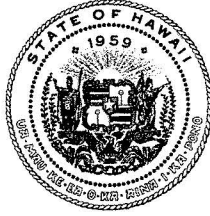
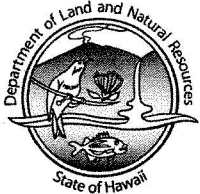


LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LINES
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**on House Bill 2626 – Relating To The Designation Of The Hawaiian Monk Seal As The
State Mammal Of Hawai‘i**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

February 8, 2008

House Bill 2626 designates the Hawaiian monk seal as the State mammal. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure, as the Department believes it is fully consistent with our goal to foster community-based conservation of Hawaiian monk seals and other indigenous wildlife species.

The Department works in close partnership with the numerous conservation organizations and community groups, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service and National Marine Sanctuary Program, to promote the protection and recovery of our critically endangered Hawaiian monk seals. For example, with funding from NOAA, Department staff on Kau‘ai and Hawai‘i islands manage volunteer networks that each year set up hundreds of “seal protection zones” around seals “hailed-out” on popular beaches. These roped-off areas help ensure the protection of the seals and the safety of beach goers. As another example of cooperative conservation, Department and NOAA staff manage seal “pupping events” across the State, where nursing seal pups and their mothers are provided around-the-clock protection and monitoring during their six-week long nursing period on shore. These efforts are made possible with the invaluable support of the University of Hawaii at Hilo, Hawaii Pacific University, the United States Coast Guard, Hawai‘i Wildlife Fund, county lifeguards and police departments, numerous beach resorts and tour operators, individual volunteers, and many others.

The Department believes designating the Hawaiian monk seal as Hawai‘i’s State mammal would help raise public awareness of the plight of the seal and bolster public support for our conservation efforts. The Department notes that similar conservation benefits have resulted from the designation of the humpback whale as our state marine mammal. The Department looks forward to working with the Legislature and all concerned parties toward the continued protection of Hawaiian monk seals and their ultimate recovery from endangered species status.



HB 2626, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN MONK SEALS
House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources & Hawaiian
Affairs

February 8, 2008
Room: 312

8:30 a.m.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** H.B. 2626, which would establish the Hawaiian monk seal, or *ñilioholoikauaua*, as the official state mammal of Hawai'i.

OHA believes that bestowing this formal status upon the Hawaiian monk seal will direct more attention and public support towards the effort to improve the precarious predicament of this critically endangered mammal.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS H.B. 2626. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Testimony Submitted to the House Committee on Water, Land,
Ocean Resources & Hawaiian Affairs

Hearing: Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am Room 312

Support for HB 2625 Relating to the Designation of April 19 as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day"

Aloha. The Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 2625, which is to celebrate

and raise awareness and support for the endangered 'Ālioholoikauaua – Hawaiian monk seal. Perhaps a date other than one in April might make it easier for organizations and agencies to plan public outreach events. April is usually full of Earth Day related events.

We also support funding for monk seal response coordinators on each island to help save seals in danger of entanglement, harassment, and other threats. The coordinators are often the first line of response when seals are in trouble.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Ziegler



Working Today for the Nature of Tomorrow!

Telephone/Fax 808.593.0255 • email: info@conservehi.org • web: www.conservehi.org

P.O. Box 2923 • Honolulu, HI 96802 • Office: 250 Ward Ave., Suite 212 • Honolulu, HI 96814

Hawai'i Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

President: *Julie Leialoha* * Vice-President: *Nelson Ho* * Secretary/Treasurer: *Kim Ramos* * Directors: *Fred Kraus, Ph.D.* * *Douglas Lamerson,*
George Robertson * *Claire Shimabukuro* * *Helene Takemoto* * *Mashuri Waite* * Executive Director: *Marjorie Ziegler*

From: Lloyd Lowry [mailto:lloyd@eagle.ptialaska.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 5:07 PM
To: WLHtestimony
Cc: Rep. Ken Ito; Rep. Ryan Yamane; Rep. Kymberly Pine
Subject: Testimony in support of HB 2625 and 2626

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HB 2625 AND HB 2626 FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, AND TOURISM AND CULTURE COMMITTEES

Representative Ken Ito
Representative Kymberly Marcos Pine
Representative Ryan Yamane

Dear Representatives Ito, Pine, and Yamane:

Today the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Team (HMSRT) is meeting to discuss ways in which federal agencies, the State, and the people of Hawaii can take the actions needed to prevent the extinction of one of Hawaii's two endemic mammals, the Hawaiian monk seal. On Friday, the Joint Hearing of the House Water, Land, Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs, and Tourism and Culture committees will hear testimony on HB 2625, which would designate a "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day," and HB 2626, which would select the Hawaiian monk seal to be the Hawaii State Mammal.

Hawaiian monk seals are in crisis. There are only about 1200 of them alive today, and the total population across their entire range is in decline. A small but growing number of monk seals reside and are born in the main Hawaiian Islands. Fewer than 100 seals have been sighted here, but this population increase has led to increasing interactions of seals with humans. Some of these interactions may lead to serious problems for the seals, such as being caught on fishing gear and human disturbance of mother and pup pairs on the beaches. There may also be problems associated with transmission of diseases among seals, animals, and people. However, the presence of seals provides an opportunity for people to experience nature and to inspire them to help with monk seal recovery. Some progress has been made in developing cooperative efforts between government biologists and volunteer groups to manage problem interactions and to foster harmonious co-existence between people and the seals. But, there is a crucial need to further raise awareness and support for the conservation of the Hawaiian monk seal.

The HMSRT believes that both HB 2625 and HB 2626 will help engage Hawaiians in monk seal conservation and enhance the recovery potential of the species, and we encourage you to pass these bills.

Sincerely,
Lloyd Lowry, Chair HMSRT,
and HMSRT members
William Aila
Don Bowen
Brian Funai
Bill Gilmartin
Dan Goodman
Frances Gulland
Don Siniff

February 7, 2008

To: The House Committee on Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

From: Gerald Okamoto
700 Richards Street
Apartment 1810
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 291-0907
geraldokamoto@gmail.com

Reference: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008, 8:30 a.m., Conference Room 312
Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2626, Relating to the designation of the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal of Hawaii.

For the last three weeks in January 2008, I had the pleasure of “standing watch” over Chester, a Hawaiian Monk Seal who was molting on the beaches of Kailua, Kalama and Lanikai.

During the many hours of volunteering to protect this Hawaiian treasure, it was a pleasure to share with residents in the area and tourists from various countries, the historical significance of the Hawaiian Monk Seal to the Hawaiian Islands, culture and people. Many were also surprised to discover the Hawaiian Monk Seal is the most endangered mammal in the entire United States and had experienced a steady decline in population of approximately four percent per year for the past twenty years.

What this experience brought to the forefront was the need for outreach and education to develop a culture of coexistence between humans and the Hawaiian Monk Seal, as their very continued existence is threatened by human disturbance, habitat loss, infectious disease, fishery interactions, entanglement in marine debris (gill nets), coral/reef deterioration and food competition.

Establishing the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal of Hawaii is an incremental step to achieving this objective and I strongly support this bill and urge the state legislature to act and pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Gerald Okamoto

-----Original Message-----

From: Kanani Rayne [mailto:neski_808@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 12:20 PM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject: RE: For Public Hearing, Friday Feb 8, 2008

To: The house on Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr.Ken Ito, Chair
Mr.John Karamatsu

FR. Tyneski Quintel
2210 Girls Rd. Kamehameha Schools
08tyquin@ksbe.edu

RE: For Public Hearing, Friday Feb 8, 2008
Conference room 312

Testimony in support of HB2625 and HB 2626

January31, 2008
Kamehameha Schools Marine Science
Taking action to conserve Hawaii's Marine Resources.

Aloha Senator Tokuda,

I am a senior attending Kamehameha Schools Kapalama and I have a great passion for our island chain. I love the animals in Hawaii and would do anything in my power to protect them all.

I hope you will consider allowing a STATE DESIGNATED HAWAIIAN MONK SEA DAY to bring awareness upon this endangered species. I have just learned in class about two new bills that will hopefully be passed named the SB 2464 SB 2465 with compassion bills HB 2625 HB 2626. I think these bills will only benefit the state for the advantage of the monk seals. Also the bills will not only bring awareness, but also safety for Hawaii's precious monk seals. I think that if Hawaii is able to have a special day for the monk seals, more awareness will be taken; therefore more monk sea lives will be saved.

Hawaii is a tropical paradise that many people from around the world visit and place their footprints. I hope that you will support these bills so that everyone can leave more than their footprints and take with them new information about our endangered species.

MAHALO NUI LOA,
Tyneski Quintel

-----Original Message-----

From: Everett Collier [mailto:09evcoll@ksbe.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 1:02 PM

To: WLHtestimony

Subject: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008 8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Importance: High

2/6/08

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

Thank you for raising HB2626 (Designation of the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the state Mammal.) Please accept this testimony expressing my **STRONG SUPPORT** for this bill.

This bill is important to me because I know that there is only two native Hawaiian mammals. The Hawaiian Bat is one and The Hawaiian Monk Seal is one. The Hawaiian Monk Seal is on it's way to being extinct, but with everyone's help we can get the Hawaiian monk seal off the endangered species list.

It is critical hat the state legislature act to pass this bill because the species of the Hawaiian Monk Seal is slowly declining, but with more publicity by making the Hawaiian Monk Seal our State Mammal people would think twice about endangering or killing the animal. Many people do not know how rare it is to see a monk seal. That is why people don't care. If people cared then maybe we could get the monk seal out of the endangered species list.

TO: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

FR: Kristen Fujinaga
95-1126 Wekiu st.
Mililani HI 96789
(808)-223-4349
08krfuji@ksbe.edu

RE: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony IN SUPPORT of HB2625, Establishing an annual Hawaiian Monk Seal day
(second letter) Testimony in Support of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal

February 4, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and Committee members,

Thank you for raising the HB2625 (HB2626). Please accept this testimony expressing my **STRONG SUPPORT** for this bill.

I strongly support Monk Seal Day because I think it will be a great way to raise awareness for the decline of the monk seals. The population of the Hawaiian monk seal is declining at 4% every year. This is a concern for the potential extinction of the endangered species. Community awareness and empowerment may be the only way to help this crisis. I believe that creating a state designated Hawaiian Monk Seal Day could help to inform the community of this crisis.

I understand that there are two bills, SB 2464 SB 2465 with companion bills HB 2625 HB 2626, that are being considered to help promote the Hawaiian monk seal conservation awareness. These bills focus on designating the monk seal as the state mammal. These bills also promote the idea for a state designated Hawaiian Monk Seal Day.

All in all, I thank you for taking your time to address this issue. The problem with the Hawaiian Monk Seal is a crisis in Hawaii and needs to be addressed quickly before our endangered species becomes extinct.

Aloha and Mahalo,

Kristen Fujinaga

-----Original Message-----

From: Kauai Joy [mailto:kauijoy@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 7:54 AM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject:

To: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian
Affairs

Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

FR: Kauinohea Joy
Kamehameha High School
98-1718 Hapaki st. Aiea Hi 96701
kauijoy@yahoo.com

RE: For Publilc Hearing, Friday, Febuary 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Aloha Representative Yamane,

The Hawaiian monk seal is very much an endangered species due to the drastic changes in Hawaii's environment and human interaction with theses animals.

The monk seal that is from Hawaii's waters is the only endemic marine animal of this land. According to National Geographic, the population of the monk seals has decreased more than ten percent since 1989.

In order to correct the injustices done to the monk seals, the bills SB 2464 SB2465 along with the bills HB 2625 HB2626. These bills will raise awareness in the Hawaiian community about the monk seals and the predicament that they are facing. This bill will also designate a day a year for the monk seal to also raise awareness for the monk seal.

The students of the marine science classes at Kamehameha do their part everyday to help the monk seals by educating themselves and caring for the seals and their well being. There is also teams of volunteers and professionals that respond to needy monk seals. It is now your turn to do your part in the repopulation of the Hawaiian monk seal.

Thank you for your support and awareness,

Aloha,
Kauinohea Joy

TO: The House Committee of Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

FROM: Teeana Paikai
91-237 Laupai Way Ewa Beach, HI 96706
(808)853-9370 (mobile)
08tepaik@ksbe.edu

RE: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony IN SUPPORT of HB2625 and HB2626, establishing an annual Hawaiian Monk Seal Day.

February 7, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

Thank you for raising HB2625 "Monk Seal Day" and HB2626 "State Mammal Designation" bills. Please accept this testimony expressing my **STRONG SUPPORT** for this bill. As you may already know the population of monk seals has been declining 4% per year causing extreme concern over the issue of possible extinction of the entire species. I believe that the best way to address this problem is by raising community awareness. My Marine Science teacher Ms. Duffy has not only shared the importance of this issue but has stressed that we are the only ones who are able to make a difference. She has therefore raised my awareness to the point where I felt that I should help to raise the awareness of the community regarding issues of monk seals by expressing my support for a Monk Seal day.

According to my studies two new bills are in the process of ratification or at least trying to become ratified in order to preserve and protect the lives of monk seals in Hawaii. Declaring the monk seal a state mammal and creating "monk seal day" will increase awareness and empowerment amongst the community to make a difference. Many groups are involved with the preservation of the monk seal and I feel that this issue should be shared more with the community and the only way to do that is to pass these two bills.

By including the community we will all be able to work together to save the lives of monk the monk seals. Everything god created is important and was placed on earth for a reason. Let's do our best to work together and continue to protect god's creations.

Sincerely,

Teeana Paikai

-----Original Message-----

From: Mishea Cook [mailto:08micook@ksbe.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 8:13 AM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject:

To: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

Fr: Mishea Cook
Kamehameha Schools
1506 Kaumualii St. 107 Honolulu, Hi 96817
808-728-6570
alwazlulu@yahoo.com

Re: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony in SUPPORT of Hb2625, Establishing an annual Hawaiian Monk Seal day and HB2626, designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal.

February 7, 2008

Dear Representative Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

Thank you for raising HB2625 (HB2626) which are establishing an annual Hawaiian Monk Seal day and designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal.

I am currently a student at Kamehameha Schools and I feel that there is a great concern over the potential extinction of the species. I have a strong feeling that there should be a Monk Seal day and that the Monk Seal should be our State Mammal. We need to keep our endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals safe. We should consider the two bills that help promote conservation awareness. By having the Monk Seal as our State Mammal it will raise the awareness for the Monk Seal. This will help everyone learn more about the seal and by knowing more this will increase the population of the endangered species. We have many organizations that are always on call to help an endangered species. We all need to pull together and help a species in need. We don't want to see another one of our Hawaiian animals go extinct. There should be no reason to why the end result should be extinction. We have the power now to stop those who harm the endangered species. They just need the chance to repopulate.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my strong support for this bill.

Sincerely,

Mishea Cook

-----Original Message-----

From: Charmaine Mokiao [mailto:08chmoki@ksbe.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 8:11 AM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject:

To: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

Fr: Charmaine Mokiao
85-1366 Kaneaki St. Waianae, HI 96792
(808)696-6794
08chmoki@ksbe.edu <mailto:08chmoki@ksbe.edu>

RE: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony in support of HB2625, HB2626, SB2464, and SB2465
Establishing annual Hawaiian Monk Seal day and designating the Hawaiian Monk
Seal as the State Mammal

February 4, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

Thank you for raising HB2625, HB2626, SB2464, and SB2465. Please
accept this testimony expressing my strong support for this bill.

This bill is important to me because as a Hawaiian student at
the Kamehameha Schools I have learned much of my culture throughout the
years of my attendance. I remember learning about these beautiful ancient
birds in which craftsmen would use their feathers to make capes for the
ali'i(chiefs). The birds that I speak of are the 'Iwi and the 'Apapane.

These birds, in which our ali'i cherished are no longer here for us today because they are extinct.

With that being said the Hawaiian monk seal will be most likely facing that same fate as the 'Iwi and 'Apapane if nothing is to be done. Back in the ancient days of Hawaii people did not know about endangered species and how to restore them, so I can not necessarily blame them for the extinction of those animals. But as a Hawaiian today brought in a society of great technological strives and knowledge, I feel that I can make a difference as well as my fellow Hawaiian monk seal supporters.

All I ask is for an awareness to be out there. We should not hide the fact that one of our native mammals may be facing extinction. That is why I fully support these two new bills that will help to promote endangered Hawaiian monk seal conservation awareness. These are SB 2464 SB2465 with companion bills HB 2625 HB 2626. The focus of these bills are for the monk seal to be designated as the State Mammal and for a designated day each year to raise awareness for the plight of the monk seal by having a state designated Hawaiian Monk Seal Day.

As I have said earlier we just need to get people to know what is going on in our islands. I do not want to have to live the day where monk seals go extinct; I want to live many years with the Hawaiian monk seal striving through its restoration by the people of Hawaii. We have the knowledge and skills to do so, it is just that we need to put them to use and do something about this situation.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my strong support for these bills.

Sincerely,

Charmaine Mokiao

To: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

From: B.J. Campbell
1223 7th Ave.
Honolulu, H 96816
808-753-5438
BJTCJTSOUP@aol.com

Re: For Public Hearing on Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 AM, Conference Room 312

Testimony in support of HB2625, Establishing an annual Hawaiian Monk Seal day and in support of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal

February 4, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

I have recently learned of two new bills being considered regarding the Hawaiian Monk Seal. These are SB 2264 SB 2465 and HB 2625 HB 2626. These bills would help to increase public awareness of the current state of the monk seal. With the seal's population on the decline, any type of public support in regards to the protection of the seal would be a benefit to the conservation efforts. Many state agencies are working diligently every day to oversee programs that help these endangered mammals. The support of Hawai'i's governing body would be much appreciated to help save another of Hawai'i's endangered species. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Mahalo,
B. J. Campbell

-----Original Message-----

From: Ashley-Ann Pang [mailto:08aspang@ksbe.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2008 8:10 AM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject: Bill HB2626

TO: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs

Mr. Ken Ito, Chair

Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

FR: Ashley Pang

Marine Biology Student

85-332 Farrington Hwy, Waianae, HI 96792

696 8015

08aspang@ksbe.edu

RE: For Public Hearing Friday, February 8, 2008

8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony in Support of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk as the state mammal.

Feb. 4 2008

Dear Senator Espero,

Thank you for raising HB2626. Please accept this testimony expressing my strong support for this bill. Hello, my name is Ashley Pang and I am a senior at Kamehameha Schools that is enrolled in a Marine Biology class. I am composing this letter to you with my concerns of the monk population. It has come to my attention that the population of monk seals decline 4% a year and with that rate, the population will cease to exist in about 10 years.

According to my research, two new bills are trying to be ratified to help keep the monk seal in existence by declaring the monk seal the state mammal. With declaring the monk seal the state mammal, it will bring awareness to the public and protect the monk seal. There are many groups that are involved with the preservation of the monk seal and I feel that we should involve the various communities to help protect the population.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Mahalo,

Ashley Pang

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

VIA: WLH FAX: 586-8494

FR: Georgette Yaindl
1312A 13th Ave.
Honolulu, HI 96816
808-732-3138
yaindl@hawaii.edu

RE: **For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008** Please make eight (8) copies.
8:30 am; Conference Room 312

Testimony IN SUPPORT of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal the State Mammal

February 7, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and Committee members,

Thank you for raising for public hearing HB2626, the bill designating the Hawaiian monk seal as our State Mammal. And special thanks to Representative Karamatsu for co-sponsoring the bill. Please accept this testimony expressing my **STRONG SUPPORT** for Hawaii's recognition of the Hawaiian monk seal as our state mammal.

This recognition is long over-due but nonetheless very much on time. For if we are to recover the Hawaiian monk seal population, it is truly now or never. Unlike our State *Marine* Mammal, the humpback whale, Hawaiian monk seals live nowhere else on Earth, were born of our own rock some 12 million years ago, and are completely dependent on the consciousness and care of Hawaii's residents and visitors. It is up to us alone.

As I was falling asleep last night I overheard Sean Ching preview the Ch 2 news saying "Should the monk seal be our state mammal? Why not the hoary bat, feral pig, or the mongoose?" The only potential contender is the hoary bat because like the monk seal, it is the only other mammal endemic to Hawaii. If the bat people come out (during the day?!) and state a claim, mahalo, but here's one reason why na 'ilio holo i ka uua should reign:



On or about June 1, 2006
Kahuku, O'ahu

The first recorded birth of a Hawaiian monk seal on O'ahu in eight years!

Sincerely,

Georgette Yaindl

From: patie boehm [mailto:patiemoose@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 7:19 PM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject: HB2626 "State Mammal Designation:"

TO: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

FR: Patricia Boehm
Hawaiian Monk Seal Supporter
944 Wanaao Road
Kailua, HI 96734
808-261-4238
patiemoose@hotmail.com

RE: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony IN SUPPORT of HB2626, State Mammal Designation

Please make five (5) copies.

02-08-08

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

Thank you for raising HB2626. Please accept this testimony expressing my STRONG SUPPORT for this bill.

I have spent the last 30 days as a volunteer Monk Seal responder on Kailua Beach with "Chester" the Hawaiian Monk Seal. I educated myself as well as the many beach visitors about this endangered mammal. I witnessed a community come together in support of the Hawaiian Monk Seal.

US Senator Dan Inouye said last August at a ceremony at the Waikiki Aquarium when federal officials signed the updated Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan, I also want my grandchildren to grow up able to experience real living Hawaiian monk seals, not stuffed toys or photographs in a museum.

Hawaiian monk seals are the indicator species for Hawaii. If we recover their population, it will be because all of us have taken care to restore even more of what is precious and unique about the Hawaiian Archipelago. Hawaiian monk seal recovery is the bellweather campaign. Hawaiian Monk Seals are declining by 4% every year and have been for the last 20 years. They are the most critically endangered species in the United States.

It is critical that the state legislature act to pass this bill. It is indigenous to our Island and we need to all work together to keep the Hawaiian Monk Seal alive by establishing the Hawaiian Monk Seal our state mammal.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my strong support for this bill.

Sincerely,

Patricia Boehm

-----Original Message-----

From: Yvonne Lynne Geesey [mailto:geesey@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 8:54 PM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject: Testimony in Support of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal

TO: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

FR: Yvonne Geesey, geesey@hawaii.edu

RE: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312
Testimony in Support of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal

February 6, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and Committee Members,

Thank you for raising HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal. Please accept this testimony expressing my STRONG SUPPORT for this bill.

This bill is important to raising the public's awareness of Monk Seals.

It is critical that the state legislature act to pass this bill because the survival of these unique mammals is being threatened.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my strong support for this bill.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Geesey
1224 Nehoa Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

From: Karen Rohter [mailto:karenrohter@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2008 8:58 PM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject: HB2626 Hawaiian Monk Seal as State Mammal
TO: The House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs
Mr. Ken Ito, Chair
Mr. John Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair
FR: Karen Rohter
1684 Halekoa Dr.
Honolulu.HI
732-5497
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RE: For Public Hearing, Friday, February 8, 2008
8:30 am, Conference Room 312

Testimony IN SUPPORT of HB2626, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal

Please make five (5) copies.

FEB. 6, 2008

Dear Representatives Ito, Karamatsu, and committee members,

Thank you for raising HB2626 Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as the State Mammal.

Please accept this testimony expressing my STRONG SUPPORT for this bill.

Establishing the Hawaiian Monk Seal as our State Mammal will help raise awareness of the plight of these animals. Found nowhere else on earth, our Hawaiian monk seal is critically endangered and the population is in decline. Without state and federal help, and public awareness these animals may soon disappear from our beaches on the main islands and at Papahānaumokuāke'a National Marine Preserve. Seals hauling out on the beaches create much excitement and interest from the public as demonstrated by the news articles about Chester, the Hawaiian monk seal who graced the Kailua beach for quite a few days while molting. Children who saw the seal excitedly shared their experiences in my classroom. Another student shared her experience of seeing the seal pup that was born near Turtle Bay in 2006. Unfortunately, that seal was to die within 6 months after being caught in a gill net. The monk seal is an animal that catches people's imagination. We must do all we can to allow this unique animal its survival into the next millennium. Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as our State Mammal is a solid step in the right direction. Mahalo to Vice Chair John Riki Karamatsu for co-sponsoring this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my strong support for this bill.

Sincerely,
Karen Rohter