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DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
OCEAN, MARINE RESOURCES, & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Tuesday, March 21, 2017
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

In consideration of
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 209/HOUSE RESOLUTION 137
URGING SUPPORT FOR THE GOAL OF EFFECTIVELY MANAGING THIRTY
PERCENT OF NEARSHORE WATERS BY 2030

House Concurrent Resolution 209/House Resolution 137 urge the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to support the goal of effectively managing 30 percent of nearshore waters by 2030. **The Department is in strong support of these measures.**

The Department is currently engaged in implementing the *Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative*, the marine portion of which recognizes that Hawaii's coral reefs are a local and national treasure, providing cultural, economic, and recreational opportunities to our residents and more than eight million visitors annually. They are a driver of our local and tourism economy, generating more than \$360 million each year.

Recent worldwide bleaching events are a stark reminder of the devastating effects of rising sea surface temperatures on coral reefs around the world. Hawai'i experienced its first statewide mass-bleaching event in 2015. Given the continuing rising greenhouse gas levels and sea surface temperatures around the globe, scientists predict additional bleaching in 2016 and beyond.

A strong base of scientific evidence suggests that the health and function of at least 30% of nearshore reef areas are necessary to sustain the productivity of a reef region like the Main Hawaiian Islands. To improve the resilience of corals and ensure they continue to provide benefits to Hawaii's people and economy, we need to effectively manage the local stressors that are within our control, including sediment and nutrient runoff from land, invasive species, and illegal and unsustainable fishing. To meet this challenge, we are committed to *effectively manage 30% of Hawaii's nearshore waters by 2030*, complementing the State's current commitment to protect 30% of our priority watershed areas.

The Department notes that “effective management” includes a suite of adaptive management approaches balancing sustainable use, restoration, and conservation measures such as community-based management, time and area closures for fisheries replenishment, reasonable laws to encourage sustainable fishing practices, and effective enforcement, combined with systematized monitoring to assess effectiveness. **This is not an effort to make 30% “no take.”**

30 by 30 effective marine management provides an overarching target that pulls together the State’s current aims to improve the capacity and coverage of enforcement, support community-based marine management, develop a plan to address coral bleaching, and strengthen statewide regulations, monitoring, and other adaptive management measures.

This effort will be an open, inclusive process balancing fisher and other ocean user interests with the State’s restoration and conservation needs.

Effective management will be measured by a broadly agreed-upon set of biological parameters for “healthy” reef systems developed by scientific expertise, traditional knowledge, and user input. This collaborative effort is currently underway.

As part of this effort, the Department is pleased to collaborate with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in the perpetuation of Hawaiian cultural resources within nearshore water areas, as well as with communities, fishers, and other stakeholders throughout Hawai‘i on effective management of Hawaii’s nearshore waters.

The Department is currently engaged in statewide marine planning efforts to guide efforts for effective marine management. The Department notes that this will be an ongoing process over several years, but would be pleased to provide a status report to the Legislature as a result of any legislation that may be proposed, no later than 20 days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2018.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.C.R. 209 Urging Support for the Goal of Effectively Managing
Thirty Percent of Nearshore Waters by 2030
House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources and Hawaiian Affairs
Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 10:00AM, Room 312

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which life depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. We manage 40,000 acres in 14 preserves and work in 19 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs and waters of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties and communities to protect Hawai'i's important watershed forests and coral reefs.

The Nature Conservancy supports H.C.R. 209. Hawai'i's coral reefs are a local and national treasure, providing cultural, economic, and recreational opportunities to Hawai'i residents and more than eight million visitors annually. They are a driver of our local and tourism economy, generating more than \$360 million each year.

However, Hawai'i's reef fish populations have declined by more than 75% over the past 100 years. This loss is not only a loss to Hawaii's fishers, it is a loss to all of Hawaii's people, and to a cultural heritage that is unique in the world.

Recent worldwide bleaching events are a stark reminder of the devastating effects of rising sea surface temperatures on coral reefs around the world. Hawai'i experienced its first statewide mass-bleaching event in 2015. Given continuing rising CO2 levels and sea surface temperatures around the globe, scientists predict additional bleaching in 2016 and beyond.

There is widespread agreement amongst a variety of stakeholders that Hawai'i's coastal environment needs improved management by government, communities, cultural practitioners, fishers, and the general public all working together.

Multiple sources of scientific literature suggest that the health and function of at least 30% of nearshore reef areas are necessary to sustain the productivity of a reef region like the Main Hawaiian Islands. To improve the resilience of corals and ensure they continue to provide benefits to Hawai'i's people and economy, we need to effectively manage the local stressors that are within our control, including sediment and nutrient runoff from land, invasive species, and illegal and unsustainable fishing. To meet this challenge, the State is proposing to *effectively manage 30% of Hawai'i's nearshore waters by 2030*, complementing the State's current commitment to protect 30% of our priority watersheds and other lands.

"Effective management" includes a suite of adaptive management approaches balancing sustainable use, restoration, and conservation measures such as community-based management, time and area closures for fisheries replenishment, reasonable laws to encourage sustainable fishing practices, and effective enforcement, combined with systematized monitoring to assess effectiveness. **This is not an effort to make 30% "no take" or closed to fishing.** The goal is to have more fish for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

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HCR209

Submitted on: 3/19/2017

Testimony for OMH on Mar 21, 2017 10:00AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Don Aweau	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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HCR209

Submitted on: 3/18/2017

Testimony for OMH on Mar 21, 2017 10:00AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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HCR209

Submitted on: 3/17/2017

Testimony for OMH on Mar 21, 2017 10:00AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carl M Jellings Sr	Individual	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

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