

ACT 174

H.B. NO. 2967

A Bill for an Act Relating to Surfing.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds and declares that Hawaii is the cradle of surfing - he'e nalu - and that as both a recreational and sporting activity, it has significant historical and cultural importance to this State. Worldwide recognition of surfing's birthplace is undeniable and strengthened by the talents of Duke Paoa Kahanamoku in the early 1900's, who is regarded today as the "Father of International Surfing." Another Hawaiian ambassador, Rell Sunn, is credited with bringing respect and recognition to women's professional surfing.

Although surfing was practiced throughout Oceania prior to Western contact, scholars on the subject cite a definite Hawaiian-Polynesian influence and credit the greatest number of surfing legends to Hawaii. As such, records of Hawaiian oral tradition dating as far back as the 15th century describe surfing as an integral part of ancient culture, often involving contests, wagers, and courtships among the ali'i class.

The legislature recognizes that Hawaii is renowned for its massive winter waves, attracting surfers from dozens of countries to test their skills in the sport's most prestigious event of the world professional tour, the Triple Crown of Surfing. By all accounts, Hawaii is the mecca of the surfing world thanks to two fundamental factors:

- (1) "Surfing ambassadors" who embodied the proud legacy of their ancestors and who shared that legacy with people on distant beaches around the globe; and
- (2) Waves of tremendous height and power associated with Oahu's infamous North Shore, and more recently with Maui's deep-water breaks off Peahi and Spreckelsville where jet-skis assist surfers in riding some of the biggest waves ever.

The legislature further finds that the International Olympic Committee formally recognized the International Surfing Association in 1995, formally welcoming the sport of surfing to the Olympic Movement. Its competitors and enthusiasts, estimated at more than fifteen million, have thus been provided the opportunity to petition for inclusion in the Summer Games of 2000 in Sydney, Australia.

The purpose of this Act is to bestow formal recognition on surfing as a special livelihood with deep cultural roots in Hawaii by designating it as the official state individual sport.

SECTION 2. Chapter 5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§5- State individual sport. Surfing is adopted, established, and designated as the official individual sport of the State."

SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.¹

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
(Approved July 15, 1998.)

Note

1. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.