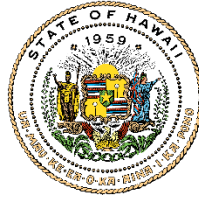


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LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Tuesday, March 12, 2024
9:00 AM**

State Capitol, VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, Conference Room 430

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3167, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE PACIFIC MARINE FISHERIES COMPACT**

Senate Bill 3167, Senate Draft 1 proposes to authorize the Governor to execute a compact on behalf of the State to cooperate in the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) and establishes procedures for selection and succession of commissioners. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this bill.**

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) is an interstate compact agency that helps state resource management agencies and the fishing industry sustainably manage Pacific Ocean resources, particularly those that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The PSMFC's mission is "to promote the better utilization of fisheries – marine, shell, and anadromous, which are of mutual concern, and to develop a joint program of protection and prevention of physical waste of such fisheries in all of those areas of the Pacific Ocean over which the compacting states jointly or separately now have or may hereafter acquire jurisdiction." This mission closely aligns with the mission of the Department to work with the people of Hawai'i to manage, conserve, and restore the state's unique aquatic resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

Although the PSMFC has no regulatory or management authority, it serves a number of vital functions that are relevant to Hawai'i. These include providing a forum for the discussion of interstate fisheries resources management issues; coordinating research and management projects related to interstate fisheries and making this data available to the public; and dispersing federal fishery disaster funds. Two areas of particular interest to Hawai'i, which the PSMFC has dealt

with recently, are understanding the impacts of offshore wind energy projects on fisheries and preventing and responding to the spread of aquatic invasive species.

The State of Hawai'i would greatly benefit from becoming a member of the PSMFC as membership would facilitate improved management of state and regional marine fishery resources through increased collaboration with other Pacific states. This increased collaboration increases access to other fisheries scientists and managers with expertise in matters that the state currently lacks. Membership in the PSMFC could also potentially open avenues for federal funding that could be used directly to enhance the management of Hawai'i-based fisheries projects.

Although the PSMFC is an interstate compact, it works with indigenous groups on fisheries issues where appropriate. For example, the PSMFC disbursed CARES Act funding for tribes and territories, works directly with west coast tribes on fishery disasters, and assists tribes in the Columbia River basin with fisheries data collection and other needs. The Department supports the language in Senate Draft 1 that would require at least one of the Hawai'i commissioners to have knowledge of Native Hawaiian cultural and fishing practices and to serve as a representative of the Native Hawaiian fishing community. While the PSMFC does not focus on fisheries issues solely within a single state's jurisdiction, such as Hawai'i nearshore fisheries, the Commission could benefit from having a Native Hawaiian fisher perspective among its membership.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.