



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

February 6, 11:00 A.M.
(Testimony is 1 page long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 760

Aloha Chair Yamane, Chair Lee and Committee Members:

The Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, with over 10,000 dues-paying members and supporters, **supports** the HB 760. This bill would allow people renting a car the option of making a donation to the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The islands of Hawai'i are blessed with an abundance of natural resources, diverse ecosystems, and stunning beauty unparalleled elsewhere on the Earth. This is the foundation of Hawai'i's tourism industry. For this reason, we need to better protect Hawai'i's environment, and we should use visitor money to do so.

A survey of 1,000 visitors performed in 1998 by the Sierra Club, Maui Group, found that Hawai'i's environment and pristine natural areas were very important in attracting tourists. Respondents chose open spaces, natural beaches, and undeveloped coastlines as reasons they visit Maui. The survey also revealed that visitors would be willing to pay for the protection of Hawai'i's environment. Over 80% of the sample surveyed said that they would be willing to spend an extra dollar on their hotel room tax (transient accommodations tax – TAT) if it was to be spent on preserving and protecting Hawai'i's natural areas.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.