

SCR 151



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

30 March 2010

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Hawaii State Capitol
415 Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senate Committee on Tourism

Dear Senators Gabbard and Nishihara:

The Marine Mammal Commission, an independent federal agency with oversight responsibilities for marine mammal research and conservation, strongly supports the adoption of Senate Congressional Resolution 151. The resolution calls for the development of public service announcements for use on commercial passenger flights to Hawaii. Such announcements would focus on the importance of protecting the state's unique and fragile ecosystems and wildlife. In part, the resolution requests that the Hawaii Tourism Authority, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, develop public service announcements that specifically include information on Hawaiian monk seals and how people should behave around them.

Hawaiian monk seals are the most endangered seal in the United States, and their conservation represents one of the nation's most pressing marine mammal conservation issues. Reoccupation of the main Hawaiian Islands by the seals is vital if the species is to avoid extinction. This reoccupation may be undermined by unintended harassment by well-meaning, but uninformed people using public beaches on which seals haul out. People who do not expect to find seals resting on beaches are likely to approach them too closely. Such disturbance could disrupt essential behaviors, such as resting, molting, and pupping, and expose people to the risk of being bitten. A public service announcement on all arriving flights would ensure that visitors have the information necessary to avoid such disturbance and possible injuries. For that reason, the Marine Mammal Commission strongly supports adoption of Senate Congressional Resolution 151.

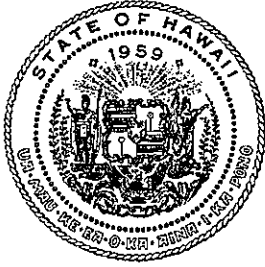
The National Marine Fisheries Service, in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, has lead responsibility for the conservation and recovery of Hawaiian monk seals. To ensure that visitors are given appropriate advice on how to behave if they encounter seals, the Commission suggests that the proposed resolution be modified to direct the Hawaii Tourism Authority to consult with those two agencies when developing the public service announcements.

This resolution is a very important and constructive action, and we hope that it will be approved. Please do not hesitate to call if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen".

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Hawai'i Convention Center, 1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815
Website: www.hawaiitourismauthority.org

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LINDA LINGLE
Governor

MIKE MCCARTNEY
President and
Chief Executive Officer

Testimony of
Mike McCartney
President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
S.C.R 151
Requesting the Development and Airing of
Public Service Announcements on Commercial
Passenger Air Flights to the State on the
Importance of Caring for the State's Unique and Fragile Ecosystem.

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Senate Committee on Tourism
Tuesday, March 30, 2010
2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 225

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) opposes S.C.R 151, which requests the HTA to work in cooperation with the Department of Transportation to develop public service announcements on commercial passenger air flights to Hawai'i about Hawai'i ecosystems with information focusing on the Hawaiian monk seal.

While the HTA recognizes the need to protect the State's unique and fragile ecosystem, we feel that the proposed means to achieve the protection of endangered species may do little if anything to address this important problem. As such, the HTA would like to make the following points:

- As part of the Hawai'i State Tourism Strategic Plan: 2005-2015 which includes a Natural Resources Initiative, the HTA works with others including DLNR to manage, improve, and protect Hawai'i's natural environment and areas frequented by visitors and with its Natural Resources Advisory Group (NRAG) to develop and prioritize the programs in its natural environment initiatives. This includes providing support for rangers and volunteers to provide information on proper ways to interact with Hawai'i's wildlife.
- In the February 1, 2010 article in the Honolulu Advertiser reported that the biggest problem in the decline of the monk seal population is poor juvenile survival. According to the article, this is because, in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument where most of the monk seal population is, juveniles are starving to death. Other threats to the seal population cited in the article were entanglement in marine debris, loss of haul-out and pupping beaches, disease outbreak, low genetic diversity, and other causes. The HTA believes that development of public service announcements to be shown on in-bound flights may do little to enhance the monk seal population.

- To the best of our knowledge, the airlines do not do public service announcements of this type. Most programs shown on commercial passenger flights are considered advertisements, for which there is a charge. Besides the cost of production, the program would have to be done in multiple formats – older aircraft have video tape, others utilize DVD, CDs or other media. As aircraft rotate around the world, hundreds of copies would also have to be made since aircraft are usually not dedicated to the Hawai‘i route. These factors make the production of these announcements very costly.

While HTA is concerned about the protection of Hawai‘i’s natural resources and works with its Natural Resources Advisory Group, DLNR and others to implement the Authority’s Natural Resources Initiative, the production and showing of these announcements on in-bound passenger aircraft amounts to a significant cost that will not yield the intended results. Therefore, the HTA is willing to meet with various groups like those identified in the resolution to help find the appropriate means to promote to Hawai‘i’s visitors, the need to protect endangered species.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



Conservation Council for Hawaii

Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment and
Senate Committee on Tourism

Hearing: Tuesday, March 30, 2010 2:45 pm Room 225

In support SCR 151

Aloha. Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports SCR 151 requesting the development and airing of public service announcements on commercial passenger air flights to the state on the importance of caring for the state's unique and fragile ecosystems. It couldn't hurt and it might do a lot of good in protecting our land, waters, and natural resources.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Marjorie Ziegler



Hawai'i's Voice for Wildlife -- *Ko Leo Hawai'i no na holoholona lohiu*

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P.O. Box 2923 • Honolulu, HI 96802 • Office: 250 Ward Ave., Suite 212 • Honolulu, HI 96814
President: Maura O'Connor * Treasurer: Kim Ramos * Secretary: Douglas Lamerson
Directors: Madelyn D'Enbeau * Maka'ala Ka'aumoana * Hannah Springer
Executive Director: Marjorie Ziegler

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, March 25, 2010 3:10 PM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: makaala@hawaiian.net
Subject: Testimony for SCR151 on 3/30/2010 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for ENE/TSM 3/30/2010 2:45:00 PM SCR151

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Makaala Kaaumoana
Organization: Hanalei Watershed Hui
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: makaala@hawaiian.net
Submitted on: 3/25/2010

Comments:

The Hanalei Watershed Hui strongly supports SCR 151. This resolution supports a vital effort to educate and inform our island residents and visitors to the issues and plight of our fragile environment. Experience teaches that we all appreciate knowing the facts and the resources benefit every time the truth is told. Let's tell the truth and help those without voices.



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'omalu I ka Aina

**Senate Hearing
Committee on Energy & Environment
Committee on Tourism
Tuesday March 30, 2010 Conference Room 225 2:45 pm
Testimony on SCR 151**

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair Nishihara and Members of the Energy & Environment and Tourism Committees:

Aloha. My name is Keiko Bonk. Thank you very much for hearing SCR 151. I am here today to ask you to approve this resolution.

I am the coordinator of a consortium of conservation and cultural groups and individuals called the Save Our Seal Campaign. The Save Our Seal Campaign supports SCR 151 that requests the development and airing of conservation Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on commercial airline flights to Hawaii. Passing SCR 151 will help us develop a message to Hawaii visitors as well as returning residents, that we all share the responsibility to protect Hawaii's endangered animals and plants and their habitat. All residents and our guests need to become informed of our critically endangered animals, like the Hawaiian monk seal, Hawaii's official mammal. We need to understand the guidelines for protection and the plans for recovery of these species.

Our Hawaii home is like nowhere else on earth. We share this distinct place with flora and fauna that have evolved over millions of years. It is this rich biodiversity that attracts 6.5 million tourists annually.

As you continue to work through this legislative session to determine what is essential to Hawaii, I urge you to think of Hawaii's wildlife as not only essential, but also irreplaceable treasures. Hawaii's unique location, our unique geography, unique flora and fauna drive our spirit and all Hawaii's economic engines. We must insure the best management practices of Hawaii's natural resources to secure a long-term quality life for Hawaii's people.

As elected leaders, you are stewards of our natural assets. We trust you will care for all of our wildlife and their habitat. Please become an advocate for the recovery of the Hawaiian monk seal and ask Hawaii's residents and visitors to be an integral part of saving our seal. Everyone who frequents the shorelines and ocean of Hawaii are responsible for this 13 million year old mammal.

Building a responsible culture is a first step towards caring for Hawaii's species. SCR 151 will help to develop a culture that will better manage our natural resources and ecosystems. SCR 151 is a good step to acknowledge the serious and complex environmental challenges we face ahead.

It is important to learn to pursue our long-term interests based on facts. For us in Hawaii, one of those unpleasant facts is that Hawaii has the dubious distinction of being "The Endangered Species Capital of the World." Hawaii's terrestrial and marine environment is still breath-takingly beautiful, but it is not healthy. In fact it is very, very sick. Pretending otherwise, and delaying dramatic and systematic intervention, will only insure that our environmental illness progresses from critical to terminal.

We know the world can probably survive without Hawaii's many unique species, but I am here to remind you that what threatens Hawaii's endemic species, threatens the very health and survival of the human species. For this reason we have chosen to focus on a campaign to assist in the recovery of the critically endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal, a species that shares many of our best characteristics and none of our worst. Perhaps if we can save the seal, it will inspire us to believe we can save ourselves.

The Hawaiian Monk Seal represents Hawaii's struggle to survive the challenges of a rapidly degrading global environment, a process of degradation that is of our own making. The Hawaiian Monk Seal is like Hawaii itself, unique and threatened. It is the only endemic marine mammal in Hawaii and one of the most critically endangered marine mammals in the world. It, like much of what makes Hawaii, Hawaii, is on the verge of extinction. Many of these threats are beyond our ability to control locally. The primary threats to the Hawaiian Monk Seal are climate change, overfishing, pollution, disease, human encroachment and marine debris. And yet, we in Hawaii are determined to show that the accelerating trend toward extinction of the Hawaiian Monk Seal can not just be slowed down, and it can be reversed.

Besides its intrinsic value, and its important role in the marine ecosystem of the Hawaiian archipelago, the Hawaiian Monk Seal has spiritual value as a reflection of Hawaii's soul. The Monk Seal's current endangered status is a reflection of who we have been, but its potential rescue is a reflection of who we can become; who we wish to become. We in Hawaii, at least most of us, are ready to go beyond blaming outsiders for our plight, and admit that we are part of the problem. We are also ready to change and sacrifice for a better future. But at the same time we are also cognizant of the fact that we cannot save our seal, anymore than we can save ourselves, without a lot of help from others. Locally, we have overfished, polluted our waters, and failed to implement policies that protect our shared environment from the more selfish side of our own human nature. We sat back and allowed hundreds of unique endemic species to go extinct on our watch. There is no excuse for what we have done, but I believe there is a genuine desire among most of us to reverse this trend and demonstrate our better nature.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration of SCR 151.

Keiko Bonk, Save Our Seal Campaign Coordinator
808 732 6411 or 808 938 6888 keiko.bonk@mcbi.org



COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

Date: Tuesday, March 30, 2010

Time: 2:45 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 225

Testimony in SUPPORT of SCR 151

Chair Gabbard, Chair Nishihara and members of the committee:

My name is Kiana Kauwe and I am working on the Save Our Seal Campaign, a coalition of 15 local and national environmental NGOs. I am in strong **support** of SCR151.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) population of Hawaiian monk seals continues to decline (approximately 4% annually), while the Main Hawaiian Island (MHI) population is slowly growing. This difference in survival rates and population growth underscores the hope the MHI offers to the recover of this species. Knowing that the MHI is critical to the long-term recovery, it's essential to support greater outreach and education.

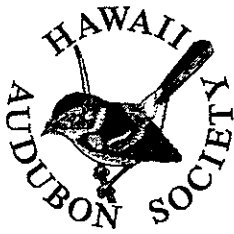
Millions of tourists visit Hawaii each year. Nowhere along their trip from the plane to the beaches are they given information about how to be pono with our fragile environment. Volunteers monitoring seal haul outs see firsthand how tourists can inappropriately interact with seals. They share stories about visitors approaching seals or even trying to sit a child on top of a seal to take a picture. Monk seals are large animals that can become very aggressive when approached. Visitors need to be educated for their own safety and to understand that this is a critically endangered animal that needs its space to rest.

A public service announcement would serve to educate our local population. Misinformation about seals and anti-seal sentiment has spread throughout all the islands. Many believe that seals are stealing all their fish and do not belong in the MHI. This information is simply not true and needs to be countered with outreach and education. The Hawaiian monk seal is our official state mammal, a unique and critically endangered animal to be cared for and respected.

Public service announcements on incoming flights are a great opportunity to educate tourists and locals alike. Greater outreach and education is critical to the Hawaiian monk seal recovery.

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'omalua I ka Aina



For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife

HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

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March 29, 2010

Committee on Energy and Environment

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

Committee on Tourism

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 30, 2010; 2:45 P.M., Conference Rm. 225

Re: SCR151 – Requesting the Development and Airing of Public Service Announcements on Commercial Passenger Air Flights to the State on the Importance of Caring for the State's unique and Fragile Ecosystem.

Testimony in Strong Support

Chair's Gabbard and Nishihara, and members of the Committee's on Energy and Environment, and Tourism. SCR151 would encourage the Hawaii Tourism Authority along with the Department of Transportation to air in-flight public services announcements that will educate visitors traveling to Hawaii on the uniqueness of our State's ecosystems, as well as how to best care for this fragile resource, including our State mammal, the Hawaiian Monk Seal.

The Society believes that any PSA developed needs to do two things. **First – educated visitors about the Hawaiian Monk seal, stressing the guidelines on what to do if you come across monk seals during the course of their visit in Hawaii which include:**

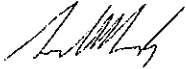
- Not approaching monk seals while on land or in the water. They may approach swimmers, divers or vessels out of curiosity, but in no instance should you approach them. This may be considered a form of harassment.
- When it is necessary to pass by a monk seal that has hauled itself on to a beach, it is recommended that you remain a minimum distance of 100 feet away from the seal, so as not to disturb them.
- Do your best to avoid female monk seals with pups, and never come between a mother and a pup.
- Report sightings of injured or sick seals or of harassment by others to the National Marine Fisheries Service in Honolulu or DLNR.

Second – it should provide conservation education on how truly unique and fragile our islands really are.

We would urge the committee's to pass SCR151.

Thank you for opportunity to offer our testimony here today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Massengale".

George Massengale, JD
Legislative Analyst



March 30, 2010

RE: SCR151

Aloha Senator Nishimara and Senator Mike Gabbard,

I would respectfully ask that you support SCR 151 for the Hawaiian Monk Seal protection and education of the public.


This is our State Marine Mammal and could become an even larger part of our heritage and culture here in Hawaii with public education and knowledge that these creatures have been a part of our Islands for 13 million years. The public interest could be such that these animals would generate as much interest and support as our Humpbacks, that are only here part time.

The people and lawmakers here in the Main Islands are their only hope of survival.

We need to educate our own people and ensure that our visitors also treat our land and ocean life with respect.

Please help support this bill. The people need to know and the seals need your help.

Mahalo,


Dana Jones
HMSRTO
Secretary

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2010 6:36 AM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: gabriedm@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for SCR151 on 3/30/2010 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for ENE/TSM 3/30/2010 2:45:00 PM SCR151

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Diane Gabriel
Organization: Individual
Address: Kaneohe
Phone: 808-235-6296
E-mail: gabriedm@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 3/29/2010

Comments:

This is the perfect way to get important information to tourists visiting our islands. We must do everything we can to protect our endemic species from harm. Mahalo for your support.
Diane Gabriel

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Harvey Arkin [alohaxtc@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2010 7:20 AM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: SCR 151

Dear Chair Gabbard and Chair Nishihara:

Thank you for hearing SCR 151, regarding Public Service Announcements (PSA) on airlines coming to Hawaii. I support this effort for more conservation outreach.

Our Hawaii home, in the middle of the Pacific is like no where else on earth. We share this distinct habitat with unique animals and plants that have evolved over millions of years. It is this rich beauty that attracts 6.5 tourists here every year.

Unfortunately we have not done a great job managing our natural resources and many of are unique species are now extinct. And we have more endangered species than anywhere else on earth and despite the laws that protect these species, people continue to act inappropriately when encountering marine mammals, such as the critically endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

Please help our visitors have a richer experience in our special home and support this resolution for Public service Announcements on the airlines coming to Hawaii.

Thank you.
Aloha,

Harvey Arkin
3349 A Anoa'i Pl
96822

gabbard1 - Carlton

From: Becky [bwaikiki@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 28, 2010 9:47 AM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: *****SPAM***** SCR151 for service announcement about protecting Hawaiian Monk Seals and Hawaii's fragile environment

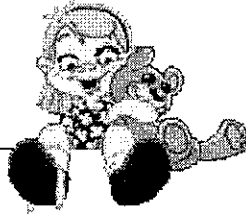
Please pass this bill to educate and inform the public, both visitors and local people about the importance of the Hawaiian Monk Seals and that the seals often seen on Hawaii beaches are there to rest and sleep and not be disturbed. People should not poke them or throw sand, slippers, balls, or debris to wake them or get a response. Many may think the seal is dead or stranded, but they should be educated to contact the nearest lifeguard or call the NOAA response phone number. They should not approach or disturb the seal nor get between the seal and the ocean.



Sincerely,

Becky Gray

2421 Tusitala St., #2703
Honolulu, HI 96815
HMSRTO Member



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Dear Chair Gabbard and Chair Nishihara:

Thank you for hearing SCR 151, regarding Public Service Announcements (PSA) on airlines coming to Hawaii. I help as a volunteer with the Hawaiian Monk Seal Conservation Hui on Kauai and I support this effort for more conservation outreach.

The beauty and uniqueness of Hawaii is a treasure whose animals and their habitats deserve to be protected and preserved. A large part of environmental and wildlife conservation can be accomplished simply by educating and encouraging the millions of visitors that will travel to Hawaii to care about and to act appropriately when experiencing the natural environment here.

It exciting to imagine visitors being informed about some of the unique, wonderful, and fragile aspects of Hawaii's wildlife such as the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. They will likely want to help protect what is so special after they have been given the opportunity to gain a good basic understanding.

Please support this resolution for Public Service Announcements on the airlines coming to Hawaii. It is a powerful yet relatively easy way to help visitors have richer experiences while protecting the nature that draws them here.

Thank you.

Aloha,

Sophia Senter

PO Box 1268, Lawai, HI 96765

gabbar1 - Carlton

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2010 7:22 PM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: joelandstacey3@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SCR151 on 3/30/2010 2:45:00 PM

Testimony for ENE/TSM 3/30/2010 2:45:00 PM SCR151

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Stacey Stella
Organization: Individual
Address: 1161 Mokuhano St. A104 Honolulu HI 96825
Phone: 469-6618
E-mail: joelandstacey3@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/29/2010

Comments: