

March 31, 2011

TO: Representative Jerry Chang
Chair, Committee on Water, Land & Ocean Resources

Representative Sharon E. Har
Vice Chair, Committee on Water, Land & Ocean Resources

FR: Representative Dee Morikawa

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of HCR 210 / HR181 - URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES, TO DETERMINE THE POPULATION OF THE AKULE SPECIES AND ESTABLISH A MANAGEMENT PRACTICE TO PRESERVE THE SPECIES

Fishermen from the district I represent have been concerned about the declining population of the akule and fear that the future of the species is in jeopardy.

A management plan with the input of community and commercial fishermen was completed in January 2001. Also, the plan's executive summary established:

- Boundaries restricting commercial fishermen from entering into and fishing within the harbors
- Bag limits for commercial, recreational boaters, and shoreline fishermen

However, the management plan did not take into account the population of the akule fish species. Ten years have passed and the fishing community is now concerned that the population of the akule fish is diminishing and most likely will disappear.

I believe it is necessary to study the akule and its migration and reproduction habits. It is also important to recognize the invasive species that are harmful to the akule, including other predatory fishes and fishermen that endanger the survival of the akule.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HCR 210 / HR 180.

LATE TESTIMONY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, & OCEAN RESOURCES

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NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Friday, April 01, 2011
TIME: 10:30 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 325
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

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Hawaii Nearshore Fishermen
Honolulu, Hawaii
540-1308
778-3133

The fishermen are neither in support nor in opposition to this reso. Let me explain:

Hawaii Nearshore Fishermen have gone on record many times calling for better fisheries data both scientific peer critical as well as expert fishermen empirical science to better shape fisheries management measures. This resolution brings this conversation forward and we appreciate the opportunity to comment and share our experiences.

However, if the intent of the resolution is ultimately to restrict access or fishing in order to mitigate a social conflict then we do have concerns.

The fishermen agree with one of the stated intents of the reso which would be *"urging the department to determine the population of the akule species"*

However, there are tones to the reso in the preamble that cause some concerns as to the real intent of this reso, for example, in line 5-8, page one, *"Whereas, there is a growing fear among commercial and recreational fishermen that the akule population is declining at an unusually fast rate and the resource will be depleted for future generations" ..*

And in line 23-24, page one, *..would help alleviate the fishing community's concerns about the dwindling supply of akule and ensure the survival of the species..*"

And in the second stated intent, in line 6-7 page two, urging the department to *establish a management practice to preserve the akule species for future generations* could be interpreted as to be calling for more Akule fishing restrictions.

As stated in the reso, in line 10-12, page one, the department did prepare a "management plan for Hawaii's Akule Fishery" in 2001.

Furthermore, the Akule fishery is highly regulated with seasons, bag limits, and gear and area restrictions already in place.

Finally, as evidenced by commercial landings data, as well as fishermen's own landings as well as empirical observations, the Akule stock remain as strong as ever. As far as Akule goes, nothing is dwindling.

Social behavior amongst various sectors of the fishing community will always be colorful – Yet the

Akule fishermen and the State seemed to have managed the fishery especially well over the years and further restrictions would not be beneficial.

I present herewith data of commercial reported landings from 1948 to 2010 indicating the historical abundant nature of Akule.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Costa

Hawaii Nearshore Fishermen

Reported Commercial Akule landings
Data from DAR, State of Hawaii/ Pacific Islands Science Center NOAA

Lbs landed:

1948	580,042	1991	582,822
1949	618,532	1992	846,095
1950	396,653	1993	663,359
1951	411,732	1994	602,871
1952	339,886	1995	675,536
1953	338,665	1996	584,803
1954	354,054	1997	778,087
1955	324,564	1998	1,311,203
1956	158,168	1999	1,123,132
1957	177,243	2000	1,105,273
1958	178,424	2001	729,985
1959	155,586	2002	614,306
1960	297,804	2003	365,707
1961	287,052	2004	743,052
1962	242,767	2005	232,930
1963	150,665	2006	556,865
1964	160,701	2007	736,172
1965	449,571	2008	358,582
1966	624,577	2009	302,342
1967	853,303	2010	92,708
1968	947,137		
1969	796,104		
1970	980,083		
1971	818,873		
1972	869,595		
1973	717,513		
1974	627,026		
1975	512,622		
1976	975,199		
1977	721,281		
1978	415,337		
1979	453,009		
1980	510,153		
1981	378,300		
1982	413,830		
1983	608,159		
1984	556,764		
1985	241,519		
1986	226,094		
1987	173,514		
1988	338,527		
1989	724,096		
1990	682,179		