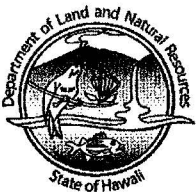


LATE TESTIMONY

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 House Committee on
WATER, LAND AND OCEAN RESOURCES**

**Monday, March 8, 2010
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2441, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Senate Bill 2441, Senate Draft 2 would establish the knowing or intentional taking of a Hawaiian monk seal as a class C felony with a fine of up to \$50,000. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the need for better deterrence and stricter penalties for harassment or taking of Hawaiian monk seals, given recent incidents involving this endangered species. The Department supports this measure with a recommendation that the effective date be amended to "upon approval".

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
LAND
STATE PARKS



LATE TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RESOURCES

Date: Monday, March 8, 2010

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 325

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2441, relating to endangered species

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Har and members of the committee:

My name is Kiana Kauwe and I am working on the Save Our Seal Campaign. I am in strong **support** of SB 2441 which establishes the crime of intentional or knowing taking of a Hawaiian monk seal as a class C felony.

I am outraged and deeply saddened that three seals were shot and killed this past year. In April and May, there were two back-to-back shootings on Kauai; one male and the other a pregnant female. The death of the female was especially sad because she carried a baby almost to full term. When including this dead fetus, four monk seals have been intentionally killed this past year. This female RK06 was in her mid-teens and had given birth to 5 pups in the past and was pregnant with her sixth. She was an important breeder and her death was a loss to the entire population. Lastly, in December a male monk seal was found apparently shot and floating off of Molokai.

It is critical that our legislature take action against these seal killings. The Hawaiian monk seal population is so critically endangered that every intentional killing is a sad loss to the species' recovery. Increased penalties would serve as a deterrent for future killings. It sends a strong message that we will no longer allow this senseless violence against our beloved and endangered seal.

The Hawaiian monk seal's primary habitat is in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) where their population is rapidly declining at approximately 4% each year. Numerous threats to the population include but are not limited to food limitation, marine debris entanglement, climate change and shark predation. All of these threats disproportionately affect juvenile survival. Less than 1 in 5 pups survive to adulthood.

The hope for the species lies here, with us in the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI). The MHI population is slowly growing and the animals are much healthier than those in the NWHI. With this hope comes the need for greater stewardship and protections. Thus, it is critical for the survival of the seal that we develop a culture of cohabitation that does not tolerate any kind of inappropriate or violent interactions with this species. Hawaii's people must understand the severe nature of the rules of enforcement for a species so fragile and on the verge of extinction.

I ask these committees to support SB2441 and show that our legislature is committed to helping in the recovery of our critically endangered Hawaiian monk seal, our official state mammal.

Save Our Seal Campaign Organizations

Marine Conservation Biology Institute * The Snorkel Bob Foundation * Firedoll Foundation * Conservation Council for Hawaii
KAHEA The Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance * Maui Tomorrow * Center for Biological Diversity * Surfrider Foundation
Sierra Club * Hawaii Audubon Society * Earthtrust Hawaii * Lost Fish Coalition * Malama O Puna * Save Our Seas * Life of the Land
Greenpeace Foundation Hawaii * Hanalei Watershed Hui * Hui Ho'omalulu I ka Aina