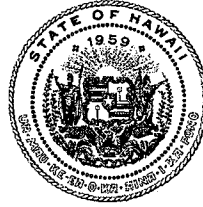
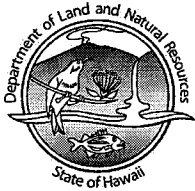


SR 117

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Thursday, April 2, 2009
3:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 171/SENATE RESOLUTION 117
URGING THE STATE OF HAWAII TO RECOGNIZE THE THIRD SATURDAY OF
EVERY APRIL AS "HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL DAY" AND TO COORDINATE THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE HAWAIIAN MONK
SEAL WITH THE FEDERAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 171/Senate Resolution 117 urges the recognition of the third Saturday in April of each year as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day." The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports these resolutions as the Department believes it is fully consistent with our goal of fostering community-based conservation of Hawaiian Monk Seals and other indigenous wildlife species.

The Department works closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service and National Marine Sanctuary Program, and numerous conservation organizations and community groups to promote the protection and recovery of our critically endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals. For example, with funding from NOAA, Department staff on Kau'ai manages a network of over 50 volunteers who set up "seal protection zones" around seals "hauled-out" on shore. These roped-off areas help ensure the protection of the seals and the safety of beach goers. Our Kau'ai seal response network typically conducts more than 400 such responses every year. Department staff also manages a similar NOAA-funded seal response network on Hawai'i Island. In addition, Department staff across the State, coordinates rescue responses for injured or entangled seals, and conduct a wide variety of research, education and outreach activities devoted to monk seal conservation.

The Department believes designating a state Hawaiian Monk Seal Day would help raise public awareness of the plight of the seal and bolster public support for seal conservation efforts. 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.

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
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kahea-alliance@hawaii.rr.com

**SR 117 Hawaiian Monk Seal Day
Room 225, 3:15pm
April 2, 2009**

Aloha Chairman Senator Gabbard and members of the Committee on Energy and Environment,

Mahalo nui loa for hearing SR 117 relating to establishing every third Saturday of April as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day" in the State of Hawai'i and to coordinate the implementation of the recovery plan of the Hawaiian monk seal with federal and county governments. **KAHEA: The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance supports every effort to protect and revitalize the endangered, endemic Hawaiian monk seal.**

KAHEA is a network of over 6,000 people representing kūpuna, cultural practitioners, scientists, educators, and concerned citizens working to protect Hawai'i's unique natural and cultural resources. KAHEA has been active in advocating for permanent and adequate protection of the 'Ilioholoikauaua, throughout the entire Hawaiian archipelago.

The Hawaiian monk seal is on the verge of extinction. Though it has been on the endangered species list since 1976, its population continues to rapidly decline due to excessive hunting, interactions with commercial fishing boats, entanglement with abandoned fishing gear, and military activities. More must be done to prevent the loss of this 15 million-year-old species that holds such significant cultural importance for Hawaii.

With the naming of "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day," the state can help to raise public awareness about the plight of our seal and the many efforts underway to assist them. Currently, the federal government conducts annual statewide seal counts every April. In addition, on Kauai the state has funded a monk seal coordinator, Maui County has taken steps to prevent urban sprawl and protect important shoreline habitats for the seal, and communities throughout Hawaii conduct regular beach clean-ups to reduce the threat of entanglements. Every effort must be made to ensure the recovery of the Hawaiian monk seal population, especially coordinating between federal, state, and local initiatives. The official distinction of the third Saturday in April as "Hawaiian Monk Seal Day" can only benefit the efforts to make the public aware of the threats to monk seals in Hawaii and aid in their recovery.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony,

Marti Townsend
Program Director



Marine Conservation Biology Institute

William Chandler, Vice President of Government Affairs

April 2, 2009

The Honorable Mike Gabbard
Chair, Senate Energy and Environment Committee
Hawaii State Legislature
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Chairman Gabbard,

Marine Conservation Biology Institute is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with offices in Washington, Hawaii, California and Washington, DC. Our mission is to preserve marine biodiversity. Currently, we have two projects in Hawaii: (1) protecting and restoring the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and (2) restoring the Hawaiian monk seal to ecological health throughout the state.

A more vigorous federal recovery effort for the highly endangered monk seal is now underway with the unanimous support of Hawaii's congressional delegation. I urge you to establish a monk seal day in Hawaii as a symbol of the need to preserve this special and rare animal--the world's only coral ecosystem seal. The Hawaiian monk seal is an asset for the state culturally, economically and ecologically. Proclaiming an annual monk seal day will be a powerful symbol of the state's commitment to protecting and maintaining its cultural and natural heritage.

I respectfully request your committee to move **SCR171/SR117** towards enactment.

Sincerely,

William Chandler
Vice President for Government Affairs

From: Barbara Beasley [bwbeasley@comcast.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2009 4:37 PM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: PLEASE SUPPORT MONK SEAL DAY (SCR 171/ SR 117)

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair
Thursday, April 2, 2009 3:15 p.m
Conference Room 225
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Senator Mike Gabbard and Senator J.Kalani English:

I am writing this email in support of establishing "Monk Seal Day". The unique Hawaiian ecosystems provide a model for the world to better understand ocean conservation given endangered species like the Hawaiian Monk Seal (the most endangered pinniped in the United States). These ancient creatures remind us that others have come long before us and we have a responsibility to maintain this balance.

I volunteer with the Marine Mammal Center which helps support Monk Seal Recovery efforts. Our mission: We recognize human interdependence with marine mammals and their importance as sentinels of the ocean environment, the health of which is essential for all life.

And, as a professional in change leadership, I have learned the importance of rituals and ceremony to build awareness and connect diverse communities to drive key mindset shifts. To that end, Monk Seal Day would be a great opportunity for all to honor this incredible marine mammal unique to Hawaii while inspiring action to protect our marine environment today.

Again, please support SCR 171/SR 117 to establish "Monk Seal Day". Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Beasley
2376 Kamole Road
Kealia, HI

From: Jennifer Hill [jenniferamhill@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2009 8:10 AM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: MONK SEAL DAY (SCR 171/ SR 117)

Aloha,

As a resident of Kauai, I believe it is urgent that the State of Hawaii coordinate with NOAA and the volunteer and NGO networks to help save our endemic Hawaiian Seal from extinction. This effort is a positive collaboration to build resident and visitor responsibility for seal recovery. It is a great opportunity to develop more awareness of Hawaii's unique endangered species and the need for more care of our larger ocean's ecosystems. I understand this to be an educational effort which will not require funding.

It my sincere hope that these resolutions will pass.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Hill
Kapaa, Hawaii

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 2, 2009 3:15 p.m

Conference Room 225

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Testimony in support of SCR 171/ SR 117, resolutions to establish a “Monk Seal Day” to coincide with NOAA’s Monk Seal Count Day, the third Saturday in April.

Aloha, I am a volunteer with the Kauai Monk Seal Conservation Hui. Our activities include:

1. Setting up barriers around Monk Seals that have hauled out on our beaches in the morning to rest and digest the food they have consumed during the night, to protect the seals and the public.
2. Provide education to both visitors and locals about the Monk Seals habits and lifestyle.
3. Set up barriers around newborn pups and their moms and maintain a constant vigil (5 to 7 weeks) until the pup is weaned and the mom leaves to replenish the fat she has transferred to her pup.
4. Collect photos and keep records of seals haulout locations and identify the seals.
5. Participate in NOAA’s Seal Count to determine the approximate numbers of seals present in the main Hawaiian Islands.

Establishing a “Monk Seal Day” to coincide with this count will help raise awareness of the plight of one of Hawaii’s most endangered marine mammals, and recognize the efforts of many who are passionate about this Hawaiian animal. I urge you all to play a part in this amazing animal’s survival by designating “Monk Seal Day”

Mahalo,

David H. Leopold

Volunteer and Educator

Kauai Monk Seal Conservation Hui

Submitted via email on March 27, 2009

From: Kelsey McDonald [KMcDonal@ScrippsCollege.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2009 6:13 PM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: Monk Seal Day (SCR 171/ SR 117)

I am writing to support making April 18 official Monk Seal Day. Monk seals are a vulnerable and unique part of Hawai'i's ecosystem. Monk seals' survival is dependent on public awareness, and creating an official monk seal day would be an important step to further public education. Please help dedicate this day to this special Hawaiian mammal.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kelsey McDonald

From: Franinkauai@aol.com
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2009 5:30 PM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: HawaiianMonkSeal@msn.com; paddala@hotmail.com; kmcdonal@scrippscollege.edu
Subject: Monk Seal Day

To:
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

I would like to endorse the proposal to make April 18, 2009 official Monk Seal Day. (SCR 171/ SR 117)

For the past two years I have been involved in the annual monk seal counts, volunteered as a member of the monk seal emergency response team and have helped guard baby monk seals and their mothers during the time of nursing. Not only have I learned more about these marvelous creatures, but it has given me and my two children the opportunity to help educate both visitors and kama'aina about the plight of the monk seal and it's vulnerability. Official Monk Seal Day will help bring more awareness to our people about how special these creatures are and how fragile is their existence today.

Aloha,

Fran

Fran McDonald, RA, ABR
Cell: 808-635-0165
FraninKauai@aol.com
www.FransKauaiRealEstate.com



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1941-B Poipu Road
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Office: 808-742-7561 Fax: 808-742-7685
www.MakaiProperties.com

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From: Michele Olry [m_olry@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 8:47 PM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: PLEASE SUPPORT MONK SEAL DAY (SCR 171/ SR 117)

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair
Thursday, April 2, 2009 3:15 p.m
Conference Room 225
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Senator Mike Gabbard and Senator J.Kalani English:

I am writing this email in support of establishing "Monk Seal Day". I have worked with other volunteers for many years to take care of the critically endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals on Kaua'i. Daily we rope off the seals to protect them and allow them to rest on the beach and raise their pups. These seals are now "red listed" and their numbers are decreasing drastically from only 1,100. They are the most endangered marine mammals in US waters. This resolution represents an opportunity to move forward to save one of Hawaii's more endangered species.

By establishing a Monk Seal Day, this will greatly enhance our efforts to educate and encourage residents and visitors alike to care about these special seals and support conservation efforts....not only on our local beaches, but throughout its marine habitat.

As species around the world are becoming more endangered due to many impacts...this small effort can make a huge difference, and set an example of Hawaii excelling in its stewardship of native species.

Again, please support SCR 171/SR 117 to establish "Monk Seal Day". Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha nui loa,

Michele Olry

From: Schumacher, Tim W [tim.w.schumacher@intel.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 2:32 PM
To: ENETestimony; Schumacher, Tim W
Subject: In support of SCR171 and SR117

Re: SCR 171 / SR117

To the Hawaii Legislature:

I was contacted by a person who knows well about Hawaiian monk seals, notifying me that there is an item of business in your April 2nd agenda involving monk seal awareness.

Why should I care? Because I think the state should do more than it does to protect its marine resources. I am a frequent visitor and snorkeler / free diver in Hawaii. While I live on the mainland, I own a home in Manoa, and frequent the state when I can.

Sure, I've had the usual encounters of monk seals on land, on Kauai and Kaena Point. But last September, I was in the water at Sharks Cove, over in a deep area, and a monk seal encountered me. I say he encountered me because he was looking at me, hanging with me. I have no idea how long he floated behind me before I looked back to see him.

He came very close, and shadowed me for a while, ultimately hissing at me and herding me out of his/her territory. I returned the next day, and saw from a distance that he really was territorial. So I didn't go there for a few weeks.

I don't understand why Hawaii isn't stricter about marine preserve protection, because in those exact same waters, I find occasional spear fishermen. I respect the locals. I understand that I am an outsider, who doesn't have a legacy claim to your land or waters, other than as any American citizen who buys a home there would. But it is backward, it is uninformed to treat the environment like it has the resiliency and recuperative powers to right itself against the stresses of man.

I came to Hawaii the very first time in 1995. And I "discovered" Sharks Cove all by myself. No one told me where to go. It just looked like a good spot to get in the water. That is an irrelevant fact, except that since 1994, when I first went there, the deterioration of the land at Shark's Cove is dramatic. Daily scuba classes mean daily trips of heavy tanks. Whereas there used to be trees, and the rocks (ex-reef) were too sharp for bare feet, now, the rocks are like sandstone, rounded and rounding off daily. I would think that the scuba tour franchises would do a better job protecting what they've got, but often, people are shortsighted and just care about what they get out of something, and not whether something nice will be around in the future.

Anything the state does to recognize its marine resources, and anything it does to induce its population to help do that is better than a status quo in which disrespecting its preserves is seen as okay.

As for your monk seal population...based on the fact that in my personal life, sightings and encounters has gone up, well, maybe you can bring that population back the way conservationists are bringing back the condor. Species can come back if humans don't intervene.

Count me on the side that that not only wants to protect monk seals, but also on the side that thinks government can be good at helping us make our world better. There's really no other entity besides government to try and help this mammal survive.

Sincerely,
Tim Schumacher
Principal Engineer
Intel Corporation

From: DEBBIE FRIEDMAN [djfbsk@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2009 9:36 AM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: scr 171/sr117 monk seal day

Aloha to whom it may concern, I support the idea that Monk Seal Day should be on the same day as Monk Seal Count Day. I feel it is very important to continue to educate people and keep reminding them to be aware of the danger of extinction that our Hawaiian Monk Seals are in. We need to keep reminding people how important and special and unique these animals are in our lives and in our environment. We need to keep them in the forefront and let people know how lucky they are that we can share Hawaii's ocean and shoreline with them, and how we need to protect them from harm. Dogs, fishnets, hooks, boat propellers, etc are a constant problem. Let's keep reminding people about this important issue, our wonderful seals. Mahalo, Debbie Friedman 808-639-1390 po box 968 Kalaheo, HI. 96741 djfbsk@yahoo.com