

**Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations
Honorable Chair Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice-Chair Ken Ito
February 24, 2009
2:05pm**

**Submitted by: Inga Gibson, Hawaii State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
In Support of H.B. 366; Relating to Manta Rays**

Dear Honorable Chair Karamatsu,

On behalf of our 47,704 members and supporters of the Humane Society of the United States in Hawaii, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak in favor of H.B. 366; relating to Manta Rays.

Manta Rays were added to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species in 2005 and classified as "near threatened." The 2006 Red List of shark species published by the World Conservation Union listed 547 total species of shark and ray. Of these, 110 species are critically endangered (19), endangered (25) or vulnerable (66), while a further 96 are facing some level of threat.

Manta Rays are threatened primarily due to poaching and commercial fishing. In fact, around the world populations have declined due to overfishing and demand for human consumption of fin soup. Based on their low birth rate, Mantas also are highly vulnerable to sustained fishing pressure and habitat degradation. There are currently no laws in Hawaii forbidding the capture of mantas, making the animals vulnerable to anyone who wants to remove them.

Manta rays are also extremely popular with tourists, divers and snorkelers therefore their continued presence supports our state's economy. Without adequate protection, it is only a matter of time before they begin to disappear from our waters. It would be a shame if our citizens and visitors were only able to see manta rays in a bowl of soup or in an unsuitable and inadequate aquarium environment.

Protecting these animals will benefit the local economy by maintaining a natural and balanced ecosystem that allows people to continue to view these amazing animals in their natural habitat.

We respectfully request your support of HB 366.

Please contact me at 808-922-9910 or igibson@humanesociety.org for additional information.

karamatsu3-Leanne

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 3:33 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: ropediver@sbcglobal.net
Subject: Testimony for HB366 on 2/24/2009 2:05:00 PM

Testimony for JUD 2/24/2009 2:05:00 PM HB366

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
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Submitted on: 2/24/2009

Comments: