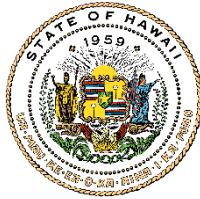


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, February 21, 2024  
2:00 PM

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1689  
RELATING TO PARROTFISH

House Bill 1689 proposes to prohibit: (1) commercial sales of parrotfish that have been caught by spearing; and (2) the spearing of parrotfish in state waters after sunset or before sunrise. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

The Department recognizes the importance of Hawai'i's parrotfish, or "uhu", species for both the health of coral reef ecosystems as well as non-commercial and commercial fisheries. It is the responsibility of the Department to find a balance between ecosystem health and continued access to sustainable fisheries through effective management informed by public input.

In response to mounting scientific evidence and community concerns regarding the sustainability of uhu and other herbivorous reef fish, the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) led a multi-year statewide stakeholder engagement process to develop conservation measures for these important species. This process gathered public input through public scoping sessions, targeted stakeholder outreach, and formal public rulemaking hearings.

As a result of this process, the Board of Land and Natural Resources recently approved amendments to statewide uhu rules, including restrictions on both commercial and non-commercial take. The rules establish important statewide limits on both non-commercial and commercial uhu fisheries, prior to which did not exist.

The Department intends to continue to monitor the health of statewide uhu populations to gauge the effectiveness of these new regulations. If found to be ineffective, the Department will pursue

DAWN N. S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY  
DEAN D. UYENO  
ACTING 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

changes intended to achieve management goals. Additionally, through the ongoing Holomua Marine Initiative, the Department is facilitating a community-led process to identify island-scale fisheries issues and establish island- and place-based management measures reflecting varying resource conditions and cultural practices. Rules established on the island- and place-based scales will complement statewide rules to provide local communities a powerful tool to guide how their resources are managed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



To: The Honorable Chair David Tarnas, the Honorable Vice Chair Gregg Takayama, and Members of the Committee Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **HB1689 RELATING TO PARROTFISH**

Hearing: Wednesday February 21, 2024 2:00 p.m. , CR325

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

**The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB1689!**

HIROC is deeply concerned about the harm that the taking of reef cleaning herbivorous fish, specifically the severely depleted parrotfish (uhu), inflicts on our precious coral reefs!

Hawaii's reefs will die in warmer, more acidic, and rising oceans if we don't do all we can to help keep them healthy! Corals are threatened by smothering algae fertilized by nutrient pollution from wastewater and other land-based sources. The presence on the reef of abundant stocks of reef-cleaning herbivorous fish is critical to reef health and survival under ocean warming.

**Parrotfish are known as the “lawnmowers of the sea” because they scrape algae off the corals, opening space for juvenile corals to attach and flourish. They are a natural resilience mechanism. But parrotfish need to be abundant to help save the reefs.**

**Hawai'i needs to increase herbivore and specifically parrotfish stocks now in order to give coral reefs a chance to survive in the face of ocean warming and harmful land-based pollution!** A study reported in Nature Journal last August found that **“Simultaneous reduction of human-derived stressors that originate on land, such as coastal run-off, and sea-based stressors, such as fishing pressure, resulted in greater coral-reef persistence before, during and after severe heat stress than did reduction of either alone.”** Gove, J.M., Williams, G.J., Lecky, J. *et al.* *Nature* **621**, 536–542 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06394-w>.

**This bill would help the reefs by reducing a major source of parrotfish loss.** It would **prohibit spearfishing at night**, when parrotfish sleep and are easy prey for spearfishers. **Night spearfishing of sleeping fish is not pono!** This bill would also remove an incentive for poaching by **prohibiting the commercial sale of parrotfish caught by spearfishing.**

**Protecting parrotfish stocks is not about the environment versus the fishers. This bill would not interfere with daytime spearfishing for subsistence or recreation. Nor would it prevent commercial sale of parrotfish caught by net or trap.**

**Protecting parrotfish now will increase future fish stocks, since healthy reefs are critical to abundant fish populations.**

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!



Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 10:59:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Godfrey Akaka	The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association is in strong opposition this bill as it is banning a form of Gathering as customary and culturally practiced as night fishing. This bill is infringing on our gathering rights under Article 12 Section 7 and is clearly exterminating systematically our cultural practices and abilities to gather food. There is zero data for justification and purpose other than biased opinions.



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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Tuesday, February 20, 2024

To: House Committee on the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Hon. David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Hon. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair

Re: HB 1689 relating to Parrotfish

Hearing: Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 2:00 p.m., Room 325 & videoconference

Position: Strong support

Aloha, Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the House Committee on the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, which has about 7,500 active members statewide, strongly supports HB 1689 relating to Parrotfish. As you surely know, Parrotfish (*uhu* in Hawaiian) are critical species for our coral reefs because they eat at the coral and thereby clean the coral surfaces, removing algae among other things.

Coral requires clean surfaces in order to thrive. Unfortunately, the natural cleaners, the parrotfish – *uhu* – have been seriously depleted in recent years. And, also unfortunately, the new herbivore fishing rules adopted by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to protect the *uhu*.

It is well known that much illegal fishing is taking place at night. Among other practices, divers spear *uhu* while they are sleeping. These illegally caught fish are then frequently sold in markets by people who do not have commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural cleaners of our reefs. Their presence helps ensure that our reefs have better water quality, and this helps avoid pollution and coral bleaching. But we need to have an abundance of *uhu* for the reefs to thrive. And, as we easily observe, *uhu* excrete sand as they eat bits and pieces of algae-covered coral. Herbivores such as *uhu* are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i. We must back off and let them live in abundant numbers, or else we will lose our reefs.



Environmental Caucus of  
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Testimony for the House Committee on the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Re: HB 1689 relating to Parrotfish

For Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Page 2

Please remember that healthy coral reefs help protect our coasts from erosion, they provide fisheries for many species (not only herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching.

Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these fish.

We MUST protect our reefs. This is an important piece of the puzzle. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

*Melodie Adyja* [legislativepriorities@gmail.com](mailto:legislativepriorities@gmail.com)

*Alan B. Burdick* [burdick808@gmail.com](mailto:burdick808@gmail.com)

Co-Chairs,

Environmental Caucus of the

Democratic Party of Hawai'i

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 1:44:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Damien Kenison	Kauhako Ohana Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha no kakou,

I am writing this letter in support of HB 1689, an important effort by our legislators to reverse the decline of uhu in our State waters. Hawaiians have harvested uhu for many generations, taking what they need to feed their families and not wasting this precious food resource. Eating it raw, broiled, or cooked in an imu, the uhu has provided our ohana with an ono, nutritious, supply of protein

With the loss of the konohiki and the passing of our kupuna our lawai'a have forgotten the practice of "lawai'a pono", a wayof fishing that ensured this favored mea'ai of our elders would be available for each generation. Combined with commercial harvesting, this has led to a decline of the uhu population in Hawaii. Baseline studies that have been conducted do not take into account the increasing number of migrant fishermen that are coming here to live and fish.

The Micronesian people have been brought here because we destroyed their fishing grounds and they have not been appropriately informed about the fishing regulations and cultural barriers here in Hawaii. Traditionally, eating fish is their predominant source of protein and spearing at night is their preferred way of harvesting food for sustenance.

This letter is not intended to place the blame for the decline on any one stakeholder but it is meant to express the need for protection of this valuable food fish whose role in maintaining a healthy reef is critical to our endangered coastal reef fish habitats. Please support the passing of this important piece of legislation for the benefit of us all.

Mahalo nui,

Damien Kenison

Kauhakō 'Ohana Association

PO Box 38, Honaunau, HI. 96726



February 21, 2pm

JHA Committee

**RE: Support for HB1689; Relating to Uhu**

Dear Chair Tarnas and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

For the Fishes, a Maui-based non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of coral reef wildlife, asks for your support of HB1689.

Research has shown the importance of healthy and abundant populations of coral reef fishes for their role in combatting the impacts of climate change, notably, the overgrowth of algae that threatens to smother our reefs and lead to coral loss and death. Scientists forecast that ocean heat waves will only increase in frequency and intensity over the coming years, threatening to wipe out nearly 70 percent of our coral reefs as early as 2030.

While Parrotfish (Uhu) are not taken by the commercial aquarium trade, which takes important herbivores en masse for the mainland and international pet trade, they too play an important role in reef health and resiliency. Taking uhu at night, when they are sleeping, is also contrary to pono fishing practices.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Inga Gibson

For the Fishes

<https://FortheFishes.org>



# FRIENDS of HANAUMA BAY

CONSERVE • PROTECT • RESTORE

---

*Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments,  
emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay*

---

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature

February 2024

Aloha Legislators,

Friends of Hanauma Bay **strongly supports HB1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save these critical herbivores from further severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses.

**This practice is not *pono*!**

HB1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai‘i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai‘i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by

poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

**Please support HB1689 to help save our defenseless *uhu* from senseless human overpredation.**

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop  
President I President  
Friends of Hanauma Bay  
Oahu, Hawai'i





February 18, 2024

To: Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and the House Committee on  
Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Re: **SUPPORT**, HB1689: Relating to Parrotfish

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and the House Committee on  
Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

We respectfully write in **SUPPORT** of HB1689 which would amend  
conservation and resources law **to prohibit**: (1) Commercial sales of  
parrotfish that have been caught by spearing; and **(2) The spearing of  
parrotfish in state waters after sunset or before sunrise** and offer the  
following comments:

- ⇒ Using special glands behind their gills, Uhu (parrotfish) secrete a  
mucus bubble that surrounds and protects them from parasites  
and other predators while they are sleeping and stationary at  
night. They are defenseless at that time.
- ⇒ Uhu play a critical role in the health and resilience of coral. As uhu  
numbers diminish, so does the health and resilience of our reefs.
- ⇒ Killing uhu at night is not pono based on traditional Native  
Hawaiian customary practices and values.

Our marine resources are fragile and it is up to all of us to ensure their  
abundance is protected and maintained for future generations.

Respectfully, MPW **SUPPORTS HB1689** and hopes this bill will advance.

*Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is a grassroots, community non-profit  
that actively works to care for, educate about, and protect our fragile,  
near-shore marine ecosystems. Our mission is "working to replenish and  
sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea  
ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community  
stewardship, education, and partnerships."*

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Jenny Yagodich  
Director of Educational Programs &  
Makai Watch Coordinator

**Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea**  
Post Office Box 188  
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

**Board of Directors**

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Keelan Barcina  
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*Jenny Yagodich, Director of  
Educational Programs &  
Makai Watch Coordinator*

**Federal Nonprofit Organization**  
501(c)(3) FEIN 27-0855937  
[www.pupukeawaimea.org](http://www.pupukeawaimea.org)



Aloha e Chair Tarnas and honorable Committee members,

I want to express **HULI PAC's strong support for HB 1689** relating to Parrotfish. We firmly believe this bill helps to save our coral reefs from severe overexploitation. Uhu, or Parrotfishes, are keystone species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, Uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear Uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono (righteous or just). HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of Uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared Uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps. Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawn mowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the Uhu. Importantly, Uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, the Uhu being a major player in this realm, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers. Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Fishers and environmentalists are on the same team, with the unified goal of the abundance of Uhu, both for consumption and ecosystem balance. Ultimately, by helping to replenish Uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo nui,  
Hannah Hartmann on behalf of HULI PAC  
Hōlualoa, 96725  
Hawai'i Island

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 1:19:46 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sylvia Dolena	Aloha Lokahi Association 501c3 Hawaiian Culture	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HP1689 and save our oceans, reef fish with pono practices.

Mahalo.

Pres. Aloha Lokahi Association

Bringing Aloha to the Planet

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 2:08:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Richard Bodien	Hawaii Cigar	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish.

Pleae pass this bill. Our reefs depend on it.

Thank you,

Richard

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 6:35:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Nakachi	Moana Ohana LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e JHA Committee,

I am in full support of this bill, Take only what you can eat and gather for yourself, this Bill is long overdue and UHU needed these protections for our Pae Aina a long time ago. Please pass this bill and keep it moving forward.

Mahalo to all involved in crafting this wonderful Bill. Malama Pono, Mike Nakachi

Moku o Keawe, Kakahawaiole.



# Global March for Elephants and Rhinos

824 North Wilson Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104. USA | +1 626 808 4107 | EIN: 81-1276522

[gmfer@gmfer.org](mailto:gmfer@gmfer.org) | [march4elesandrhinos@gmail.com](mailto:march4elesandrhinos@gmail.com) | [www.gmfer.org](http://www.gmfer.org)



Gold  
Transparency  
2024

Candid.

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Rosemary Alles  
44-315 Kahawai Road  
Honokaa HI 96727

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe over exploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawn mowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. And *uhu* poop much of the sand that replenishes our beaches! Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Rosemary Alles (President of GMFER) and the GMFER team.  
Honokaa, Hawaii.

*The mission of the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (#GMFER) is to #MarchAgainstExtinction and work with indigenous communities to influence governments and world leaders to STOP the poaching of elephants and rhinos. GMFER visions a livable earth for all living things by building human communities that see non-human communities as deserving of justice.*



House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 relating to parrotfish** to save our coral reefs from further overexploitation. Parrotfishes, or uhu, are scientifically well known to serve as a key species that keep our reefs clean so that new coral and other species can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are now severely depleted in many regions of the State, and the new herbivore fishing rules previously approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these critical reef fish.

I am the co-Principal Investigator and senior author of a series of studies on fish population changes throughout the West Hawai'i Island coastline over the past 22 years. The data from our combined NOAA, DLNR-DAR, and university records confirm a steep decline in adult uhu fish due to overfishing.

It is also known that these long pillaged uhu are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not highly unsustainable.

HB 1689 will prohibit night spearing of uhu, which is the time in which this species rests in a stationary position and thus can be shot by a single snorkeler in quantities of up to 30 fish per swimmer. HB 1689 will also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. Critically, this bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor does it affect commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Mahalo for your attention,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gregory P. Asner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gregory P. Asner PhD  
Director

**House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature**

**Subject: SUPPORT HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish**

Aloha,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs!!

- UHU (Parrotfishes) eat the limu (algae) that KILL CORAL. The LARGE UHU EAT THE MOST LIMU!
- LARGE UHU ARE OVERFISHED! DLNR/DAR HAVE DOCUMENTED
- APPROVED NEW HERBIVORE RULES ARE INADEQUATE!
- UHU MUST BE PROTECTED TO HELP SAVE OUR REEFS, LIVELIHOODS, AND RESOURCES!

PLEASE VOTE TO SUPPORT **HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish!**

Mahalo,

Jim Beets  
28-608 Opuia Rd  
Pepeekeo, Hawai'i



9 February 2024

Dr. Charles Birkeland  
94-258 Oluia Pl  
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I fully support HB 1689 protecting parrotfishes (uhu) from severe overexploitation to provide resilience or strength to our economically and culturally important Hawaiian coral reefs. Parrotfishes (uhu) are key species that graze down seaweed and keep our reef surfaces clear so corals can recruit and grow. It is tragic that uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these key components of coral reef ecosystems. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono fishing. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Protecting and replenishing parrotfishes is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our key herbivores. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Sincerely,

Charles Birkeland

Waipahu, Hawaii

February 8, 2024

House Speaker Saiki, Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing this letter to strongly support HB 1689 to save our coral reefs from severe overexploitation by protecting the key species, parrotfishes. It is scientific fact that *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* are herbivores that consume algae and allow new corals to form. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are valuable to all the people of Hawai'i as more than just food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is vital to the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. By allowing the protection of *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by healthy coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Brian Bowen, Ph.D.  
Kailua, Hawai'i



# FRIENDS of HANAUMA BAY

CONSERVE • PROTECT • RESTORE

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*Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments,  
emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay*

---

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

February 2024

Aloha Legislators,

Friends of Hanauma Bay **strongly supports HB1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save these critical herbivores from further severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses.

**This practice is not *pono*!**

HB1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by

poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

**Please support HB1689 to help save our defenseless *uhu* from senseless human overpredation.**

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop  
President I President  
Friends of Hanauma Bay  
Oahu, Hawai'i

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save uhu from severe overexploitation and thereby support the health of our coral reefs. I am a professional marine biologist who has studied species interactions on coral reefs in Hawaii for over a decade. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean by scraping away algae. This provides space for coral to flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish uhu populations on our coral reefs.

Night fishing of uhu allows divers to spear uhu as they sleep. This is a real-life version of shooting fish in a barrel; this practice is not pono, it is not sustainable, and it is damaging our coral reefs. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu.

The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps. The bill will not impact people who are fishing responsibly to feed their families and make a living.

Uhu are a natural resilience mechanism that supports the ability of our reefs to recover and thrive. Having large numbers of uhu living on our reefs supports the health of our coral reefs. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, support fisheries for many species, and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection.

In Hawai'i, many of our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Protecting and maintaining abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, provides a way for our reefs to better handle and recover from these stresses.

Uhu replenishment is about the long-term perspective; it is about the future of our coral reefs. Ultimately, by helping replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and our communities into the future.

Mahalo,

Chelsie Counsell, PhD

Kailua, Hawai'i

Dear Legislators,

Please pass **HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish**. Parrotfish or *uhu* are keystone species that support healthy coral reefs. These fish keep the reef surface clean and enable crustose coralline algae to grow promoting coral larval settlement. The new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are woefully insufficient to address the severe overexploitation of these fish. Nighttime spearfishing of *uhu*, when they sleep is just wrong.

HB 1689 prohibits night spearing of *uhu* and prevents the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish during the day or commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide habitat for other fish species, and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. A healthy *uhu* population builds natural resilience needed for our reefs to recover and thrive from the many threats they face now and in the future.

Mahalo,  
Catherine Courtney  
Kailua, Hawai'i

Aloha Legislators,

We strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs from severe over exploitation. The latest science as well as indigenous knowledge confirm that Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. In essence, *Uhu*, among other herbivorous fish, are nature's own **tools for reef recovery and health!**

Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are ***insufficient*** to replenish these reef builders.

Importantly, this bill *does not adversely affect subsistence and recreational fishers* who fish *pono* during the day; nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Finally, *Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists versus fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs versus the short-term perspective of those who would continue to take without caring or conscience.

Please pass HB1689!

R A Culbertson

Member, on behalf of the Big Island Reef Keeper's hui  
Honokaa

Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Daniela Escontrela Dieguez  
Oahu, Hawai'i



Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I am a former NOAA NMFS Research Biologist (retired in 2016, after 27 yr service studying coral reef fishes of Hawaii) who also strongly **supports HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfishes**. Parrotfishes (*uhu*) function as ecological engineers and are essential to protect our coral reefs from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean, allowing coral to replenish and flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to protect them. It is strongly documented by photos and common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they are resting under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores, especially *uhu*, are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. Their activities produce sand that gets transported by waves to maintain our beaches as well as clean reef surfaces for coral attachment. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual and cultural connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of these keystone species. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Edward E. DeMartini, PhD,  
Kaneohe, Hawai'i

Aloha,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Kyle Franks  
Kualapuu, Hawai'i

Aloha Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature,

I'm writing to support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish asking you to please save our coral reefs. We need our reefs for future generations and for the well being of our ecosystems. The uhu are a key species to help keep our reefs clean. They are already being depleted.

What will our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren do, what kind of world will they live in, if we make only money-minded, short-term choices?

Please help us get HB 1689 so that we can prohibit night spearing of uhu and prevent sale of illegally speared uhu.

We need the uhu alive and taking care of our ocean, not dead as a quick buck. I understand people need to economically survive but not if it threatens humanity's survival on a larger scale - we need our ecosystems to survive and thrive so that we may all be healthy and alive, both today and in future generations.

I write to you from New York, as a lover of Mother Earth, and lover of Hawai'i. This affects all of us. We are one world.

Thank you for your understanding, your care, and your commitment.

Mahalo,  
Olivia Frazao  
New York, NY 10021

Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

**Hawai'i's herbivorous fish community isn't able to keep pace with rampantly growing invasive algae. It is healthy and hungry fish that allow our native *limu* to beat out the invaders.** Protection of *uhu* enables us to promote the growth of native *limu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
James Fumo  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature.

February 13, 2024

Aloha Legislators,

**Let's get it done this time. I whole-heartedly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish. Please understand: I also support subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during daylight hours, and commercial fishers who use nets or traps. HB 1689 does not interfere with these practices.**

But we must protect our irreplaceable ocean resources against those who fish illegally at night, when the Parrotfish, or *uhu*, sleep helplessly under ledges. And we must do everything in our power to stop the commercial sale of *uhu* that have been speared illegally at night. **The new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources will not be job. They would permit these catastrophic practices to continue.**

**That's why we need HB 1689, which would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*.**

My wife and I moved to Hawaii 13 years ago and live here full-time because we love the ocean, the coral reefs, and the biodiversity it supports. But our reefs are in steep decline. Over the years we have lived here, we have watched fish populations on the reef dwindle, in the case of many species disappearing altogether. **Our best hope for turning the situation around is to protect our parrotfishes, or *uhu*, which clean the reef, allowing new coral to colonize and flourish.**

**HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources do not provide these protections. They will not do the job.**

Abundant *uhu* stock and the healthy coral they sustain protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which, without *uhu* to consume and control them, quickly smother corals.

**Let's think ahead! Let's preserve the aina for the next generation and the generations after that. Let's not watch our beautiful islands turn into a wasteland in our own lifetime—leaving new generations nothing but stories about the wonders that used to be.**

Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future. Let's get it done this time!

Mahalo,

Matthew Anatole Gurewitsch

Kihei, Hawai'i

Aloha Legislators,

I was born and raised in Hawaii and have lived here for all of my 76 years. I am a fisherman, ocean swimmer and a diver, and in my lifetime I have witnessed a clear decline in our ocean's bounty.

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are a key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Rick Gaffney  
Kailua Kona, Hawai'i

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Dear Legislators,

**Please pass HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs from continuing overexploitation.

Parrotfish or *uhu* keep reef algae from overgrowing corals on the reef. Reef rock that passes through the *uhu*, becoming sand in the process, is critical to replenishing our beaches. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish them.

Overharvesting of our reefs often occurs at night, when sneaky divers spear *uhu* sleeping under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. **This practice is not *pono***. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the reefs but they must be abundant enough to thrive and reproduce. The science is clear that herbivores--especially *uhu*--are depleted around all of the main Hawaiian islands. A snorkel outing at Hanauma Bay reminds us that an abundance of large *uhu* is the normal condition—but one that is rarely seen now outside of protected areas.

Thank you for your efforts to conserve Hawai'i's invaluable reef resources for generations to come. **The time to save *uhu* is now.**

With aloha,



Cynthia Hunter  
Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish**. These fish, also known as UHU, are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. This natural action can save our coral reefs from severe overexploitation. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are **insufficient** to replenish these reef saviors.

It is common knowledge that the pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Dr. Kate Jewell  
Kahala, Oahu Hawai'i



To whom it may concern,

2/17/2024

RE: HB 1689

Our near shore waters need much more protection ... Our Natural Resources are critical to our way of life.

Over the last 50 years of pleasure diving I have noticed a pronounced diminution in our uhu population. I swam from Waimea Bay to Haleiwa [Puaena Point] twice and failed to see one uhu. Whereas If you swim from Kapo'o [Sharks Cove] in the Pupukea Marine Life Conservation District down to Kalua o Mauwa [Three tables], You usually see a male uhu with two or three females every 200 feet or so.

**I strongly support passage of HB 1689**

MAHALO for the opportunity to provide input.

Roberts Leinau

59-524 Aukauka Pl., Haleiwa, HI 96712

Aloha Legislators,

**As a marine ecologist focusing on the coral reef fishes and the effects of fishing on coral reef ecosystems, I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. **This practice is not *pono*.** HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. **As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food.** Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

***Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors.**

Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Dr. Elizabeth Madin  
Associate Professor of Marine Ecology  
Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology  
Kailua, Hawai'i

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

9 Feb, 2024

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Dr George S Losey Jr  
44-432 Kaneohe Bay Dr  
Kaneohe HI 96744

Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing to strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

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Mahalo,  
Dennis Mahaffay  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

**TO:** House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,


I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

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*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mackenzie Manning', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mackenzie Manning  
Haleiwa, Hawai'i

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair  
& Members of The Committee On Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Committee Members,

I support the prohibition against spearing uhu (parrotfish) at night contained in HB 1689, because parrotfish are so important to the long-term sustainability of both (i) our reefs, and (ii) our white sandy beaches. And parrotfish are being overfished, and depleted, in Hawaii in a way that is simply not sustainable.

### **The Critical Importance of Uhu (Parrotfish)**

According to scientists at the University of Hawaii, approximately 70% of the white sand in Hawaii comes from uhu (parrotfish). Parrotfish feed on the algae that grow on the surface of many reefs. In this process of eating, the parrotfish teeth also chew off a small bit of the coral, which is ground up further by special grinding teeth, and eventually expelled (pooped out) as white sand. A single large parrotfish can produce 2,000 pounds of white sand, or more, per year!

In addition to parrotfish helping us preserve our beaches by producing about 70% of all the white sand in Hawaii, scientists also tell us that parrotfish are good for the health of our coral reefs. In addition to removing the algae that sometimes smother and kill our coral reefs, the small bite marks on the coral actually stimulate new coral growth, which helps corals be more resilient against warming ocean water and pollution.

### **The Remaining Uhu (Parrotfish) Stocks are Being Rapidly Depleted**

Uhu (parrotfish) are already listed as a “depleted” species by the National Marine Fisheries Service. They have been overfished in Hawaii in a way that is not sustainable on a long-term basis.

The scientific evidence is also consistent with my personal observations, and the observations of my friends who spearfish and surf. On both the North Shore and the South Shore of Oahu, we used to see many parrotfish, now we see very few.

### **Spearfishing at Night Makes it Way Too Easy to Find and Kill Uhu (Parrotfish)**

Parrot fish tend to be wary of humans in the daytime. At night, however, parrotfish are typically in a “sleep-like” state, and frequently sleeping under rock overhangs or in crevices, and particularly vulnerable to spearfishing at night. When an underwater hunter finds a sleeping

parrotfish and shines a light on it at night, it typically does not swim away, which makes it an easy target, just swim up to it and spear it.

Many South Pacific islands have similar species and sub-species of parrotfish, to those found in Hawaii. And on many of those South Pacific islands, parrotfish have been absolutely decimated by excessive spearfishing at night. On Guam, at least one sub-species of parrotfish is now extinct.

Here in Hawaii, all too often, especially on Oahu, large groups of people will spearfish for uhu (parrotfish) at night, with lights, and collectively kill dozens and dozens of parrotfish, and more or less “sweep an area clean” of all the parrotfish.

In order to help protect this depleted, but critically important, species of fish, there really should be a limitation that spearfishing for uhu (parrotfish) can be done only during daylight hours.

Mahalo for considering the ideas in this testimony,  
Ken Martyn, Waialua, Hawaii.

References supporting the scientific statements made in this testimony, are listed below:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/exploringourfluidearth/physical/coastal-interactions/beaches-and-sand/weird-science-parrotfish-and-sand>

<https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/fish/tough-teeth-and-parrotfish-poop>

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/animals-we-protect/parrotfish/#:~:text=Parrotfish%20live%20in%20reefs%20all,in%20the%20coral%E2%80%94at%20night.>

<https://fishpono.org/>

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

**HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to protect our coral reefs is an important bill and I strongly support. Parrotfishes are key species that help keep our reef surfaces clean so coral can survive and new coral can grow. Many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds which smother corals. Parrotfish serve an important function in cleaning the seaweed off the coral.

HB 1689 would prohibit night spearing of Parrotfish, uhu, and prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. Our reefs are suffering from pollution and coral bleaching. We need to protect and replenish Parrotfish populations. HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and benefit our coral reefs. Please support HB 1689.

Mahalo,  
Mary Marvin Porter  
Island Eyes Video Journalism  
Kea'au, Hawai'i 96749  
808-982-9100



Aloha Hawai'i State Legislature,

I am writing to give my strong support for HB1689. I am sick and tired of seeing our uhu, parrotfish, exploited, even by our community of cultural practitioners who are aware of their importance to reef ecosystems and still will spear dozens of them at night when uhu are asleep and helpless.

Clearly, education is an essential component of this, but also, we need regulation. We no longer have kapu systems & have reached a point where uhu need statewide legal protection to kapu their abuse. Without regulation, we can't actually protect our restore our reefs. Personal incentives are simply too strong, and everyone wants to think that whatever they take won't affect the whole. However go to any heavily fished area in Hawaii - especially Oahu - and you will see once vibrant coral reefs now dead & crumbled, choked by algae and unable to support any life at all, without the presence of our precious uhu and other overfished marine herbivores.

Parrotfish are essential to restoring our coral reefs. They are the biggest scraper of algae, and areas where they, and other herbivore fish, populations have been decimated (such as most of Oahu, and increasingly almost all the other islands), we see coral being suffocated by algae and the loss of our reefs. Uhu even save reefs after they bleach! It's incredible. As long as there are uhu, they scrape the algae off bleached coral structures, and coral polyps will literally return.

So they are an essential and precious resource for our coral reef survival, especially in this time of ocean warming and climate change. Reefs keep our shores safe from flooding so it is a matter of massive infrastructure survival too, for all our beaches, shoreline homes, hotels, etc. Now more than ever we need to protect uhu.

This bill is an important first step. By banning the commercial sale of speared uhu as well as night fishing, we are at least preventing the unnecessary death of a keystone species for coral reef survival. Families can still harvest for subsistence, and commercial fishers can still fish during the day with nets or traps. To me, this bill doesn't go far enough. I'd like to see daily catch limits. We are looking at the total collapse of our reefs on one lifetime here! And protecting and rebuilding the population of literally one fish can reverse that. It's a no-brainer.

But I understand that there are many different interests involved here and I will support whatever I can to this end.

Please pass HB 1689, as the absolute bare minimum that is ESSENTIAL for the survival of our reefs. Mahalo.

Malia Nolan  
Kaunakakai, Molokai

February 19, 2024

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation.

Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors.

It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors.

Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Sherri Rigg  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

February 12, 2024

Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

RE: HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfishes

Dear Sirs:

For decades scientists and ocean users have been asking the state to ban night fishing with scuba. One example is the Background Paper on SCUBA Spearfishing prepared by William Walsh for the Division of Aquatic Resources, January 2013: “the perceived problems associated with using scuba for spearfishing include reducing fish populations to low levels and diminishing or eliminating the positive effects of deep water acting as a sanctuary for fish. Most Pacific Island countries ban the use of scuba in spearfishing.” I also refer to an Views and Voices article of mine printed in the 7/8/2020 Honolulu Star-Advertiser in which I write that steps to support reef resilience are “to ban fishing with scuba, which has been done by most tropical oceanic nations, and to stop the commercial sale of reef fish.”

To allow a small number of fishers to deplete a public resource in the face of increasing threats to Hawai'i reefs is, at the least, poor stewardship. I remind you of the Department of Land and Natural Resources' mission statement – to enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawai'i unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources HELD IN PUBLIC TRUST.

Please pass HB 1689 to prohibit night fishing of parrotfishes and the commercial sale of speared uhu. If the Pacific nations can do this, so can Hawai'i.

Thank you,

Diane E Shepherd, DVM 808-283-2024

3329 Kehala Dr., Kihei, HI 96753

[Diane.shepherd@outlook.com](mailto:Diane.shepherd@outlook.com)

February 18, 2024

Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to protect these critically important members of the coral reef fish community. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that remove suffocating algae from coral reef surfaces.

**Parrotfish play a crucial role in the ecology of coral reefs for several reasons:**

1. **Algae Removal:** Parrotfish are the principal consumers of algae, preventing it from overgrowing and smothering coral, thus promoting coral reef health.
2. **Coral growth:** Their feeding habits involve scraping algae and other material off coral surfaces, which aids in coral reef growth by exposing the coral skeleton for settlement of larvae and subsequent new growth.
3. **Beach Production:** Parrotfish have powerful beaks capable of grinding coral, which they ingest and later excrete as sand, contributing to the formation of sandy beaches and islands. Up to 70% of the sand on Hawaiian beaches comes via parrotfish activity.
4. **Habitat for Other Species:** Their excretion of sand creates habitats for various marine organisms, including invertebrates and small fish, which in turn support the diversity of coral reef ecosystems. Sand bottom species make up a significant percentage of coral reef associated organisms.
5. **Coral Restoration:** Some species of parrotfish help in coral restoration efforts by assisting in the dispersal of coral larvae and aiding in the settlement of new coral colonies.

**Overall, parrotfish are essential components of coral reef ecosystems, contributing to their resilience, diversity, and overall health.**

**In order for parrotfish to fulfill their role in maintaining and restoring reef health, they must be sufficiently abundant.** Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted due to overfishing at night on our reefs, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep in their cocoons under ledges. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence, recreational, or commercial fishers.

**Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries of many species, contribute to overall biodiversity and contribute heavily to Hawaiian tourism and recreation.** Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, coral reefs can be overgrown with algae and disappear.

**HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.**

Mahalo,  
Stephen E. Thompson, PhD  
Kailua-Kona, HI



Members of the Hawai`i State Legislature

Dear Legislators,

Please support HB1689 relating to parrotfish.

I have spearfished all around O`ahu since the 1990s and have seen the decline in our reefs and fishes. Older fishermen have seen even more decline from the 1950s, and historical accounts indicate that there were very rich fisheries in traditional Hawaiian days. To bring back healthy fisheries for future generations we are going to have to give up some privileges now. Leaving the status quo in place maintains a cycle of poor fisheries as there are not enough parent fish to spawn new fish, and there are not enough herbivores to control algae growth on the reef.

This is a gyotaku I did of a blue uhu that I speared on the windward side of O`ahu (I shared the fish with friends, and gave the painting to my mom for her birthday).



I need to give up spearing uhu, despite my love for eating this fish.

HB1689 will address unsustainable fishing practices targeting sleeping parrotfish, helping to increase their populations, and bring back their ecological role in 'lawnmowing' algae off the bottom so corals can grow better. Catching fish while they are sleeping is an unsustainable practice that we should discontinue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin C. Weng". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'K'.

Kevin Weng

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral depletion, yet they must be abundant to do so. And *uhu* poop 70% of the sand that replenishing our beaches! Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
William Walsh Ph.D.  
Former Division of Aquatic Resources Aquatic Biologist  
Captain Cook, Hawai'i



Michael Wilson  
666 Prospect St  
Apt 408  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
December 7, 2023  
808-228-1250

Hawaii State Legislature  
House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committees

Re: **HB 1689 Save the Uhu**

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Tarnas, members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committees, House Speaker Saiki, Senate President Kouchi, and Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

My name is Michael Wilson. Please consider my strong support for **HB 1689 Save the Uhu**. I grew up in Kailua diving, surfing, hiking in Kawainui Marsh, swimming in Maunawili falls and for much of my adult life helping our community stop the destruction of Hawaii's natural resources by government. The Hawaiian community, including Mapuana de Silva's halau and other concerned citizens, organized to stop the drainage of Kawainui Marsh when government sought to develop a shopping center; we organized to stop government from building on Mount Olomana; we organized to save sandy beach to prevent government from turning the coastline into luxury homes and retail buildings. As chair of the department of land and natural resources it was evident that Hawaii has one of the weakest natural resource programs in the United States. Depending on the calculation, it is the most underfunded of all states for resource enforcement and protection of aquatic resources.

But this is consistent with the resource management model of the state. Three natural resource regimens are employed by governments. The model most commonly practiced is sustainability: managing resources in a manner that sustains land, water and the environment for future generations. A less practiced but more enlightened resource management regimen is restoration... applied by governments of countries such as Norway, Switzerland and New Zealand. The restoration model involves the identification of key natural resources and the restoration or improvement of those resources. The third resource management model is exploitation: the maximization of resource extraction with an emphasis on economic development and acceptance of the degradation of the resources as a legitimate tradeoff for economic development. To those of us who have for the last fifty years been involved in protection of Hawaii's ocean, forests, streams, and mountains (upon which the Hawaiian culture depends) from wanton degradation by government, it is apparent that Hawaii practices the exploitation model. Even our most basic natural resource, drinking water, lacks protection as evidenced by the contamination of critical groundwater resources by development (most

recently, by the United States Military) without any effective monitoring or intervention by the state water commission or the county board of water supply. Another example is recounted by the Hawaii State Supreme Court in *Umberger v Department of Land and Natural Resources* where the Department of Land and Natural Resources was found to have acted in violation of the law when it failed to apply the protection of Hawaii's environmental protection act to extraction of aquarium fish for commercial sale. The Department adopted a policy to allow unlimited take of aquarium fish by refusing to limit the number of licenses for commercial aquarium fish collection. The court found that the Department acted improperly by failing to apply the protection of the state environmental protection law to reef fish taken from Hawaii's waters for sale.

The *Umberger* case was decided in 2017. Any marine scientist, waterperson or Hawaiian cultural fisherman knows that the near shore fish population-- including critical species of Uhu, Kala and other herbivores-- has continued to decline, except in a very few protected areas.

Now the legislature has the opportunity to help the Board of Land and Natural Resources depart from its legacy of making political decisions rather than scientific decisions to decide whether to protect Hawaii's natural resources. It is apparent that to do so in this case will not only enhance economic development by supporting the recreational diving industry, but will also provide support for Hawaiian culture and the biodiversity upon which a healthy reef depends. Although the Department of Land and Natural Resources lacks any state wide climate protection plan to protect Hawaii's natural resources from the existential threat of climate change, in this case the Department and the Uhu and Kala have the benefit of input from world renown marine scientists who have, without compensation, worked tirelessly to develop rules that will protect herbivores and thereby protect the reef that is under siege from climate change. It is a testament to the legacy of exploitation management of Hawaii's ocean resources that the rules of the department of land and natural resources are now too weak.

This legislature has the opportunity to continue the exploitation model, ignore the extraordinary wisdom of Hawaii's top marine scientists, and continue with rules that are inadequate to protect herbivores and the reef. On the other hand, the decision to adopt stronger legislation to provide adequate protection is not a difficult decision if it is based on science rather than a false belief that it is better to fish out the herbivores to serve the pleasure of a minority of people who want to kill the fish regardless of expert scientific warning that the citizens of the state of Hawaii and their descendants will have their right to have herbivores and a healthy reef in the future violated.

To see an uhu or kala swimming in the ocean of Oahu is to experience true Hawaii. They are indigenous beauties and they are the architects of a healthy ocean. Now that they are disappearing at a rate that will mean a sick reef and the loss of our children's connection to true Hawaii, it is time for the legislature to allow DLNR, the great marine scientists at the University of Hawaii and the Hawaiian community to protect them.

For these reasons I respectfully request the legislature to act on un rebutted science to protect herbivores and the reef for future generations. This exercise of sustainability will be an important departure from the prevailing model of exploitation commonly practiced by the State of Hawaii. Please pass **HB 1689**.

Thank you for your consideration. With aloha, Michael Wilson

## HB1689 to Save the Parrotfish

Aloha **House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee**,

In December 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources passed a severely weakened package of herbivore fishing rules that experts believe will *not* recover the ability of our herbivores, especially severely depleted parrotfishes (*uhu*), to serve as the “lawnmowers of the sea” and save our reefs from shifting from coral to algae dominated. Bag limits and restricted phase of blue uhu are modest measures that will not facilitate recovery by themselves.

After consultation with fishermen and DOCARE officers (fishing rules enforcement officers), [House Bill 1689 Relating to Parrotfish](#) was introduced for the 2024 legislative session by [Representative Nicole Lowen](#).

This short bill has two provisions: (1) prohibiting spearfishing of uhu at night, when they sleep helplessly under reef ledges and are often pillaged by poachers\*; and (2) prohibiting the commercial sale of speared uhu, justified because poaching and commercial sales of illegally speared fish by lawbreakers will still continue despite the first provision.

In short, this law would help to end a major source of uhu loss from our reefs. The Uhu Conservancy is submitting testimony in support of passing this bill and hope to continue to spread awareness, education, and regulations in protection of herbivorous fish populations. More substantial measures to foster uhu populations in Hawaii are vital for enhancing the ability of coral reefs to resist and recover from climate change driven disturbances.

Thank you for your consideration,

**The Uhu Conservancy**

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:18:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laila Kaupu	Miloli'i CBSFA Outreach & Biological Monitoring Coordinator, Kalanihale	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

Laila Kaupu, a lineal descendent of Miloli'i and an Outreach & Biological Monitoring Coordinator for the Miloli'i CBSFA. I am in support of this bill.

We all know the importance uhu have on our reefs, and what they can do for our beaches. These measures keep their presence where they belong.

To commercialize sale for this species will lead to a broken reef system that will lead to a dead reef system, due to the mass removal of the one species that help to restore the coral. We cannot allow the commercial sale of these species to happen unless we want to say aloha to what makes Hawai'i, Hawai'i, our waters and everything in it.

Time in Tahiti 2016, I got to witness commercial sales of pananu and uhu on strings full being sold along the side of the road and at their markets, then jumping into their ocean to see the dead coral systems with absolutely no fish around, all within their barrier reefs. This is not what I, a lawai'a who lives off the reef, want to see happen in waters known as our ice box.

Placing a sunset to sunrise rule of no harvesting is needed to protect them as they sleep. This is a measure that the Miloli'i CBSFA has in place to do exactly that, especially from poachers. Also, I don't think you'd want someone shooting you as you sleep, would you.

Please pass this measure. Mahalo!

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Support for HB 1689, Relating to Parrotfish  
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
February 21, 2024, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Chair Takayama, and Member of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) **supports** HB 1689, relating to parrotfish, which amends conservation and resources law to prohibit: (1) Commercial sales of parrotfish that have been caught by spearing; and (2) The spearing of parrotfish in state waters after sunset or before sunrise.

HB 1689 would prohibit night spearing of uhu and prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps. Uhu and other herbivores are the natural resilience mechanism of the sea that can save the reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism and spiritual connection.

Ensuring that reefs have healthy herbivore populations, including uhu populations, is one of the most important and effective actions we can take to make reefs as resilient as possible in a changing world. Many stressors can kill corals and lead to the loss of the habitat they create, and the ability of reefs to recover from damage depends on the presence of an abundant, diverse population of herbivores that can keep seaweed populations in check, keeping reef area clear for new corals to settle and grow. Studies from around the world have demonstrated that resilience and recovery is enhanced by healthy herbivore populations. Recent research in Hawai'i has reinforced this finding, with a statewide analysis showing that reefs in West Hawai'i that had abundant herbivores recovering more quickly from the impacts of the 2015 mass coral bleaching.

There is very strong evidence, however, that herbivore populations in Hawai'i are depleted. Communities across the state have voiced concerns that many species of herbivores are not as abundant as they used to be, and in-water surveys conducted by many organizations across the state show that herbivore populations in many areas are far below what could and should be present on those reefs. A just-released statewide analysis revealed that in many places, especially where herbivore abundance is low, fishing-driven reductions in herbivore populations have led to less healthy reefs. A stock assessment conducted by fisheries scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that both the surgeonfish kala and **parrotfish uhu palukaluka**, are experiencing overfishing (i.e., fish are being removed faster than they are replenished).

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All herbivores are important for the health of the reef, but **uhu palukaluka is the single most important species in Hawai'i** for scraping the reef free of all algae and other coral-competitors so that new corals can settle and grow to repair reefs.

For over 40 years, TNC has actively managed nature preserves throughout Hawai'i. We currently manage 40,000 acres in preserves on Hawai'i Island, Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work with over 30 coastal communities through networks and partnerships to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. Over our decades of experience of forest management and marine conservation, TNC has implemented many conservation actions that promote biodiversity and it is these experiences which underpin our support for this measure.

We look forward to continuing to support efforts to collectively raising awareness about the importance of our State's natural resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1689.



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 21, 2024      2:00 PM      Conference Room 325

**In SUPPORT of HB1689:** Relating to Parrotfish

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Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB1689, which will help to prevent the continued depletion of a vital reef species and thereby support our coral reef ecosystem, as well as the subsistence, cultural, recreational, scientific, and economic interests associated with both uhu and a healthy nearshore environment.

Hawai'i's uhu play a critical and direct role in perpetuating our nearshore ecosystems and cultural and subsistence traditions, and their sustainable management supports a wide range of interests in our marine environment. These fish species serve a critical and unique role in maintaining healthy reefs through their control of coral-inhibiting algae; are the basis of a number of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices; and also serve as a subsistence and recreational fishery resource. The ecological services provided by uhu also benefit a wide range of cultural, subsistence, recreational, scientific, and economic interests dependent upon a healthy and abundant nearshore environment.

Unfortunately, our uhu populations are far from healthy, and may be at risk of further decline or collapse. The value of uhu as table fare creates a significant financial incentive to harvest them for commercial gain, and their extreme vulnerability at night has enabled significant numbers of uhu to be taken with devastating efficiency, particularly through the use of SCUBA gear and spears. Without greater controls to manage the harvest of uhu, we risk seeing the further depletion of these species, and ever increasing impacts to the environmental, cultural, subsistence, recreational, scientific, and economic values they provide.

By prohibiting the commercial take of uhu by spear and protecting uhu from night harvest using the same, this measure provides a much-needed, targeted layer of protection that can help prevent the further decline of this critical resource. **Notably, the increased abundance of uhu that would be facilitated by this measure will provide greater opportunities for subsistence and cultural practitioners to sustainably enjoy and share this resource, without having to compete with commercial operations and "recreational" fishers known to harvest uhu en masse, particularly at night.**

Accordingly, the Sierra Club respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:54:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dean Sensui	Hawaii Goes Fishing	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill partly on the basis that fishing regulations should never be established by legislation. The Division of Aquatic Resources has established a rulemaking process regarding access to marine resources, and the development of rules need to take into account changing conditions for proper fishery management.

We've already witnessed the kind of problems that arose when legislation was set for the Kona crab fishery. Changing the laws, as determined by good scientific studies, was a difficult and cumbersome process. And that could have put the resource at unnecessary risk.

Also, it should be pointed out that night spearing is very selective. There's plenty of opportunity for a diver to decide if a particular fish is to be harvested or passed by. If excessive take is a concern then catch-limiting strategies should be established to ensure the sustainability of resources. Bag limits and annual catch limits are among the means that have proven effective for good fishery management.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Dean Sensui, executive producer.  
Hawaii Goes Fishing

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 5:54:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregg Gruwell	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

House Speaker Saiki,

Senate President Kouchi, and

Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe over exploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawn mowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. And uhupoop much of the sand that replenishes our beaches! Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai‘i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai‘i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable

sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Gregg Gruwell

Kamuela, HI

## Scientific Testimony in Support of HB1689 Relating to Parrotfish



Dr. Mark Hixon (Professor, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, School of Life Sciences)



Dr. Randy Kosaki (Marine Ecologist, NOAA, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument)



Dr. Alan Friedlander (Chief Scientist, Pristine Seas, National Geographic Society, and University of Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology)



Dr. Kawika Winter (Director, He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve, and University of Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology)

*testifying as private citizens*

Aloha Chair Tarnas and members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee:

**We marine scientists with long experience studying parrotfishes and other herbivores in Hawai'i strongly support HB1689 Relating to Parrotfish, and offer the narrative below for your consideration as the justifying preamble to this currently bare-bones bill. We also include an appendix and illustrations that address possible concerns about this bill.**

**Coral reefs provide extremely valuable ecosystem goods and services for the people of Hawai'i**, including habitat for nearshore fisheries, opportunities for tourism and other industries and activities, and coastal protection from waves, storms, and erosion as sea level rises.<sup>1</sup> Reefs are also fundamental to the fabric of local communities, providing a source of food, materials, and traditional activities.<sup>1</sup> From a purely economic perspective, Hawai'i's coral reefs generate about \$800 million per year in gross revenues.<sup>2</sup> One estimate of the total economic value of coral reefs in the main Hawaiian Islands is \$33.57 billion.<sup>3</sup>

**Hawai'i's coral reefs have suffered tremendously** from increasing population density and coastal development, resulting in damage by snorkelers and divers, anchor drags and vessel groundings, runoff and leaching of sediment and fertilizers from poor land use practices, urban runoff and leaching of cesspool sewage and other pollutants, plastic debris, invasive species, and overfishing near population centers.<sup>4</sup> More recently, ever-increasing ocean warming has caused coral bleaching events that have killed over 50% of the corals on some reefs.<sup>1</sup> Ocean climate models predict that Hawai'i's coral reefs will bleach every year sometime before 2040.<sup>5</sup>

**Maintenance and recovery of coral reefs requires abundant and diverse herbivores**, which are fishes and invertebrates that eat seaweeds (technically, benthic algae).<sup>6</sup> Herbivores prevent seaweeds from outcompeting and replacing corals, especially following coral mortality events.<sup>6</sup> Where herbivores are depleted, seaweeds eventually proliferate, which prevents reef recovery.<sup>6</sup> **The major herbivores that clean dead reef surfaces so corals can flourish are parrotfishes**

(*uhu*)<sup>7</sup>: Subfamily Scarinae of the Family Labridae, of which there are seven species in Hawai‘i.<sup>8</sup> Three of these species are found only in Hawai‘i and therefore have irreplaceable biodiversity value.<sup>8</sup> **Parrotfish are also major producers of the sand that replenishes our beaches.**<sup>7</sup>

**Parrotfish and other herbivore populations are severely depleted near population centers in the main Hawaiian Islands.**<sup>9</sup> The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) considers the status of both small-bodied and large-bodied parrotfishes in Hawai‘i to be “unsustainable”.<sup>10</sup> **The depletion of herbivores leaves Hawai‘i’s coral reefs extremely vulnerable to severe degradation because once coral dies and seaweeds cover a reef, corals cannot recover.**<sup>11</sup>

**A major contributor to parrotfish depletion is illegal or otherwise unethical spearing of these fish at night**, while they sleep helplessly under reef ledges.<sup>12</sup> Legal and otherwise ethical (*pono*) fishing of parrotfish occurs during the day by subsistence, recreational, and commercial fisheries.<sup>10</sup>

Management agencies have long been concerned about parrotfish depletion.<sup>13</sup> The DAR proposed a substantial package of herbivore fishing rules in December 2022.<sup>14</sup> By the time the final rules package was passed by the Board of Land and Natural Resources in December 2023,<sup>15</sup> **explicit protections for parrotfishes had been weakened to point where we believe these new rules will be ineffective. Additionally, the new rules do not address the sale of fish from successful poaching, which DOCARE reports is widespread at night.**<sup>12</sup>

**HB1689 will greatly reduce illegal or otherwise unethical (i.e., not *pono*) night spearfishing of parrotfishes (*uhu*) in Hawai‘i state waters**, thereby fostering the replenishment of these crucial herbivores to enhance the maintenance and recovery of Hawai‘i’s coral reefs. **The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/habitat/coral-reefs/>

<sup>2</sup> Hawai‘i Coral Reef Initiative Research Program. 2004. Economic value of Hawai‘i’s nearshore reefs. [https://www.hawaii.edu/ssri/cron/files/econ\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.hawaii.edu/ssri/cron/files/econ_brochure.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bishop, R.C., D.J. Chapman, B.J. Kanninen, J.A. Krosnick, B. Leeworthy, and N. F. Meade. 2011. Total economic value for protecting and restoring Hawaiian coral reef ecosystems: final report. NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Office of Response and Restoration, and Coral Reef Conservation. Silver Spring, MD. Program. NOAA Technical Memorandum CRCP 16. 406 pp. <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/684>

<sup>4</sup> Friedlander, A.M., G. Aeby, E. Brown, A. Clark, S. Coles, S. Dollar, C. Hunter, P. Jokiel, J. Smith, B. Walsh, I. Williams, and W. Wiltse. 2005. The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the Main Hawaiian Islands. pp. 222-269. In: J. Waddell (ed.), The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States: 2005. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 11. NOAA/NCCOS Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment’s Biogeography Team. Silver Spring, MD. 522 pp. [https://library.oarcloud.noaa.gov/noaa\\_documents.lib/NOS/NCCOS/TM\\_NOS\\_NCCOS/nos\\_nccos\\_11.pdf](https://library.oarcloud.noaa.gov/noaa_documents.lib/NOS/NCCOS/TM_NOS_NCCOS/nos_nccos_11.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> van Hooidonk, R., J. Maynard, J. Tamelander, J. Gove, G. Ahmadi, L. Raymundo, G. Williams, S.F. Heron, and S. Planes. 2016. Local-scale projections of coral reef futures and implications of the Paris Agreement. Scientific Reports 6:39666. DOI 10.1038/srep39666. Supplemental material details projected bleaching in Hawai‘i.

<sup>6</sup> Review by Hixon, M.A. 2015. Reef fishes, seaweeds, and corals: a complex triangle. Pages 195-215 in C. Birkeland, editor. Coral reefs in the Anthropocene. Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands. Hawai‘i case study: Gove, J.M., G.J. Williams, J. Lecky, E. Brown, E. Conklin, C. Counsell, G. Davis, M.K. Donovan, K. Falinski, L. Kramer, K. Kozar, N. Li, J.A. Maynard, A. McCutcheon, S.A. McKenna, B.J. Neilson, A. Safaie, C. Teague, R. Whittier, and G.P. Asner. 2023. Coral reefs benefit from reduced land-sea impacts under ocean warming.

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Nature 621:536-542. See also <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/files/2021/11/Sustainable-Herbivore-Management-Plan-2021.pdf>

- <sup>7</sup> Review by Bonaldo, R.M., A.S. Hoey, and D.R. Bellwood. 2014. The ecosystem roles of parrotfishes on tropical reefs. *Oceanography and Marine Biology: An Annual Review* 52:81-132. Hawai'i case study: Howard, K.G., B.D. Schumacher, and J.D. Parrish. 2009. Community structure and habitat associations of parrotfishes on Oahu, Hawaii. *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 85:175–186.
- <sup>8</sup> Randall, J.E. 2007. Reef and shore fishes of the Hawaiian Islands. Sea Grant College Program, University of Hawai'i. 546 pp.
- <sup>9</sup> Studies in Hawai'i: Edwards, C.B., A.M. Friedlander, A.G. Green, M.J. Hardt, E. Sala, H.P. Sweatman, I.D. Williams, B. Zgliczynski, S.A. Sandin, and J.E. Smith. 2014. Global assessment of the status of coral reef herbivorous fishes: evidence for fishing effects. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 281:20131835. Nadon, M.O. 2017. Stock assessment of the coral reef fishes of Hawai'i, 2016. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-PIFSC 60. Friedlander, A.M., M.K. Donovan, K.A. Stamoulis, I.D. Williams, E.K. Brown, E.J. Conklin, E.E. DeMartini, K.S. Rodgers, R.T. Sparks, and W.J. Walsh. 2018. Human induced gradients of reef fish declines in the Hawaiian Archipelago viewed through the lens of traditional management boundaries. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 28:146-157. Gorospe, K.D., M.J. Donahue, A. Heenan, J.M. Gove, I.D. Williams, and R.E. Brainard. 2018. Local biomass baselines and the recovery potential for Hawaiian coral reef fish communities. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 5:DOI 10.3389/fmars.2018.00162. Stamoulis, K.A., J.M.S. Delevaux, I.D. Williams, M. Poti, J. Lecky, B. Costa, M.S. Kendall, S.J. Pittman, M.K. Donovan, L.M. Wedding, and A.M. Friedlander. 2018. Seascape models reveal places to focus coastal fisheries management. *Ecological Applications* 28:910-925. Donovan, M.K., C.W.W. Counsell, M.J. Donahue, J. Lecky, L. Gajdzik, S.D. Marcoux, R. Sparks, and C. Teague. 2023. Evidence for managing herbivores for reef resilience. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 290:20232101 (see figure at end of Appendix).
- <sup>10</sup> <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/files/2021/11/Sustainable-Herbivore-Management-Plan-2021.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> Review by Williams, I.D., T.L. Kindinger, C.S. Couch, W.J. Walsh, D. Minton, and T.A. Oliver. 2019. Can herbivore management increase the persistence of Indo-Pacific coral reefs? *Frontiers in Marine Science* 6:doi 10.3389/fmars.2019.00557. Supplemental material focuses on Hawai'i.
- <sup>12</sup> Recent examples: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2023/11/08/nr23-192/>, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2023/05/16/nr23-91/>, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2022/10/10/nr22-150/>, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2021/10/24/nr21-188/>, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2020/09/18/nr20-144/>, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/blog/2020/08/18/nr20-121/>, see photo at end of Appendix.
- <sup>13</sup> WESPAC. 2008. Biology of parrotfish in Hawai'i. [https://www.wpcouncil.org/coralreef/Hawaii%20Parrotfish\\_Jan%202008%20Final%20Report.pdf](https://www.wpcouncil.org/coralreef/Hawaii%20Parrotfish_Jan%202008%20Final%20Report.pdf)
- <sup>14</sup> <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/F-5.pdf>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/F-5.pdf>

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## APPENDIX: Responses to concerns about HB1689:

**Concern:** Why protect parrotfish legislatively so soon after a public process that resulted in the new DAR herbivore fishing rules?

**Response:** In Hawai'i, as with any public hearing process anywhere involving natural resource management, the loudest and most influential voices are always those who make money extracting the resource, even though the silent majority may be opposed to further extraction. We have personally seen this scenario play-out elsewhere in the world – from New England cod to West Coast groundfish to Caribbean grouper and snapper – with the same end result of collapsed fisheries. We believe that the new DAR herbivore fishing rules will not replenish our parrotfish populations sufficiently. HB1689 will provide immediate protection of parrotfish from nighttime slaughter.

**Concern:** Let's allow time to see if the new herbivore fishing rules will work.

**Response:** Unfortunately, we don't have time as many of our reefs continue to be overexploited and severe coral bleaching looms on the horizon. Indeed, we seldom see

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newly recruited uhu during our SCUBA surveys around O‘ahu and other crowded regions, a sign of recruitment overfishing and imminent stock collapse. The new herbivore fishing rules are scientifically indefensible given the extremely depleted status of herbivores – especially uhu – on O‘ahu and elsewhere (see illustrations on next page).

**Concern:** The state will eventually implement island-by-island rules, starting with Maui, so let’s wait for that process.

**Response:** With the Maui process stalled because of the fires, and DAR having insufficient funding to start island-by-island processes simultaneously across the archipelago, we just don’t have time. Recovery of depleted coral reef fisheries typically takes about a decade, and with the rapidly increasing threat of severe coral bleaching, immediate and substantial protections of parrotfish are imperative. If necessary for passage, HB1689 could be amended to include only O‘ahu as a test case, including a 10-year monitoring-and-evaluation clause.

**Concern:** Subsistence fishers spear uhu at night and we don’t want to limit them.

**Response:** Enforcement officers report that pillaging of our reefs at night is done by “hired guns” posing as subsistence fishers. The subsistence fishers we know are appalled by spearing parrotfish at night – clearly not a pono practice. This is why the bill includes no commercial sale of speared uhu – to account for those who will continue to spear parrotfish at night illegally.

**Concern:** Much of the commercial catch of uhu is from night spearfishing.

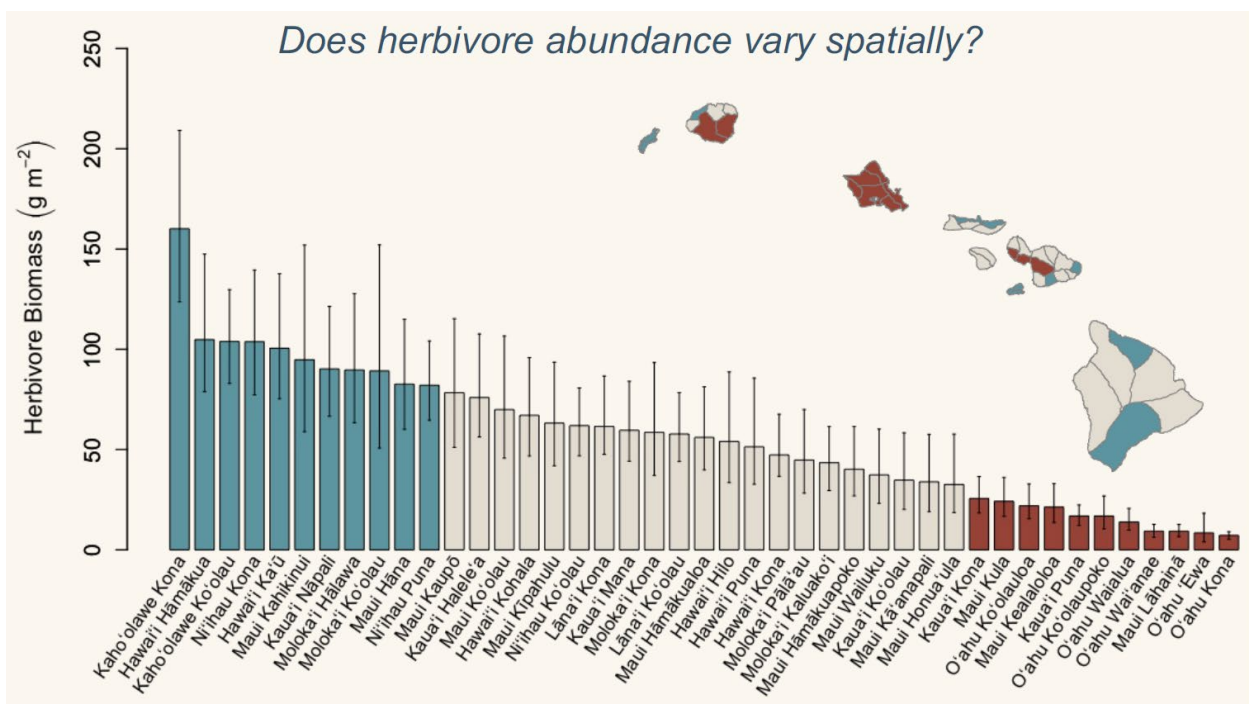
**Response:** Exactly! The only way to replenish a severely depleted stock is by substantially reducing the catch. This bill would do so, affecting primarily the commercial fishery. Unfortunately, there is no free lunch when it comes to replenishing severely overfished stocks: either those engaged in the fishery are angry because of catch reductions yet the stock eventually recovers, or those engaged in the fishery are happy in the short term yet the stock eventually collapses.

**Concern:** The elderly and others who don’t fish need to be able to buy uhu at the market.

**Response:** This bill still allows the commercial take of parrotfish by nets and traps. In any case, parrotfish are much more valuable to the people of Hawai‘i as ecosystem engineers that save our reefs than as mere food. There are many other food fishes available.

With high-grade uhu bringing upwards of \$50 per pound in local markets and \$70 per pound shipped to the mainland, this fishery is now entering the realm of threatened Atlantic bluefin tuna: the more depleted the stock, the more valuable the fish, the more intensive the fishing, and the more complete the eventual collapse of the fishery. Unfortunately for Hawai‘i, this is not simply a fishery issue: uhu and other herbivores are *THE* natural resilience mechanism on our reefs inhibiting coral bleaching and excess nutrients from accelerating the transition from dominance by coral to dominance by seaweeds. And, as a bonus, they produce most of the sand that replenish our shrinking beaches. **In short, uhu are worth far more alive than dead for the future of Hawai‘i’s coral reefs and beaches!**





Abundance of herbivorous fishes, including parrotfish, moku-by-moku in the Main Hawaiian Islands. Using Kaho'olawe as an unfished baseline (far left blue bar), it is obvious that O'ahu and parts of Kaua'i and Maui are severely depleted (red bars), and most of Hawai'i is moderately depleted (gray bars). Figure from Donovan et al. (2023)<sup>9</sup>.



Example of overexploitation of sleeping parrotfish (large red and blue fish) from a single night spearfishing. Photo courtesy of DAR.



Michael Wilson  
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December 7, 2023  
808-228-1250

Hawaii State Legislature  
House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committees

Re: **HB 1689 Save the Uhu**

Aloha Chairs Lowen and Tarnas, members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committees, House Speaker Saiki, Senate President Kouchi, and Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

My name is Michael Wilson. Please consider my strong support for **HB 1689 Save the Uhu**. I grew up in Kailua diving, surfing, hiking in Kawainui Marsh, swimming in Maunawili falls and for much of my adult life helping our community stop the destruction of Hawaii's natural resources by government. The Hawaiian community, including Mapuana de Silva's halau and other concerned citizens, organized to stop the drainage of Kawainui Marsh when government sought to develop a shopping center; we organized to stop government from building on Mount Olomana; we organized to save sandy beach to prevent government from turning the coastline into luxury homes and retail buildings. As chair of the department of land and natural resources it was evident that Hawaii has one of the weakest natural resource programs in the United States. Depending on the calculation, it is the most underfunded of all states for resource enforcement and protection of aquatic resources.

But this is consistent with the resource management model of the state. Three natural resource regimens are employed by governments. The model most commonly practiced is sustainability: managing resources in a manner that sustains land, water and the environment for future generations. A less practiced but more enlightened resource management regimen is restoration... applied by governments of countries such as Norway, Switzerland and New Zealand. The restoration model involves the identification of key natural resources and the restoration or improvement of those resources. The third resource management model is exploitation: the maximization of resource extraction with an emphasis on economic development and acceptance of the degradation of the resources as a legitimate tradeoff for economic development. To those of us who have for the last fifty years been involved in protection of Hawaii's ocean, forests, streams, and mountains (upon which the Hawaiian culture depends) from wanton degradation by government, it is apparent that Hawaii practices the exploitation model. Even our most basic natural resource, drinking water, lacks protection as evidenced by the contamination of critical groundwater resources by development (most

recently, by the United States Military) without any effective monitoring or intervention by the state water commission or the county board of water supply. Another example is recounted by the Hawaii State Supreme Court in *Umberger v Department of Land and Natural Resources* where the Department of Land and Natural Resources was found to have acted in violation of the law when it failed to apply the protection of Hawaii's environmental protection act to extraction of aquarium fish for commercial sale. The Department adopted a policy to allow unlimited take of aquarium fish by refusing to limit the number of licenses for commercial aquarium fish collection. The court found that the Department acted improperly by failing to apply the protection of the state environmental protection law to reef fish taken from Hawaii's waters for sale.

The *Umberger* case was decided in 2017. Any marine scientist, waterperson or Hawaiian cultural fisherman knows that the near shore fish population-- including critical species of Uhu, Kala and other herbivores-- has continued to decline, except in a very few protected areas.

Now the legislature has the opportunity to help the Board of Land and Natural Resources depart from its legacy of making political decisions rather than scientific decisions to decide whether to protect Hawaii's natural resources. It is apparent that to do so in this case will not only enhance economic development by supporting the recreational diving industry, but will also provide support for Hawaiian culture and the biodiversity upon which a healthy reef depends. Although the Department of Land and Natural Resources lacks any state wide climate protection plan to protect Hawaii's natural resources from the existential threat of climate change, in this case the Department and the Uhu and Kala have the benefit of input from world renown marine scientists who have, without compensation, worked tirelessly to develop rules that will protect herbivores and thereby protect the reef that is under siege from climate change. It is a testament to the legacy of exploitation management of Hawaii's ocean resources that the rules of the department of land and natural resources are now too weak.

This legislature has the opportunity to continue the exploitation model, ignore the extraordinary wisdom of Hawaii's top marine scientists, and continue with rules that are inadequate to protect herbivores and the reef. On the other hand, the decision to adopt stronger legislation to provide adequate protection is not a difficult decision if it is based on science rather than a false belief that it is better to fish out the herbivores to serve the pleasure of a minority of people who want to kill the fish regardless of expert scientific warning that the citizens of the state of Hawaii and their descendants will have their right to have herbivores and a healthy reef in the future violated.

To see an uhu or kala swimming in the ocean of Oahu is to experience true Hawaii. They are indigenous beauties and they are the architects of a healthy ocean. Now that they are disappearing at a rate that will mean a sick reef and the loss of our children's connection to true Hawaii, it is time for the legislature to allow DLNR, the great marine scientists at the University of Hawaii and the Hawaiian community to protect them.

For these reasons I respectfully request the legislature to act on un rebutted science to protect herbivores and the reef for future generations. This exercise of sustainability will be an important departure from the prevailing model of exploitation commonly practiced by the State of Hawaii. Please pass **HB 1689**.

Thank you for your consideration. With aloha, Michael Wilson

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair  
& Members of The Committee On Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Committee Members,

I support the prohibition against spearing uhu (parrotfish) at night contained in HB 1689, because parrotfish are so important to the long-term sustainability of both (i) our reefs, and (ii) our white sandy beaches. And parrotfish are being overfished, and depleted, in Hawaii in a way that is simply not sustainable.

### **The Critical Importance of Uhu (Parrotfish)**

According to scientists at the University of Hawaii, approximately 70% of the white sand in Hawaii comes from uhu (parrotfish). Parrotfish feed on the algae that grow on the surface of many reefs. In this process of eating, the parrotfish teeth also chew off a small bit of the coral, which is ground up further by special grinding teeth, and eventually expelled (pooped out) as white sand. A single large parrotfish can produce 2,000 pounds of white sand, or more, per year!

In addition to parrotfish helping us preserve our beaches by producing about 70% of all the white sand in Hawaii, scientists also tell us that parrotfish are good for the health of our coral reefs. In addition to removing the algae that sometimes smother and kill our coral reefs, the small bite marks on the coral actually stimulate new coral growth, which helps corals be more resilient against warming ocean water and pollution.

### **The Remaining Uhu (Parrotfish) Stocks are Being Rapidly Depleted**

Uhu (parrotfish) are already listed as a “depleted” species by the National Marine Fisheries Service. They have been overfished in Hawaii in a way that is not sustainable on a long-term basis.

The scientific evidence is also consistent with my personal observations, and the observations of my friends who spearfish and surf. On both the North Shore and the South Shore of Oahu, we used to see many parrotfish, now we see very few.

### **Spearfishing at Night Makes it Way Too Easy to Find and Kill Uhu (Parrotfish)**

Parrot fish tend to be wary of humans in the daytime. At night, however, parrotfish are typically in a “sleep-like” state, and frequently sleeping under rock overhangs or in crevices, and particularly vulnerable to spearfishing at night. When an underwater hunter finds a sleeping

parrotfish and shines a light on it at night, it typically does not swim away, which makes it an easy target, just swim up to it and spear it.

Many South Pacific islands have similar species and sub-species of parrotfish, to those found in Hawaii. And on many of those South Pacific islands, parrotfish have been absolutely decimated by excessive spearfishing at night. On Guam, at least one sub-species of parrotfish is now extinct.

Here in Hawaii, all too often, especially on Oahu, large groups of people will spearfish for uhu (parrotfish) at night, with lights, and collectively kill dozens and dozens of parrotfish, and more or less “sweep an area clean” of all the parrotfish.

In order to help protect this depleted, but critically important, species of fish, there really should be a limitation that spearfishing for uhu (parrotfish) can be done only during daylight hours.

Mahalo for considering the ideas in this testimony,  
Ken Martyn, Waialua, Hawaii.

References supporting the scientific statements made in this testimony, are listed below:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/exploringourfluidearth/physical/coastal-interactions/beaches-and-sand/weird-science-parrotfish-and-sand>

<https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/fish/tough-teeth-and-parrotfish-poop>

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/animals-we-protect/parrotfish/#:~:text=Parrotfish%20live%20in%20reefs%20all,in%20the%20coral%E2%80%94at%20night.>

<https://fishpono.org/>

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:57:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Oppose

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I have three keiki who love snorkeling and witnessing ocean wildlife. Last year, one of my daughters entered the Clarence TC Ching Foundation's Acts of Kindness Inspired in Hawai'i Art Contest with our coral reef herbivores in mind. Her poster titled, "Save the Uhu," was discovered by UH Manoa professor Mark Hixon, who invited her to attend local artist Jana Ireijo's launch of a special collection of paintings created to raise awareness for reef conservation. Stella and her ohana stand for the uhu and reef health and **strongly support HB 1689 relating to parrotfish so that our coral reef saviors may be protected from severe overexploitation. Specifically, HB 1689 will protect our reefs by prohibiting night spearing of uhu and prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu.**

Since joining this critical conversation, Stella and her brother and sister have learned that herbivores are the ocean's gardeners, playing their essential part in a circle of life full of symbiotic relationships: herbivores like uhu and kala help restore reefs from coral bleaching; they eat seaweed that grow on the corals; the reef surfaces stay clean; new corals can grow; and the reefs and all the species that depend on them for food and shelter flourish too. Our keiki's favorite fact is that uhu poop out 800 pounds of sand a year by using their hard beaks and teeth in their throats to crunch dead corals, thereby creating our iconic beaches. Our ohana also learned that reefs produce phytochemicals that are used to treat lymphoma and leukemia and breast cancer. Let's protect the herbivores that keep the reefs healthy so the reefs, in turn, can keep people healthy too.

We believe in fishing. We fish to be connected physically, emotionally, and spiritually to the aina. But if we want to keep fishing and maintain these connections to our land and sea, we must be responsible stewards of the rich resources Mother Ocean gives freely—especially the herbivore populations that manage the health of our reefs. The choice to ignore what science says about the decline of herbivore populations due to overfishing is a choice that will deprive Hawai'i of a future of biodiversity and economic growth. Kill the herbivores, and you kill the coral reefs and beaches. Without reefs and beaches, our coastlines are threatened by erosion, and tourism and recreation industries will decline. Let's give our reefs, and our people, the gift of life by saving the uhu.

We strongly support prioritizing reef health by replenishing the herbivore populations so that all Hawaiians, and our fellow human beings may continue to enjoy the benefits of a thriving ocean for future generations.

Mahalo,  
Sarita Rich

Honolulu, Hawai'i



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 10:26:08 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jose San Austin, Jr.	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Jose San Agustin Jr oppose HB 1689 !!!! It would really hamper the way I gather for food for substance I'm get up there in age and not being able to take this species of fish I have not seen any clear data that would warrant this no take method so please wholeheartedly do not pass this bill I would be in support of a no take of any fish at night with scuba gear ????

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 11:27:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelden Yagin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose bill hb1689. I do night gathering it allows me to better choose and my catch better and secure with minimal loss.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 2:37:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelsie Counsell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save uhu from severe overexploitation and thereby support the health of our coral reefs. I am a professional marine biologist who has studied species interactions on coral reefs in Hawai‘i for over a decade. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean by scraping away algae. This provides space for coral to flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish uhu populations on our coral reefs.

Night fishing of uhu allows divers to spear uhu as they sleep. This is a real-life version of shooting fish in a barrel; this practice is not pono, it is not sustainable, and it is damaging our coral reefs. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu.

The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps. The bill will not impact people who are fishing responsibly to feed their families and make a living.

Uhu are a natural resilience mechanism that supports the ability of our reefs to recover and thrive. Having large numbers of uhu living on our reefs supports the health of our coral reefs. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, support fisheries for many species, and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection.

In Hawai‘i, many of our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Protecting and maintaining abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, provides a way for our reefs to better handle and recover from these stresses.

Uhu replenishment is about the long-term perspective; it is about the future of our coral reefs. Ultimately, by helping replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and our communities into the future.

Mahalo,

A professional marine biologist and community member of O‘ahu



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 3:13:41 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei Fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** better protection of our precious uhu. Please **PASS** HB1689.

At the recent passing of the watered-down Herbivore Rules, DLNR Chair Dawn Chang voiced strong concerns that the amended rules would not be enough to protect these precious creatures - and I agree. Although Chair Chang instructed DAR to do more to better protect our uhu, I'm not sure at this point what (if anything) is being done on DAR's end - which only adds to the importance of passing this measure.

Uhu is my favorite fish for several reasons, including its beauty and tastiness, but also its extreme importance & vital role as an herbivore for cleaning our reefs and creating sand. The uhu literally looks like it's smiling at all times - pretty hard to *not* love these wonderful creatures.

As a Native Hawaiian I also know how important culturally this animal is - and I know that in the past these fish were often reserved only for Hawai'i ali'i and leaders to eat. For example, a quick search of Nupepa.org, I found an article from *Ka Nupepa Kuokuoa* published February 11, 1862, telling everyone that the Uhu of Waimanalo were reserved only for the Konohiki:

*OLELO HOOLAHA*

*KE HAI AKU NEI MAUA, NA MEA NONA NA INOA malalo, ua hookapu maua i ka Uhu o Waimanalo, ko maua aina, oia ka i-a a ke Konohiki, a me ka laau kukui o kuahiwi, oia ka laau kapu o ko maua aina.*

*E hiki no i na kanaka o ka aina ke kii i na laau a me na mea i aeia ma ke Kanawai, no lakou pono, aole no ka hoopukapuka aku me ka imi waiwai.*

*O ka poe a pau e kue ana i keia mau olelo papa, e hoopiiia no e maua ma ke Kanawai.*

*LIMAIKAIKA OPIO.*

*KEONI KAMAKI.*

*Waimanalo, Koolaupoko, Oahu, Feb. 11, 1862. 12 2t*

Although uhu is my favorite fish, the last time I ate one was about 10 years ago when my husband caught one for my birthday. Knowing that the uhu populations are targeted so much, especially by commercial fishers on O'ahu, it pains me too much to think of killing & eating just one anymore. The thought of anyone shameless enough to hunt and kill these fish at night while they sleep defenselessly, is so sad and frustrating. **Everyone knows that killing the uhu while they sleep at night is so hewa -- and yet our laws still don't reflect this well-known fact/custom/belief that has persisted since ancient times until today??** Please help us with correcting this major flaw in our current laws.

All this to say - the uhu is an extremely beloved and respected animal to Native Hawaiians and locals alike - please support better protecting it for future generations to come. Anyone who is against this bill obviously has commercial interests, or does not *really* understand the cultural & ecological importance of these sacred animals. **Please protect our uhu.**

Aloha nui & mahalo for considering my testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB1689.

Lei Fisher

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 3:23:05 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniela Escontrela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Daniela Escontrela Dieguez

Oahu, Hawai'i



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 5:02:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mackenzie manning	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha Legislators,*

*I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.*

*Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i especially the uhu.*

*Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are*

*valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.*

*Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.*

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 6:18:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Gurewitsch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Let's get it done this time. I whole-heartedly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish. Please understand: I also support subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during daylight hours, and commercial fishers who use nets or traps. HB 1689 does not interfere with these practices.**

But we must protect our irreplaceable ocean resources against those who fish illegally at night, when the Parrotfish, or *uhu*, sleep helplessly under ledges. And we must do everything in our power to stop the commercial sale of *uhu* that have been speared illegally at night. **The new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources will not to be job. They would permit these catastrophic practices to continue.**

**That's why we need HB 1689, which would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*.**

My wife and I moved to Hawaii 13 years ago and live here full-time because we love the ocean, the coral reefs, and the biodiversity it supports. But our reefs are in steep decline. Over the years we have lived here, we have watched fish populations on the reef dwindle, in the case of many species disappearing altogether. **Our best hope for turning the situation around is to protect our parrotfishes, or *uhu*, which clean the reef, allowing new coral to colonize and flourish.**

**HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources do not provide these protections. They will not do the job.**

Abundant *uhu* stock and the healthy coral they sustain protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which, without *uhu* to consume and control them, quickly smother corals.

**Let's think ahead! Let's preserve the aina for the next generation and the generations after that. Let's not watch our beautiful islands turn into a wasteland in our own lifetime—leaving new generations nothing but stories about the wonders that used to be.**

Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future. Let's get it done this time!

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/16/2024 6:22:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Darrell Tanaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in opposition because whoever wrote this bill is out of touch with how Uhu is harvested and is out of touch with current regulations and how they are changing. In conservation management you cannot just make up any kind of regulation, or it doesn't achieve the desired goal...for instance, the state is creating a bag limit of 2 Uhu per person per day, so what is wrong with selling two Uhu?? And the methods of catching Uhu is not just limited to spearing....Someone is trying to go through a lot of trouble passing an act of the legislature when even if achieved, won't have much of an impact considering the current rules and how they are changing...if someone doesn't know much about fishing regulations or how a fish is harvested, they shouldn't try passing legislation...its just dumb.

Aloha Legislators,

I was born and raised in Hawaii and have lived here for all of my 76 years. I am a fisherman, ocean swimmer and a diver, and in my lifetime I have witnessed a clear decline in our ocean's bounty.

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are a key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Rick Gaffney  
Kailua Kona, Hawai'i

I **strongly support** better protection of our precious uhu. Please **PASS** HB1689.

At the recent passing of the watered-down Herbivore Rules, DLNR Chair Dawn Chang voiced strong concerns that the amended rules would not be enough to protect these precious creatures - and I agree. Although Chair Chang instructed DAR to do more to better protect our uhu, I'm not sure at this point what (if anything) is being done on DAR's end - which only adds to the importance of passing this measure.

Uhu has always been a staple for young native Hawaiian free divers. It's taught to us, from our Makua and Kupuna, that successfully hunting this type of fish separates the novice diver to the expert diver and is often viewed as a right of passage in our fishing abilities. Aside from this expectation, the mana'o that followed was most important. These fishes were highly kapu amongst commoners, in ancient days, and were reserved for ali'i. They were sacred and highly respected. It was taught to us, that after mastering successfully hunting these precious fishes, it is our kuleana as native Hawaiians and true ambassadors of the sea, to protect, mitigate, and perpetuate sustainable fishing of uhu. The act of preparing for dive gear the night before, waking up before the sun rises, getting to the beach, swimming out, acquiring one, bringing it home, preparing it for dinner, and as we finish eating it, reflect on the catch, but mainly focusing on how we need to sustainably fish for them, to ensure that there will be many more available for the following generations. It was truly full circle to learn about them, their role in our culture's history. Getting out and acquiring 'one' to feed my family, and to know deep down in my na'au, that although beyond its delicious taste, this fish needs to be protected above anything else.

Aside from their historical role in our culture's history, they are truly remarkable and play a pivotal role within sustaining the life of our coral reefs. They protect bleached coral reefs by chewing off algae and promoting new growth. With the consumption of coral polyps, they excrete sand, which is vital for healthy longevity for coral reefs. They also surround themselves with a mucous membrane while they sleep throughout the night protecting them from predators. However, this part leaves them purely defenseless amongst night divers. It is TRULY looked down upon to catch these fish at night, as they have no way of defending themselves against us. It is not pono and truly unfair for the uhu. My kupuna would always tell me that if I, or anyone I know, catch uhu at the night, that is the worst sin you could commit as a native Hawaiian diver. With all that Uhu does for our oceans, the least we can do is establish restrictions on when and where to hunt them and harsher backlash. Set out seasonal hunting times throughout the year to promote healthy reproduction (certain months throughout the year as kapu to fish for uhu). Set out Uhu/Fish sanctuaries that promote absolutely NO fishing.

I grew up learning everything there is to know about Uhu. How they move, how they graze, how they interact with different wildlife, how they express themselves. Hunting them has given me a certain love and appreciation for who they are and what they do for us and our oceans. I plan to educate my children how important these fish are to our culture and aina and teach them how to sustainably hunt them so that there will be more uhu available in the future for them to pass that native ike to their kids and so on and so forth.

In conclusion, I strongly urge to support this bill to better protect for uhu for future generations. Anyone against this bill is obviously not educated on how respected and vital these fishes are for us kanaka and our aina. Commercial fishing for this fish should not be allowed as it poses a huge threat to their ecological and cultural importance, and I hope this bill will help to protect them from this aspect as well.

Aloha nui and mahalo for considering my testimony in SUPPORT of HB1689

Scott Fisher



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/17/2024 3:49:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Janik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

What is being done to the parrotfish is cruel and unusual. Please support this bill.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/17/2024 7:55:46 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mark Tang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB1689!

Mahalos!

Mark Tang,

Hilo, HI

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/17/2024 8:14:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Speaker Saiki,

Senate President Kouchi, and

Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

My name is Diane Ware, Moku o Ka'u.

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs cleaner fishes from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. And uhupoop much of the sand that replenishes our beaches! Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai‘i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai‘i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our

coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo nui for your support for the fishes,

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/17/2024 9:13:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lance Askildson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a lifelong waterman, fisher and spearfisher, I want to express my strong support for this measure. I have watched the decline of Uhu on Hawaii's reefs and strongly endorse a complete ban on commercial harvesting. Uhu are increasingly uncommon at some of the biggest sections of reef around Oahu and particularly so for the larger species that are harvested for commercial purposes. None of our native reef fish should be harvested for commercial purposes when their populations and the reef itself is under existential threat. I also support prohibiting take of Uhu on night dives. Uhu are challenging fish to spear during the day and in their reef environment; spearing an Uhu in this environment -- especially with polespears -- is an art and an accomplishment. Spearing Uhu at night is like shooting fish in a barrel and gives the Uhu no chance of escape. There is no sport or honor in harvesting fish in this way, and it encourages night spearfishing that goes beyond the subsistence and sustainable fishing practices that we should be encouraging. Simply put, its not pono. I hope that you pass this bill and many fishermen and spearfishermen like myself will be supportive of its passage.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/18/2024 5:56:55 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sanjay Velappan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/18/2024 6:17:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marty Kossoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strong support of HB1689!

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing to strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,  
Dennis Mahaffay  
Honolulu, Hawai'i



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/18/2024 9:44:01 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Committee members,

Our herbivores need all the protection they can get. Night spear fishing is needlessly decimating these critical and defenseless reef fish. It is not pono.

Mahalo for supporting this bill!

Elizabeth

Oahu, Hawaii

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
Hearing on Feb. 21, 2024 at 2:00 pm

SUPPORTING HB 1689

Coral reefs are the most biologically diverse marine ecosystems. They support fishing, scuba diving, boating, and other recreational activities. They also form barriers around islands, providing shoreline protection from storms.

Coral reefs are an important part of Hawaiian culture and history, including food, cultural practices, recreation, and overall survival. According to the Hawaiian Creation Chant, the Kumulipo, the coral polyp was the first creature to emerge from the sea during the creation of the world. The early Hawaiians recognized that coral reefs are a building block of our islands and used coral in religious ceremonies to demonstrate honor and care for ocean resources.

Unfortunately, coral reefs are among the most threatened ecosystems in the world. Corals are highly susceptible to local stressors, such as overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction, as well as global stressors, such as climate change, coral bleaching, and ocean acidification.

This bill takes a step to remove a threat to the health of coral reefs. Parrotfishes, or *uhu*, are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

For the sake of preserving Hawaii's coral reefs, I urge the committee to pass this bill.

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I am a local, elderly woman and I strongly support HB 1689 relating to the overexploitation of Parrotfish, a fish necessary for reef survival. I swim, snorkel, an/or dive almost every day and I am witness the value of these fish. I also participate in the volunteer reef survey project for reef.org and, because of constant surveying of our reef, I recognize certain areas along our Kona coast where the parrotfish population is greatly diminished.

Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. And uhu poop 70% of the sand that replenishing our beaches! Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu. Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Sincerely,  
Cathie A. Becker  
Kailua-KOona  
808-747-7702

February 12, 2024

House Speaker Saiki  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

RE: HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfishes

Dear Sirs:

For decades scientists and ocean users have been asking the state to ban night fishing with scuba. One example is the Background Paper on SCUBA Spearfishing prepared by William Walsh for the Division of Aquatic Resources, January 2013: “ the perceived problems associated with using scuba for spearfishing include reducing fish populations to low levels and diminishing or eliminating the positive effects of deep water acting as a sanctuary for fish. Most Pacific Island countries ban the use of scuba in spearfishing.” I also refer to an Views and Voices article of mine printed in the 7/8/2020 Honolulu Star-Advertiser in which I write that steps to support reef resilience are “to ban fishing with scuba, which has been done by most tropical oceanic nations, and to stop the commercial sale of reef fish.” To allow a small number of fishers to deplete a public resource in the face of increasing threats to Hawai'i reefs is, at the least, poor stewardship. I remind you of the Department of Land and Natural Resources' mission statement – to enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawai'i unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources HELD IN PUBLIC TRUST. Please pass HB 1689 to prohibit night fishing of parrotfishes and the commercial sale of speared uhu. If the Pacific nations can do this, so can Hawai'i.

Thank you,

Diane E Shepherd, DVM 808-283-2024  
3329 Kehala Dr., Kihei, HI 96753  
[Diane.shepherd@outlook.com](mailto:Diane.shepherd@outlook.com)

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/18/2024 3:52:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Speaker Saiki,

February 18, 2024

Senate President Kouchi, and

Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I support **HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to protect these critically important members of the coral reef fish community. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that remove suffocating algae from coral reef surfaces.

**Parrotfish play a crucial role in the ecology of coral reefs for several reasons:**

1. **Algae Removal:** Parrotfish are the principal consumers of algae, preventing it from overgrowing and smothering coral, thus promoting coral reef health.
2. **Coral growth:** Their feeding habits involve scraping algae and other material off coral surfaces, which aids in coral reef growth by exposing the coral skeleton for settlement of larvae and subsequent new growth.
3. **Beach Production:** Parrotfish have powerful beaks capable of grinding coral, which they ingest and later excrete as sand, contributing to the formation of sandy beaches and islands. Up to 70% of the sand on Hawaiian beaches comes via parrotfish activity.
4. **Habitat for Other Species:** Their excretion of sand creates habitats for various marine organisms, including invertebrates and small fish, which in turn support the diversity of coral reef ecosystems. Sand bottom species make up a large percentage of coral reef associated organisms.

5. **Coral Restoration:** Some species of parrotfish help in coral restoration efforts by assisting in the dispersal of coral larvae and aiding in the settlement of new coral colonies.

**Overall, parrotfish are essential components of coral reef ecosystems, contributing to their resilience, diversity, and overall health.**

**In order for parrotfish to fulfill their role in maintaining and restoring reef health, they must be sufficiently abundant.** Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted due to overfishing at night on our reefs, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep in their cocoons under ledges. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence, recreational or commercial fishers.

**Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries of many species, contribute to overall biodiversity and contribute heavily to Hawaiian tourism and recreation.** Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, coral reefs can be overgrown with algae and disappear.

**HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.**

Mahalo,

Stephen E. Thompson, PhD

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/18/2024 4:08:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Helen Cox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Representatives,

I am writing to support HB1689 to prevent night spear-fishing of Uhu and the commercial sale of speared Uhu. This is an important bill not simply to protect Uhu but also to protect our reefs. Uhu scrape coral, and that action controls algae as well as creating a place for baby coral to attation. We all know that coral is in trouble due to climate change and pollution, and we need to do all we can to protect our reefs and their biodiversity. HB1689 is a bill that will help us do this. Please pass HB1689. Mahalo,

Helen Cox, Kalaheo, Kauai

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 3:14:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Zalewski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote to prohibit: (1) Commercial sales of parrotfish that have been caught by spearing; and (2) The spearing of parrotfish in state waters after sunset or before sunrise. Thank you!



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 4:17:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and members of the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

I am in strong support of HB 1689. Uhu (parrot fish) are our beach builders and critical to maintaining a healthy coral reef.

I humbly ask for your support to ban uhu spearfishing after sunset when they are sleeping and the commercial sale of speared uhu. It is the pono decision.

Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy

Kalaoa North Kona

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 4:26:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Georgia Kossoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly in support of - thank you!

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 8:17:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ROXANNE RIVERO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In December 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources passed a severely weakened package of herbivore fishing rules that our scientists believe will *not* recover the ability of our herbivores, especially severely depleted parrotfishes (*uhu*), to save our reefs.

After consultation with fishermen and DOCARE officers (fishing rules enforcement officers), [House Bill 1689 Relating to Parrotfish](#) (bill text and justification attached) was introduced for the 2024 legislative session by [Representative Nicole Lowen](#). This short bill has two provisions: (1) prohibiting spearfishing of *uhu* at night, when they sleep helplessly under reef ledges and are often pillaged by poachers\*; and (2) prohibiting the commercial sale of speared *uhu*, justified because poaching and commercial sales of illegally speared fish by lawbreakers will still continue despite the first provision. In short, this law would help to end a major source of *uhu* loss from our reefs, thereby enhancing the resilience of our corals. pls help our coral reef for our future generations as well as climate change, this is so important thank you

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 9:00:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Speaker Saiki,

Senate President Kouchi, and

Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

It is baffling with the current knowledge of the damage done by the aquarium industry that these aquarium bills are even heard. Hawaii must implement a total aquarium fishing ban and prohibit exportation and importation of all salt water reef fish, coral and all other life forms outside of permitted research.

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. And uhupoop much of the sand that replenishes our beaches! Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai‘i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Bob Douglas

Hilo, Hawai'i

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 9:14:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of HB1689 as it is one of many steps that we need to take to protect our reefs. Climate change is stressing our reefs, and we have little control over global emissions. But we can take some local actions that have a direct positive impact on our reefs. One such measure is HB1689 which would help protect the commercial fishing of parrot fish or uhu, which keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish.

Please pass this bill out of your committee for the sake of our reefs and natural beauty.

Mahalo,

Paul Bernstein

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 9:24:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
noriko donna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators, I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps. Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai‘i, especially the uhu. Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai‘i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers. Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Noriko Morisaki Donna

Holualoa resident

February 19, 2024

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation.

Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors.

It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

*Uhu* and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. Unfortunately, the science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the *uhu*.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors.

Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Sherri Rigg  
Honolulu, Hawai'i



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 10:17:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeddie Kawahatsu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of bill HB1689 and urge you to pass it. Having worked with many ocean conservation organizations here, I believe that this will help us in being one step closer to a healthier and more sustainable reef ecosystem.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 11:10:06 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
tlaloc tokuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha JHA Committee, Please pass bill HB1689 to prohibit the spearing of parrotfish at night. We need conservation strategies to save the uhu. This conservation bill is a good first step in saving the uhu. Please pass this important bill so that the uhu is put on the road to recovery.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Tlaloc Tokuda

Kailua Kona HI 96740

House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha,

I'm writing to express my support for **HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish**, which proposes prohibiting spearing *uhu* or parrotfishes during the night, as well as preventing the commercial sale of *uhu* that have been illegally speared. This bill would ensure that these fish, which are vital in keeping our coral reefs clean to allow new coral to grow, are not overfished or overexploited. Spearfishing *uhu* has been commonly occurring throughout the night, when these fish are asleep under ledges. These fish are then often sold to markets by fishermen without commercial licenses with little regulation. The new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient in protecting *uhu*, and their population is being severely depleted.

*Uhu* remain an important part of the coral reefs, as they help to prevent poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching. They also act as natural lawnmowers to our reefs, as they remove seaweeds that can smother coral. Their role in our reefs' ecosystem is crucial, and they remain far more valuable to our reefs alive rather than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Additionally, their excrement provides much of the sand that replenishes our beaches, which is beneficial in protecting against the erosion of our beaches.

It is important to note that HB 1689 does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish throughout the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps. This bill is not aiming to prohibit *uhu* fishing, but rather to help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs in the future, as these fish are valuable to the long-term wellbeing of our coral reefs.

Mahalo,  
Sean Oketani  
Kaneohe, Hawai'i

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 2:56:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gabrielle Provencher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our Uhu are so important for the health of our coral reefs. This bill does not stop the fishing/spearing of Uhu all together. It makes sure the Uhu aren't vulnerable while being hunted. Help save our beautiful parrot fish who do so much for our reefs!

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 3:59:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Leveen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to protect parrotfish and keep the ecosystem in balance. Taking out or reducing species can have devastating effects on the environment, in this case the coral reefs of our beautiful oceans. Please leave the parrotfish alone in the habitat in which they evolved.

Mahalo,

Linda Leveen

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 4:00:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamalii Haumea-Thronas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Call to Action and

Testimony Letter regarding

HB1689 to Save the Uhu

Aloha House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

In December 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources passed a severely weakened package of herbivore fishing rules that our scientists believe will not recover the ability of our herbivores, especially severely depleted parrotfishes (uhu), to save our reefs.

After consultation with fishermen and DOCARE officers (fishing rules enforcement officers), [House Bill 1689 Relating to Parrotfish](#) was introduced for the 2024 legislative session by [Representative Nicole Lowen](#).

This short bill has two provisions: (1) prohibiting spearfishing of uhu at night, when they sleep helplessly under reef ledges and are often pillaged by poachers\*; and (2) prohibiting the commercial sale of speared uhu, justified because poaching and commercial sales of illegally speared fish by lawbreakers will still continue despite the first provision.

In short, this law would help to end a major source of uhu loss from our reefs. I am submitting testimony in support of passing this bill and hope to continue to spread awareness, education, and regulations in protection of herbivorous fish populations.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kamāli'i Haumea-Thronas

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 4:18:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sunshine Eckstrom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protect our parrotfish! They shouldn't be harmed or taken from our waters. If you want beaches, you need parrotfish to be numerous and healthy.



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 5:45:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angelina Kossoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/19/2024 11:31:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrea Nandoskar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support!

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:22:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protect the Uhu to help save the reefs. I support this bill.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:23:42 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mina H Elison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. The science is clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

Mina Elison, Ke'ei, South Kona

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:59:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charles KH Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Charles Young, I residfe in Kealia S. Kona Hawaii Island and i support HB1689 to ban night spearing of Uhu, (Parrot Fish) for commercial sale. As a life long subsistence diver i can submit first hand of how night diving can be very destructive on nearshore fisheries, Uhu in particular. It's widely known that Uhu rest during the night and if found have no defence against being caught by spearing. Uhu is a favored fish in Hawaii for native Hawaiians. By allowing night spearing of Uhu for commercial sale it encourages and incentiivises the taking of uhu in higher numbers, beyond which a subsistence fisher would take at a time when Uhu stock have already been identified as stressed.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide comment supporting banning night spearing of uhu for commercial sale.

Charles Young

PO Box 505

Honaunau, Hi 96726

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:04:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James T Fumo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not *pono*. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared *uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

**Hawai'i's herbivorous fish community isn't able to keep pace with rampantly growing invasive algae. It is healthy and hungry fish that allow our native *limu* to beat out the invaders. Protection of *uhu* enables us to promote the growth of native *limu*.**

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

*Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo,

James Fumo

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:05:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keith Neal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice chair Takayama, and members of the JHA

I strongly support HB1689

Hawaiian reefs are challenged to remain healthy. To support a living reef we must prohibit the taking of Parrotfish by spear commercially and at night.

‘If the reef dies, the waves take the land.’

Thank you for consideration,

Keith Neal

Waimea



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:20:54 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB 1689, which prohibits poaching uhu at night, when they are asleep under reef ledges, and prohibits selling these poached uhu. Uhu are critical in helping our already threatened coral reefs to survive. They control algae, and make surfaces for baby coral polyps to grow. They are important to our reef ecosystems and the long-term survival of our coral reefs and all the species that live there. But they can't help the reefs if we are decimating them.

Please pass this important bill.

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen  
Kealakekua Bay, South Kona, Hawaii

**HB1689**

RELATING TO PARROTFISH.

House Committee on Judicial and Hawaiian Affairs

February 21, 2024, | 2:00PM | Room 325

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Shane Palacat-Nelsen, I am a generational resident of Kealakekua Bay and **SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS** HB1689 which amends conservation and resources law to prohibit: (1) Commercial sales of parrotfish that have been caught by spearing; and (2) The spearing of parrotfish in state waters after sunset or before sunrise.

Within the last decade, many of our coral communities are struggling to survive which causes the rapid decline of our fish populations and impacting our food supply. This measure will assist in restoring marine life by maintaining a balanced and adequate herbivore population such as the parrotfish that supports coral growth.

Although, spear fishing at night has become a way of life in Hawai'i nei due to improved technology such as underwater night dive lights and spearguns, historically, night diving may not have happened. The concern is if enforcement agents are available to police rural and impacted areas "after sunset or before sunrise?"

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify, please SUPPORT HB1689.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:50:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rita Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Bill HB1689 to protect our Uhu to help save our reefs!

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:55:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Uilani Naipo	Miloli'i CBSFA (Kalanihale)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

Mahalo for hearing this measure.

Recently in December, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) approved DAR's recommendation for the Herbivore Rules package, while simultaneously showing strong concerns for the lack of protection for uhu. The resounding concerns mirrored that of the vast amount of public testimony. Listen/see @ 7:14:35 of the Board's decision making for this agenda item.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-am30qSC-7I>

In Miloli'i Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (a fisheries managed area designation), no night spearfishing of uhu is allowed. This is a Hawaiian cultural practice not only of our place, but throughout Hawai'i. CBSFAs can not act on our own. This common traditional practice needs to implemented state wide.

Uhu is headlined to be in a state of unhealthy populations at DLNR's Holomua Marie Initiative website - <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua/herbivoremanagement/participate-in-the-process/> and scientific data (provided by partners of DLNR) reflect this state.

Our coral reefs depend on these coral gardeners. Our shorelines depend on resilient coral reefs.

HB1689 bill addresses the missing and very important protection needed for uhu.

Please pass this measure.

Mahalo,

U'ilani Naipo

Miloli'i CBSFA Administrator

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 10:02:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Grutter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 relating to parrotfish. As a marine biologist studying fish for over 30 years, including parrotfish, I have become very aware of how important they are to the reef.

Parrotfish are an important group for many reasons.

First, they are herbivores that control algae and the detritus that lives amongst it. This "reef cleaning" service they perform is vital for the reef, as not only does it prevent the over growth of algae, which can smother coral and other benthic organisms, their activities promote biodiversity on coral reefs by allowing many other organism to live where otherwise large matts of algae would.

Second, parrotfish are a high-risk source of ciguatera fish poisoning making them a dangerous food to eat if consumed or sold to unsuspecting costumers. This is because parrotfish feed on species of algae in which the toxic organisms that produce ciguatoxin live (tiny dinoflagellates). By feeding on algae they reduce the incidence of ciguatoxin in the environment and the accumulation in larger legally-caught target species fished commercially.

Third, parrotfish are an important part of the marine food web, as food for other larger fishes, and thus their presence improve the biodiversity of reef fishes.

Parrotfish are particularly vulnerable to spearfishing because of their unique way of sleeping in a mucous cocoon out in the open at night. This cocoon protects them from predators. But as part of my research as a marine biologist, we showed experimentally that this protects them from blood sucking parasites that act like "fish mosquitos" at night. The cocoon blocks the so-called fish mosquitos much like a mosquito net does for human at night.

Finally, parrotfish are beautiful fish, displaying some of the most vivid colour patterns of on the reef. Thus they are valued by snorkellers and divers for their beauty alone. They come from a very old lineage of parrotfish, even found in fossils in Italy where they clearly have not survived. But somehow they made it here to one of the most isolated islands in the world where they are still clinging on. For this alone it is worth protecting them.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Grutter, PhD

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 10:16:42 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I live in Mō'ili'ili. I'm writing in support HB1689.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu



Aloha Legislators,

This testimony is in strong support of **HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish.**

I'm sure you know the important role that uhu play in our ocean ecosystem. This bill is key in preventing the further depletion of this species of fish here in Hawai'i. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps; but instead prohibits the unsustainable practices of night spearing these fish.

If you have spent any time in the ocean here in Hawai'i over the course of your life, you would know that our reefs are not what it used to be. Uhu play a vital role in maintaining healthy coral reefs which in turn through multiple mechanisms, care for us. We can help stop the destruction through a bill like this.

Mahalo,  
Kilihea Inaba

Kaloko, Kona, Hawai'i

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 11:10:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denise E Antolini	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Committee members,

I write as an individual in STONG SUPPORT of HB1689, to better protect parrotfish from night fishing and commercial sales of speared Uhu.

Both of these exploitive practices needed to be ended. Parrotfish play an invaluable role in maintaining our coral reef health.

Night fishing for Uhu, when they are resting and sleeping, is particularly reprehensible and not a pono fishing practice by any measure.

Mahalo,

Denise Antolini

Pūpūkea Residents, North Shore, O‘ahu

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 11:13:22 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wendy Noritake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save the coral reefs and to save them from severe exploitation. Parrotfish are key to the coral reef system as they eat the algae and other debris from the coral, keeping the reef healthy.

Parrotfish are extremely vulnerable to divers at night, because they sleep within a mucus cocoon in plain sight. The cocoon keeps it safe from fish predators by sealing off its scent, but they can be seen in this sac directly on the sand or under a ledge. Humans can see them easily and take them. Parrotfish can only make one per night, and if disturbed, would be vulnerable to prey.

It is totally unfair for poaching and taking these beautiful and valuable fish, especialy at night. Please help to save these fish, who will in turn, help to save the reefs.

Mahalo,

Wendy Noritake, Hawi, Hawaii

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 11:20:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Sur	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Not support. Fish is food for locals don't make laws on what locals can eat its our culture..  
thanks

Aloha kākou,

My name is Bert Weeks and I was born and raised on O'ahu in Aiea. As a marine scientist who also spear fishes, I spend a lot of time in the ocean and can see the difference in areas with high herbivory on the health of the coral reefs. While a healthy reef naturally contains a good balance between coral and limu, many of the reefs on Hawaii where I dive are heavily impacted by land-based pollution which has caused this balance to be disrupted. As corals face an increasing number of stressors, their ability to keep this balance gets harder and harder, but with a healthy herbivore population, reefs can recover from high impact events such as coral bleaching caused by heat waves.



It is also abundantly clear to me that there is significant overfishing in many of the most accessible nearshore areas on O'ahu. When I dive in open fishing areas and compare them to areas where fishing is restricted, such as MCLDs, or in areas where fishing pressure is limited due to weather, it's like night and day how much more fish are present. I don't often have the luxury of spearfishing in remote areas with healthy fish populations, because, like many people I know who spear, I have a Monday - Friday job allowing me to generally only hunt in the most accessible areas where many other people go.

I support additional rules for protecting uhu and other herbivorous species that help regulate the balance on coral reefs. A ban on night spearing of uhu will be greatly beneficial to helping recover depleted populations. Uhu sleep at night in the holes on the reef, and it's not hard to find one while swimming at night on the reef with a flashlight. At night, they are defenseless and easy to spear, unlike during the day where it takes knowledge and ability to bring one home.

These conditions make night spearing an easy opportunity for overharvesting where a single person or a group of people can effectively wipe out an entire section of reef in a single night. While the vast majority of fishermen in Hawaii are pono and fish responsibly, this is a situation where the impact from a single person or small group of people can offset all of the sustainable practices that the rest of us do whenever we go out.

I suggest that these rules be enacted on a place-based scale, specific to each island or region of island. I primarily dive in O'ahu and see many depleted areas, especially in heavily populated areas. However, the same restrictions that are needed on O'ahu might not be appropriate to Moloka'i or Lana'i where the number of fishers, their preferences in fish, and their needs as a community are much different. I encourage the support the Holomua initiative as they strive for place-based planning on each island developing enhanced protections for herbivores based on the needs of each reef and fishing community.

Mahalo

-Bert Weeks

## HB1689 to Save the Parrotfish

Aloha **House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee**,

In December 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources passed a severely weakened package of herbivore fishing rules that experts believe will *not* recover the ability of our herbivores, especially severely depleted parrotfishes (*uhu*), to serve as the “lawnmowers of the sea” and save our reefs from shifting from coral to algae dominated. Bag limits and restricted phase of blue uhu are modest measures that will not facilitate recovery by themselves.

After consultation with fishermen and DOCARE officers (fishing rules enforcement officers), [House Bill 1689 Relating to Parrotfish](#) was introduced for the 2024 legislative session by [Representative Nicole Lowen](#).

This short bill has two provisions: (1) prohibiting spearfishing of uhu at night, when they sleep helplessly under reef ledges and are often pillaged by poachers\*; and (2) prohibiting the commercial sale of speared uhu, justified because poaching and commercial sales of illegally speared fish by lawbreakers will still continue despite the first provision.

In short, this law would help to end a major source of uhu loss from our reefs. I am submitting testimony in support of passing this bill and hope to continue to spread awareness, education, and regulations in protection of herbivorous fish populations.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Eric Dilley**

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:32:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

**I strongly support HB 1689**, Relating to Parrotfish, to save our coral reef saviors from *severe overexploitation*.

Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, uhu are severely depleted, and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night when divers spear uhu as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. This practice is not pono. HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of uhu, but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish pono during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Uhu and other herbivores are the natural lawnmowers of the sea that can save our reefs from poor water quality, pollution, and coral bleaching, yet they must be abundant to do so. Science makes it clear that herbivores are depleted near human population centers in Hawai'i, especially the uhu.

Importantly, uhu are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i *alive* than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially uhu, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless these natural lawnmowers remove them

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately,

by helping replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits our coral reefs provide far into the future.

Mahalo,

Maki Morinoue  
Holualoa, Hawai'i



House Speaker Saiki,  
Senate President Kouchi, and  
Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature

Aloha Legislators,

I strongly **support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish** to save our coral reefs saviors from severe over exploitation. Parrotfishes or *uhu* are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish. Unfortunately, *uhu* are severely depleted and the new herbivore fishing rules approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources are insufficient to replenish these reef saviors. It is common knowledge that pillaging of our reefs occurs at night, when divers spear *uhu* as they sleep helplessly under ledges. These pillaged fish are often sold to markets by lawbreakers without commercial licenses. **This practice needs to be stopped.** HB 1689 would not only prohibit night spearing of *uhu*, *but also prevent the commercial sale of illegally speared uhu*. The bill does not affect subsistence and recreational fishers who fish *pono* during the day, nor commercial fishers who use nets or traps.

Importantly, *uhu* are about far more than fishing and feeding people. They are the natural resilience mechanism needed for our reefs to recover and thrive. As saviors of our reefs, they are far more valuable to all the people of Hawai'i alive than as food. Healthy coral reefs protect our coasts from erosion, provide fisheries for many species (not just herbivores), and are valuable sources of recreation, tourism, and spiritual connection. Our reefs are seriously threatened by poor water quality and increasingly severe coral bleaching. Without abundant and diverse herbivores, especially *uhu*, many of our reefs are now covered in seaweeds, which quickly smother corals unless they are removed by these natural lawnmowers.

***Uhu* replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our**

**valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef savors.** Ultimately, by helping to replenish *uhu* populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

Mahalo for your time,

Crista Francis

Hawi, Hawaii

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:17:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1689 Relating to Parrotfish to save our coral reefs saviors from severe overexploitation. Parrotfishes or uhu are key species that keep our reef surfaces clean so new coral can flourish.

Uhu replenishment is not about environmentalists vs. fishers; it is about the long-term perspective of those who care about the future of our valuable coral reefs vs. the short-term perspective of those who would continue to allow the depletion of our reef saviors. Ultimately, by helping to replenish uhu populations now, HB 1689 will help sustain our fisheries and other benefits provided by our coral reefs far into the future.

This approach has been successful in other fishing areas where sustainable practices have been implemented.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:12:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaikea Nakachi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha JHA committee.

My name is Kaikea Nakachi from North Kona, Hawai‘i Island and I support HB1689. After the weakening of the DAR Herbivore rule package it is important for additional rules to protect uhu. I support HB1689, as it will add important protections to uhu when they are the most vulnerable and help to address the shortcomings of the DAR herbivore rules.

Mahalo,

Kaikea Nakachi

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 6:20:41 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kurt Kawamoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The ocean is our icebox. Locals need renewable resources such as fish as a food source to sustain ourselves. Many of the most vulnerable residents rely on the ocean to provide for the family.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:31:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roy N Morioka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, V-Chair Takayama and Members of the House Committe on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Please defer this bill as it should more appropriately be first heard by the House Committee on Water and Land..

Mahalo,

Roy Morioka

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:35:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelvin Ching	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly oppose.

**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 8:41:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Avalon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB 1689, which helps to protect uhu populations in Hawai'i. Uhu are important for the health and balanced ecology of our reef habitats. I have deep love and respect for our lawai'a, and enjoy eating uhu as many others do -- but we need to ensure their numbers are healthy, for the wellbeing of our waters as well as for the enjoyment of future generations.

Mahalo nui for your time.

~ Avalon P.



**HB-1689**

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 10:11:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dorothy Norris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Parrotfish are an important herbivorous fish that keeps reefs healthy. Also they are helpless at night and are easily speared since they sleep in the coral beds.