



**SB 2464, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN MONK SEALS**  
House Committees on Tourism & Culture;  
and Economic Development & Business Concerns

March 24, 2008

10:00 a.m.

Room: 325

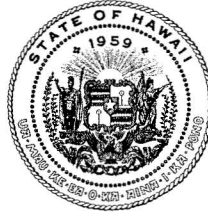
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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** S.B. 2464, which would establish the Hawaiian monk seal, or *ñilioholoikauaua*, as the official state mammal of Hawai'i.

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 Committees to PASS S.B. 2464. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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

**on Senate Bill 2464 – Relating To The State Mammal**

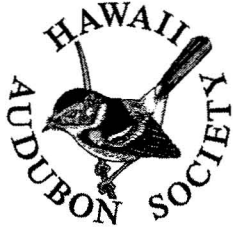
**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
TOURISM AND CULTURE**

**March 24, 2008**

Senate Bill 2464 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.



*For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife*  
**HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY**

850 Richards Street, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813-4709  
Phone/Fax: (808) 528-1432; hiaudsoc@pixi.com  
www.hawaii Audubon.com

**TO:** COMMITTEE ON TOURISM & CULTURE  
Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair & Representative Joey Manahan, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS CONCERNS  
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair & Representative Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

**HEARING:** Monday, March 24, 2008, 10:00 AM, Conf. Room 325

**RE: SB2464 (HSCR1170-08), RELEATING TO THE STATE MAMMAL**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

Chair's Yamane and Yamashita, and members of the Committee on Tourism & Culture and the Committee on Economic Development & Business Concerns. My name is George Massengale, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Audubon Society in support of SB2464 (HSCR1170-08).

The primary missions of the society is to foster community values that result in the protection and restoration of native ecosystems and conservation of natural resources through education, science and advocacy in Hawai'i and the Pacific.

The society believes that bestowing formal recognition of the Hawaiian Monk Seal and its designation as the state mammal will garner additional attention and encourage public support of efforts to protect this critically endangered species.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure today.

Respectfully,  
George Massengale, JD  
Legislative Analyst

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND CULTURE  
Mr. Ryan Yamane, Chair  
Mr. Joey Manahan, Vice Chair

VIA: FAX: 586-6011

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

RE: **For Public Hearing, Monday, March 24, 2008**  
**10:00 am; Conference Room 325**

Please make twelve (12) copies.

Testimony IN **STONG SUPPORT** of **SB2464**, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal the State Mammal

March 23, 2008

Dear Representatives Yamane, Manahan, and Committee members,

Thank you for raising for public hearing SB2464, the bill designating the Hawaiian monk seal as our State Mammal.

The Senate Economic Development and Taxation Committee advanced the Senate bill with the following report (SSCT 2650):

The purpose of this measure is to recognize the importance and uniqueness of the Hawaiian monk seal to the Hawaiian Islands by establishing and designating the Hawaiian monk seal as the official state mammal. Your Committee received widespread support for [these measures which would designate the third Saturday in April of each year as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day" [and designate the Hawaiian monk seal as the State Mammal]. Supportive testimony was submitted by the Department of Land and Natural Resources; the Conservation Council of Hawai'i; the Marine Conservation Biology Institute, Hawaii; and over one hundred individuals; including the 4th Grade Class of Island Pacific Academy, the 5th Grade Class of St. Andrew's Priory, students from Kapunahala Elementary School, Sacred Hearts Academy, Kamehameha Schools, over seventy from James Campbell High School, and from the University of Hawai'i.

Many of the people who testified were volunteers who watched over Chester, the Hawaiian monk seal, who recently spent several weeks of his annual moult on the windward Oahu beaches of Kailua and Lanikai. They spoke of how important it was to both protect Chester during the period when he was most vulnerable, and to educate the public who watched his progress — not always patiently or sympathetically.

The members of your Committee commend the commitment of all those who supported both of these measures, including the many students, teachers, and individuals who attended the hearing and spoke so eloquently about the plight of the Hawaiian monk seal and the importance of protecting this endangered symbol of Hawai'i.

This recognition of the Hawaiian monk seal as our State Mammal is long over-due but nonetheless very much on time because 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.

Thank you very much for your kind attention to this letter and for the Committee's awareness of our responsibility and last chance opportunity to recover the "OI" (Original Issue) Hawaiian!

Sincerely,  
Georgette Yaindl  
Kaimuki

**manahan1-Haylee**

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**From:** donnafesta@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 20, 2008 8:51 PM  
**To:** TACtestimony  
**Subject:** support for bill SB2464

TO: Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Joey Manahan, Vice Chair  
Rep Lyla B. Berg Ph.D  
Rep Clift Tsuji  
Rep Tom Brower  
Rep Glenn Wakai  
Rep Jerry L. Chang  
Rep Kyle T Yamashita  
Rep Faye p Hanohano  
Rep Corrine W.L. Ching  
Rep Robert N. Herkes  
Rep Barbara C. Marumoto

From: Donna Festa, Realtor-Associate, Century 21 Kailua Beach Realty, & NOAA Volunteer

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2464 DESIGNATING THE HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL AS HAWAII'S STATE MAMMAL

For public hearing Monday March 24th 2008; CR 325; 10:00 AM  
Please make 12 copies

Dear Representatives Yamane, Manahan and committee members;

In January I was privileged to participate in the monitoring of a Hawaiian monk seal on Kailua Beach. Prior to the arrival of this seal I knew very little of their plight, I was SHOCKED to learn they are one of the most endangered species. For me personally there is no question, I will do what it takes to help in the recovery of this beautiful mammal.

After spending 27 days on the beach I learned by talking with residents and visitors how little information was available to the public. Initially the crowds that gathered were neighbors and residents of Kailua, however once the media printed and aired the story of Chester, I met people from all of the Island, and yes there were many visitors. In fact two of our volunteers were here vacationing for a month. I soon realized that people wanted to help they just didn't know how.

I believe by passing this bill it will raise awareness to our residents but will also benefit Hawaii's visitors. The majority of visitors spend a lot of time in our waters, it would be beneficial if they knew what to do or more importantly what NOT to do if they encounter a Hawaiian monk seal. Knowledge is powerful, and I believe by making the Hawaiian monk seal out state mammal, we will begin the education and awareness necessary to save this species.

As a volunteer I need to know the right state agencies and departments are involved to combat the rapid decline of the Hawaiian monk seals. We should consider this bill a step towards the protection and recovery of this twelve million year old species.

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

3/23/2008

Donna Festa (RA)  
CENTURY 21 Kailua Beach Realty  
130 Kailua Road Suite 110  
Kailua, HI 96734  
808-561-8112 (cell)  
808-262-8275 (fax)

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March 21, 2008

To: The House of Representatives Committee on Tourism & Culture  
Representative Ryan I Yamane, Chair  
Representative Joey Manahan, Vice Chair  
House of Representatives Committee on Tourism & Culture

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

Reference: For Public Hearing, Monda, March 24, 2008, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 325  
Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2464, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as Hawaii's State Mammal.

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 and concerned 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, lost gear), 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. This designation has allows this subject to be better understood by the people of Hawaii and those who come to visit our beautiful island and allows us to continue to share this special treasure of the Hawaiian Island. As indicated by my most recent experience, even the brief interaction with the Hawaiian Monk Seal established a memorable bond to those who happened to be visiting Hawaii and a provided a greater sense of our history for those who reside in Hawaii.

For humanity, economic, tourism and local cultural reasons, I strongly support this bill and urge the state legislature to act and pass this bill.



Sincerely,

Gerald Okamoto

## manahan1-Haylee

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**From:** patie boehm [patiemoose@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 5:15 PM  
**To:** TACtestimony  
**Subject:** SB2464

March 21, 2008

To: The House of Representatives Committee on Tourism & Culture  
Yamane, Chair  
Representative Joey Manahan, Vice Chair  
House of Representatives Committee on Tourism & Culture

Representative Ryan I

From: Patricia Boehm  
944 Wanaao Road  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734  
808-261-4238  
patiemoose@hotmail.com

Reference: For Public Hearing, Monday, March 24, 2008, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 325

Reference: For Public Hearing, Monday, March 24, 2008, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 325  
Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2464, Designating the Hawaiian Monk Seal as Hawaii's State Mammal.

I am one of the volunteers from Kailua that was part of the response team helping Chester the Hawaiian Monk Seal stay on Kailua Beach to complete his annual molt safely.

I have lived in Kailua for over 20 years and I had not seen a Hawaiian Monk Seal only heard from my daughter who surfs that she had seen one. My response to her was always that I really wished I was able to see this special seal.

January 1st changed my life. I not only got to see this endangered mammal, I spent my nights on the beach in a sleeping bag under the stars with a flash light watching to keep him safe from dogs on the beach and anything else that might disturb this stressful time in a monk seal's life.

I met many residents and tourists walking the beach that were unaware of the Endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal. They were amazed that this seal was the most endangered mammal in the United States. The Humpback whale is our marine mammal and is proof that we can make a difference and this mammal is now thriving with continued increased numbers. The Humpback whale is a visitor to the Hawaiian waters each year but the Hawaiian Monk Seal is a resident!

Hawaiian Monk Seal Day is an important step to help educate us about this endangered mammal and protect it from extinction. The tourists I met on Kailua Beach were thrilled to hear about the Hawaiian Monk Seal and many asked how they could help.

Please help save our resident, the Hawaiian Monk Seal, and pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Patricia Boehm

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***Kawaihapai Ohana***  
**c/o Thomas T Shirai Jr**  
**P O Box 601**  
**Waialua, HI 96791**  
**email: *Kawaihapai@hawaii.rr.com***

**Hearing Notice**  
**Monday, March 24, 2008**  
**10:00 AM**  
**State Capitol Conference Room 325**

House Committee on Tourism & Culture  
Representative Ryan Yamane, *Chair*

**RE: Testimony of Support for SB 2464 (Relating to the State Mammal)**

*Aloha* Chair Yamane & Committee Members,

The *Kawaihapai Ohana* supports SB 2464. The *Hawaiian Monk Seal* is highly deserving of this recognition. We are a recognized *Native Hawaiian Organization* by the Department of Interior and mission statement includes preservation of *mo'olelo* of *Waialua Moku* with an emphasis on the Northwest Coastline which includes the *Ahupua'a* of *Kamananui, Mokulei'a, Kehahi, Aukuu, Kawaihapai, Kealia and Kaena*.

There was once an abundance of *Hawaiian Monk Seals and Green Sea Turtles* that inhabited *Kawaihapai Beach* however, they disappeared with the existance of the *Kealia Rock Quarry* which started roughly around *World War II* due to the constant dynamite blasting that scared them away during thi round the clock operation (24/7) for over 30 years before closing in the early 1970's.

Since then it's taken years to create the serene and tranquil environment required for the *Hawaiian Monk Seal and Green Sea Turtles* to *ho'i hou (return)* back to *Kawaihapai Beach*. This one of the *hoailona* in making things *pono* for the wrongs done in the past at *Kawaihapai Ahupua'a*.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting SB 2464 (Relating to the State Mammal). *Malama Pono*.

**Thomas T Shirai Jr**  
***Kawaihapai Ohana - Po'o***

**Thomas T Shirai Jr**  
**P O Box 601**  
**Waiialua, HI 96791**  
**email: Kawaihapai@hawaii.rr.com**

**Hearing Notice**  
**Monday, March 24, 2008**  
**10:00AM**  
**State Capitol Conference Room 325**

House Committee on Tourism & Culture  
Representative Ryan Yamane, *Chair*

**RE: Testimony Supporting SB 2464 (Relating to the State Mammal)**

Aloha Chair Yamane & Committee Members,

As a lifetime resident of *Mokulei'a Ahupua'a* with lineage dating back several generations in *Waiialua Moku*, I support SB 2464. It's highly deserving that the *Hawaiian Monk Seal* be afforded this recognition. Like with places fortunate to have had *Hawaiian Monk Seal* habitation, the Northwest Coastline of *Waiialua Moku* encompassing the *Ahupua'a* of *Kamananui, Mokulei'a, Kekahi, Aukuu, Kawaihapai, Kealia & Kaena* was such an area.

My Grandfather (*David Peahi Keao Jr*) shared an abundance of *Hawaiian Monk Seals* along with *Green Sea Turtles* inhabited *Kawaihapai Beach* shoreline and would just walk by without disturbing or harming them. He also shared that when *Kealia Rock Quarry* started roughly during *World War II*, it severely impacted the *Hawaiian Monk Seal and Green Sea Turtles* population due to the dynamite blasting done which led to their disappearance regarding this around the clock (24/7) operation for over 30 years before closing. The noise from the dynamite blast scared them away and it's taken years after the rock quarry's closure to create a serene and tranquil environment for seals and turtles to *ho'i hou (return)*.

On *August 1, 2007* my Wife and I were blessed and treated with the sight of a *Hawaiian Monk Seal* resting on the shoreline fronting our home in *Mokulei'a*. I shared with my Wife that it's been over 40 years since a seal has come here. Just prior to that sighting I was treated to another rare encounter with *muhe'e (cuttlefish)* while spearfishing in front our home. They were also once abundant. To me these are all *hoailona (signs)* the *Aina* is healing and legislation along with projects pertaining to the Northwest Coastline of our beloved *Waiialua Moku* are making things *Pono* for wrong things done in the past. *Mahalo* for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting SB 2464 (Relating to the State Mammal). *Malama Pono.*

**Thomas T Shirai Jr**  
**Mokuleia, Waiialua**

To: House Committee on Tourism & Culture  
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Rep. Joey Manahan, Vice Chair

From: Craig W. Burns  
University of Hawaii at Manoa, School of Social Work, MSW student  
91-1039 Leleoi Street  
Ewa Beach, HI 96706  
[cwburns@hawaii.edu](mailto:cwburns@hawaii.edu)

Re: Public Hearing, Monday, March 24, 2008  
10:00 a.m., Conference Room 325

Please provide five (5) copies.

Testimony in support of SB2464, RELATING TO THE STATE MAMMAL.  
Designates the Hawaiian monk seal as the state mammal.

March 24, 2008

Dear Representatives Yamane, Manahan and House Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2464, designating the Hawaiian monk seal as the state mammal.

When we think of mass extinctions, we think of the Amazon rain forest or the jungles of Indonesia where slash-and-burn agriculture and unchecked urbanization are leading to the extinction of hundreds of species every day. However, the Hawaiian Islands have more endangered species per square mile than any other place on earth. One of the most threatened animals in Hawaii is the Hawaiian monk seal which is one of only two mammals endemic to the Hawaiian Islands. At the rate the current population is declining, it is a very real possibility that this magnificent animal will be gone from the oceans and beaches of the islands in a relatively short period of time. By designating the Hawaiian monk seal as the state mammal, it will bring attention not only to the plight of this magnificent and fascinating marine mammal, but also to the dangers being faced by the myriad other species facing very real threats to their survival on a daily basis.

The Hawaiian monk seal is one of only two mammals endemic to the Hawaiian Islands and is therefore the most appropriate choice to represent Hawaii as the state mammal. Unlike the humpback whale, which is recognized and admired around the world, the Hawaiian monk seal is in a unique category. The Hawaiian monk seal is one of three known species of monk seal: Hawaiian, Caribbean, and Mediterranean. Caribbean monk seals were last sighted in 1952 and are currently thought to be extinct. Mediterranean monk seals are clinging to survival with a population of between 500 and 1,000 and live in isolated areas of the Mediterranean where they have little contact with human beings. The population of the Hawaiian monk seal is currently estimated to be around 1,200 individuals and while the majority of the population lives among the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, it is possible to see these animals on the beaches of some of the inhabited islands. The monk seal is an ancient animal, having lived as a separate species for

over 15 million years. It is the only marine mammal whose habitat lies entirely within the United States and is unique to the Hawaiian Islands.

It is important for Hawaii to take as the state mammal an animal that is unique to the islands. Designating the Hawaiian monk seal the state animal and creating a day to honor and educate on this incredible creature is an important first step in raising public awareness—of visitors as well as locals—in regards to the situation being faced by this species. And public awareness is the key in any endeavor to preserve something precious, and this animal is indeed precious to the history and ecological diversity of these islands. Through awareness, education and an intimate knowledge of these animals, people become personally engaged in the protection and preservation of the object, whether it is an historical building, a sacred cultural site, or an endangered seal.

Additionally, these animals can serve as a point of unity for residents who grow continually more distant from one another. I have witnessed firsthand the quick response of the dedicated volunteers along the north shore of Oahu who respond to protect these emblematic and unique sea mammals. Working with teenagers in Ewa Beach who interact intimately with these animals, I see the potential for the designation of these animals as a symbol of the state of Hawaii as providing an opportunity to make a connection with Hawaii's young people and the natural heritage of the islands, a heritage I see challenged every day by littering and the accumulation of trash on the beaches I visit that indicate a disconnect from their land and what it represents.

With awareness comes knowledge, and from knowledge comes the wisdom to do the right thing. Hawaiian monk seals are harassed not only by people lacking the education and awareness to know better, but by errant dogs that approach and can injure the seals or transmit diseases. As history has shown time and again, all it takes is the wrong disease at the wrong time to devastate a species and take it past the point of no return. It would indeed be tragic to reach the point where we must watch as the final Hawaiian monk seals pass from this earth and we stand by, helpless to stop their extinction and wondering, if we'd acted only a little sooner, would they still be here?

There are a number of reasons to protect the Hawaiian monk seal, some of which I've already discussed. Additionally, as with any ecosystem, we are never quite certain what havoc the extinction of an animal will wreak on the system. Animals do not become endangered or extinct in isolation. In Hawaii and other island ecosystems, we have seen the damage that can be caused by the introduction of non-native invasive species. We must consider the potential damage that will be caused by the extinction of any animal in the system, but particularly large animals such as the Hawaiian monk seal. So, for the benefit of the state of Hawaii, the residents of the state, the Hawaiian monk seal and the island ecosystem of which the seal plays such an integral part, I urge you to pass SB2464 and designate the Hawaiian monk seal as the official state mammal of Hawaii.

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to offer my testimony in support of SB2464.

Sincerely,

Craig W. Burns

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair, Committee on Tourism and Culture  
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair, Committee on Economic Development and  
Business Concerns

March 24, 2008  
10:00 am. Conference Room 325

**Testimony in strong support of SB 2464 and SB 2465**

Chairs Yamane, Yamashita, and members of the committees:

My name is William Aila Jr, and I am an employee of DLNR however, the testimony is that of my own.

The Hawaiian Monk Seal is the most endangered mammal in the United States. There are only about 1000 left in the world.

We, the people of Hawaii, Hawaiians and Non-Hawaiian have a responsibility to both the Monk Seal and future generations of our children to do everything within our power to increase the chances for recovery of this endemic species.

There will be some who misunderstand the purpose of these two bills. Let me be clear the purpose is to bring more awareness to the plight of these magical mammals.

These bills will not take away any attention of the Humpback Whale, nor will either designation impact fishermen, the Hawaiian Monk Seal is already protected Federal and State law. These designations will help to highlight the urgency that is needed to educate and gain assistance from everyone in the state and the rest of the world, of the challenge that Monk Seals face.

Please pass both SB 2464 and SB 2465 and make a difference in the survival of this, our endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 2464 and SB 2465.