

LATE

Testimony of Bob DaMate

IN OPPOSITION of S.B. 27

Relating to Fishing

Senate Committee on Energy & Environment

Senate Committee of Water and Land

Thursday, January 29, 2013, 2:45 p.m., Room 225

Aloha Senator Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environment,

Aloha Senator Solomon and Members of the Committee on Water and Land;

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to S.B. 27. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit the sale and use of gill, or throw nets made of monofilament or other synthetic material that does not readily biodegrade. Section 1 of this bill states that using throw nets that are made of synthetic material is not a traditional Hawaiian practice. The bill also states that it is “not intended to prohibit or interfere with traditional Hawaiian fishing practices using traditional Hawaiian nets made of traditional Hawaiian materials”. And, that these materials mean “natural fibers, such as the fibers of the olona shrub, commonly used in Hawaii before 1900.”

Senators, the very language of this bill contradicts itself by stating that cultural traditions must be preserved, yet it is attempting to prevent the very means of preserving those same traditions. These traditions have existed prior to the arrival on western political influence. I do not wish to go into the political history of Hawaii, but I do want to stress the importance of protecting and preserving the generational practices of Native Hawaiians, especially their dependence on the ocean for subsistence. That dependency continues, for Native Hawaiians, to this day in a very practical way.

The upena, or throw net, is crucial to ocean subsistence for Native Hawaiians. People rely on the ocean for their food, especially in Ka’u, Moku O Keawe (or Hawaii Island) where I live. Because of the lack of supermarkets and stores in Ka’u, we always harvested.

S.B. 27 is an invasive effort that currently will impact our cultural traditions, kept alive for generations. Western understanding of these traditions still does not know the significance of the upena as a way of eating seafood and gathering. We remain responsible for our own food supplies and use the upena religiously to supplement our existence.

In Ka’u, at least 50% of our food is gathered through traditional practices and not through a store. There are not enough stores to support our community, and we heavily depend on growing our own food, and fishing – using upena.

This bill says that we must depend on olona to make our nets. I am a lawaia, a fisherman who practices Hawaiian traditional ways to fish. I cannot make nets out of olona now because all

stocks have been depleted. The areas that were prime to grow olona are now used for subdivisions, house lots and other uses. The amount of olona plants needed for one traditional net is equivalent to the size of a one-acre lot.

Hawaiians have always been an adaptable race who incorporated whatever technology existed to continue their practices. After all, Kamehameha would not have conquered the islands if he did not use gunfire – at that time, a new technology for Hawaiians.

Passing this bill will affect our lifestyle, further degrade the Native Hawaiian cultural practices and is just another way of preventing us from gathering food.

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 27.

Respectfully yours,

Bob Damate,

LATE

SB27

Submitted on: 1/29/2013

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Jan 29, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kim Koch	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: I oppose this bill. This is another poorly thought out, poorly defined anti fishing bill.

SB27

Submitted on: 1/29/2013

Testimony for ENE/WTL on Jan 29, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 225

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brandy	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: Why is this state trying to get rid of all of the Hawaiian traditions and culture when this is Hawaii? Every other culture or race has somewhere they can call home, unfortunately we can't say the same because people are trying to change the laws to conform to their culture. If u want it to be like Japan, then live there. Don't try to come here and give the same rules to our culture or heritage.

SB27

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hiermansperger	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: