



# Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 8:30 A.M.

(Testimony is 1 page long)

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 3177

Chair Ito and members of the committee:

The Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, with 5500 dues paying members statewide, supports HB 3177, increasing the maximum penalty that can be assessed for violations in the state conservation district and providing the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) flexibility in setting the penalties. The Sierra Club strongly supports efforts to increase penalties against those who violate laws intended to protect our fragile environment. These penalties serve both as a deterrent and as a means to provide resources to repair resource damage done by the violator.

Penalties for violations in Hawaii's most environmentally-sensitive lands—the conservation district—should not simply be part of 'the cost of doing business.' Strong, meaningful penalties are necessary to punish offenders and send a signal to potential offenders of the consequences of their actions. Increased pressure on conservation lands and habitat raises the need for strong deterrents to illegal activities on these lands.

House Bill 3177 not only increases the maximum penalty allowed to \$10,000 per violation, it wisely provides the DLNR flexibility in setting the penalty based on the scale of the damage, the market value of the resources lost, or other factors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.