


From: Rep. Cindy Evans
Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 7:39 PM
To: Rep. Ken Ito; Rep. Sharon Har
Subject: HB366

LATE TESTIMONY

Aloha Rep. Ito (Ken) and Rep. Har (Sharon):

In talking to some of my constituents they mentioned the possibility that night diving with manta rays has interrupted the mating of the manta rays. This is a tourist attraction. If our population is not increasing, then maybe we should protect the manta ray like the spinner dolphins and turtles.

Regards,

Rep. Cindy Evans



LATE TESTIMONY

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 5:13 PM
To: WLOtestimony
Cc: alohapatricia@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Patricia Stillwell
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: alohapatricia@hawaii.rr.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2009

Comments:

LATE TESTIMONY

Bill: HB366

I wish to add my testimony in support of Bill HB366.

I think that manta rays are the most awesome of creatures. It was in Hawaii on the Kona Coast where my husband and I were able to realise our dream and swim with these amazing, beautiful creatures. The most wondrous thing was that they were totally wild – they chose to be there with us for those precious, precious moments. They had not been pulled by a chain, they were not caged and they were not boxed in an aquarium. We travelled to Hawaii for the sole reason to swim with the wild Manta Rays. We are not alone in this either as, manta ray ecotourism generates big tourist dollars (over 2.5 million dollars per year in revenue for the state of Hawaii in 2002). The increase in tourism over the last seven years suggests even more is generated today. This depends on a healthy population of live manta rays in Hawaii.

If you allow humans to start taking them from the wild, the population will diminish very, very quickly. Manta rays have extremely low reproductive rates. Only 2-3 new pups are observed in Kona each year. It would take a long time for captured manta rays to be replaced by natural reproduction. Manta rays do not have to be in aquarium for researchers to learn more about them. Hawaii is a perfect location for researchers to study manta rays in the wild. In addition this increased research activity would bring income into the state through increased visitor expenditure and the increased tourist dollar.

There is no reason we should allow our local manta rays to be sold to generate income for outside parties. They are worth much more to Hawaii alive and swimming in our local waters than dead or stuck in a tank on the mainland.

So many creatures suffer at the hands of man – make the right decision to stop that here. Let them go and let them justlive. Out of danger. Free to live their lives. Humans make such a big deal of being free, the right to vote etc – please do not commit these wondrous creatures to a life where they are no longer free.

Manta Pacific Research Foundation - Talking Points

Why Should we support HB366 and SB394?

Kailua-Kona, HAWAII - January 30, 2009

As you may have heard, there are two Bills in the Hawaiian State Legislature this year. A review of our website will show you that this is not our first attempt, however this year we are more hopeful than ever that we will secure some success. But it won't

happen without the support of the manta community and that's where you come in.



This year two bills have been proposed in the Hawaii Legislature that would make it illegal to capture or kill manta rays in Hawaii, HB366 and SB394. While manta rays have been fished for years in Indonesia, Baja, the Philippines, Africa, and throughout Asia, no fishery has ever existed in Hawaii. However, Hawaii has now been targeted by aquariums as a location where they can capture manta rays for husbandry experiments and for display in tanks. This may start as soon as this year. Without legislative protection, these aquariums would be able to take as many individuals from the population as they want, and not have to report on the fate of the individuals they take. Hawaii has a healthy population of manta rays, but information on the life history and movement rates suggest that they would be highly susceptible to overfishing. If we are going to protect manta rays in Hawaii, we need to do it now before fishing starts.

The first bill (HB366) is being heard in the House on Monday, but testimony needs to be submitted **24 hours in advance by Sunday** to be heard in this session. It is critical that the House knows your feelings on this matter. It is fairly easy to submit testimony on the web at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/emailtestimony/>. Please tell the representatives about your personal experiences with manta rays and why you think they deserve protection in Hawaii. Some key points you may want to consider are:

- There is currently no protection for manta rays from any type of fishing, collection, or capture in Hawaii.
- Kona is one of the best locations around the world to see manta rays in the wild. Manta rays are observed on 80% of the dives at Garden Eel Cove each year.
- Manta ray ecotourism generated over 2.5 million dollars per year in revenue for the state of Hawaii in 2002. The increase in tourism over the last seven years suggests even more is generated today. This depends on a healthy population of live manta rays in Hawaii.
- Individuals can be identified by their unique spot patterns on their belly. These pigment patterns have allowed residents to name and keep track of individuals, and has shown that many are long-time residents at certain sites.
- Manta rays are very long lived. One individual (Lefty) has been a resident in Kona since before 1979, when she was first identified as a full grown adult female.
- Only 154 manta rays have been identified along the Kona Coast since 1992, suggesting very small population sizes.
- No individual has ever been documented migrating between Kona and Maui, despite two separate photo-identification studies and two acoustic tracking studies. This suggests that each island has its own distinct population, and overfishing on one island will not be alleviated by migration of new individuals from another island.



LATE TESTIMONY

1/30/09

Testimony Regarding Manta Rays

It is so important to pass this bill protecting the manta rays of Hawaii. They are beautiful, trusting creatures that are unique and important to our ecosystem.

I own a house in Puako on the Big Island. At Christmas, four large rays visited our swimming cove and stayed there for over a week. It was easy to identify them by their scars and markings. I recognized two of them as the rays that I had swum with in May and August of 2008. They had evidently been living in other areas, but they were able to make their way back to Puako in December, bringing along with them two slightly smaller 5 foot wide rays. They let me play with them for an hour one morning and it was an amazing experience, one that I will always remember and something that I hope to share with my grandchildren in the near future. They do not seem to fear people and it would be wonderful if it could remain that way.

If researchers and aquariums start fishing in the Hawaiian Islands, we will lose many of these gentle beautiful creatures. They will become wary and perhaps leave our shoreline, they will be injured and captured and tortured by being put into a small tank. These are some of the most magnificent creatures in the islands, and we must prevent their demise.

Please support the ban on fishing or capturing the Hawaiian Manta Rays. Mahalo.

Gail Morris

Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 6:48 PM

To: WLOtestimony

Cc: [REDACTED]

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325
Testifier position:
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Trevor Lattin
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Submitted on: 2/1/2009

Comments:

I am a big fan of manta rays and am concerned about their preservation. Please consider my testimony:

There is currently no protection for manta rays from any type of fishing, collection, or capture in Hawaii.

Kona is one of the best locations around the world to see manta rays in the wild. Manta rays are observed on 80% of the dives at Garden Eel Cove each year.

Manta ray ecotourism generated over 2.5 million dollars per year in revenue for the state of Hawaii in 2002. The increase in tourism over the last seven years suggests even more is generated today. This depends on a healthy population of live manta rays in Hawaii.

Individuals can be identified by their unique spot patterns on their belly. These pigment patterns have allowed residents to name and keep track of individuals, and has shown that many are long-time residents at certain sites. Manta rays are very long lived. One individual (Lefty) has been a resident in Kona since before 1979, when she was first identified as a full grown adult female.

Only 154 manta rays have been identified along the Kona Coast since 1992, suggesting very small population sizes.

No individual has ever been documented migrating between Kona and Maui, despite two separate photo-identification studies and two acoustic tracking studies. This suggests that each island has its own distinct population, and overfishing on one island will not be alleviated by migration of new individuals from another island.

Manta rays have extremely low reproductive rates. Only 2-3 new pups are observed in Kona each year. It would take a long time for captured manta rays to be replaced by natural reproduction.

Manta rays do not have to be in aquarium for researchers to learn more about them. Hawaii is a perfect location for researchers to study manta rays in the wild.

There is no reason we should allow our local manta rays to be sold to generate income for outside parties. They are worth much more to Hawaii alive and swimming in our local waters than dead or stuck in a tank on the mainland.

Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 7:15 PM

To: WLOtestimony

Cc: [REDACTED]

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Grover Jeane

Organization: Individual

Address: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Submitted on: 2/1/2009

Comments:

I am a retired fisheries biologist who studied Kona manta rays for four years and supports this legislation to protect a valuable Hawaiian resource. Between 1994 and 1998 I worked as a scuba diver and had my own business taking tourists for manta ray dives. I conducted 400 dives with about 5,000 tourists to observe manta rays in their natural environment. I also recorded data from these dives which includes physical, biological and economic data which I am willing to make available to further research in support of protecting these creatures.

I am currently in Mexico in the Sea of Cortez, working with local sea turtle researchers. Yesterday while doing routine grocery shopping in Guaymas Mexico, I found manta rays for sale in the seafood department of the local store. It was shocking to see the skinned wings frozen and ready for eating.

Is this what we are to expect in Hawaii?

I want to have this testimony provided to each of the 13 members of the Committee on Water, Land and Ocean Resources

Grover Jeane

Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 9:40 PM

To: WLOtestimony

Cc: [REDACTED]

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Jeff Leicher

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Submitted on: 2/1/2009

Comments:

I support protection for manta rays from being killed or collected. They are a gentle and important part of our ecosystem for many reasons. In addition to their important niche in our environment, they contribute greatly to our economy through tourism. It would be very short-sighted to allow a few to profit in the near-term by harvesting these animals. They provide a great opportunity for sustainable marine tourism. Thousands of divers a year come to see these amazing animals. I own a dive business in Kona (Jack's Diving Locker), which has conducted manta ray night dives since 1984. Manta Ray biology and life-cycle make them very susceptible to overfishing, and the time to protect them is now, before the threat becomes well-established. Although Hawaii has not historically been pro-active in protecting resources like this, it would be the wise thing to do. Some local business, as well as the rays, would not survive if the mantas are wiped out. Thank you.

Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 10:02 PM

To: WLOtestimony

Cc: [REDACTED]

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Nina Monasevitch

Organization: Individual

Address:

Phone:

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Submitted on: 2/1/2009

Comments:

Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 11:38 PM

To: WLOtestimony

Cc: [REDACTED]

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Harry Donenfeld

Organization: Individual

Address:

Phone:

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Submitted on: 2/1/2009

Comments:

Please consider this bill with the greatest of care. We are the stewards of our planet and these islands need to be the hallmark for our planetary success. If we truly believe in the spirit of Aloha and belief that these islands are special, then we need to enact laws like this to protect what belongs here.

Secondly, these particular animals are exquisite, harmless and the most graceful of creatures. There is no sustainable fishery here, the Manta Rays can easily be taken in numbers that will effect our tourism, economy and worst of all the, the way the world looks at us. We can not afford to let this stand. We must pass HB366.

Peace & Aloha,

Harry Donenfeld

Testimony for HB366 on 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM

mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]

Sent: Monday, February 02, 2009 2:15 AM

To: WLOtestimony

Cc: [REDACTED]

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony for WLO 2/2/2009 9:00:00 AM HB366

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Susan Millward

Organization: Individual

Address:

Phone: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Submitted on: 2/2/2009

Comments:

I am a regular visitor to Hawaii and come to the state to enjoy its wildlife. I am an avid scuba diver and while I have not dived and seen manta rays in Hawaii I have in Yap, FSM. Manta rays are the most incredible sea creatures that I have ever had the privilege of being near.

The dive operators of Yap are particularly protective of their manta rays with divers having to remain motionless at far away from the animals so as not to alarm them.

Hawaii should lead in preserving these magnificent animals and prohibiting their harassment, capture and harm. I understand that Kona has a good habitat for manta rays and that the area generates significant income from diving and other tourism associated with the manta rays.

Please pass HB366 to ensure the manta rays protection for future generations.

Testimony from Dr. Kim Holland, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology

Committee on Water, Land and Ocean Resources

Hearing on Monday, Jan 2nd at 0900, Rm 325

LATE TESTIMONY

Concerning HB 366 “Relating to Manta Rays”

Dear committee members,

I am on the faculty at the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, University of Hawaii where I specialize in studying the movements and behavior of Hawaii’s fishes and sharks. This is my own private testimony.

I am strongly opposed to HB 366 because it is not necessary for the protection of Hawaii’s manta rays and it would have the negative effect of prohibiting legitimate research and educational activities. Further, this piecemeal approach to resource management is bad public policy.

There is no imminent or plausible threat to Hawaii’s manta ray populations and, if such an unlikely scenario were to develop, the are existing ways of shutting those activities down. On the other hand, Hawaii’s manta ray population can certainly withstand the very low numbers of removals that would be needed to support legitimate research and educational goals. These could include collecting some animals for display in aquariums. It is widely recognized that aquariums serve an important role in raising the public’s awareness of the importance of wise husbandry of marine ecosystems and therefore the harvest of very low numbers of animals for this purpose could have a net overall benefit for manta populations. Similarly, legitimate research activities also play a crucial role in ensuring the future wellbeing of our marine creatures. Thus Bill would prohibit those activities.

It is commendable that people are concerned about the well being of marine species but this Bill is unnecessary, is poor government policy and could have deleterious impacts on legitimate uses of our marine resources.