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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021
12:00 PM**

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1023, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO A NONRESIDENT RECREATIONAL MARINE FISHING LICENSE**

House Bill 1023, House Draft 1 proposes to establish a nonresident recreational marine fishing license requirement and fees to enable the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to more effectively manage the marine fisheries resources of the State. **The Department supports this Administration bill and offers the following comments.**

Hawaii's marine fishing opportunities attract thousands of visitors each year. With ever increasing pressure on the State's marine fishery resources, it is critical that the State identify and develop sustainable sources of funding to effectively manage its fisheries. Nonresident fishers directly benefit from the enjoyment of Hawaii's marine fishery resources without directly contributing to management of those resources.

The concept of a non-commercial marine fishing license has been introduced in the past, most recently in 2018 (House Bill 1752; Senate Bill 2052). Both measures met resistance from resident fishers, who indicated that a fee-based fishing license was financially burdensome, infringed on fishing rights, and needed more public outreach prior to legislation. A recreational marine license requirement that would only apply to nonresidents would avoid most of these concerns.

Given the increased budget constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a nonresident recreational marine license and associated fees would provide a much-needed source of revenue to the State for marine fisheries management. License revenues could also be used as match for federal funds received through the Federal Sportfish Restoration Program. Current sources of State match have been adversely affected by budget reductions, and as a result, the Department risks not being able to maximize federal funding opportunities.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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LAND
STATE PARKS

The Department estimates that implementing a non-resident recreational marine fishing license as proposed would generate roughly \$1 million annually. Costs to implement this license would include a one-time investment of \$400,000 for IT hardware and software design and development, and annual operating costs of approximately \$100,000.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.