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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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

**On House Bill 3173 – Relating To Grounded Vessels**

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

**February 8, 2008**

House Bill 3173 proposes to clarify that, upon assuming control over a grounded vessel, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) shall remove the vessel by any means necessary in order to minimize damages to the natural resources and not become a hazard to navigation. The Department is in strong support of this Administration legislation.

Presently, when the Department assumes control of a vessel that has been grounded on a coral reef or in imminent danger of breaking up and that cannot be removed immediately by the owner in a manner that is reasonably safe, the statutes require the Department to direct the vessel to a safer location. When encountering situations where the vessel is breaking up or damaged beyond repair and becomes a threat to the natural resource, or a hazard to navigation, total removal of the vessel may not always be practical. As an example, there are vessels aground at the Kure Atoll and off the Honolulu International Airport reef runway that need to be removed in pieces because it has been determined that to remove them whole would cause extensive damage to the natural resources.

This bill would allow the Department to take immediate action and reduce the cost to remove a grounded vessel that has been determined to be a threat to natural resources or a hazard to navigation.

The Department strongly recommends passage of this Administration bill.



**HB 3173, RELATING TO GROUNDED VESSELS**

House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources & Hawaiian  
Affairs

February 8, 2008

8:30 a.m.

Room: 312

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 3173, which would allow the removal of grounded vessels from a living reef or other critical marine environments, at the vessel owner's expense, more quickly and with the safety of the public and the environment in mind.

Because all submerged lands are ceded lands, OHA takes seriously its trust responsibilities to protect and preserve these lands, and the water and air columns above them. A number of dangerous and expensive vessel groundings have occurred within Hawaiian state waters, just during the past decade. Because it is often difficult to find the owners of such vessels, the boats are left to disintegrate and to wreak havoc on fragile reef ecosystems throughout the Main and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Coral reefs take scores of years to grow and mature, and seconds to be demolished. These fragile ecosystems harbor shelter for many stages of marine animals' growth, reproduction and survival. So much impact on a fragile ecosystem which contains many endangered and endemic species cannot be ignored.

Amending existing statutes to clarify that such vessels will be specifically removed, instead of vaguely "directed to a safer location," is a vast improvement for the Department of Land and Natural Resources' ability to act decisively and immediately.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS HB 3173. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Room312 on Friday, 8 February 2008

Chair Ito and Respected Members of the Committee:

My name is Reg white. I am a tenant and a resident of Ala Wai Small Boat Harbor. I am very familiar with the condition of our state recreational boating facilities. Those at Keehi Small Boat Harbor truly need and deserve our support for reconstruction and repair. Repairing these facilities will also help to restore the revenue stream into the State Boating Special Fund which will guarantee the future maintenance and repair of these facilities into the future, so this bill is a win, win. Please give it your support.

Thank you,

Reg White  
Vice president, project development  
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1540S. King St.  
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(808) 222-9794  
RawcoHI@cs.com

House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs  
Room312 on Friday, 8 February 2008

Chair Ito and Respected Members of the Committee:

My name is Reg white. I am a tenant and a resident of Ala Wai Small Boat Harbor. For the past fifty five years I have been a licensed U.S. Merchant Marine Officer. I have served aboard salvage tugs and am very familiar with the performance required to mitigate the potential damage from a grounded vessel. Time is of the essence here, and each bureaucratic delay increases the possibility of increased damage to our natural resources. It is important that this bill be passed so that DLNR may remove grounded vessels before they become wrecks. This expedient removal will also reduce the cost to the state coffers as it's much less expensive to tow off a grounded vessel than it is to clean up the debris of a wreck. This bill seeks to cut the red tape and allow immediate removal of grounded vessels, thereby reducing the potential to increase the annual number of wrecks that must be removed because of the delays to action under the present system.

Please give this bill your support.

Thank you,

Reg White  
Vice president, project development  
Paradise Cruise, Ltd.  
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**From:** rhardlydavison@aol.com [mailto:rhardlydavison@aol.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, February 07, 2008 10:40 AM

**To:** WLHtestimony

**Subject:** IN SUPPORT OF HB 3173

IN SUPPORT OF HB 3173

House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs  
Room312 on Friday, 8 February 2008

Chair Ito and Respected Members of the Committee:

My name is Captain Richard Davison.

I have been a licensed Captain in Hawaiian waters since June 1986. I have served aboard salvage tugs here in Honolulu and understand what is required to remove a grounded vessel. Time is extremely important when talking about removing a grounded vessel and every delay increases the possibility of increased damage to the reef. It is important that this bill be passed so that DLNR may remove grounded vessels before they become wrecks.

Please give this bill your support.

Thank you,

Richard Davison  
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