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

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**Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2014
11:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1684
RELATING TO MANTA RAYS**

House Bill 1684 proposes to authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to adopt administrative rules to establish a permit system to limit the number of boats and people at manta ray sites. **The Department supports the intent of the bill and offers the following comments:**

The Department currently has the authority to adopt rules to address the boating situation at the manta ray sites. The Department requests clarification about whether numbers of boats and people should be limited based on facilities (i.e. moorings) capacity, user experience, and/or impact to living aquatic resources. Impact to living resources depends very much on the behavior of the users, often more so than on the number. Facilities have a relatively stable capacity. Researchers from the University of Hawaii have offered the Department data relating to user experience. The Department recommends that there be a prohibition on users deliberately touching the manta rays.

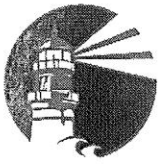
The Department would like to recognize that any permitting or licensing system requires additional departmental capacity to establish and administer effectively.

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ESTER KIA'AINA
FIRST DEPUTY

WILLIAM M. TAM
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
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LAND
STATE PARKS



Ocean Tourism Coalition

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February 26, 2014

Testimony To: House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair

From: Tim Lyons, CAE
Executive Director

Subject: H.B. 1684 - RELATING TO MANTA RAYS.

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, Executive Director of the Ocean Tourism Coalition and we support this bill.

We believe that the rays population needs protection just like other marine creatures in the sea and we therefore endorse the establishment of rules on capacity.

Based on the above we support this bill.

Thank you.

finance1

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 4:52 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: sgd8@hawaiiintel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1684 on Feb 26, 2014 11:15AM

HB1684

Submitted on: 2/24/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 26, 2014 11:15AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Dursin	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chairs Johanson and Nishimoto: I am in strong support of HB1684, which would limit the number of viewers at manta ray congregation sites. I myself have observed the problems associated with large numbers of people in the water and with numbers of boats cruising among them. Also, I have talked to visitors, some of them friends of mine, who were seriously concerned about the dangers posed at these sites. One had even had a boat hit him. While I know this has become an important addition to our tourist economy, it seems clear that restrictions must be put in place to protect everyone -- visitors, tour operators, and the mantas themselves. Thank you for considering my testimony. Susan Dursin

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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