

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

Friday, February 12, 2021
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1173
RELATING TO OCEAN STEWARDSHIP

Senate Bill 1173 proposes to establish the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund for the collection and use of moneys for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State's marine resources, and to authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to collect non-resident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources. **The Department supports this administration bill and offers the following comments.**

Hawai'i's ocean waters and the marine resources contained within are some of the State's most ecologically, economically, and culturally valuable environmental assets, central to our [\\$7.8 billion outdoor recreation industry](#). Our marine resources are also under threat - more frequent coral bleaching events, pollutant runoff, unsustainable fishing practices and the rapid proliferation of invasive species demand that we take action now to halt and reverse these threats. It is critically important that the Department has adequate resources to help ensure the health of our nearshore marine ecosystems for present and future generations. With current state budget challenges, additional revenues are needed to prevent us from moving backwards in protection of these natural, cultural and economic resources.

For decades, visitors have enjoyed Hawai'i's abundant ocean resources without contributing directly to management of those resources. Senate Bill 1173 would provide a framework for the Department to begin collecting nominal fees from visitors for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources. These fees would provide needed revenues to the Department for marine resource conservation, restoration, enhancement, research, and educational activities.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

The Department recently commissioned a study to explore the feasibility of establishing an Ocean Stewardship Fee. The full study can be viewed or downloaded (10 MB) at this link: https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2021/01/Ocean_Stewardship_Fund.pdf

The Ocean Stewardship Fee would be collected through commercial ocean operators who provide vessel-based activities to passengers or vessel-free services to customers. The Department's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) Commercial Use Permit holders would collect a small per head fee from each passenger or customer. Fees would be paid to the Department through an online payment system at the end of each month. Collected fees would be directed into a special fund managed by the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). DAR supports the idea of establishing a stakeholder advisory committee to provide recommendations on expenditures from the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund.

According to the study, if the fee is set at \$1.00 per passenger or customer, and fee volumes are based on tourism numbers with COVID-19 potential impacts, the program would be expected to generate a Net Present Value (NPV) of \$14.4 million over a 15-year time horizon. If the same \$1.00 per passenger or customer fee rate is used with Hawai'i tourism numbers prior to 2020, the program would be expected to generate a NPV of \$30.3 million over a 15-year time horizon. If the rate is increased to \$2.50 per passenger or customer and used with Hawai'i tourism numbers prior to 2020, the program would be expected to generate a NPV of \$85.4 million over a 15-year time horizon.

Residents and visitors alike would benefit from healthier reefs and restored fisheries. Commercial ocean tour operators would benefit directly by being able to offer more enjoyable experiences to their customers, and customers will have the satisfaction that their experience is contributing to marine resource conservation, restoration, and enhancement. It is a win/win situation for Hawai'i's residents, visitors, businesses, resource managers, and most importantly the ocean resources themselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 8:39:44 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Caitlin Maratea	Testifying for Banyan Tree Divers Maui	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Caitlin Maratea, writing on behalf of Banyan Tree Divers Maui. Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony regarding my opposition to SB1173 Relating to Ocean Stewardship.

At first glance this bill looks like a good idea. Why would anyone be opposed to allocating funds to protect Hawai'i's precious marine ecosystem? I have been teaching scuba diving on Maui for 10 years. My livelihood and passion reside in protecting Hawai'i's coral reefs. The problem with this bill pertains to the proposed source of these funds.

This initiative imposes additional financial pressure on small business operators who not only have been devastated by the loss of revenue during the covid-19 pandemic, but are also NOT the culprits that make ocean conservation necessary. I resent that the verbiage "diving activities" is even mentioned alongside "poaching" and "land and water-based pollutant discharges" among others listed.

If you want to focus on the real damage caused to Hawai'i's nearshore environment, perhaps take note that due to a reduction in tourism and reduced hotel capacity, West Maui's wastewater treatment plant released 60% less wastewater from March 2020-October 2020. This led to an immediate improvement in the nearshore waters of Kahekili Reef in Ka'anapali, Maui, according to a study conducted by the University of Hawai'i in tandem with Texas A&M. This study shows that wastewater generated by hotels directly contributes to the decline in the health of nearshore reefs. Why not collect a non-resident fee from hotels then? Or from large development projects adding to ocean sedimentation? Or from large agricultural operations producing runoff that increases ocean acidification?

The Commercial Ocean Recreation Industry already pays 3% non-resident user fee to the DLNR, which was increased only recently. While it is appropriate to allocate some of these existing funds to bolster marine conservation management, it is NOT appropriate to add further strain to this already struggling sector.

While I support Hawai'i's ambitious 30x30 marine management initiative, I do not support singling out small businesses to foot the bill for a much larger problem. Ignoring the bigger picture and enacting oppressive measures is not how the 30x30 initiative will become successful.

Many thanks again for your time and consideration. Please VOTE NO on SB1173.

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 9:27:27 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
victoria martocci	Testifying for Extended Horizons Scuba	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and committee members,

My name is Victoria Martocci and I'm testifying today in OPPOSITION to HB1019 as written.

As both an individual and on behalf of our mom-n-pop scuba shop, Extended Horizons, I wholeheartedly agree that Hawaii's marine ecosystems are important, and conservation is necessary. Scientists project 70 to 90 percent of coral reefs will disappear over the next 20 years as a result of climate change and pollution.

Since 1983 Extended Horizons has been teaching ecology and stewardship to visitors. We spearheaded installation of day-use moorings on West Maui and Lanai in 1994 to protect reefs from anchor damage, and we continue to manage and maintain Maui's day-use moorings through volunteer work. Our vessel stopped using fossil fuels and converted to 100% biodiesel in 2000, and our shop runs on solar power. We organize and conduct regular cleanup dives. Conservation and teaching ecologic consciousness is a part of every dive briefing we give and how we guide our dives.

Conservation is the cornerstone of our scuba company ethos and our business model, and we support the concept of a DLNR DAR Ocean Stewardship Special Fund; however, this bill unfairly targets the Commercial Ocean Recreation industry. "The increasing popularity of marine ecotourism requires greater measures to ensure the continued health of our marine ecosystems" implies that marine ecotourism, aka Commercial Ocean Recreation, is the reason conservation is needed, when in fact much larger local issues of shoreline sedimentation, land-based pollution, destructive fishing practices, rising sea temperatures, and ocean acidification heavily impact Hawaii's marine ecosystems. No one can deny that Commercial Ocean Recreation is not the sole variable in marine ecosystem health; therefore, revenue for a special fund should be more broad to include other related sectors such as air travel, visitor lodging, rental cars, golf courses, and development projects, just to name a few. Ensuring 'continued health of our marine ecosystem' can only be successful with participation from all sectors.

Additionally, the proposed Non-Resident User Fee is redundant. The Commercial Ocean Recreation industry already has a 3% User Fee to DLNR. Having a portion of that already existing User Fee allocated to a special conservation fund would be welcomed, rather than creation of a second, new User Fee. Even if the nuance is that the two fees would go to different funds, for different purposes, the fact remains that the same individual will be charged a User Fee twice by the same Agency.

Lastly, the ongoing covid19 pandemic has impacted the Commercial Ocean Recreation industry with complete closure, and even today the restriction to 50% capacity. Businesses are struggling to stay afloat and keep employees working. It's unreasonable to burden this industry with yet another fee at this time, not to mention its associated, highly problematic bookkeeping.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

-Victoria Martocci
Director of Operations
Extended Horizons Scuba
Lahaina | Maui | Hawaii



THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2021

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING
DATE: Monday, February 8, 2021
TIME: 1:00 P.M.
PLACE: Conference Room 22

TESTIMONY OF THE OCEAN TOURISM COALITION IN SUPPORT TO
SB1173 AS WRITTEN.

Dear Chair Lorraine, Vice Chair Kieth-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

The Ocean Tourism Coalition (“OTC”) is cooperating with the DLNR and the Department of Aquatic Resources (“DAR”) to revise this bill to achieve the stated bill objectives. OCT recognizes the importance ensuring the continued health of our marine ecosystems, including installation, maintenance and replacement of day use mooring buoys and other infrastructure.

OTC recently met with the DAR to revise the bill to set a predictable, affordable standard for the non-resident user fee. OTC recommends the following bill revisions, which are indicated in the bold, underlined language below:

§187A- Ocean stewardship fees. The department of land and natural resources may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to establish non—resident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the State’s ocean resources. Fees collected under this section or any rule adopted thereunder, shall be deposited in the ocean stewardship special fund.

The non-resident user fee adopted hereunder shall be \$1 per passenger. The non-resident user fee shall be adjusted every 5 years to match changes in the Consumer Price Index in the Honolulu Area as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; provided, however, the non-resident user fee shall not be adjusted more than 10% every 5 years. The non-resident user fee collected by a

permittee with a commercial use permit shall not be included in the definition of “Gross Receipts ” as defined by H.A.R. 13-230-8, or "gross revenues" referenced in H.R.S. 200-10(c)(5).

OTC is involved in ongoing discussions with DAR to develop the above language. We also suggest the non-resident user fee not be imposed until 2024 due to current economic and operating conditions.

In addition, OTC strongly urges that the sources of revenue for this fund be expanded to include all industries and businesses that have an impact on our State’s marine waters. It cannot be understated how great of an impact land-based activities have on our marine environment. Pollutants such as sediment, nutrients (from fertilizers), bacteria (from animal waste), toxic chemicals, oil, and trash all flow into the streams, rivers, and finally into the ocean. These pollutants, whether from golf courses, agricultural activities, or a myriad of other land-based activities, have a significant effect on the health of our reefs. The Ocean Tourism Industry is willing to contribute funds to ensure that our marine environment is protected, however, we cannot carry this load ourselves. All those who benefit or have a harmful impact on our State waters should be asked to contribute as well.

Finally, OTC opposes the bill as currently written, but is working with DAR to draft a bill that achieves the stated objections of the bill. We also humbly ask that this bill be expanded to include other sources of revenue, particularly from any industry or activity that may have a harmful impact on our marine environment.

Sincerely,
Zachary LaPrade, Director, OTC



SB1173
RELATING TO OCEAN STEWARDSHIP
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Wai a me ka ‘Āina

Pepeluali 12, 2021

1:00 p.m.

Lumi 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB1173, which would provide a mechanism for generating substantial and dedicated revenues to support the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State’s marine resources.

Hawai‘i’s ocean environment forms the bedrock of our islands. Hawai‘i’s marine environment and natural resources serve as a cultural, economic, social, scientific and recreational foundation for these islands. OHA notes that economic studies in 2002 and 2003 found an overall contribution of \$800 million in revenue generated from our coral reefs and coastal resources, with an added recreational, amenity, fishery, biodiversity and educational value of \$364 million per year. A subsequent report released in 2011 utilizing “innovative economic survey techniques” found that across U.S. households, the economic value of protecting Hawai‘i’s nearshore environment could be estimated at \$34 billion a year. While our ocean waters clearly hold cultural, spiritual, and biological significance beyond any monetary value, these economic analyses clearly reflect the critical nature of our marine environment to Hawai‘i nei.¹

This measure would accordingly support the management and stewardship of some of our most culturally, economically, and socially valued ocean areas, as well as research and other activities that may benefit our ocean environment as a whole. By authorizing nonresident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the state’s ocean resources, and dedicating such fees to the conservation, restoration, enhancement of marine resources, this measure could result in millions of dollars of revenues to protect and perpetuate the ocean environment upon which our islands depend – without any increased burden on state taxpayers. OHA understands that geographical limitations would likely limit the practical application of such fees to only a few marine managed areas; however, **with pre-pandemic numbers approximating 1 million annual visitors to Hanauma Bay alone, a modest nonresident user fee for this one location alone could generate millions of dollars**

¹ See Carlie S. Weiner, Mark D. Needham, & Paul Wilkinson, *Hawaii's real marine life park: interpretation and impacts of commercial marine tourism in the Hawaiian Islands*, 12 CURRENT ISSUES IN TOURISM 489, 489-90 (2009) citing P.J. van Beukering & H.S. Cesar, *Ecological economic modeling of coral reefs: Evaluating tourist overuse at Hanauma Bay and algae blooms at the Kihei Coast, Hawaii'i* 58 PAC. SCIENCE 243 (2007); A.M. Friedlander et. al., *The state of coral reef ecosystems of the main Hawaiian Islands* in THE STATE OF CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES AND PACIFIC FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES 222-269 (2005); K. DAVIDSON, M. HAMNET, & C. MINATO, ECONOMIC VALUE OF HAWAII'S NEARSHORE REEFS (2003), available at [http://nature.forestry.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/2009-2%20CIT%20-%20Wiener%20Needham%20Wilkinson%20\(2009\).pdf](http://nature.forestry.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/2009-2%20CIT%20-%20Wiener%20Needham%20Wilkinson%20(2009).pdf); HERMAN CESAR ET. AL., ECONOMIC VALUATION OF THE CORAL REEFS OF HAWAII FINAL REPORT 74 (2002), available at http://www.coralreef.gov/meeting18/evhcric_samo_a_2007.pdf; RICHARD C. BISHOP ET. AL., TOTAL ECONOMIC VALUE FOR PROTECTING AND RESTORING HAWAIIAN CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2011), available at https://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/hawaii_econeal/resources/execsumm.pdf.

a year in support of the management, stewardship, restoration, and perpetuation of our ocean resources and sites.²

Therefore, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB1173. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

² Hanauma Bay State Park, Hanauma Bay History, <https://hanaumabaystatepark.com/hanauma-bay-history/> (last accessed Feb. 8, 2021).



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Friday, February 12, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Darren T. Lerner, Director
Sea Grant College Program,
School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1173 – RELATING TO OCEAN STEWARDSHIP

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports the intent of SB 1173. This legislation proposes to establish the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund for the collection and use of moneys for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State's marine resources, and to authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to collect nonresident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources.

Hawai'i Sea Grant's mission is to provide integrated research, extension, and education activities that increase understanding and use of ocean and coastal resources of the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands and support the informed personal, policy, and management decisions that are integral to realizing this vision. Hawai'i Sea Grant is part of a national network of 34 university-based programs associated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that promote better understanding, conservation, and use of coastal resources.

We see the Ocean Stewardship Fee as an important and sustainable pathway to fund the marine resource monitoring, restoration, and management that is vital for the conservation of ocean resources that sustain communities at the local level. As a program we are committed to the use of sound scientific information to advance understanding of the nature and value of our coastal, ocean, and marine resources; to identify new ways to conserve and use these resources; and to support evaluation of the environmental impacts and socio-economic trade-offs involved in coastal decision-making. We believe that there is a strong rationale for the establishment of an Ocean Stewardship Fee.

- The Ocean Stewardship Fee is aimed at commercial ocean users who provide vessel-based activities to passengers or vessel-free services to customers.

- The nominal fee could be set at rates as low as \$1.00 per passenger and has the potential to generate an estimated \$14.4 to \$30.3 million over a 15 year time horizon.
- Ocean waters, marine environments, and beaches are the backbone of Hawai'i's \$15 Billion tourism industry and are central to Hawai'i's unique culture and lifestyle.
- Residents and visitors alike would benefit from improvements to the management of marine resources in Hawai'i.
- Improvements from increased marine management facilitated by the Ocean Stewardship Fee will help to sustain continued tourism spending and interest in boating and ocean recreation activities.
- A study commissioned by the Division of Aquatic Resources and completed in collaboration with Conservation International has looked in depth at successful finance models from other U.S. states. The establishment of an Ocean Stewardship Fee is based on other successful models.
(https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/files/2021/01/Ocean_Stewardship_Fund.pdf)
- The Division of Aquatic Resources has already identified priority areas such as coral reef restoration, mooring buoy maintenance, and habitat restoration that funds generated from the fee could be put to immediate use towards.

Hawai'i Sea Grant supports SB 1173 to establish the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund for the collection and use of moneys for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State's marine resources. However, we are aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realizes that state funding is reduced. For the next fiscal biennium, the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents approved a budget request for the University that was flat and did not seek any increased funding to the University. UH defers to DLNR on their priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony Before The
Senate Committee on Water & Land
IN SUPPORT OF SB 1173
Friday, February 12, 2021, 1:00PM, Room 229

My name is Kevin Chang and I am the Co-Director of Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (or KUA). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama 'āina groups – fishers, farmers and families- to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawai'i and achieve 'āina momona— an abundant, productive ecological system that supports community well-being.

KUA supports SB 1173. This bill authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to collect non-resident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources.

KUA works to empower communities to improve their quality of life through caring for their environmental heritage together. We employ a community-driven approach that currently supports a network of more than 36 mālama 'āina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 38 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko I'a, and a growing hui of Limu practitioners all from across our state.

A primary function of KUA includes development of an 'auwai, a stream of resources tools, bridges and networks that help to cultivate and take our communities' work to greater levels of collective impact. A core source of the flow in this 'auwai includes building the capacity within and between the state and communities to better care for Hawai'i's resources together. An Ocean Stewardship Fee program would help address the increasing challenge of responsibly caring together for Hawai'i's marine ecosystem and the important services it provides for current and future generations.

Our state depends on healthy marine systems; they feed us, protect our shorelines, support and sustain cultural practices, and ensure economic vitality. For the last century visitors have enjoyed Hawaii's abundant ocean resources with no direct contribution to their care and vitality. This bill provides a pathway to generate needed visitor revenue to help fund marine resource restoration, conservation, and education. We are of course excited that this support will also boost government and community capacity to better collaborate in our care for the ocean.

Indeed, other island nations as you know have begun to do similar.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Aloha 'Āina Momona.

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 9:56:47 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Damien Kenison	Testifying for Kauhako Ohana Association	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of SB 1173 because it will hold non residents accountable for their actions and allow them to contribute to proper management of our marine resources here in Hawaii. Those stakeholders who benefit financially from Hawaii's resources should contribute appropriately to maintaining a viable resource that they are using for monetary gain.

When the camping fees in Hawaii County were raised from \$5.00 to \$20.00 for non residents there was a lot of backlash at first. But tour companies who were making money off our beaches began to realize that it was all part of doing business here and camping revenues increased dramatically.

Previously, when it was \$5.00 for non residents, it attracted a different type of clientele. Mostly people who did not want to spend money or obey the rules of the campground. They partied all night, left a lot of trash, and did their best to avoid paying the \$5.00 fee. They were disrespectful and bothered the other campers. As the fees were raised the campgrounds became more manageable, cleaner, and quieter.

The tour companies will oppose this bill but they will accept it as they adjust their rates and operate a business that is more appropriate and respectful of the people here.

Mahalo,

Damien Kenison

President - Kauhako Ohana Association

PO Box 38,, Honaunau, HI, 96726

808-987-9149



The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i Program
923 Nu'uuanu Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96817

Tel (808) 537-4508
Fax (808) 545-2019
nature.org/hawaii

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
In Support of SB 1173, RELATING TO OCEAN STEWARDSHIP**

**Committee on Water & Land
Friday, February 12, 2021, 1:00 PM
Conference Room 229 Via Teleconference**

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and work in over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.

The Nature Conservancy supports SB 1173 which proposes to establish the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund for the collection and use of funds for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State's marine resources, and to authorize the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to collect non-resident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources.

Life in Hawai'i is concentrated along our spectacular coasts, where islanders and visitors take full advantage of tropical waters and vibrant coral reefs teeming with life. The reefs that line our coasts are environmental, economic, recreational, and cultural treasures that support our island lifestyle and livelihoods. Each year, they provide flood protection to people, property, and jobs valued at more than \$836 million, support nearshore fisheries worth \$13.4 million, and contribute more than \$1.2 billion through reef-related tourism to the state's economy. Yet local pressures from overfishing and land-based pollutants have contributed to a 60% decline in living coral reefs in some areas over the past 40 years, and as much as a 90% decline in some important nearshore fisheries. The impacts of global climate change, such as warming and rising seas and more powerful and frequent storms, hasten the loss of coral reefs and threaten coastal areas with flooding and erosion. In a recent poll of Hawai'i residents, 93% said that coral reefs dying off was a serious concern. We must reverse this trend to protect the environmental engine that drives our economy.

DLNR is responsible for managing and protecting Hawai'i's coral reefs, nearshore fisheries, and other important coastal resources, and it is imperative that they have the financial resources necessary to do so. SB 1173 will enable DLNR to begin collecting nominal fees from visitors for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources. These fees will provide critical revenue to DLNR for essential marine resource protection, restoration, and management. The Ocean Stewardship Fee would be collected through commercial ocean operators who provide services to tourists. Collected fees would be directed into a special fund managed by the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), and residents and visitors alike would benefit from healthier and more resilient marine resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB 1173 to provide the funding necessary for DLNR to protect and restore the unique marine resources that make Hawai'i a global destination for discerning visitors and an irreplaceable home that will sustain us and our children for generations to come.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Duke E. Ah Moo Paul D. Alston (Chair) Kris Billeter Dr. C. Tana Burkert Anne S. Carter Richard A. Cooke III Ka'iulani de Silva
Brian J. Doyle Dave Eadie Matt Emerson Hon. Judith Epstein Dr. Alan M. Friedlander Benjy Garfinkle James J.C. Haynes III Sean A. Hehir
Brett MacNaughton Kathy M. Matsui Janet Montag Alicia Moy Dustin E. Sellers Peter K. Tomozawa Richard N. Zwern

Ihupani Advisory Council: Christopher J. Benjamin Kenton T. Eldridge Eiichiro Kuwana Duncan MacNaughton Jean E. Rolles Crystal K. Rose
Founders: Samuel A. Cooke Herbert C. Cornuelle

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 9:10:09 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Bishop	Testifying for Friends of Hanauma Bay	Support	No

Comments:

To: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Re: SB1173 Relating to Ocean Stewardship

Hearing: Friday, February 12, 2021 1:00 P.M. Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Position: Strong Support

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Keith-Agaran,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB1173.

Visitors to Hawaii have enjoyed our abundant ocean resources without contributing directly to management of those resources for decades. SB1173 would provide a framework for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to begin collecting nominal fees from visitors for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources. These fees would provide needed revenues to DLNR for marine resource conservation, restoration, enhancement, research, and educational activities.

Residents and visitors alike would benefit from healthier marine ecosystems. Commercial ocean tour operators would benefit directly by being able to offer more enjoyable experiences to their customers. Customers will have the satisfaction that their experience is contributing to marine resource conservation, restoration, and enhancement, thereby focusing on the importance of Hawaii's growing pivot to ecotourism. It is a win/win situation for Hawaii's residents, visitors, businesses, resource managers, and most importantly the ocean resources themselves.

Please support SB1173, and mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Lisa Bishop

President

Friends of Hanauma Bay

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 12:52:47 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Senator Inouye, Chair

Honorable Senator Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land.

From: HAWAI'I REEF AND OCEAN COALITION – HIROC (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing SB1173 RELATING TO OCEAN STEWARDSHIP

Hearing Date: [Friday, February 12, 2021, 1:00 pm](#), by videoconference

Position: STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB1173!

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land:

The HAWAI'I REEF AND OCEAN COALITION – HIROC – was formed in 2017 by coral reef scientists, educators, local Hawaii environmental organizations, elected officials, and others to address the crisis facing Hawaii's coral reefs and other marine life.

Our reefs and oceans are under great stress and need funding for protection! Coral bleaching, polluted runoff, unsustainable fishing, and invasive species are all degrading our reefs and oceans that are critical for protecting our aquatic life and shorelines and maintaining our tourism and recreational economy. This bill would establish the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund for the collection and use of moneys for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State's marine resources, and authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to collect non-resident user fees for the use and enjoyment of the State's ocean resources. This fund is a way to finance marine resource conservation, restoration, enhancement, research and educational activities. HIROC believes this funding is essential for maintaining our reef and ocean health.

Please pass this Bill!

Mahalo!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 5:19:27 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Kelley	Testifying for Teralani	Oppose	No

Comments:

Thank you chair and committee members. My name is Mike Kelley. I've been an active member of the Maui business community for over 43 years. My company Teralani Catamarans are highly responsible, conservation minded stewards of our island resources. I am opposed to bill SB1173. Our marine recreation, boating and watersports industries introduce visitors from around the world to Hawaii's beauty both above and below the surface of our oceans. Maintaining pristine conditions and area conservatorship are critical to all of us residents, businesses and visitors.

With the current massive impact of COVID 19, business closures, unrecoverable debt and negative sentiment globally for visiting Hawaii it is absolutely "not" the time to slap yet another fee onto the backs of our dwindling visitor population. Barrier to entry, costs for operations and absurd expense to vacation and / or try time live in Hawaii while running a business is out of control. I pleaded with you to at this time decline passage of SB 1173. Use a small fraction of the 3% user fee we collect from and pay to the State DLNR as a contribution towards conservation a fund. As a company with vessels operating off-shore in Ka'anapali we see little result or return of our 3% fees as we have no harbor slip or benefit of such. Again, please consider what we're already paying, how many businesses are about to fold, the timing of this proposed bill and the negative impact already high costs have on our principle industry of tourism. I'm asking for your assistance and understanding.

Mahalo,

Mike Kelley

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 7:26:59 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erik Stein	Testifying for Extended Horizons	Oppose	No

Comments:

Thank you for taking time to read my testimony in opposition to SB1173

While I agree that Hawaii's marine ecosystems are important and need protection I emphatically say that ecotourism is not the main culprit making conservation necessary. Ecotourism is not even a top five threat to the reef. Global ocean warming caused by greenhouse gases is easily the biggest threat globally. The sad fact is that ocean sedimentation and point source pollution play a much larger role in impacts to the reef in Hawaii as do global issues. And studies have consistently shown these impacts are much much larger than ecotourism.

Ocean tourism already contributes a 3% fee to the DLNR from monies collected on users. This would be a second fee DLNR is imposing. I do recognize DOBOR and DAR are different departments but that does not take away from the fact that the same people are being asked for fees twice by the same Department. The fund says it will fund moorings and other projects and while this seems like a worthwhile goal DAR needs to look elsewhere to those who are causing a bigger impact for this conservation fund to be successful. These other sectors should be made to contribute to special conservation fund. Air travel, visitor lodging, rental cars, development projects. All of these have impacts that are significant and measurable.

I do think it appropriate that the State allocate a portion of the 3% fee already charged to Ocean tourism business to conservation funding. But it is inappropriate for more fees to be tacked on to the commercial ocean recreation industry while many are still trying to stay afloat from being closed and now restricted in capacity. I strongly oppose this bill in this form and suggest that fishing, construction, DMV, and even airport taxes and other industries be tapped if the government creates this conservation fund.

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 8:36:03 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Pauline Fiene	Testifying for Mike Severns Diving	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members ~

My name is Pauline Fiene and I am the owner/operator of a small dive boat operation that has been in business here on Maui for 42 years. I am writing in opposition to HB1019. During the decades that I have been diving on Maui I have had a front row seat to the degradation to some of Maui's coastal reefs. So I am absolutely in favor of a special fund for DAR to do conservation work.

However, the ocean recreation industry already pays 3% of our income to DLNR. I believe that the proposed Non-Resident User Fee should be more broadly shared by all visitor industries such as hotels and car rentals as well as any developer whose project is upslope from the ocean. That would send a statement that caring for Hawaii's reefs is everyone's responsibility, not just the responsibility of someone who rents paddleboards or who takes snorkelers out on a raft. Particularly since it is well-documented that most of the degradation to our reefs has been caused by run-off, fertilizers and chemicals – land-based sources.

In addition, to levy a second fee on one of the hardest hit industries (boats are only allowed to take 50% of their normal passengers), some of which have not survived the covid shut-down and others which will take years to climb out of the debt incurred, could not happen at a worse time. Ocean recreation companies are some of Hawaii's smallest businesses. My dive boat can take out just SIX people each day. Compared to mainland-based hotels and rental car companies that service hundreds of visitors per day, it is tone deaf to put the burden of financing this worthy cause on small, local family-run businesses.

Mahalo for your thoughtful attention to this important matter.

~ Pauline Fiene

Kihei, Maui, Hawaii

Testimony In OPPOSITION to SB1173
Relating to Ocean Stewardship

To the Senate Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii State Capital, Conference Room 229
February 12, 2021
1:00 pm

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Agaran, and the members of the committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in OPPOSITION of SB1173 as written.

The merits of this bill are noble, we all would like to see our oceans protected for generations to come. Better conservation means that our kids will be left with a better ocean than was given to us.

My concerns with this bill are:

1. The visitor is going to bear the burden for the funding at a time when what we need are more visitors back to our islands.
2. The additional fee increase is levied on one industry only, Ocean Tourism. Ocean Tourism are not the bad guys.
3. Additional fees to an already hard hit industry during a pandemic could be the tipping point for small businesses who are struggling to survive.

What we seem to do with the visitors that arrive to our islands, is tax the heck out of them and grumble that they are here. My concern is the the visitor is already getting hit with a 10.25% Transient Accommodation Tax, car rental tax and fees are as much as 20% (facility charge, Hawaii State fee, License fee, county tax, and GET). In addition, DOBOR charges the Ocean Tourism industry 3% of our gross revenues, which in most cases is passed on to the guest as well. My concern is that we are eventually going to kill the goose that is laying the golden eggs for our state. Whether we like it or not, the visitor industry is that goose.

The Ocean Tourism industry should not be only business sector to bear the burden for this fee. As previously stated we already pay 3% of gross revenues to DOBOR. Why is the financial burden solely on one industry? Ocean Tourism doesn't even rank as far as reasons for a decline in ocean quality. The top contributors to our ocean's demise in Hawaii are warming water temperatures, injection well pollution, and mauka land use (fertilizer runoff, and construction to name two).

Adding additional fees to small business, and ultimately to the visitor, is just a bad idea at this time during a pandemic. We need help surviving, we need government to implement reforms that help both government and businesses. Atlantis has been closed since March 19, 2020. We remain closed today

and probably will not reopen until mid March. That is one year without revenue. That is one year without DOBOR getting their 3% fee, or the state receiving their GET from the tens of thousands of guests that we would have served.

In closing, I certainly am not opposed the establishment of a funding source for ocean stewardship, however, I am opposed to putting this burden on one industry, Ocean Tourism, and continuing to tell the visitor to go somewhere else (that is what higher taxes on them will do).

For these reasons I am in opposition to SB1173, and ask that this bill not mover forward.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Walsh
General Manager
Atlantis Adventures ~ Maui

LATE

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 7:10:57 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Catherine Kessler	Testifying for Dive Maui / Hawaiian Rafting Adventures employer of 7	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

First off, mahalo to the Chair and Committee for their time and consideration to protect our precious marine resources in Hawaii. My name is CJ Kessler and I am the manager of Dive Maui / Hawaiian Rafting Adventures, a scuba diving and whale watching company that operates out of Lahaina. I am writing to you to voice my opposition for Bill SB1173.

I agree wholeheartedly that the environment needs protecting and am especially an advocate for marine conservation legislation. In fact, the reason I became a dive instructor and manage a dive operation on Maui is to share my love for the ocean with guests. I believe ocean based experiences are the best way for people to have an intimate connection with our marine ecosystem. Through knowing the ocean and seeing the gorgeous life on top of and below the water, I believe our guests can come to love, protect and cherish the ocean and act as stewards for it's wellbeing.

While I agree Hawaii's marine ecosystems are important and need protection, ecotourism is not the culprit making conservation necessary. The #1 threat to Hawaii's reefs: forecast that 70% of reefs will be lost in next 15-30 years due to rising sea temperatures. To be successful, other sectors should be tapped to contribute to special conservation fund. Air travel, visitor lodging, rental cars, development projects.

The Commercial Ocean Recreation industry already has a 3% User Fee to DLNR. It is appropriate to allocate a portion of existing User Fee to special conservation fund, but it is inappropriate to create a second, new User Fee for this sector. Additional fees to an already hard hit industry during pandemic could be the tipping point for small businesses struggling to survive reduced capacity.

Thank you again for your time, consideration, and work to protect the oceans.

Mahalo,

CJ Kessler

LATE

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 11:14:11 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Teri Leicher	Testifying for Jack's Diving Locker	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committe members,

My my name is Teri Leicher. I am representing my business, Jack's Diving Locker and our families. We have been in business since 1981, and will soon celebrate 40 years. We have been actively involved in conservation efforts in our oceans for decades. Prior to it being popular. Prior to folks realizing how important it is to care for our oceans. Prior to the creation of DAR.

Although we agree that we would love to see DAR receive funding for conservation efforts, we feel that now is not the time for the following reasons.

1. the method has not been thoroughly thought out and is being rushed.
2. Ocean recreation is being targeted, when there are many other factors affecting our shorlines such as, *runoff, *golf courses, * injection wells, over fishing, unenforced laws, and more. As a general rule ... Ocean recreation businesses have lead the conservation efforts and are non consumptive.
3. Due to COVID19, Many ocean recrean businesses are either not operating at all ... or operating at 50% capacity and struggling for survival. This is not the time to tax them/us further.
4. Currently we pay the greater of a set fee or 3% of our gross, in addition to 4.72% state tax. Many folks also pay additional fees to operate within an MLCD, access the shore line and other fees, including the DOBOR Ocean User fee.

Polls have shown that folks travel to Hawaii for the ocean. To view it or be In it. We are all still struggling to survive this pandemic. We are very appreciative of the help we have received from the State and Counties of Hawaii. It is helping us all get through this and not shut down our businesses.

But now is not the time to add additional fees when the plan has not been thoroughly vetted. We appreciate that DAR has reached out to many of us to get our thoughts. But we have not come up with a practical solution. Saying, "we want more

money", during a pandemic is not practical.

Let's take this back to the drawing board and come up with a better solution that we can all get behind ... next year.

Mahalo,

Teri Leicher

Jacks Diving Locker

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 9:17:55 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lauren Blickley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Currently, fees paid by most commercial ocean users go towards the maintenance and support of harbor/marina infrastructure, boating safety and navigation programs for vessels. An Ocean Stewardship Fee program would address the increasing challenge of responsibly caring for Hawai'i's marine ecosystem and the important services it provides for current and future generations of residents and visitors to Hawai'i.

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 6:45:57 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

Please support SB1173.

Thank you,

Andrea Quinn

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 10:13:59 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Coral reefs serve many functions, and a non-resident user fee is appropriate.

LATE

SB-1173

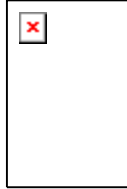
Submitted on: 2/11/2021 1:05:33 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support



Jill Mickelsen

PO Box 12495
Lahaina, Maui, Hi. 96761
Ph. or Fax (808) 667-0605
Jilibean@hawaii.rr.com

Hawaii House of Representatives
Hawaii Senate
Thirty-First Legislature, 2021
State of Hawaii

February 10, 2021

To whom it may concern:

I would like to submit the following testimony in **OPPOSITION** to HB1019 and SB1173.

I agree with the merit of these bills, but strongly oppose the funding basis to be levied on the Ocean Recreational Industry. As a commercial boat operator for over 30 years, I take pride in the fact that I have an opportunity to educate so many people about our beautiful, yet fragile ecosystem. We commercial boat operators ARE the stewards of our ocean realm.

- Look, but don't touch
- Reef safe sunscreen, and apply ½ hr before entering water
- Ensure whales, dolphins, turtles, monk seals get their space
- Pick up marine debris
- Report fuel spills
- Report entanglements

WE as commercial boat operators cannot change global warming – the number one cause of coral reef derogation. Nor can we control runoff or pollution. – Number 2 & 3. WE CAN educate.

WE, as commercial boat operators, already pay a User Fee of 3% to DLNR. If the intent of these bills are to raise monies for “Ocean Stewardship special fund”, kindly look elsewhere, or mandate funds out of our 3% to go directly to the “Ocean stewardship special fund”. Many of us in the industry are barely hanging on. While forced to close due to COVID, we still had overhead to cover. Now that we are able to run, we are at 50% capacity.

WE cannot afford another fee!

Thank you, for the opportunity to testify. And thank you for addressing this critical issue. As I tell my passengers, I want my son, his kids, and his kids kids and his kids kids kids to be able to experience our Hawaii Ocean Realm.

Aloha,
Jill Mickelsen

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 5:25:10 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Greg Howeth	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly disagree that the Ocean Recreation industry should have yet another User Fee be the target revenue stream for such a fund, without participation from other sectors like air travel, visitor lodging, car rentals, development projects, etc, especially at a time when the industry is struggling to provide employment for our local residents.

As you're probably aware, the Ocean Recreation Industry is not even one of the top 5 threats to Hawaii's marine ecosystem. Try land-based pollutants such as sewage treatment injection wells, fertilizer run-off, sedimentation events, destructive fishing practices, rising sea temperatures, or ocean acidification. Yet these bills as written paint "marine ecotourism" as a significant hazard to ocean and reef health when in reality the ocean tourism industry is one of Hawaii's greatest assets to provide marine resource protection through education of the visitor market.

LATE

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 5:37:22 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patricia Cadiz	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members,

My name is Patricia Cadiz and I am writing to oppose SB1173 as written.

I am first and foremost, an advocate for restoring and preserving Hawaii's precious reefs, beaches and marine ecosystems so I have no opposition to the *intent* of this bill.

I do, however, object to this particular part of the bill: "(1) Moneys collected as non-resident user fees pursuant to section 187A- ;

Studies show that reef impacts are from overfishing first and sediment runoff second. "Non-resident ocean users" generally can't be blamed for either.

What is the definition of an "ocean user"? Swimmers? People who rent snorkle gear? Deep sea fishers? People who rent surfboards? What about people who buy boogie boards at Costco? I believe that they are all ocean users but how are you going to collect from these groups? Or is this bill targetting permitted ocean recreation operators that already pay fees to state and county? Why single out this tiny protion of ocean "users"? Seems unfair and poorly targetted.

And who is a "non-resident" and how is the designated fee collector to determine that? What about someone who owns real-estate here but lives here part-time. How much time makes them resident or non-resident?

This sounds like a bookeeping nightmare for small businesses and (by reading other's testimony) for a manini fee that will cost more to administer than will be gained.

Maybe there is a better way to protect our precious marine ecosystems....

I suggest that we need instead a "per seat" environmental impact fee on all arriving airline passengers. Hawaii taxpayers could get a full rebate when they file thier taxes. This has the double benefit of incentivizing quality over quantity, which would also benefit our precious natural resources.

Thank you for considering.

LATE

SB-1173

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 9:32:14 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/12/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Heidi Speedie	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha, thank you for the time and concern given to ocean conservancy as well as your work on behalf of our state.

I'm a scuba diver, boat captain and operations manager for a charter vessel that's been operating out of Lahaina harbor since 1991 and I'm not in support of Bill SB1173. I've been with the company and visiting the same three reefs since 1993. I share with our passengers (eager to learn about Hawaii culture and who never get in the water while on the tour with us) the improved condition of two reefs in front of Lahaina Baby Beach and in front of the Harbor breakwall reef to Shark Pit since the mid 90s. They are pleased as are all of us residents to hear/see that once it became common practice to be more environmentally conscious and hotels and golf courses stopped using so much pesticide and chemicals in treating their grounds that the turtles no longer all have tumors and the algae blooms have lessened and coral has grown. This is despite the water now being several degrees warmer than it was then. I have underwater video of these reefs from 1994-1997 to give evidence of the improved condition of these two reef systems, the two reefs closest to Maui's busiest commercial harbor. This is also despite the many more commercial permits that seem to be allowed now.

Although there are more boats operating out of Lahaina Harbor, Mala and Kaanapali the fees and penalties for recklessness and violations of safe and clean practices are still in force and personally I see all crew being trained in their slips, at the ramp, on the beach and at the loading dock in the severity of ensuring no fuel, oil or hazardous material leak on to the docks or into the water. We will always try to do our part in keeping the ocean free of pollution because we're ocean lovers and thus consider it a privilege to be able to make our livings while being on (or under) the water.

I'm happy to report that the visitors aboard our boat (and the others I've crewed on) practically beg to learn what they can do to help keep the reefs healthy as they've usually adopted a life-of-less-plastic already, just to "save the turtles," even if they reside in the desert of CA or the mountains of TN. We get to tell them about how important it is to use reef safe products, especially sun block, not to touch coral and we love when they want to learn more about the animals they see.

When commercial boats interrupt their tours to pick up trash in the water from nets to picnic debris the passengers act as if they're part of an ocean conservancy project and proudly take pictures of the event as part of their tour.

When visitors confusedly ask about the litter they see on the side of the road on their way to Lahaina or to Hana we tell them that we're still working on educating everyone (visitors and residents) about how to keep things clean and safe. Fortunately visitors see the natural beauty past the trash and continue to pay the airfare, hotel and food and beverage prices to vacation here. We tell them we're honored they've chosen Hawaii as we know there are so many destinations they have from which to choose. They of course remark at how expensive it is here and we remind them of shipping costs and try to remind them that it's worth it as we point out the whales, dolphins, yellow tangs and the rainbows in the West Maui Mountains.

If we were to incur more costs to the guests and to businesses we will lose out to other destinations. Earning an income, justifying vacation spending, making revenue and paying bills has never been more difficult (for anyone other than hand sanitizer makers and plexiglass distributors) than it has been in the past 11 months. We ask that our law makers don't make running a business, providing jobs and hosting guests any more expensive and challenging.

If the 3% User Fee could be efficiently managed and spent to help conservancy would not all benefit?

Mahalo for considering these points and hearing about our experiences. Our crew would be happy to testify in the future.