

HO'OKAHI NO KA 'ĀNA A ME NA KĀNAKA

KAHEA

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HB

~~SB~~568 Relating to Aquaculture
Room 312, 8:00 AM
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Aloha e Chairmen Dela Cruz and Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committees on Water, Land and Agriculture,

Mahalo for accepting our testimony. As written, KAHEA opposes the passage of ^{HB}~~SB~~568. While we support the development of sustainable local food production operations, such as aquaponics, we are concerned that open ocean aquaculture is not yet adequately tested or regulated in Hawai'i to protect the public's best interest in this shared public trust resource.

We suggest amending the definition of "aquaculture" in this bill to include:

"Aquaculture shall not include commercial mariculture finfish operations in the open ocean."

KAHEA is a local non-profit network of over 7,000 people working with cultural practitioners and conservationists to protect Hawai'i's public trust natural resources and unique cultural heritage. We offer this amendment because open ocean aquaculture operations are not at all like "experienced farmers" on state land.

First, open ocean aquaculture is in its infancy. We have very little data on the long-term affects to the quality of public trust ocean resources from a stationary source of pollution like aquaculture pens. What little we do know about ocean-based aquaculture operations in Canada is that, in not properly regulated, they have serious negative affects on the environment and traditional fishing practices.

Second, though it should go without saying, farming on land is fundamentally different from aquaculture in the ocean. The affects of one mistake on an aquaculture operation in the open ocean could have far-reaching, long-term implications for quality of the surrounding ocean and its resources. The regulatory system of protections and incentives cannot be translated from land-based farming to ocean-based commercial aquaculture.

Third, lack of financial support has not been the obstacle to open ocean aquaculture in Hawai'i, but rather the inherent challenge of "farming" the ocean on an industrial scale. This industry relies on imported fish feed, imported oil, and imported labor to raise thousands of pounds of deep sea fish in a confined area, which they hope will be of sufficient quality to export to high-end markets in Asia. Lack of federal loans, which they are already eligible to receive, is the least of their challenges.

Mahalo,



Program Director