



**HB 2828, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE SUPER SUCKER**  
House Committee on Finance

February 22, 2008

2:15 p.m.

Room: 308

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs **SUPPORTS** HB 2828, which seeks to provide one year's funding for the full-time operation of the super sucker project in Kāne'ohe Bay and for the purchase of a portable super sucker unit to be used in more remote sections of Hawai'i.

For more than 70 million years in Hawai'i, the evolution of new species greatly exceeded losses to extinction. This led to the wondrous biological diversity for which our State is known. Hawai'i actually surpasses the Galapagos Islands in the number and variety of species that evolved from a small set of colonizing ancestors, and about 25 percent of Hawaii's reef fish, coral, and algae species occur no where else.

Native Hawaiians successfully managed these natural resources as cultural resources and for sustenance for centuries. Many of the resources upon which they used to rely, and which are specifically named in the creation chant, Kumulipō, are now extinct or endangered by alien, invasive species, such as gorilla ogo, which has taken over Kāne'ohe Bay, causing a dearth of our precious, native limu species.

Not only are we reliant on our natural resources for healthy subsistence, but they are also something upon which we are dependent for our economy. According to an August 2007 Honolulu Advertiser article, a federal study estimates that recreational fishing, hunting and wildlife-watching in Hawai'i generated \$402.3 million in spending in 2006. Much of this income is ocean related, and this tremendous benefit to our state is dependant upon healthy nearshore ecosystems and coral reef habitats.

However, Hawai'i is now also well known as the extinction capital of the world. For example, the Hawaiian Islands support more than 30 percent of the nation's species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Invasive algae are over-running our marine ecosystems and threatening our imperiled reefs with even more species loss. These losses would be more than symbolic; it would impact our statewide economy as well and in unexpected ways.

However, we can prevent this. The super sucker program has proven itself to be effective in the removal of invasive and damaging algae from coral reefs in a very

cost-effective way. A five person crew can remove 800 pounds of algae – including gorilla ogo – an hour. These are remarkable effects; and considering the investment made to get them - they are achieved at bargain rates. The funding that this bill proposes will be recouped many times over in the results received.

OHA asks that the legislature keep in mind the urgency of the issues that this bill addresses. We also ask that if not the super sucker, then what other tools of this efficacy do we possess to accomplish this meaningful and needed task?

Therefore, OHA urges the Committee to PASS HB 2828. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## FINtestimony

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**From:** Cynthia Hunter [cindyh@hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 22, 2008 1:06 PM  
**To:** FINtestimony  
**Subject:** 2/22/2008 HB2828 Agenda #5

# LATE

Testimony of Cynthia L. Hunter, Ph. D.  
Supporting of HB 2828 Making an Appropriation for the Super Sucker  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Monday February 11, 2008, 2:30PM, Room 414

Alien algae overgrowth presents the most imminent threat to Hawaii's coral reefs. Mechanical removal of the algae by underwater pumps ("Super Sucker Sr. and Jr.") has been developed and tested through a collaboration of the University of the Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources, and The Nature Conservancy.

Mechanical removal is effective: experimental plots were still clear of alien algae 14 months after removal, and new coral recruited into some plots. It is essential that these efforts are continued and expanded, as our reefs are currently being overgrown and killed by alien algae and at increasing rates. The spread of algae needs to be stopped.

Researchers, students, and volunteers have provided most of the labor on the Super Suckers to date, but they cannot provide the level of effort necessary to control the continued spread of alien algae. Permanent positions are needed to staff the deployment of the Super Suckers on a regular basis in order to provide an effective management measure to save Hawaii's reefs.

Please support funding the positions proposed in HB 2828.

Thank you,

Cynthia Hunter, Ph. D.  
Marine Biologist