

HCR 216

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

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**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
and**

TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**Tuesday, April 20, 2010
10:45 AM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

**In consideration of
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 216 -
EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR HAWAII TO PURSUE THE BID TO HOST THE 2016
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE WORLD
CONSERVATION CONGRESS**

Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) is in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 216, expressing support for Hawaii to pursue the bid to host the 2016 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress (WCC). Hawaii has a unique opportunity to showcase our national conservation ethic and program in 2012 when the IUCN holds their next WCC in Jeju, Korea. Many in the American conservation community feel it is finally time for the United States to host a WCC and that Hawaii is the ideal venue to do this.

An IUCN WCC in Hawaii could be enormously successful for many reasons, not the least of which is the rich diversity of island ecosystems it can share with participants and the model conservation programs we have implemented here including the nationally recognized Watershed Partnerships, Hawaii Invasive Species Council, and many endangered species restoration programs. Hawaii has a remarkably high percentage of biological endemism, an extensive network of marine protected areas, including our newest Marine National Monument, Papahānaumokuākea, and two MAB sites (Haleakala and Volcanoes National Park) all within reach. The WCC will place world attention on conservation issues related to the preservation of Hawaii's indigenous host culture and unique native biodiversity.

The economic stimulus as well as the international attention that the WCC would bring to Hawaii and our nation is substantial. The Congress could be key in promoting Hawaii as a world-class conference venue.

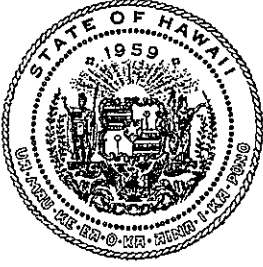
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

For the above reasons, the Department is in strong support of Hawaii pursuing the bid to host the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress.



Hawai'i Tourism Authority

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Testimony of
Mike McCartney
President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
H.C.R. 216
**Expressing Support for Hawaii to Pursue the Bid to Host the 2016
International Union for Conservation of Nature
World Conservation Congress.**
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Transportation, International and Intergovernmental Affairs
Tuesday, April 20, 2010
10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 225

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly supports H.C.R. 216, which expresses support for Hawai'i to pursue the bid to host the 2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress.

HTA's Strategic Marketing Initiative in the *Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan: 2005-2015*, the State's 10-year tourism plan, is to develop marketing programs that contribute to sustainable economic growth which includes the development of the meetings and convention business. In addition to being a higher spending visitor, business visitors attending business-related meetings require additional services, such as staging, rentals, and transportation.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is considered to be the world's largest and most diverse conservation event which brings together leaders from the public and private sectors to discuss issues related to the environment and sustainability. The event has the potential to attract 8,000 participants, representing 64,320 room nights and generating significant tax revenues. If held in Hawai'i, the event could also the state as a desirable destination for other key conservation-related events.

The Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC) is a world-class facility that can provide all of the services required by convention planners, and that has accommodated other large meetings and conferences such as the American Dental Association in 2009, Sweet Adelines International Annual Conference in 2008 and the Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting in 2008.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Testimony of Trisha Kehaulani Watson, JD, PhD
Supporting H.C.R. 216: Expressing Support for Hawai'i to Pursue the Bid to Host
the 2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation
Congress
Senate Committees on Energy and Environment (ENE) and Transportation,
International and Intergovernmental Affairs (TIA)
April 19, 2010, 11:45AM, Room 225

I represent a volunteer working group of members of the conservation and tourism industries who are collaborating on an effort to bring the IUCN to Hawai'i in 2016.

We are in strong support of this resolution.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) www.iucn.org is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network, with more than 1,000 government and non-profit member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. IUCN brings together governments, nonprofits, scientists, companies, and community organizations to help the world make better conservation and sustainable development decisions.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is the largest and most important international conservation event. Held every four years, the Congress aims to improve how we manage our natural environment for human, social and economic development. Nearly 7,000 world leaders from all the public and private sectors come together to discuss, debate and decide solutions for the world's most pressing environment and development issues. This body deals with how to protect the world's most important species and habitats in the face of such things as climate change, poverty, war, social and economic change.

In more than 60 years, there has never been a World Conservation Congress held in the United States.

Attendance at the WCC includes leaders in policy and conservation, heads of nations and indigenous groups, prominent world citizens, Nobel laureates and scientists, as well as leaders in communications and alternative energy. It is the kind of event that can leave a lasting impression on attendees and legacy in the State of Hawai'i; particularly as a follow up to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Hawai'i in 2011.

Hawai'i is at the leading edge of addressing both the threats and the solutions to environmental protection and sustainable management of our natural resources. Hosting the World Conservation Congress in 2016 will give the islands an opportunity to showcase the knowledge and contributions of many sectors of our community in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, as well as feature the critical role that biodiversity and conservation plays in the economic viability of Hawai'i, the Pacific region, and the world.

I have attached a briefing paper prepared by our working group for your review.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important resolution.

**IUCN World Conservation Congress
2016**

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Briefing Paper

May 2009

Purpose

Hawai'i is widely perceived as a popular tourist destination, rather than a outstanding location to hold major working conferences such as the IUCN World Conservation Congress and others that relate to conservation, culture, and the environment. Hawai'i is centrally located for participants from Asia and the Pacific. And Honolulu affords all the expected amenities and security that attendees, organizers, and governments would require. **It is the hope of the local planning committee that all government, cultural, tourism, and other authorities will help facilitate a successful bid to host the 2016 IUCN WCC in Hawai'i.**

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

IUCN's Activities

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, was founded in 1948 and is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

The work of IUCN work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. The Union's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, Switzerland; its North American headquarters are located in Washington DC. Headquarters in Oceania are located in Suva, Fiji.

Governance and Funding

IUCN is structured into six Commissions with members from eight world regions. One such Commission, the Species Survival Commission, **includes a Specialist Group on Hawaiian Plants**. Of the eight regions, one encompasses Oceania.

There are 87 State members (nations) officially represented and 25 government agencies without State membership. The official US State representative is the US Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.¹

Funding for the IUCN comes from governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations, member organizations and corporations.² The IUCN holds official observer status at the United Nations General Assembly.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress

By statute, the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) convenes every four years and is hosted by a member State. The IUCN Congress has never met in the United States.

¹ The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Forest Service (USFS), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are also member agencies, along with 24 International and 50 National NGO members from US-based organizations.

² The U.S. Department of State, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S Forest Service and the National Park Service, have been important funders of past Congresses, including most recently in Barcelona, Spain in 2008.

The WCC is a two-part event. The first is the World Conservation Forum, a 5 day event open to all registrants who discuss major sustainable development issues, propose solutions and facilitate the sharing of information and experiences. The second part is the Members' Assembly, a 5 day deliberative session on policy open to official delegates of member organizations. The entire Congress lasts almost two weeks and attracts some approximately 8,000 delegates from around the world.

Attendees and active participants include world leaders in policy and conservation, scientists, leaders in communications and alternative energy, indigenous groups, prominent world citizens, Nobel laureates and others.

Why Hawai'i should host the WCC in 2016

President Barack Obama has indicated a desire to change the course of environmental policies and practices by the US becoming a leader in the world conservation community. He has initiated a change in the US stance on the Kyoto Protocol and in global warming dialogues. The IUCN WCC is in alignment with **President Obama's environmental agenda**.

We believe that the IUCN World Conservation Congress is an opportunity for **transformational change globally**, within the nation, and for the State of Hawai'i. With the increased attention being paid by world governments, conservation NGOs, researchers, and the public to marine and island systems, Hawai'i offers an outstanding site for the next World Conservation Congress.

Hawai'i is superbly poised to host this highest level of dialogue for the IUCN WCC. Our **geographic location** makes the state a bridge to Oceania and Asia. It would not be lost on the rest of the world that Hawai'i is also where our current President grew up surrounded by a richly diverse cultural community; an island in Oceania. We are confident that an event in Hawai'i will be enormously successful for many reasons that are important to the IUCN.

Unparalleled Natural Diversity

- Rich diversity of ecosystems and habitats
- Active volcanoes and ancient volcanic flows
- Unique native flora of which 90% are endemic (occurring nowhere else on Earth)
- Two Man and the Biosphere Program sites (Haleakalā and Volcanoes National Park)
- Network of marine sanctuaries, including the recently established Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument whose 362,580-square-kilometers exceeds the size of Australia's Great Barrier Reef).

Critical Conservation Issues

- Greatest number of endangered species in the US
- More than 300 endangered species; more per square kilometer than anywhere on Earth
- Greatest risks of losing species every day due to invasive species and the ever increasing pressures of a growing human population
- First state in the US to create a united body on invasive species control that coordinates federal, state, local and NGO efforts

Unique Cultural Diversity

In addition to its natural diversity, the Hawaiian Islands boast one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world. The Native Hawaiian people (along with their Polynesians cousins) have mingled and mixed with more recent immigrants from all parts of Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

The presence of Hawaiians, the islands' indigenous people, is evident throughout the landscape. The Hawaiian people, their language and culture, like the islands' endemic species, are turning from an era of great loss to one of renewal.

A Quality Venue

Honolulu is world-renowned as a visitor destination and has the capability and the facilities required to stage the IUCN Congress. Each island provides a broad selection of activities for pre- and post-Congress experiences.

Benefits to Hawai'i's conservation community and to the State's economy

A significant portion of conservation funds in Hawai'i depend on the health of the tourist industry. The IUCN World Conservation Congress presents a matchless opportunity to demonstrate this by changing the direction and focus of tourism and increasing conservation dollars in Hawaii, in two ways:

1. By shifting the focus from attracting individual visitors to attracting a broad array of conventions, conferences and workshops, the state brings in more revenue for less and can better manage tourist activity to reduce the environmental impact of the industry.
2. Hosting the WCC in Hawai'i would clearly demonstrate the connection between the human action and the survival of the natural world.

Alignment with 2016 IUCN WCC Issues

The focus for WCC 2016 will likely be Oceania. Major conservation issues at IUCN 2016 in Oceania would include:

Global climate change

Sea level rise threatens to displace whole cultural communities and nations throughout Oceania and the world, with additional impacts to the unique biodiversity of those islands and reef systems. For Hawai'i, much of the coastal lands will be underwater, but how it will affect the near-shore reef systems, important cultural sites, and other areas is still unknown.

Population pressure, economic and social change

Marine and terrestrial habitat, and native flora and fauna continue to decline as a result of human overpopulation and overuse. Aquatic and marine habitats are severely challenged throughout the region. Soil erosion and severe vegetation loss in tropical island nations has had tremendous impacts on near-shore reef health and on people's livelihoods. The interdependence of island nations on the natural resources that surround them and with each other has never been more apparent.

Invasive species

Habitat degradation and species decline due to invasive species has advanced rapidly. Hawai'i, Guam, Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia make the issue most visible, but alien species affect all of Oceania. A significant number of the 100 Worst Global Invaders are negatively impacting the biological and cultural integrity of this region.

Cultural integrity

Many Pacific island nations, including Hawai'i, are concerned with broader impacts of all the above factors on cultural survival and integrity, sacred sites, and the ability of nations to protect endangered species and culturally-important food crops.

The WCC 2016 Selection Process

The IUCN World Conservation Congress will announce the venue for its 2012 event in May of 2009, six months after the end of the last Congress in 2008 which was held in Barcelona, Spain. Countries interested in hosting begin their planning fully four years out from the selection date which is an additional three years prior to the event. Thus, during 2009, will Hawai'i begin in earnest to enlist the support of its congressional delegation, the US Department of State, and our State and County governments to pull together the resources, commitments, and team necessary to complete the bid process.

Submitting a Successful Bid

A successful bid requires the full support of Hawai'i's congressional delegation, the US Department of State, the Hawai'i State Legislature, the State of Hawai'i, and the City and County of Honolulu. The following statutory criterion set by the IUCN must also be met:

Admittance to Hawaii of all qualified participants and the materials and equipment necessary for the conference.

The IUCN requires that all qualified conference participants be allowed to attend the WCC. Because of the sensitive political realities between nations, Hawai'i provides a singularly simple solution for several reasons:

- Geographic isolation of the Hawaiian Islands significantly reduces the chances of outside disruption and facilitates security screening
- Distance from the mainland aids in protecting Congress participants and the nation
- Major security and military facilities (e.g., Hickam Air Force Base)
- Hawai'i-only visas (or other such program) could minimize security risks for the US mainland

Three Issues to Consider

Entry Requirements

As described above, IUCN will expect all delegates to be admitted.

Geopolitics within Oceania

It will be important to build consensus among the nations of the region in support of Hawai'i as an appropriate host site for the WCC that will benefit all of Oceania. This will require an indigenous dialogue as opposed to competition, a process which mirrors the selection process within the IUCN.

Competing bids from other US sites

If the United States is invited to bid, Hawai'i will compete with other states and convention cities throughout the US, several of which have strong connections to biodiversity and marine conservation.

Current Progress

The congressionally-established National Tropical Botanical Garden, the University of Hawai'i's Lyon Arboretum, and E kūpaku ka 'āina - the Hawai'i Land Restoration Institute, initiated discussion in 2008 regarding hosting the WCC with the IUCN, as well as with state and federal agencies. The Hawai'i Tourism Authority and Hawai'i Convention Center have joined this effort as full partners and have committed to providing major support to bring the IUCN WCC to Honolulu.

To date we have opened a dialogue with US Department of State (Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; and Consular Affairs).

The following broad group of federal, state, NGO and grassroots conservation and cultural organizations have recently joined us in support.

Supporting Organizations

American Public Gardens Association	Mālama Hawai'i
Bishop Museum	Missouri Botanical Garden
Botanical Society of America	National Tropical Botanical Garden
Center for Plant Conservation	The Nature Conservancy Hawai'i
E kūpaku ka 'āina - Hawai'i Land Restoration Institute)	Smithsonian Institution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botany Department
Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation	State Department of Land and Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Hawai'i Invasive Species Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Island Invasive Species Committee 	University of Hawai'i <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harold L. Lyon Arboretum • Botany Department
Hawai'i Convention Center	US Department of Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry • Plant Quarantine Branch
Hawai'i Tourism Authority	US Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Islands Field Office
Kamehameha Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Division 	US Geological Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center • National Office

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Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.C.R. 216 Expressing Support for Hawai'i to Pursue the Bid to Host the
2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Transportation, International & Intergovernmental Affairs
April 20, 2010, 10:45AM, Room 225

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawai'i's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i supports H.C.R. 216.

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