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STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on  
WATER AND LAND

Wednesday, February 1, 2017  
2:45 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 690  
RELATING TO CONSERVATION

Senate Bill 690 proposes to appropriate funds for a state civil service position to effectively track and monitor funds and expenditures related to habitat conservation plans and perform other tasks to benefit the recovery of threatened and endangered species. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

Hawaii has the unfortunate distinction of being the endangered species capitol of the nation. With continuing land development throughout the state impacting habitat for endangered species, Safe Harbor Agreements (SHAs) and Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) have proven to be invaluable tools in the process of recovering the State's endangered species while supporting economic development opportunities. The Department, with important partnerships, currently manages ten HCPs and four SHAs to protect endangered species and their habitats. With the development throughout the State, up to 13 more are in various stages of planning or in the approval process. Most of these plans and agreements and associated take licenses span decades.

In order to effectively and efficiently manage existing HCPs, new HCPs, and amendments of existing HCPs, a new civil service position is an essential addition to Department staff. Furthermore, with the State's initiative to reach 100% renewable energy by 2045, the Department anticipates a substantial increase in responsibilities in issuing and managing new HCPs and associated incidental take permits.

In addition to the workload, a civil service position is an essential operational tool to allow full access to Hawaii government fiscal records and procedures within the HCP program and for adequate state representation on all matters related to HCPs.





**Conservation Council  
for Hawai'i**

*Hawai'i's voice for wildlife*

*Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu*



Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Water and Land  
By the Conservation Council for Hawai'i  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 1, 2017 2:45 pm  
Room 224

Support for SB 690 Relating to Conservation

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

Aloha. The Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports SB 690, which appropriates funds for a state civil service position to effectively track and monitor funds and expenditures related to habitat conservation plans and perform other tasks to benefit the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

This appropriation will go a long way toward the recovery of our threatened and endangered Hawaiian species. One of our longstanding concerns about the incidental take and habitat conservation planning process is that state and federal wildlife agencies may not be tracking the population status and key habitats for targeted species. For example, several permits have been issued to wind power projects for the incidental take (harm or killing) of endangered 'ope'ape'a (Hawaiian hoary bat) on the island of O'ahu. Yet, there are no good data on the size of the bat population or its key habitats on the island.

How can the Department of Land and Natural Resources authorize a certain number of takes without knowing how many bats there are to "give away." Similarly, how can the department approve proposed habitat conservation plans to benefit the bat in the absence of such data? The windmills have killed more bats than anticipated. When does the department say no, or are all wind operators "entitled" to receive incidental take permits to kill bats.

We are not opposed to the concept of incidental take if it is done properly, but this does not appear to be the case for the bats on O'ahu. There may be similar instances for other species as well.

Give our 'ope'ape'a and other imperiled species a chance to recover. Please pass SB 690 and make sure the department has sufficient funds for the incidental take/habitat conservation plan program. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

*Marjorie Ziegler*

Marjorie Ziegler



Telephone/Fax: 808.593.0255 | email: [info@conservehi.org](mailto:info@conservehi.org) | web: [www@conservehi.org](http://www@conservehi.org)

P.O. Box 2923 | Honolulu, HI 96802 | Office: 250 Ward Ave., Suite 215 | Honolulu, HI 96814

President: Wayne Tanaka | Vice President: Koalani Kaulukukui | Secretary: Rachel Sprague

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**MAILING ADDRESS**

PO. Box 23404  
Honolulu  
Hawaii'i 96823

January 31 , 2017

TO:            Honorable Chair Rhoads and Members of the Water and Land Committee

RE:            SB 690 Relating to Conservation  
                  Support for hearing on Feb. 1

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support SB 690 as it would provide funding for an additional staff position at the Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources. The goal is (i) to track expenditures related to wildlife habitat conservation and (ii) to monitor other activities related to the recovery of Hawaii's threatened and endangered species.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel  
President