including and particularly the herbivorous species targeted by aquarium collectors - are essential components of a healthy nearshore ecosystem, including the coral reefs that protect our shorelines from degradation by rising seas and coastal erosion. They are also critical components of traditional and customary subsistence fishing practices, have cultural and spiritual significance, and are a precious resource for residents and visitors alike.

Commercial aquarium collection, driven by the immense profit to be made by selling certain reef fish for purely ornamental purposes - such as kole and lau'ipalā - may have a disproportionate impact on reef biodiversity and ecological functions; compromise our cultural, subsistence, and recreational practices; and promote the belief that our public trust resources should be prioritized for corporate exploitation.

I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka 'Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Karie Wakat
Hawaii Resident

From: [Diane Ware](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item F.2 - RE: DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules, in Opposition
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:37:54 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Diane Ware from Moku o Ka'u and I am testifying in strong opposition to the proposed aquarium fishing rules and ask you to NOT approve public hearings at this time.

"This 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, who are being denied access to the millions of fish taken from their waters," Charlie Young has correctly pointed out.

Today, I, Diane Ware, respectfully ask you to:

- 1) Keep the permitting authority with the BLNR to ensure full transparency and accountability.
- 2) Send these rules back for redrafting in true collaboration with the 2023 Petitioners Hui and DOCARE. The state of Hawai'i has an obligation and fiduciary responsibility to protect the resources that Native Hawaiian customary and traditional practices depend upon. And DLNR's mission is to preserve and protect Hawai'i's cultural and natural resources.
- 3) Remove Kole (*Ctenochaetus strigosus*) and Umaumalei (*Naso lituratus*) from the whitelist entirely—they are culturally respected food fish for sustenance and vital herbivores that clean our reefs. They are being double-counted as both food and ornamental takes.
- 4) Remove Yellow Tang and Potter's Angelfish from the whitelist, as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) in Oahu—wild harvest is unnecessary.
- 5) Align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice!
- 6) Align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for privatized commercial Export.

The proposed rule no longer reflects community conservation intent. Instead, it creates a framework for large-scale commercial exploitation.

According to the Kalanihale Miloli'i website link to U'ilani Naipo's article in Ka Wai Ola: "Displaced from their function and vital role in Hawai'i's marine ecosystem, our

reef fish have been – and could once more be – extracted from our reefs and sent off to become personal museum pieces all over the world. A *Honolulu Civil Beat* article (June 1, 2020) notes that, “Between 1976 and 2018, more than 8.6 million fish were taken from West Hawai‘i waters for use in aquariums around the world.”

Hawai‘is cultural and natural marine resources were repurposed and retitled “Hawaiian Tropical Fish” for the international pet trade industry. West Hawai‘i has been directly and heavily impacted by the taking of millions of fish and the abrupt disturbance to the social norms of places like the traditional fishing villages of South Kona.

“Once the Department of Land and Natural Resources got involved [in this issue], the negotiated solution was to create the ‘West Hawai‘i Regional Fishery Management Area’ with ‘Fish Replenishment Areas,’ giving a carveout (at the time) of more than 50% of West Hawai‘i nearshore reefs for aquarium trade collectors,” said Charles Young, a cultural practitioner and hoā‘āina (tenant/steward) from Keālia.

Today, Hawaiian kole (tang) are sold for \$180 to saltwater aquarium enthusiasts, thus the pet trade industry competes with subsistence and commercial fishers who provide sustenance for themselves and others.

The same competing harvest pressures – aquarium collectors take the young fish, while fishers harvest mature adults for sustenance – give species little chance to reproduce and replenish their stock. This contributed to the severe depletion of pāku‘iku‘i (Achilles tang) in West Hawai‘i waters, resulting in the current two-year moratorium on pāku‘iku‘i harvest.

Meanwhile, highly coveted lau‘īpala (yellow tang) sell for as much as \$250. The proposed total allowable catch of lau‘īpala alone (200,000 fish), has a market value of \$33-\$50 million.”

It is fiscally irresponsible, generating an estimated \$700 a year in permit revenue while costing \$300,000–\$500,000 to manage this industry. It contradicts science, which shows reef fish abundance must increase—not decline—for reefs to survive climate change.

Our reefs are our life support system for future generations. Please uphold your duty to protect them. I accordingly applaud the BLNR for previously taking a stand with Kānaka ‘Ōiwi and other community groups calling for a ban on commercial aquarium collection, and urge you to continue doing so. Please do NOT let the Division of Aquatic Resources simply ignore your decisions in favor of industry advocates, and please reject the rules they have put in front of you today.

Thank you for your consideration in this Public Trust Decision.

Diane Ware
808-967-8642
(Keauhou Ka‘u)
99-7815 Kapoha
Volcano HI 96785

From: [Sue Warhaftig](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect our Reefs!
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 2:27:05 PM

Hawai'i is in my heart no reef wildlife trafficking for the aquarium trade I want Hawai'i's reefs intact I want coral cover and biodiversity No aquarium decimation!"

Thank you as a aquarium hobbist, and lover of the island of Kauai, Maui and, Hawaii. Please protect the coral reef!

Sue Warhaftig

From: [Julie Warner](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DAR bypass
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 4:03:04 AM

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Julia Warner. My family has owned a home on Puako Bay, Big Island since 1978.

We have an intimate view of the tropical fish harvesting happening 30' feet from our door. There was a marked decrease in fish population during the first ten years we were in the house. When rules were enacted to control harvesting we saw fish populations increase. And now we are seeing the effects of global water decreasing the fish population again. We must protect the fish populations and for the health of the reef ecosystem.

For the sake of our Hawaiian communities, please do not let the DAR bypass the power of the BLNR to allow aquarium permits.

Sincerely,
Julia Warner
69-1598 Puako Beach Drive
Kamuela, HI 96743

From: [Richard Warner](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DAR Proposal
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:57:17 AM

My name is Richard Warner, our family owns a home on Puako Bay on the Big Island since 1978. This proposal to take away the authority to regulate the collection of reef fish is illegal, outrageous and WRONG! We have watched the health of the fish populations in Puako Bay for almost 50 years. When the gill netting ban was put in place the difference was extraordinary.. the Bay changed from a virtual aquatic desert to a bay filled with a variety of species too numerous to count. Allowing the unregulated take of reef fish will be an ecological disaster!!! Please do not let this happen, thank you, Richard Warner 69-1598 Puako Beach Drive, Kamuela, Hawaii 96743.


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based fisheries, coral export
also to preserve genetic samples. Reopen!

 John P. Runtich

I support science based and well managed fisheries. Through proper monitoring and collaboration, an environmentally sound balance can be achieved. Both nature and economy can work together to support a long term and sustainable practice. ~~With~~ Hawaii has an opportunity to be a global leader in ~~an ecological~~ science based fishery practice. Through collaboration, black market practice can be eliminated and ^{focus on} supporting a fishery management practice that benefits the environment and the economy.

Sincerely,


Justyne Beavers

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT REOPENING THE HAWAII AQUARIUM FISHER

BEN ROS




BENJAMINROS@GMAIL.COM

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the opening of the Hawaii Aquaculture
Fishery

MARK ODORZGA


HOUSEOFFRODO@EMAIL.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Michael Fuentes - I support Ag

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the fishery

Ruth Hernandez

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Hernandez', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the West Hawaii Aquarium
Fishery!

Allyson

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT THE WEST HAWAII AQUARIUM FISHERY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. F. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the West Hawaii Aquarium fishery

Dee Luth

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery.

Amanda Aguilar.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support West Hawaii
aquarium history

Rob Hansson

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

REMAIN RE-OPEN THE FISHERY!

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopening the Hawaii fisheries
is extremely important! Listen
to the science. The Hawaii
fisheries are and have been
very sustainable.

Sincerely,

Suka Smith

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Dear Mean People,

Please bring back my favorite fish the yellow Tang. I vow to clean up the beach quarterly if you allow permitting, we hope to see these fish back this year. Thank you for your works in assistance.

Patrick Lal

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

SCIENCE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF
RE OPEN THE FISHERY!



Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Support the reopening of fisheries.



Reopen the fisheries in
Hawaii!

Jake Sandefur

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Hello,

I absolutely support the West
Hawaii aquaculture fisheries, because they
employ a proven, science-based solution
for saving the fish + reef.

Richard Sands

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fisheries

Aerinf Mark

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that are difficult to decipher as specific characters.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based
management

JON D.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT THE AQUARIUM FISHERY.

 Francisco Moreno

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

~~Shah~~ Please reopen the hawaiian fishery
-Shahaly.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen the fishery.



Edward Bilezikchian


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please open the fishery trade - Isaac Barriga
Brings jobs back to those who ~~Amac Barriga~~
lost them and help with more
research.

Isaac Barriga

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I will love to see the Hawaii Fishery Open.
Yellow Tangs should be available to anyone who
cares about the Fishery. It will help people from
Hawaii. Please Re-Open Fishery, Thank You.

Nick Ortega


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

PLEASE REOPEN THE FISHERY
WE SUPPORT THE SCIENCE BASED
MANAGEMENT FOR OUR HOBBY.

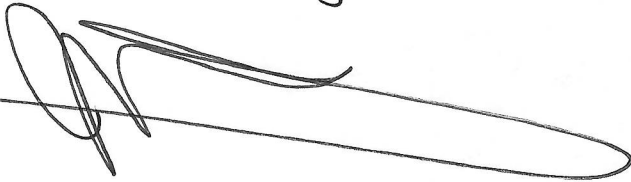


SIMON ASSECIN.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,


I whole heartedly believe in the environmental benefits of the management of fish. I have researched and read papers and believe the land permits should be granted in order to reestablish the population in their care.

John Worthington

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Worthington', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large loop at the end.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen the fishery/aquarium in Hawaii. It's sustainable. It's ethical. It's needed by hardworking families.


Daniel Bannister

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support sustainable fishery's Please
open it up!!

Armando G.

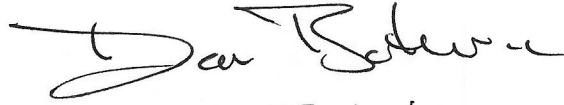
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support sustainable fishery management
open the fishery Please Please Please

x *Archie B*

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the well regulated Fishing Industry
in Hawaii, Its a sustainable Fishery and it
should be reopened.



David Dotwin

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Hawaiian Aquaculture Fishery.

G. Kennedy

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Hawaiian Fishery and would like
the ban to be lifted so we can enjoy the hobby I love.
The ban has caused prices to sky rocket.

Chat W

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support science-based fisheries. Please reopen aquaculture fisheries.

X Jonathan Lee

Jonathan Lee

8/5/23

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support sustainable reefing and fish keeping.
I believe in the work that the West Hawaii
Aquarium Fishery is doing.



Ben Burgett

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT SCIENCE BASED RESEARCH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

PLEASE OPEN UP THE AQUARIUM FISHERY IN WEST HAWAII

David Salinas
DAVID SALINAS

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support WH aquarium fishery 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES. PLEASE
REOPEN AQUARIUM FISHERIES.

CHARLES SCHUBERT



Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

The aquarium Fishery would be AMAZING to have
Reopen Please.



Immanuel vita

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Science Based Fishery management.

Please reopen aquarium Fishery.

L-L

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support the Aquarium/coral Industry

Jungle Club

Rylee Ann 8/5/23

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Science based fishery management
Please open the aquarium fishery. - Jimmy Clark

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Re open the FISHERY

OMAR MEDINA

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

AS A MARINE ENTHUSIAST AND PADI
CERTIFIED DIVER I WOULD LOVE
TO HAVE THESE FISH SCIENTIFICALLY
SUSTAINABLE WAY.

-WILL SHALER

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reel Poteeo

Reopen fishery

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen the sustainable
Hawaii fisheries! These fisheries
have been very well controlled and
monitored, they should of never
been shut down.

-Melissa Mendez

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishery!  Andrew Anaya

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the Aquarium Fishery now!

Michael Littleton

It's A Must.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Re-opening the hawaii fishery can be done
sustainably and provide good jobs and opportunity
to hawaii and the rest of the USA. David Distelano

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen for science & research!

Mary Singelman
Grand Terrace, CA

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Manage the fishery by science
Montano Juan

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please Reopen West Hawaii Aquarium Fisheries - Philip Pleter

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support scientific review of fish conservation
in Hawaii. Charles W. Mitsis

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fisheries in Hawaii.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Burns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

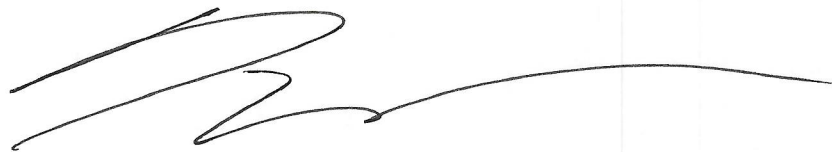
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

want the rest back given.

Robert Modesta

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Hawaiian Openmental Fisheries are sustainable
and needed to maintain the health and balance
of the NCEP system. Brings back the science



Tracy Scot Cramer, Co
Zone SF64@gmail.com

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the sustainable Hawaiian Fisheries, I would like to see
kellow land available in a sustainable way.

Thank you,

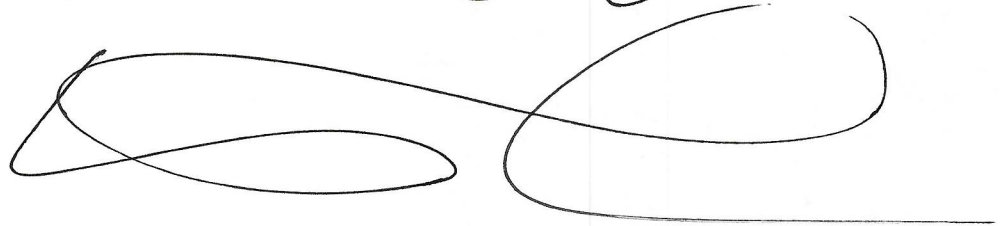
Kamran Adiparvar

(949) 374-4699

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the sustainable West
Hawaii fisheries!!!!

- Jim Sandefur

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal tail stroke.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE MORE
FISHING OUR HOBBY AS IT IS VERY
SUSTAINABLE AS I HAVE KEPT MY YELLOW
TANOS FOR 12 YEARS.

RICHARD MCKEON



Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I believe in the science and environmental reports! Please reopen the fisheries in West Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Hollie Sandefur

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hollie Sandefur', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I, Nick Cattivre, believe in science! Please re-open
the sustainable fisheries in Hawaii. - Nicatt.

-Nicholas Cattivre

8/6/23

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I highly believe in the science and research that is completed by the sustainable fisheries in Hawaii. Please re-open these establishments.

- April Triplett



Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support Science based Research

of The sustainable fishery in Hawaii

- Samuel Bales

Samuel Bales

Please listen to the science and open back the Hawaii Hatchery.

- Nathan Chan

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

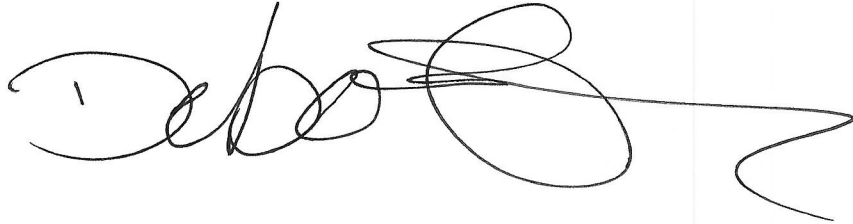
Please bring sustainable Hawaiian fisheries back!

Rufe Li

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the sustainable
fisheries in Hawaii!
Reopen!!

From
Debbie DeLillo

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Debbie DeLillo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fishery, listen to the scientist

Aud! Sarkissian

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aud Sarkissian', written in a cursive style.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen this fishery & listen to the science!

Paul

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Manage the fisheries with science

Schus Sun

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen fishery base on science

 Tony Lee

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

~~Ricardo Mendez~~ I support the science and fishery

Brianna Martinez I support the science and
fishery

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

It would be nice to have these fish in the hobby
to raise awareness of the issues that face nature.
Keeping people interested in the local habitats and animals all over
the country is key. Kurt Moses ~~trains~~

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I love affordable fish - Logan E.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Logan E.", written in a cursive style. The signature is located to the right of the text "I love affordable fish - Logan E." and extends upwards and to the right.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I only want a yellow
+ my own

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

PLEASE REOPEN THE FISHERY

KIRBI NIPUES

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the opening of the fishing. It's
the best way to support sustainable collection of
tropical fishes.

Yours truly
John Chan

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the fisheries and this endeavor to provide sustainable fish for the aquaculture hobby.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. J. King". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Fishery.

Michelle 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

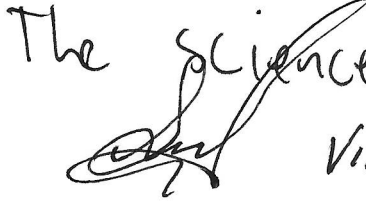
I SUPPORT THE WEST HAWAII
AQUARIUM FISHERY. (HOPE YOU DO TOO)

THANKS
ACEP


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I, Support the Science re-open the AQ
fishery. — Victoria Becerra

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen the AQ fishery!!!
The science proves this is good!!
 Victor M. Becerra.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the AQ fishery & support the
SCIENCE

Jovana Jozic

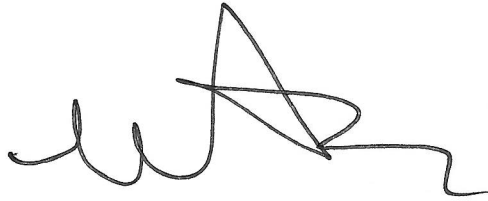
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science of the fishery

 Carlos Selva

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Follow the Science, open up the
ornamental Aquarium harvest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Noll". The signature is stylized with a large, prominent 'M' and 'N'.

Mike Noll

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please allow me to support the Sustainable
Wild capture of the species.



Bryan Schramm

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support
science
-Based
Fishing

Mike
Nelson

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I believe in the sustainability of fishery collecting in Hawaii. I was there last week and saw for myself, the reefs looked the same as when I was there last. No one cares more about our reefs than aquarium hobbyists. This has proven to be sustainable, and is an important part of the local economy.

- Shane Van Winkle

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Griffin Bentley". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Griffin Bentley

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Fishery - please reopen it.

Dona ~

Robert Lewis --

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

AA I support the science behind the Fishery. - Michael Munn - 3

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science. Please open

the AQ Ashery




Joshua Karch

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I believe that conservation efforts should be in the hands of the scientists and professionals that dedicate their lives to them. Science driven studies are the only way to assess the best path forward for the health and wellbeing of our reefs and fish. - Nick Capertina
SpectraPave, Inc.

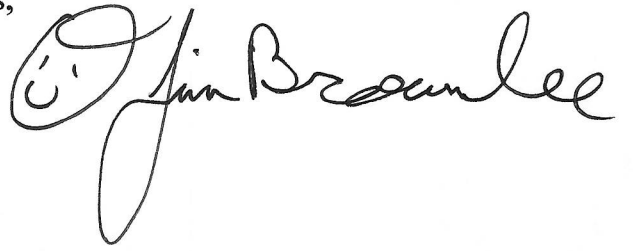
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support evidence opening of the Hawaiian
Fishing on the Big Islands of Hawaii.


Troy Nagao

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support these science!!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Braumlee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science and fishery

- Brenda Payne

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science which shows
the fish are still around and have not
reduced in numbers.

Kurt Hammel
khammel@bomeconstruction.co

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT THE SCIENCE PLEASE OPEN A Q FISHERY



MICHAEL TAO

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen the Hawaiian fishery.

Wanda King *Wanda King*

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support re-opening WHAF Steven Haysack

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Eric Riech

I support REOPENING the WEST Hawaii
aquarium fishery.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Fishery
Zone ALVES

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Listen to the fishery !!!

~~It~~ + angsa d'cantan

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support the Hawaiian
fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. M. ...", written in a cursive style.


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support this fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes that are difficult to decipher as a specific name.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

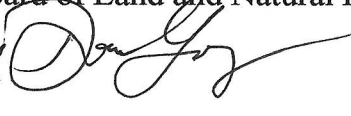
I support the Hawaiian fishery.
Drew L Balsa
I support the Hawaii fishery
Glenn J. Ferguson

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
REOPEN FISHERY ASAP! DARYL 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

hasten to science reopen fishing - 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

reopen fishery 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

CRAIG LITNER

I support re-opening Fisheries




Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishing
of Hawaii

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support sustainable fish
CPA



I Support Sustainable fish

John

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

REOPEN THE FISHERY PLEASE EMMANUEL S.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

reopen the fish please

-Zone

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishery initiative, let's have it back again.

Ray Alfredo Ayala

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support the Science.
Please Reopen the Risherpj

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long, sweeping line extending upwards and to the right.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
Reopen the fishery
Ka: Samreth

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
Fishes & Cool! Kelly Gacos

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Aquarium fishery



Bradford Smith

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Reopening distillery
Michael Miniak

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening this fishery

Daroy Pincen

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

~~Alm Estrada~~

I support reopening this fishery

Abraham Estrada

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fishery

Christina Torres
Chair

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am a hobbyist and enjoy taking care of and learning about Hawaiian species. I support the Aquarium fishery.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and strokes, positioned below the text.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fishery

Nathan

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I ~~suppna~~ support the fishery

Marissa Breiding

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fisheries - I support
West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery.
Keep the Fisheries OPEN!!

Jynn Hegast

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Hawaii fisheries opening


Al Enriouez

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Hun Fish reopening

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O. M.', written in a cursive style.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the hawai aquarim fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. J. Chang', written in a cursive style.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening the
aquarium fishery!

-~~John~~ Beukia

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

1 Suftor Hawaiian Fishery

Saul Sanche

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support re-opening the equator fishery.

Don Loveless *Donal*

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the hawaiian fishery!

- David Augustine!

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Re opening Hawaii
Raymond Grillo Reef Creation's

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Yasmin & Sal, we support the
Hawaiian Fishery.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen for
AG *happz*

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Hawaiian Ornamental Fishery
Michael Simonsen

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the Fishery

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. H. ...', written in a cursive style.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Manage listen to the Science and reopen! Tony Chew

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science.

Sam Pansa



Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

reopen the fishery.

Corals Depot


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Re open. Melissa Espasie

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening Steve Doe

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Re-open the fishing

- Hugo Delgado

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fishery Carlos Gonzalez 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,


I support this case 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fishery!

-Pedro L.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I AGREE TO OPEN FISHERY


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Re open the fishery plans

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a vertical line and a horizontal stroke, resembling the initials 'SNG'.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

reopen the fishery - Daniel Estrada

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT THE HAWAIIAN FISHERY
GIL NARA J.M.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please Re-open ~~the~~ Fishery

Muel Rosel

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Louis Blasco - I support AQ Fishing

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

James Oh Lee

I support the Hawaii Fisheries.

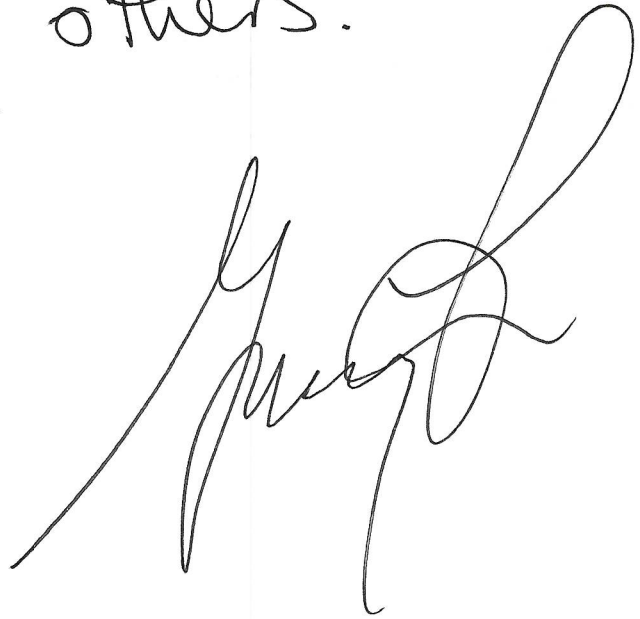
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Listen to the Science and support our hobby!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Chang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based fisheries. Having these fish and others in my tank has been highly educational for me and many others.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned at the bottom right of the page.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Good Afternoon,

Please Re open Hawaii using this
Sustainable Fisheries - Very important.
Thank you

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please help the fisherys.
We miss the fish,
and famillys depend on the
fish!

Daniel

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the fishery w/science - Jason Tuscano

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support sustainable fisheries!

- Srimal Weerahanaddi ~~Signature~~

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support sustainable fisheries- Reef sensei!

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

 I want the pin back

Oliver Baunus

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please bring back the fish we used to have.
~~My name is Clayton Stewart. The fish~~

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based fisheries

John Hlubec

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based fishery.



Robert Ross

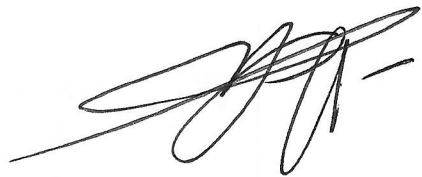
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
~~Reopen the Ashurst~~

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,
Bowling Green Research the fish hater's!!!

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Substantially collecting organisms is fantastic
for the adventure trade, helps provide funds for
Breeding projects and take account of fisheries stock.



Alex Kinslow

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I suppose the fish reopening

signature

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I fully support science based
harvesting of Kansas' rangelands -



John T. Gray

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

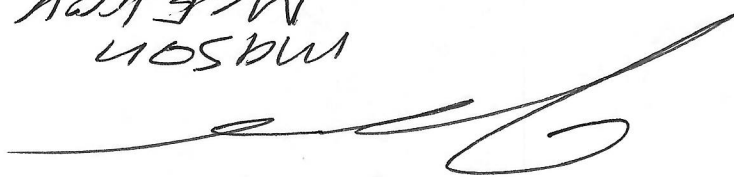
I support science based fishery harvesting.

Elliot Adlam



Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

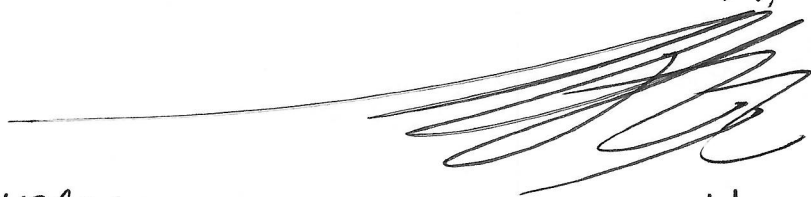
I fully support science based
harvesting if done sustainably.



MASON
MCELROY

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

1 Support Science based fisheries

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Kusken Jobs

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Sustainable Fisheries - *Coltizenhou*

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support reopening of fishery
Alexander Petrosyan.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support re-opening the west
Hawaii aquaculture fishery! Bring
back wild yellow tangs please!!

- Andrew Reid

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support re-opening the West Hawaii
Aquarium Fishery!

-Briana Comy

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please re-open the fisher
Christopher Gamboa

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

hey, I support the reopening
of the fishery
-Alex

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Support the Fishery

Steven Dick

SDICK1974@GMAIL.COM

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Disupport T Reef. Advice

Ref.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

REOPEN THIS FISHERY CARLOS BRISENO 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I fully support sustainable fishing

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned below the text.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please reopen the fisheries. I support sustainable fishing.

David DePonte


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science and sustainability!
Reopen the Hawaii fisheries and
licenses!

Sincerely,
Cynthia DeLillo

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based management. Please
re-open the fisheries.


Tyrone Chiriquy

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support Science based fisheries



Hector Serrano

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,


I SUPPORT THE SCIENCE BASED FISHERY

Keith Cox

KEITH COX

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please Help Re open the Fishery.
We have all heard talks from Respect
Scientists such as Reht Talbot who have
stated will not impact the Environment



Chris Schmitt

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Michael E. A. - I support the fishery

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support responsible fisheries
and the West Aquaculture Fisheries.
Keep all fisheries open for
business and use "Science"
only for policy decisions!

Don Kistner

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support Science backed fisheries focused on sustainable practices and ideals in growing and preserving natural environment.

-David Matonga

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Manage fishery by science + indigenous knowledge
- Emily Lucas

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I want the wild Yellow
Tangs back, which have been
sustainably collected from
Hawaii!

From,

Megan Eibarra
~~Megan Eibarra~~

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Listen to the science and reopen the AQ
fishery.

Joe Tran

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science; I support the Fisheries

- Bush

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

ReOpen the fishery -

A handwritten signature consisting of several fluid, connected strokes.

Saltwater Aquarium .Com

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Jason Glowacki,

Reopen the Fishery & Listen to the
science!

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,


Joshua Valuri - Listen to the science

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Listen to the science and reopen the fishery.

~~-matthew cantu~~
-matthew cantu

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Safe, sustainable opening of the fishery is possible. Listen
to the studies -  Kyle McAtee

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Listen to the science
Re-open AQ Fishery!!!

- Rogelio DePloy

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Listen to the science and reopen
the fishery. - Matt Huisinga

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please re-open the very obviously
sustainable fishery

- Nicholas Juarez

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please listen to the science and ^{re-}open the fishery.
Alex Castillo ▽

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Hello, please support reopening the Hawaii fisheries. Legislation should be in place to support local wildlife and businesses.

Sincerely,

Trevor Bellefueille

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

reopen the fishery

Luis Medina.

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishery. - Susie Ruy

I support the fishery - Juan Hurtado

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Stuart Millan



I support the reopening of the Hawaiian aquarium fishery
for all fish.


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the science. Please Reopen the Fishery.

Shawn Rodrigan 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support the Science and Fishery


Rick Sanchez
Rick Sanchez

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

We need this vital Resources to
Be here for generations to come
Let's All support those that do.

Woody

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

ERIC FRANCOIS HAS, NOT ONLY RESIDED ON THE ISLANDS, BUT FREQUENTED THEM TO APPRECIATE THEIR NATURAL BEAUTY. MY APPRECIATION BEGAN BY ENCOUNTERING THESE ANIMALS ON THE MAINLAND. THE REOPENING OF THE HAWAII FISHHOOK, SUSTAINABLY AND REGULATED, WILL GIVE GENERATIONS TO COME THE ABILITY TO SEE THESE ANIMALS, IN PERSON, WITHOUT TRAVELING TO THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. THIS EXPOSURE TO ANIMALS IS HOW WE INSURE STEWARDSHIP.


BEST REGARDS
EJF

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and strokes, positioned to the left of the text.

I Support Fishery mgmt

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Reopen the Hawaii Ocean Fishery! Please! 

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the marine collection industry

David D. Aguirre DAVID D. AGUIRRE

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Sharon Ray @
Hawaiian classic
srclassic.com

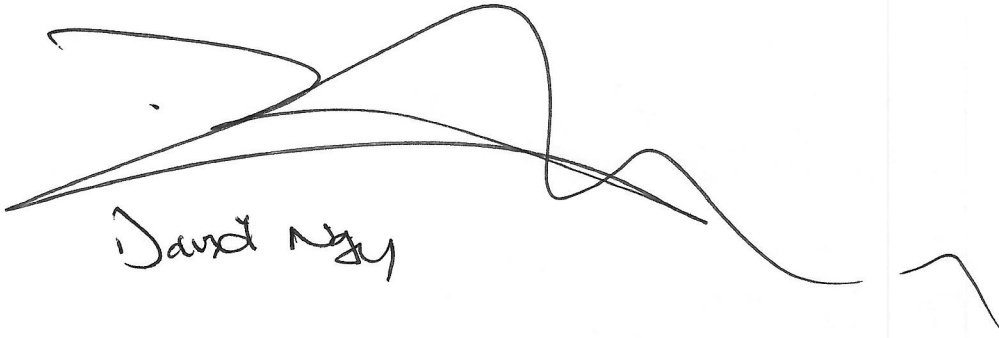
Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I SUPPORT THE SCIENCE AND FACTS

-IRVING CHAMU

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

PLEASE EXPEND FOR OUR AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke.

David Ng


Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I Support the Save the Hawaiian Fishery

Andy Han

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

Please open the fishery
for Seneca.



Corbett A. Wright

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support science based Fishery management.
Wendy Bauer
Wendy Bauer

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support the fishery and the science behind it.



Stephen Wong

Chair Chang and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I support! Reopen it! - Alan Ruiz

From: [Kamamaluwaiwai Wichimai](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F-2 BLNR Meeting, Aquarium Fishing Testimony
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:29:10 PM

Aloha e BLNR,

I am Wai Wichimai, and I live in the ahupua'a of Kea'au on Moku o Keawe.

I am requesting that the rules introduced by DAR pertaining to Aquarium Fishing Permits be redrafted so that they reflect the community's call to safeguard reef life, rather than reviving the very trade the proposed rules were meant to end. By doing so, they may restore the public's trust by keeping the permitting and authority with BLNR itself for full transparency and accountability.

In relation to species, Kole and Umaumalei should be REMOVED from the whitelist entirely, they are culturally harvested for sustenance, and are vital herbivores that clean our reefs. Yellow Tang and Angelfish should also be REMOVED from the list as they are now successfully cultivated by the Oceanic Institute (OI) of Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU). As such, wild harvest is unnecessary.

BLNR must add detailed clarity around permits, terms, conditions, and accountability to prevent abuse and ensure ecological balance. They MUST align with DLNR's Hierarchy of Use Policy, prioritizing cultural, subsistence, and ecosystem needs above commercial extraction. The Aquarium Fishery for ornamental enjoyment is not a cultural practice, and in fact, THREATENS cultural practice.

They MUST align with Hawai'i's Public Trust Doctrine. As a legal principle, protected in our state constitution, DLNR must hold all public natural resources in trust for the benefit of the people of Hawai'i, present and future. Public trust resources are NOT for commercial export.

Quite frankly, I do not support the harvesting of ANY marine life for aquariums.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,
Wai Wichimai

From: [Brett Williams](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] October 24; Agenda Item F.2
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 8:56:24 PM

Please accept these comments as an expression of deep concern about the rule package drafted by DAR to re-open Hawai'i's reefs to commercial aquarium collecting.

The pressures degrading our ocean resources are growing and a plan for the responsible stewardship of our reefs is paramount. As I learn more about the package, it appears that DAR's draft rules are antithetical not only to science-based, responsible reef management and protection, but also to transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility. They also appear to run counter to, rather than incorporate, prior expressions and measurements of the public will.

As such, confidence in DAR in this matter is low and continued oversight is crucial.

Given these concerns, please do not allow these draft rules to proceed and, throughout this process, please assure the important aspects of oversight, transparency, accountability, and stewardship.

Yours sincerely,

Brett David Hishigata Williams
Kane'ohe, O'ahu

From: [Yen, Jeannette](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: [Yen, Jeannette](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] oppose DAR Aquarium Fishery Permitting Rules
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 7:10:51 AM

Written Testimony:

I oppose DAR's aquarium fishing rules. I would like to keep the permitting authority with the BLNR. The white list should be updated. I greatly encourage attention be paid to ecosystem balance as removing a key member of the ecosystem can affect the sustainability of that system. I endorse that public trust resources are not for privatized commercial export. I do not wish to allow commercial aquarium fishing in West Hawai'i waters. The catch limits within the new rules are unacceptably high. Before the ban on aquarium fishing, seven permit holders could collectively bring in about 56,000 fish every year, but the new rules allow seven permittees to bring in more than 200,000. I support ending the catching of reef fish for commercial aquariums.

Jeannette Yen

Professor, School of Biology

Director, Center for Biologically Inspired Design

Georgia Institute of Technology

Office 404 385 1596

Cell 404 210 5458

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMlvUJ9_GSk TedX

<http://cosee.umaine.edu/programs/webinars/turbulence/turbulencescale/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hV-RpXDaEs> TLW

<http://www.news.gatech.edu/features/antarctica>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HLa1VYfR1s&list=PLtONzrBtBtli1xepftELvKeZAqmrsgPD&index=83&t=0s>

Sustainability

<https://www.museumofdesign.org/learning-from-nature> MODA

<https://arch.gatech.edu/people/jeannette-yen>

From: [Cory Cox](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of F2
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:56:31 PM

I'm am in support of F2 because of all the effort put into the management of staff and study of the science that goes into this fishery program.