

August 15, 2024

Marie Aguilar
P.O. Box 1874
Kailua Kona Hawai`i 96745

BLNR
Honolulu, Hawai`i

RE West Hawai`I AQ Permits
Issuance of Commercial Aquarium Permits of Marine Licenses for West Hawai`i
Regional Fish Management - Testimony Opposing the Permits now and for the
future.

Aloha Board of Land Natural Resources

I am a long-time resident of Hawai`i Island and know first-hand the conditions and impact of fish collection on my island. First, the seriousness of the loss of our coral on the Hawai`i coasts is listed as severe and may not recover anytime soon. The State of Hawai`i has a responsibility to protect Hawai`i's natural resources. The tropical fish of Hawai`i are declining year after year. And I have seen the decline from 1988 through 2024. Yellow tang swam along the Kailua Pier, and their visual presence created the name "Gold Coast" of the Big Island.

The effects of environmental conditions must be taken into consideration for the future of maintaining the population of our tropical fish populations. First, there is the impact of collecting tropical fish on the population. The reef fish population is declining due to serious ocean warming waters, affecting coral life. The damage is severe to our coral from the warm waters several summers and must be replenished or recovered, if possible. Our coral reef lives symbiotically with tropical fish to flourish and nurture.

The Supreme Court 2017 held that collection without environmental review violates the Act. DLNR later ordered to cease issuing further aquarium collection permits until the environmental effects of aquarium collection are fully and publicly vetted through the HEPA process. Previously, the heaviest impact on our fish collection was the lack of holding permit holders, who were limited in their ability to take aquarium fish. The new revised EIS states the eight species collected per month. The eight species being requested for collection are incredibly high. The collection of 200,000 yellow tangs cannot be allowed through seven permittees and does not access those who died in transport. If

each of these operators owns two boats and has staff using that license, they could collect in South Kau and North Kohala daily. The fish population could not be restored monthly while being collected daily; weekends included. There is no expiration date for these permits, and they could run collectively year after year.

Today, the same permit holders want to be able to take aquarium fish with limits, and this is not acceptable for our ecosystem. State of Hawai'i, DLNR does not have the staff to monitor these seven permits and get actual limits accounted for each day and monthly. This most definitely will not support what the Supreme Court ruled. No management of the fish collection limits is demonstrated in this summited EIS. Self-monitoring is not acceptable.

The collection of Hawai'i's natural resources cannot be open for sale to the mainland aquarium trade. The going prices for these fish start at \$70.00 for a yellow tang. What gain are Hawai'i's residents gaining for allowing the collection of their natural resources? No revenue can replace our ocean ecology. Do not accept this bargain hunter's profitable business for mainland commerce.

Are these permit holders actual residents of Hawai'i? Can we seriously trust the permittees who can access our reef fish for three hundred sixty-five days? There are weekends that DLNR would have issues with patrolling the west coast of Hawai'i Island. Does DLNR require bonds on each of the permit holders? Our fish population will not recover.

The County of Hawai'i and Mayor Roth presented a Sustainability Summit. The Summit successfully showed community leaders what sustainability means in our resources' scope. Among our resources, the County of Hawai'i presented Waste Management, Sustainable Tourism, Technology, Preserving the Environment, Energy, Health Care, Education, Affordable Housing, Economy, Transportation, Food Security, Aloha + Challenge.

Greg Asner, a scientist at the Global Institute of Sustainability Airborne Observatory (University of Arizona State), understands conservationism through his scientific approach to mapping the coral reefs of the Hawaiian Islands. Through Asner Labs, Global Airborne Observatory technology will be used to map coral health, beginning in mid-2019. This technology and its mapping will save our coral reefs for the future. The Hawaiian Islands are a globally important case in point. In less than fifty years, Hawai'i's unique and highly endemic coral reefs have undergone alarming losses in coral extent and health and in fish populations. The Hawaiian Islands are now in a state of highly variable reef conditions driven by a complex mosaic of coastal development, overfishing, and ocean warming. In response to these alarming losses, Hawai'i former Governor David Ige announced a new effort in 2016 to manage and

conserve at least 30% of Hawaii's reefs by 2030, known as the Marine 30x30 Initiative. Currently, Hawaii's reefs remain unmanaged. He is based here in Hawai'i. showed maps of the depletion of the tropical fish using his satellite imagery, showing ten years of depleted sea life on the west coast of the Island of Hawai'i. Those images do not lie; they show the loss of our natural resources - tropical fish and the ocean coral reefs.

Further, global warming is accurate, and climate change is the new norm. Sustainability does not include fish collection. The State of Hawai'i, through the direction of Governor David Ige, granted the Marine 30x30 Initiative in 2016, which is responsible for DLNR, will follow the protocol of this critical mapping and study for our coral reefs and its tropical fish population. Hawai'i is sustaining its resources and must continue to protect its marine life.

Each member of our County government knows the importance of Sustainability in each government area. The State of Hawai'i and the County of Hawai'i must protect our island and ocean. For that purpose, tropical fish are now being raised at the State of Hawai'i -Natural Energy Labs. Their breeding system is working, so please leave our natural resources alone. It is your responsibility.

I oppose any fish collections on the Island of Hawai'i, specifically the West Hawai'i Regional Fish Management (west coast), especially as the Revised EIS Draft indicates from Ka'u to Kohala. Our island depends on economically sustainable tourism where tour operators bring visitors to snorkel, dive, swim, and view our pristine waters. We cannot have permit holders take our natural resources for economic benefit. World countries indeed protect the collection of their reef fish, and Hawai'i must continue the restriction on any fish collection for years to come.

The Board of Land and Natural Resources voted anonymously for the allowance of the previous Draft EIS, and if they voted again, they would vote the same. Not much has changed; illegal collectors have been caught red-handed in collecting our tropical fish and tried in the courts. Penalties were severe in some cases; were they ever collected and paid to the State of Hawai'i? The fish collector applicants can find another form of economic standing, not at the cost of our resources currently protected by our Governor. Hawai'i residents, its sea life tour boat owners, and operators depend on these natural resources. They protect our environment and are invested in our community. Most of our businesses on Hawai'i Island flourish with tourism.

Our economy is dependent on eco-tourism, sustainability tourism, and Agri-tourism. We have learned a hard lesson with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our islands flourish with visitors who support our state. These visitors support our

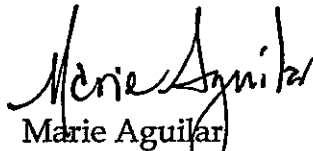
economy, enjoy our environmental friendliness, and expect us to care for our resources. Hawai'i's economy depends on tourism. Aloha and challenge remain a part of our Hawaiian lifestyle.

This decision to allow permits for fish collection is wrong; previous rulings from the Supreme Court held this in their decision. It is your kuleana to protect the resources of Hawai'i, and your appointment to your position requires you to make decisions that protect our resources. Please vote to disallow the permits. The Hawai'i Constitution guides all officials to protect Hawai'i and its people. Mahalo, thank you for taking the steps to honor your position today.

Thank you for reading my comments and recording the receipt of this letter.

Mahalo

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Aguilar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Marie Aguilar
P.O. Box 1874

Kailua Kona Hawai'i 96745

From: [Caroline Azelski](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:56:13 AM

Greetings BLNR:

I'm submitting written testimony on August 23rd Agenda Item F.1.

NO AQ permits should be issued.

- Scientists say we must increase fish abundance if our reefs are to have a fighting chance against climate change impacts. Sacrificing tens to hundreds of thousands of important herbivores to an unnecessary and destructive activity contradicts best available science and common sense
- The AQ trade fundamentally conflicts with local, cultural, and broad social values of our Hawaii home

In conclusion:

NO AQ permits should be issued.

Also important:

BLNR should be the ultimate decision-makers on whether or not to issue AQ permits, not just the Chair of DAR staff.

Thank you.

Ms. Caroline Azelski
Kapaau, Hawaii
Big Island, Hawaii

From: [Bob Douglas](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 6:08:20 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Bob Douglas of Hilo. I am related by marriage to many lineal descendants from Miloli'i to Ka'u. It is my duty to respect their opinions and ancestral knowledge as well as to defend their absence right to control their natural resources. They do not belong to any one individual or company to exploit at the detriment of the kānakas and the environment.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialized knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,
Bob Douglas
Hilo, Moku o Keawe

From: [eeb](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fish collecting
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 8:53:37 AM

Aloha, my name is Emily Burt. I am a resident of Honaunau on Hawai'i Island and am opposed to Aquarium Fish Collection. This practice should be banned permanently in its entirety. As a long time resident, I have witnessed the casual tossing aside of dead fish by collectors, at times paddling through "rivers" of floating dead yellow tang. I have witnessed the decline in fish populations along the South Kona coast for over 30 years. While I believe that other fishing practices also need to be better regulated, the aquarium trade has no upside. It is taking for profit and for vanity projects in far off cities. At this time when one can live stream fish populations without killing a single specimen ([Aqualink, MEGA Lab, Hawaii](#)) it makes no sense whatsoever to reopen the destructive practice of taking our reef fish reducing the quality of our nearshore environment, an environment already under stress due to warmer waters and food fishing.

Aqualink, MEGA Lab, Hawaii

Enjoy this underwater live webcam stream from Aqualink MEGA Lab in the waters of Kona, on the west coast of Hawa...

Mahalo, Emily Burt

From: captrick.bonefishhawaii.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ban Aquarium Trade in Hawai'i
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:17:26 AM

- Extractive for-profit aquarium collection has no place in Hawai'i.
- DAR has made multiple public statements that the Board, not the Chair, will determine whether to issue any AQ permits. Breaking that promise now is the ultimate betrayal of public trust.
- The benefits of leaving our fish on the reefs FAR OUTWEIGH the monetary gains of a handful of people who rake them off the reef for sale to the AQ pet trade outside Hawaii
- Scientists say we must increase fish abundance if our reefs are to have a fighting chance against climate change impacts. Sacrificing tens to hundreds of thousands of important herbivores to an unnecessary and destructive activity contradicts best available science and common sense.
- The AQ trade fundamentally conflicts with local, cultural, and broad social values of our Hawaii.
- Ban aquarium trade in Hawai'i once and for all.

Mahalo, Captain Rick Lee

From: [Stephanie Carpenter](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:32:44 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Stephanie Carpenter. I have resided full time at Mauna Lani 20 yrs.

I oppose issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawaii and I oppose delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding terms and conditions to issue West Hawaii AQ permits, please reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. I have witnessed our pristine waters damaged by those who are not considering long term impact.

Mahalo
Stephanie Carpenter
South Kohala
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Keith Christie](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 8:18:10 AM

My name is Keith Christie, Makawao, Maui

I have heard that the aquarium trade may we allowed to resume the collection of aquarium fish isn West Hawaii. This is not to be believed and I strongly disagree that the trade should ever be allowed to collect WILDLIFE from Hawaii's reef ecosystem.

No aquarium collection permits should be given or allowed to continue. The practice is NOT WELCOMED anywhere in Hawaii.

The BLNR shall be the ultimate decision makers on the aquarium issue, not the chair of DAR. That would,be allowing things to happen under the radar, and not an ethical practice.

We are here to protect and preserve Hawaii's reef, not take, take, take.

Mahalo,
Keith Christie

From: [Lois Crozer](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 OPPOSE new permits and OPPOSE delegating authority to Dept. chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:40:36 PM

There is hardly anyplace left in our islands that has abundant fish. Please stop issuing AQ permits.
Lois Crozer
Kailua, Oahu

From: [Greg Edwards](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:40:21 AM

not in favor of taking these fish I have seen and experienced in places like Baja Mexico, Canada, and Washington state. Basically, people are greedy when they have the opportunity to take fish. Greed enters the equation, and then quantities of fish are reduced and, in many cases, eliminated. It is wrong to do this.

From: [Marjorie](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO Fish collecting
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:19:16 AM

Aloha!

I hope you will see the reality of what would happen if lots of fish are removed from our oceans just to sell them to others who mostly do NOT know how to care for them and the fish will die soon after they are in a home tank.

It's common sense that the AQ trade is just plain wrong.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Marjorie Erway
75-181 Hualalai Rd.,
#A-111
Kailua Kona HI 96740
808-324-4624

From: [GARY JOHNSON](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#); [GARY JOHNSON](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please stop the devastation of our reefs
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:56:14 PM

Aloha,

Surely you can stop this irreplaceable loss of our already greatly diminished sea life.

Pono -do the right thing.

Mahalo
GARY JOHNSON

From: [michael gilbert](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:51:59 PM

Subject: F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is [michael Gilbert] of [Maui]. Introduce yourself and all of your roles in West Hawai'i, especially hoa'aina (tenant, caretaker) of your ahupua'a/district.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. [I have seen first hand destruction of reefs in Maui. I watched for years while the reef was raped at Makena landing in Makena Maui Hawaii. It's devoid of life now. The people were also attacking people physically who went towards their boats. In heavens name how can you allow this it's so disgusting and disrespectful ruining our waters for our future children. I have been here for thirty forty years so please please stop You can raise fish in aquariums not steal and destroy entire eco systems

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,
[Your Name]
[Ahupua'a or District], Moku o Keawe

Sent from my iPad Sent from my iPad

From: [Pat Griffith](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Cc: [Johnsy](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:53:43 AM

Aloha,

Please do NOT open West Hawaii or other Hawaiian ocean areas to aquarium fish collection. The suggestion is outrageous and absolutely not supported by the local community.

Obviously, our reefs need all the help they can get to survive and thrive. Our tropical fish support healthy reefs.

Please do not turn your backs on supporting healthy ocean diversity. Our family lives in the town of Kilauea on the beautiful island of Kauai

Let's keep our home healthy for generations.

Mahalo,

Pat and John Griffith

From: [Anthony Grise](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:45:41 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Anthony Grise and I am a resident of Kaimuki, O'ahu.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

I write to you today with these requests because I firmly reject the notion that our natural resources should be exploited for individual financial gain for any one person in the community.

Mahalo for this opportunity,

Anthony Grise
+1 808 379 7099

From: [Michael Hayley](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] fish collecting
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 9:48:57 AM

Please stop the stealing of all our reef fish...nothing to see when snorkeling ! Tourism will be affected.

Aloha, Michael Hayley

From: [Grant Heidrich](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 8:37:21 AM

My name is Grant Heidrich, and my wife and I have been substantial landowners on the Big Island, and have been strong advocates of ocean, reef, and sustainable fish issues for over 20 years.

I am in strong OPPOSITION to reopening our reefs to the senseless, and destructive Aquarium Trade fish extraction practices prevalent on the Big Island.

This practice is not only in opposition to the Supreme Court ruling against this practice based on violation of our own state constitutional laws, but it violates the very cultural practices of our people on the island.

This must end, and end now.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Grant Heidrich

From: [Hermann Heimgartner](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23 - Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:49:17 AM

Aloha,

I am STRONGLY against the issuance of any aquarium (AQ) permits in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's beautiful fish are a community treasure and should never be monetized for the benefit of a few. It is completely outrageous that this is still being sought and that the Division of Aquatic Resources is considering this. Pillaging thousands and thousands of beautiful yellow tang and other fish to ship them to the mainland or foreign countries is a horrible thing to do. Instead of considering how to squeeze money out of our reefs and coral fish, Division of Aquatic Resources should focus on preserving our fragile reefs for our keiki. Also, sending hundreds of thousands of wild yellow tang to die in some aquarium in some aquarium tank on the mainland or foreign country offends Hawai'i values.

Mahalo,

R. Hermann Heimgartner
Attorney At Law LLLC
PO Box 1839
Kailua-Kona, HI 96745
Phone/Text: 808-756-7022
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hermann@kona.attorney

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From: [Colleen Heyer](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23, Agenda item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:58:46 PM

Dear BLNR,

I am against DAR's plan to re-open West Hawai'i to commercial aquarium collection. Our reefs and our ocean ecosystems are under so many attacks, why add overfishing to their list of threats? Just to let a few people make a few bucks? To people who have not proven to be pono stewards of the ocean in the past?

I go in the ocean a lot, especially snorkeling. Nothing makes me happier than seeing a vibrant, colorful reef, teeming with fish. And I am pono. I clean up ocean debris. I wear reef safe sunscreen. I don't go too close to the wildlife. I leave things better than how I found them. I don't think fish takers can say the same. I love to snorkel on the west side of Moku o Keawe. In recent years, I have seen the yellow tang population bounce back since commercial aquarium fishing was banned there. Please don't let them suffer again.

And please keep the decision making at the BLNR level. Do not reduce democracy by giving the decision to one DAR person.

Mahalo, Colleen Heyer
Diamond Head, O'ahu kama'āina

From: [Andrew Hood](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 9:13:25 AM

This written testimony is in strong OPPOSITION to reopening our reefs to the destructive AQ trade and to silencing citizen input regarding the ultimate permitting decisions to regulate aquarium trade in the State's water.

- DAR has made multiple public statements that the Board, not the Chair, will determine whether to issue any AQ permits. Breaking that promise now is the ultimate betrayal of public trust
- The benefits of leaving our fish on the reefs FAR OUTWEIGH the monetary gains of a handful of people who rake them off the reef for sale to the AQ pet trade outside Hawaii
- Scientists say we must increase fish abundance if our reefs are to have a fighting chance against climate change impacts. Sacrificing tens to hundreds of thousands of important herbivores to an unnecessary and destructive activity contradicts best available science and common sense
- The AQ trade fundamentally conflicts with local, cultural, and broad social values of our Hawaii home

V/R,

Andrew P. Hood
Sustainable Resources Group Intn'l. Inc.
111 Hekili Street, Suite A373
Kailua HI 96734
Direct (808) 261-0862
Mobile (808) 372-1462
Office/Fax (808) 356-0552

From: [Tim Howard](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:24:12 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Timothy Howard of The Golf Villas of Mauna Lani. My wife and I have been coming to Hawaii for 20 years and have been property owners since 2016. Hawaii is unique in all the world and it's natural resources need to be protected. We do whatever we can to protect West Hawaii's eco system, especially in terms of it's natural ocean environment. With global warming our reefs are declining and our fish stocks are suffering. Just look at the Great Barrier Reef in Australia....no one ever believed that something this vast would ever disappear, and it is happening. We have been there and the bleached out coral is disgusting.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. Hawaii and it's uniqueness must be protected and not commercially vandalized for profit by companies who care little about a far away island.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,
Timothy Howard

From: [Satish Karandikar](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:00:03 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Satish Karandikar, and I am a resident of New Jersey.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i, and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,

God bless!

Satish

From: [mikey_jay](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:46:10 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Erin Kelly of Oahu.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. We need to see the land thrive, as all we do is raze it to the ground. Let this one thing live; it will be for the betterment of our children and our children's children.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialized knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo,
Erin Kelly

From: [Courtney K](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:17:21 AM

Aloha,

I am writing to strongly oppose the reopening of our reefs to the destructive aquarium (AQ) trade. This move breaks the promise that the Board would control permit decisions, betraying public trust.

Considerations Against AQ Trade:

Public Trust: Reversing the assurance that the Board would handle permit issuance undermines the DAR's credibility and public engagement.

Ecological Impact: Protecting reef ecosystems offers more sustainable benefits than the short-term profits of the AQ trade, which threatens fish populations and reef health.

Scientific Guidance: Experts agree that our reefs need increased fish abundance to combat climate change. Allowing the AQ trade contradicts this guidance.

Cultural Values: The AQ trade is at odds with Hawaii's cultural respect for natural resources and the collective value we place on our marine heritage.

In conclusion, reopening the AQ trade is ecologically unsound and disregards the will and values of our community. I urge a definitive halt to any attempts to reinstate this harmful industry.

Mahalo,

Courtney Kerr- Hawai'i Island

From: [Leah Kocher](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 3:21:08 PM

Dear Chair Chang and members of the BLNR,

My name is Leah Kocher. I am writing in strong **OPPOSITION** to reopening the aquarium pet fishing trade in Hawaii. I live in Honolulu and have been a resident from 2002-2012 and again from 2023-present. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Marine and Freshwater Biology and a Master's degree in Animal Science. I worked in the public aquarium field for almost 16 years at various facilities in the US. I can tell you first hand just how important it is to have these facilities available for guests to see and learn about the amazing animals found in our oceans. Having been on the animal care side of things, I can also attest that keeping fish alive, and thriving, in a tank takes knowledge, skill, practice, experience, proper equipment and animal diet, along with a hefty dose of patience and dedication. While there are some home aquarium hobbyists that possess these attributes, and may even rival the experienced public aquarist, they are not in the majority. The fish, and our fish populations, should not pay the price. Instead of allowing our wild fish populations to continue to be decimated, we should be focused on funding the development of captive breeding programs for these reef fish. We cannot continue to deplete the ocean waters of their fish. With established captive breeding, we can then bring the fish to the hobbyists, avoiding the challenges of shipping fish overseas and reducing loss through this process as well.

Often, the desired aquarium reef fish are those species found in Hawaiian waters, making this a hotspot for hobbyist fish collecting. Currently, there are actions awaiting response from the Hawaii Supreme Court regarding this and that response should be required prior to making any other changes or decisions. Until we can establish better sustainable methods, all permits should be banned. We need to allow the depleted populations a chance to recover. We also need to determine what the acceptable population numbers are for a thriving population versus one that is declining. Sustainability must be paramount. Efforts should be focused on developing captive breeding programs, not necessarily in Hawaii. It is not sustainable to continue fishing without recourse. Additionally, if and when permits could be reinstated, the decision should remain under the purview of BLNR, allowing for public comment and testimony, rather than under the control of a single entity. Thank you for your time in reading this and again I am in OPPOSITION to BLNR allowing AQ permits to be issued.

Sincerely,
Leah Kocher
waves3810@hotmail.com

From: [Michael J. Kolasa](mailto:Michael.J.Kolasa)
To: DLNR.BLNR.Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aq permits opposition
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:42:07 PM

eMail to: blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

Subject: F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Mike Kolasa of Puako. My wife Kim and I own a condo in the Mauna Lani Resort, and quality natural resources are very important to our ownership and long term interest. We plan to retire on Island soon. My wife and I are active in local conservation and farming groups, including at the Hakalau Refuge.

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,
Mike Kolasa

Michael J. Kolasa, J.D., LL.M., CFP, CTFA, CAP
Vice President & Trust Officer
The Stephenson National Bank & Trust
Marquette Trust & Investment Services
Cell: 906-250-3589
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906-273-1501

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From: [michael gilbert](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reef Destroyer
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:25:42 AM

- BLNR should be the ultimate decision-makers on whether or not to issue AQ permits, not just the Chair of DAR staff
- NO AQ permits should be issued
- It's hard to fathom that any intelligent human being on this planet would allow the strip mining of our reef fish. As a thirty five year resident of Kihei Maui I have seen our Makena Landing reefs completely poached by these criminals that cleaned out the entire area. They threatened anyone who came near. The reef has never recovered. I testify that I Michael Gilbert MPA.Cr have personally witnessed the complete collapse of the reef fish by this barbaric practice
- Shame on you who allow this practice

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sherry A. Marek](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Director of DAR should not be allowed to issue AQ permits
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 5:35:38 PM

Aloha,

Please, do not give the Director of the Division of Aquatic Resources the authority to issue AQ permits. This person does not live in West Hawaii.

The DAR and its Director have repeatedly ignored the testimony of West Hawaii residents, who in years past witnessed the harsh impact of AQ collection. West Hawaii's reef fish are not a "natural resource" for the Aquarium trade. Ban reef fish collection statewide.

The Director of DAR should be asked to resign.

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek
Big Island resident

"Our priority should be to understand the fragile wonders of life on Earth and do our best to ensure that we do not damage the ecosystem even further."

-Matthew Cobb, zoologist, from the essay "Alone in the Universe: The Improbability of Alien Civilisations"

From: [Sherry A. Marek](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ban AQ collection statewide, reef fish are wildlife
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 3:33:38 PM

Aloha,

Do not issue AQ permits.

Folks who live in West Hawaii are justifiably angry about having to fight (again!) to protect the ocean ecosystem and reef fish from an outdated, greedy Aquarium trade. Hawaii's Yellow Tang can live for 20 years — in the ocean. Wildlife, not pets.

West Hawaii's reef fish are not a "natural resource" for humans. Ban AQ collection statewide.

Happy swimming,

Sherry A. Marek
Big Island resident

"Our priority should be to understand the fragile wonders of life on Earth and do our best to ensure that we do not damage the ecosystem even further."

-Matthew Cobb, zoologist, from the essay "Alone in the Universe: The Improbability of Alien Civilisations"

From: [Respiratory and Environmental Disabilities Assoc of HI](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 8:14:04 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Please retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity to be heard,
B. A. McClintock

From: [Cameron McDonald](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to commercial aquarium collection (AQ)
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:35:38 PM

My name is Cameron McDonald and I live in Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i island. I strongly oppose commercial fishing for aquariums.

I am getting very tired of repetitive attempts by our state government, specifically the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to allow commercial fishing for aquariums on Hawaii island. The fish population is a limited resource and as a scuba diver, I have watched the numbers of fish decline since 1970 when I first started diving in Hawai'i waters. The fish population is not only threatened by commercial fishing, but by climate change, overfishing and deterioration of water quality due to run off. I have not seen any studies that include all of these threats.

Cameron McDonald

From: [Mary Metcalf](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 3:14:38 PM

Dear Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Mary Metcalf, a resident of Kailua Kona, and an avid snorkeler and coral reef citizen science contributor in West Hawaii. I am also a strong proponent of preserving and restoring Hawaii's ecosystems and wildlife, president of a nonprofit for dry forest restoration and education, and serve on a State Advisory Council for the Pu'uwa'awa'a Forest Reserve. In summary, I request you deny the Division of Aquatic Resources' request for approval of the items under Agenda Item F.1. in the August 23rd BLNR meeting. I find the reasoning behind the DAR request is lacking in both scientific review and analysis and in upholding Hawaii's Public Trust Doctrine.

The DAR March 2024 Report to BLNR titled "Data Review and Management Brief for the West Hawai'i Commercial Aquarium Fishery", has attempted to minimize the risk of removal of fish biomass and herbivorous fish biomass to the percent of coral cover in West Hawaii. The analysis done in the report appears too simplistic and does not take into account the cumulative and interacting human impacts to coral reefs from other factors. For example, many of the areas closed to aquarium fishing in the DAR analysis coincidentally are areas with high soil erosion and nutrient loading from cess pools, etc. Comparing these degraded areas and their percent coral cover to the coral cover in areas where aquarium fishing has been allowed is not a fair comparison. Simply put, there are many other important factors that should go into such an analysis before drawing any conclusions or recommendations.

However, we do know quite a bit about Hawaii coral reefs and reef fish thanks to the important work being done by NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, and the "Ecosystem Status Report for Hawai'i 2022". From this report we know the following:

- Hawaii's coral reefs will be subject to more severe bleaching events within the next several decades, with the timing dependent on lowering total GHG emissions worldwide, which currently does not look promising.
- Direction of change in coral reef cover was negative for 30% of sectors analyzed in the report, including west and east Hawai'i. In the west Hawai'i sector, coral cover decreased by over 50% (>95% confidence) between 2019 and 2010-2012 surveys for the shallow and moderate depth strata.
- Though Hawai'i Island had relatively high total fish biomass compared to other degraded sectors across the Hawaiian Islands, the estimated historical baseline fish biomass is roughly 2-fold higher.
- Coral reef vulnerability to climate change in West Hawaii is High to Med-High for a majority of the area.
- Herbivory contributes to the capacity of reefs to resist and recover from bleaching events, and to avoid shifting to reefs smothered by algae.

In its wisdom, NOAA did not include analyses that identify the underlying drivers of changes in coral reef benthic and reef fish indicators across space or time, citing that there are many potential reasons related to the many interacting and cumulative impacts that occur on nearshore ecosystems in Hawai'i. The analysis done by DAR in their March 2024 report to the BLNR ignores this wisdom and guidance and attempts to draw conclusions from an overly simplistic analysis of limited data, thus this analysis should be disregarded.

As BLNR members you are well aware of being bound by Hawaii's Public Trust Doctrine in decisionmaking. In strong language, the Hawai'i Supreme Court described the public trust doctrine as "the right of the people to have the waters protected for their use [which] demands adequate provision for traditional and customary Hawaiian rights, wildlife, maintenance of ecological balance and scenic beauty, and the preservation and enhancement of the waters . . ."

“For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions shall conserve and protect Hawaii’s natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the State. All public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people.”

In my humble opinion and given the bleak outlook for Hawaii's coral reefs and its wildlife inhabitants, allowing seven individuals to remove reef fish and profit off of commercial aquarium fishing in West Hawaii, when those same fish would serve valuable coral reef ecosystem services if left in Hawai'i, goes against Hawaii's Public Trust Doctrine.

Please keep Hawaii's aquatic wildlife in Hawaii for the public benefit of the people, and deny DAR's request.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration on this very important matter to many who live in West Hawaii.

Respectfully yours,

Mary Metcalf
Kailua Kona, HI

From: [Lynn Miyagawa](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Aquarium Trade
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 12:41:32 PM

Aloha,

My name is Lynn Miyagawa and I have lived in Kihei, Maui since 1972. I am appalled that Hawaii is once again considering opening the waters to the aquarium trade. There has been a drastic decrease in fish in our waters since my arrival. I am now travelling to Raja Ampat, Indonesia to experience a healthy, vibrant ocean life. How will our tourism industry survive without the benefits of a further diminished diverse ocean life?

Please 'Do Not Vote to Allow the Aquarium Trade'.

Sincerely,

Lynn Miyagawa
3411 Kuaua Place
Kihei, Hi 96753

From: jason@jasonswatergardens.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:56:05 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Jason Murray. I am a local business owner here in Kailua Kona. I moved to West Hawaii 11 years ago to live close to the ocean and share my love for marine life with others. Please deny any permits for aquarium fishing permanently. Our coral reefs depend on these fish and so does our economy. These reef fish bring in millions of tourism dollars to West Hawaii. If they are taken they will not bring in money in the future... we need every fish we have on the reef to ensure a healthy reef and healthy economy.

It is our kuleana to protect these important fish.

Mahalo

Jason Murray

From: [Jeff Nance](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Aquarium Collection on Oahu
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 9:16:05 AM

Aloha BLNR,

My name is Jeff Nance. I have been an SCUBA instructor in Hawaii since the late 90s. I have lead dives with visitors on all over Oahu for over 25years now and have watched helplessly as commercial aquarium collectors took the last Reticulated Butterflyfish from 2 of our favorite dive sites off of the Waianae Coast. I have caught Aquarium Collectors with crowbars turning over coral heads to flush fish into their nets. And this was within the protected area that extended out 300 meters from shore from Pokai Bay to I believe Makaha.

I watched as aquarium collectors dumped their unsellable surplus of Yellow Tangs at the first convenient reef (I'm guessing they thought they were doing the environment a favor). But I watched this spot for years and saw the Tangs upset the balance of sea life at this spot for years to come .

In short I have seen that you can't unchange what these people have done to the marine habitat. This needs to stop now if there is any chance of maintaining the balance of life here.

Jeff Nance DMT/CHT
University of Hawaii Hyperbaric Treatment Center
347 N. Kuakini St. Honolulu HI 96817
Cel 808-228-6087
Ofc. 808-587-3425

From: [Bettie Van Overbeke](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fish collecting
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 7:22:25 AM

I am opposed to collecting fish for aquarium trade. Benefits less than 10 people financially. It destroys the reef by removing algae eaters. That financially affects everyone in the island in a negative way killing the reefs.

NO FISH COLLECTING.

there should also be periodic kapu on types and places for catching fish to eat.

I have lived and snorkled in Hawaii for 36 years and can see huge differences in reefs from over exploitation .

Sincerely

Bettie VanOverbeke
12 423 OleOle St
Pahoa, HI 96778

From: [Robert Pecoraro](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:19:54 AM

My name is Robert Pecoraro. My wife, Debbie and I live in Kailua Kona, Hawaii. We moved to Hawaii about eight years ago, but before we moved here, we were frequent visitors. Being scuba divers, we were drawn to Hawaii and its unique fauna, of which around 25 percent are endemic to the islands. We moved here about the same time that the aquarium trade was shut down in West Hawaii. We were grateful that the State of Hawaii finally realized what a treasure they had here, and moved to protect it. Having previously lived in Hawaii, nearly 40 years ago, and as a recent visitor and resident, I have personally witnessed the degradation of many of Hawaii's beautiful reefs. There are many factors that have contributed to this including climate change, chemical runoff, sewage issues, over use and the aquarium trade. These factors have all been caused by humans and can be controlled by humans. Hawaii's aquatic fauna are a big draw to the islands. Our degraded reefs need the reef fish to remain on the reef if they are to have a fighting chance to survive. I don't understand why the DAR is pushing so hard to restart the aquarium trade. It is an unnecessary business that benefits just a few to the detriment of many, and at the expense of a crippled reef system. Not to mention that the trade itself is cruel and a vast majority of the fish die within the first year of capture, due to the stress that they endure along the way from capture to private aquarium. It's unfair to the animals, to our reefs and to our residents. I understand that the DAR is also looking to remove BLNR oversight of the aquarium trade and to remove public input. That's not the way things work here in Hawaii. This is an issue that concerns everyone, not just the chair of the DAR. They seem to be getting desperate and one has to wonder why. They seemed to have lost sight of their mission. Please don't let the DAR bully the residents of Hawaii and force their aquarium collection agenda through. Please help us to protect our fish and our reefs and ban aquarium collection in Hawaii altogether.

Mahalo,
Robert Pecoraro
Kailua Kona, Hawaii

From: [Doug Perrine](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23 meeting, agenda item F-1 testimony
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 4:27:24 PM

Aloha Board Members –

I am a 27 year resident of Kailua Kona. For all of this time my business has been marine wildlife photography. My photographs have appeared in innumerable publications, both in print and online, around the world, and serve to celebrate the inhabitants of our ocean, particularly those in Hawaii, and to educate the public to care about and conserve these creatures and their habitats. My particular focus over the last few years has been, and continues to be, those animals which are endemic to Hawaii. However, I continue to struggle to obtain good images of the endemic fish of Hawaii due largely to the fact that many of them have been reduced to extreme rarity within the shallow waters – referring to depths accessible by scuba diving – of Hawaii by the aquarium collecting trade. Additionally, the behavior of the surviving fish has been affected so that they hide upon the approach of scuba divers and are extremely difficult to photograph even though they may be present on the reef.

In the few years since aquarium collecting has mostly ceased in West Hawaii I have been able to photograph a few species that have started to reappear within dive-able depths on our reefs, but the recovery is a slow and uneven process, and some species remain elusive. If aquarium collecting is allowed to resume, this process will reverse, and many of our endemic fish will again become extremely rare in shallow waters, while those that remain free will be the most skittish individuals that hide in the reef and do not show themselves. This will not be restricted to “white list” species that are legally allowed to be collected, as there has never been any inspection of outgoing shipments of aquarium fish. This business, like any other wildlife trade, will provide a cover for the taking and commerce of protected species. Therefore any resumption of the aquarium collecting trade will negatively impact my own business and also the recreational ocean sports industry, which will not be able to promote Hawaii tourism based on the unique fish to be seen here nor on the beautiful schools of yellow tang, which have started to reappear on our reefs since the collecting trade was halted.

I urge the Board to reject the proposal to delegate authority to the Chair to approve aquarium fish permits, bypassing both the authority of the Board, and input of the public on this process.

I further urge the Board to reject any applications for commercial collecting of aquarium fish or invertebrates from Hawaiian waters, and to let the healing of our reefs continue, and the herbivore populations recover to a state where they will provide the maximal resilience against climate change by grazing the limu that tend to overtake our reefs when the coral is stressed by high temperatures.

Mahalo,
Doug Perrine

From: rtlivefish@gmail.com
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Support F.1.
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 4:55:57 PM

BLNR Hearing
DATE: April 26, 2024
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: DLNR Boardroom,
blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

From Ron Tubbs B.S.N.D. 8 years UHM research degree

Testimony **In Support** of **DAR F.1.**

Approval of State of Hawai'i Aquarium Fish Permit

Please pass the issuance of Aquarium Fish Permits.

A new report in 2024 by UHERO [University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization](#)

“Hawai'i's economy depends heavily on tourism and is therefore vulnerable to sudden drops in visitor numbers and inconsistent and slow growth in tourism revenue for the past 30 years.

A new report, 2024, by the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) analyzes the variety of industries across counties in the U.S. and Hawai'i to identify potential opportunities to diversify the state's economy.

Based on industries already in Hawai'i, the study shows Hawai'i has great potential for ocean-based industries—such as *fishing, fish farming* and hatcheries, boat building, port and harbor operations, and seafood packaging. Diversifying into these industries can create long-term stability and support growth beyond tourism.”

With overwhelming science supporting the sustainability of the aquarium fishery, the approval of fishery permits could aid the state in its greatly needed shift to sustainable renewable resource uses.

The most valuable and most sustainable ecologically friendly fishery in Hawaii is the aquarium fishery.

You had questions here are the answers:

- 1. Historical Fish Population; Aquarium Fishery**
- 2. DNA Genetic diversity and Hawaii fisheries.**
- 3. Humane Survivability of Aquarium Fishes**

1. No evidence was available to support that the Hawaii aquarium fishery caused a significant direct decline in any **historical fish populations**. The Report to the Thirtieth

Legislature 2020 Regular Session Findings and Recommendations of Effectiveness of the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA) that overall fish populations of targeted aquarium fish species increased significantly in West Hawaii over 20 years. "Overall Yellow Tang abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased by over 3.4 million fish from 1999/2000 to 2017/2018 (150% increase) to a current population of about 5.7 million fish within this depth range alone. Over time, management and habitat increases due to coral growth contribute to increased fish populations. Overall Kole abundance in the 30'-60' depth range over the entire West Hawai'i coast is estimated to have increased 118% (>5.1 million fish) during this time period with a current estimated population of almost 9.6 million fish. As with Yellow Tang, summer 2014 recruitment for Kole in many areas was very strong. Recruitment at the Manuka survey site for example was 254% higher than on any other previous survey at the site over the last 20 years." (WHRFMA)

2. The idea that DNA genetic diversity in Hawaii's aquarium fishery is significantly affected does not hold water scientifically. If overall populations were declining, deeper reserves, and statewide populations were affected then DNA diversity can be impacted. But Hawaii's aquarium fishery shows population increases not declines.

Marine species from deeper areas can come in to repopulate. Many species like yellow tangs can be found at depth exceeding 200 feet deep and many collected fish live in ecosystems as deep as 600 feet deep. Also baby fry return to Hawaii's reefs at very deep depths then slowly migrate to the shallows.

All of Hawaii's collected marine fish species are broadcast breeders. Fish thousands of miles away can contribute new DNA to fish populations. Many of Hawaii's fish species came in on ocean currents from Japan 4000 miles away. Breeding biodiversity in areas where fishing occurs is not affected because of deeper "Deep Refuge" areas hold reserve marine fish in uncollected areas. Fish are not monogamous and breed in groups creating more biodiversity than other species. Fry from far away are transported to other Hawaiian islands and even farther away in the Pacific, creating new diverse DNA stock for many areas. For example, fish from Kona can travel to Kauai in 45 days and settle there.

In areas where aquarium fish collection occurs both on Oahu and in West Hawaii, close to fishing reserves, it provides a source for new genetic biodiversity. FRA reserves in West Hawaii can repopulate the Hawaiian Islands down current.

Larger breeder fish, and smaller fish, provide DNA sources that remain in collected areas, only medium fish are collected, to ensure long term biodiversity of DNA.

Conclusion: Multiple sources of fish for renewed DNA biodiversity are available to ensure reef fish genetic biodiversity countering the harvest in Hawaii aquarium fish collection.

Humane treatment and Survivability of Aquarium Fishes

Why is it OK to Kill a fish but not OK to keep the same fish in an Aquarium?

"fish can and do live much longer lives in captivity than in the wild, not surprising given the absence of predators (in most cases), the unlimited amount of food available and the lack of disease." Link to full article:

<https://reefs.com/magazine/aquarium-fish-longevity/>

The Emily Munday study followed 200 yellow tangs from West Hawaii for two years and there was %100 survivability.

As far as aquarium related mortality in Hawaii goes here's a quote from a Cesar 2002 study **"Mortality rates of aquarium fish are low and have gone down considerably since the last survey in 1984. Currently, mortality rates from collection to wholesaler are estimated at 0 to 1 percent.** In the wholesalers' tanks, mortality rates range from close to 0% up to 2%. During shipment, rates range from 0.75% to 2%. This give a current total of between 1% and 5%, down from a range of 5% to 8% in the early 1980's (van Poolen and Obara, 1984; estimates of wholesalers and collectors, own study)." Dr. DAN A. POLHEMUS Division of Aquatic Resources Full research Ceaser 2002, and "Ornamental reef fish aquaculture and collection in Hawaii." (Full letter at end)

Resources:

Historical fish populations

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2020 WHRFMA report to Legislature

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Letter to Rene Umberger

From: Dan.A.Polhemus@hawaii.gov
Date: December 23, 2009 8:25:16 AM HST
To: Rene Umberger
Subject: Re: Your quote is being used is it accurate?

Hi Rene,

Thanks for the dialog. Let me see if I can address your questions.

First regarding underreported aquarium catch. Unfortunately there hasn't been a comprehensive study of whether there is substantial underreporting in the aquarium fishery (or any other fishery). The numbers I've cited in the past (2X unreported catch) are based on two previous studies of the Hawaii aquarium fishery. I have attached the reports for you. This is the best information that's available. Given human nature it wouldn't be surprising that some level of underreporting occurs but there is no information anywhere to support anything like the 10X figure which I've heard mentioned. Furthermore when we've compared the number of animals caught, as reported by collectors on their fish catch reports, with the numbers purchased by dealers there isn't any indication of gross underreporting by the collectors.

As far as aquarium related mortality in Hawaii goes here's a quote from a Cesar 2002 study "Mortality rates of aquarium fish are low and have gone down considerably since the last survey in 1984. Currently, mortality rates from collection to wholesaler are estimated at 0 to 1 percent. In the wholesalers tanks, mortality rates range from close to 0% up to 2%. During shipment, rates range from 0.75% to 2%. This give a current total of between 1% and 5%, down from a range of 5% to 8% in the early 1980's (van Poolen and Obara, 1984; estimates of wholesalers and collectors, own study)."

I haven't seen any work to support the figure of 99% mortality rate within one year for captive marinelife. For animals which have been collected using cyanide this may not be unrealistic and there is good work on such chemical related mortality. The aquarium fishery in Hawaii does not use destructive chemicals. The 2007 statistic cited indicating that 20,000 reef animals died while in the possession of collectors seems to be based upon comparing what collectors report as being caught vs. what's sold. In 2007 this difference was 20,345 animals statewide. A closer examination of the catch report data reveals that of that total figure, 6,000 or so were miscellaneous shrimp, most likely opae ula, which were being harvested in fairly large numbers around that time. We don't know why such large number of shrimp were caught and not sold. They may have been used for fishing purposes or to feed aquarium fish. They're pretty hardy animals so this difference may not represent collector related mortality but a redirected use.

Another interesting component of the reporting that year was a single monthly report in March 2007 that indicated a catch of 8,897 yellow tangs by a Big Island collector. Of these only 850 were reported sold. This seems to be an unrealistically high reported catch for a single collector in one month not to mention in March, months before settlement of the young, more collectible, tangs occurs. We checked the actual report and there was a data entry error. It should have been 897 caught (not 8,897). Thus the total FY 2007 difference between #'s caught and sold is actually 12,345 of which almost half were miscellaneous shrimp. For FY 2009 we see that there was a difference of about 18,000 in the number reported caught and sold. 16,000 of these were opae ula. The difference in yellow tangs reported caught and sold was 2,233, which if it does represent mortality, **suggests a collector to dealer mortality of 0.8% - quite similar to what Cesar found.**

It is a good thing for folks to scrutinize and ask questions about what's going on in our fisheries and on our reefs. These are important to all of us. A realistic perspective does need to be maintained however. Let me elaborate. On Maui in 2009 there were a total of 16,300 aquarium animals caught, representing 82 different species. Yellow tangs accounted for 69% while Kole was 7% of the catch. During that same year non-aquarium commercial fishers

captured (and killed) 319,491 reef fishes of 75 species. While yellow tangs weren't caught to any degree there was considerable overlap in a number of the other species. To the commercial food catch one can add another 480,000 reef fish taken by recreational/subsistence fishers (extrapolated from 2006 NOAA Rec Fishing Survey data). So, in the grand scheme of things, the aquarium take on Maui is literally a drop in the bucket, representing less than 2% of the total mortality of reef animals that year. This serves to point out that undue focus and hyperbole about aquarium collecting and its impact on the reefs is dangerously shortsighted and counterproductive. We need to think and act holistically.

Hope I didn't overwhelm you with numbers.

- Dan Polhemus

Dr. DAN A. POLHEMUS
Division of Aquatic Resources
State of Hawaii DLNR
1151 Punchbowl St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: (808) 587-0100
e-mail: Dan.A.Polhemus@hawaii.gov

From: [PHYLLIS ROBINSON](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:15:16 AM

I would like to make a statement against allowing aquarium trade anywhere in Hawaii. As an avid snorkel swimmer in the Hawaiian islands for 20 years with my home on Maui, I have witnessed the depletion of fish populations overtime. Why would we want our fish taken from our waters and sold to the mainland? Please vote against this and also do not allow the decision to be in the hands of the chair. It is clear the public has voted against Aquarian fishing and we must be heard and accounted for as the voice of the people.

From: [Garry Russell](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] AQ Permists
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 6:43:34 PM

We are on the Big Island Hawaii and are involved with scuba diving mostly in the area around Miloli'i. We are also associated with Ocean Janitors, a non-profit organization that is involved with cleaning up the ocean in our area of the Big Island. The idea of harvesting fish for aquariums at the expense of reducing the population in our area is unacceptable, not to mention that a high percentage of the fish never make it to their destination. It is our pleasure to only visit these areas as scuba divers, only taking pictures and leaving bubbles.

Mahalo,
Susan & Garry Russell
808-640-2395

From: [Susan Douglas](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:49:37 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Warmest Mahalo and Aloha!

Susan Douglas
84A Iliwai Loop
(that's spelled I L I W A I)
Kihei, Maui, HI 96753
H Landline: 808 879 1112 (You can call 24/7, if you get my machine
you can leave a long message, NO texts)
sd3@hawaii.rr.com



From: [Madge Schaefer](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda item F1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 11:06:14 AM

My name is Madge Schaefer. I am a longtime resident of Kihei on Maui.
Please do not change the rules on AG permits. Any permit should be subject to public hearing. The benefit of preserving herbivores far outweighs the profit for a few aquarium fishing businesses.
Thank you.
Madge Schaefer
Sent from my iPhone

From: [stephanie.scotto](#)
To: [DLNR, BLNR, Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; item F1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 4:56:31 PM

Aloha Kākou!
‘O Stephanie Scotto ko’u inoa. Noho au ma Kona hema, Moki ‘o Keawe .
Ke ‘Olu’olu!!!
‘A’ole lawe aku i nā laikini no nā i’ā! Makemake kākou nui kākou no ke kai!
Mahalo nui loa, Stephanie Scotto

From: [Sandra Shimmon](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No marine take
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:19:57 PM

Our fish are so depleted. Do not sell our fish. !!!!

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Motter Snell](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F- Oppose AQ permits and oppose delegating authority to committee chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:01:19 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is [Motter Anne Snell](#) of [Kona Mauka](#). I am the president to Pulama ia Kona Heritage Preservation Council located in Holualao, Hi.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. Fish need protecting to ensure a population for future generations to enjoy.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,
Motter Snell
Kona Mauka

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From: [James Sogi](#)
To: [DLNR, BLNR, Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 2:50:54 PM

Subject: August 23; Agenda Item F.1

My name is James Sogi Holualoa Kona County of Hawaii.

My family has been here for 5 generations 125 years.

I oppose commercial aquarium raping of the reef and taking our fish..Do not allow it. If you do we will prevent them. BLNT and the public should decide, not one Chair or bureaucrat staff.

Do not issue aquarium permit!

James Sogi

From: [Alice Thigpen](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No AQ fishing!
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 9:53:00 AM

Do not open our beautiful coral reefs to the destructive practices of commercial aquarium fishing! We need all the fish in the ocean for the health of the reefs and because tourists are an income source for many, and if there are no fish on the reefs they will go somewhere else. Totally ban AQ fishing forever!!!

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

From: [Vivian Toellner](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:59:55 AM

Testimony in opposition to the Commercial Aquarium Trade.

I, Vivian Toellner, resident and frequent snorkeler of Hawai'i Island, cannot believe how many times I have testified to Save the Fishes. It seems these apex aquarium trade predators (Greedy Humans) are out to destroy Hawaii's Natural Resources, all for a few dollars in their pockets.

This evil needs to stop.

The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is moving forward with their plan to re-open West Hawai'i to commercial aquarium collection (AQ) on behalf of the mainland businesses that sell wildlife for aquariums. They will ask the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to approve it on August 23.

Outrageously, DAR is proposing this even though the validity of the EIS-Environmental Impact Statement, upon which their plan is based, is still pending before the Hawai'i Supreme Court, and also is ahead of the community's petitioned rulemaking to prohibit commercial AQ statewide, which the Board of Land and Natural Resources unanimously approved in December 2023.

In an equally outrageous move, knowing BLNR's growing opposition to commercial AQ, DAR is also proposing to remove BLNR's oversight of the trade and the ability for the public to have a voice, by giving sole AQ permitting authority to the Chair, who could sign off without the public even being notified, let alone given an opportunity to provide any input.

Silencing community voices that have long opposed this activity and shielding potential AQ collectors from public scrutiny is yet another in a long list of betrayals from DAR on behalf of the AQ pet trade.

- DAR has made multiple public statements that the Board, not the Chair, will determine whether to issue any AQ permits. Breaking that promise now is the ultimate betrayal of public trust
- The benefits of leaving our fish on the reefs FAR OUTWEIGH the monetary gains of a handful of people who rake them off the reef for sale to the AQ pet trade outside Hawaii
- Scientists say we must increase fish abundance if our reefs are to have a fighting chance against climate change impacts. Sacrificing tens to hundreds of thousands of important herbivores to an unnecessary and destructive activity contradicts best available science and common sense
- The AQ trade fundamentally conflicts with local, cultural, and broad social values of our Hawaii home

- BLNR should be the ultimate decision-makers on whether or not to issue AQ permits, not just the Chair of DAR staff
- NO AQ permits should be issued

When I snorkel, I see less and less fish, no puffers at all.

Save the Fishes!

Most Sincerely,

Vivian Toellner

PO Box 6894,

Hilo HI 96720

From: [Tlaloc Tokuda](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:31:23 PM

eMail to: blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

Subject: F-1 I OPPOSE Issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Tlaloc Tokuda from Kailua Kona.

Enough is more than enough! Leave the tropical fish of Kona in Kona! I have a daughter and son

& ex wife who all collected gold fish & later aquarium fish, here in Kona

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. [Provide personal knowledge, family stories, perspective ... mana'o]

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo

From: [Cynthia Urry](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] F-1 I OPPOSE issuing AQ Permits & I OPPOSE Delegating Authority to Department Chair
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 5:36:46 PM

Aloha Chair and Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is Cyndy Urry of Kailua Kona. I currently am a volunteer Reef Teacher in West Hawai'i, especially in Keauhou at Kahalu'u .

I OPPOSE issuing commercial aquarium permits in West Hawai'i and I OPPOSE delegating authority to the Department Chair.

Regarding Terms & Conditions to Issue West Hawai'i AQ permits, I request you reject DAR's AQ Terms and Conditions and deny any and all permits. We have seen how easy it is for poachers to run up and down this long coast and there are not near enough support for the BLNR to patrol the vast area . Friends at the airport say there are tons of fish ,etc ,leaving our coast every day and most of them will be dead when they arrive at their destination.

Regarding Delegating Authority to Issue AQ Permits to the Department Chair, do not delegate authority to the Department Chair. Retain the discretionary authority with the Board who will continue to utilize their diverse island communities, specialize knowledge, and expertise to weigh in and make informed decisions together.

Mahalo for this opportunity,
Cyndy Urry , Keauhou and Kona districts

From: [Cynthia Urry](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hawaii Fish Collecting
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 8:35:55 AM

The meeting will be held using interactive conference technology under section 92-3.7, Haw. Rev. St. Please do not ignore the wishes of the Hawaiian people and let the aquarium fishermen rob our precious reef structure of our fish . As global warming continues, we have to be extra vigilant to help our reefs survive and our algae eaters (Tangs, etc.) are desperately needed to do their job to help us save the reef from dying . We are so far removed from the rest of the world I can't imagine what we would do with no reef because we are too far away to replenish our reef with fish from other reef systems in the Pacific .Please help Hawaii before it's too late.

Sincerely ~ C Urry , Kona resident

From: [Colleen Wallis](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ban aquarium fish taking racket
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 11:34:15 AM

Aloha,

I was doing reef teach at Kahalu'u bay for over ten years before retiring, I used to ask our visitors to watch where they stepped and to use reef safe sunscreens, I recall many years ago when WGT published a photo of dead yellow tangs and other fish left on the wharf in Honolaha harbor and thought back then what a waste and how little these people cared for these marine creatures, They only know how to exploit our coastal waters.

Our marine creatures must be protected from those aquarium fishermen.

Sincerely,

Colleen Wallis

Kailua, Kona Hawaii

From: [Bruce E. Watkins](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 23; Agenda Item F.1
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 1:16:49 PM

Dear Division of Aquatic Resources,

I strongly oppose the reopening of the commercial aquarium collection on the west side of Hawai'i.

You should permit the review of the EIS to be completed before any ruling is made. The Board of Land and Natural Resources seems to be against any commercial aquarium collection, and their authority in this matter should be preserved.

I scuba dive West Hawai'i many times each week, and have watched our reef fish rebound after the termination of commercial collecting. Reef fish are important part of a healthy coral community, and maintain the balance necessary for a healthy reef. Commercial collection is not consistent with Hawaiian culture and values.

Reef fish belong on the reef where they may be enjoyed by both locals and visitors, and not in aquariums.

No commercial aquarium collection permits should be issued.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bruce Watkins, Ph.D.
Kailua Kona, Hawai'i

From: linda.willaby
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] STOP Aquarium fishing permits
Date: Friday, August 16, 2024 10:05:15 AM

My name is Linda Willaby and I live on the Big Island of Hawaii. I snorkel in the ocean almost every day and have seen how the reef fish population has declined in the 16 years that I have been here.

- No aquarium collection permits should be issued. There are hardly any fish on our reefs now. Why would you want to issue permits so people could take more? I have been to other reefs in other oceans. I have seen the reef fish populations in the Maldives where reef fish are abundant. That is more what the reef fish population of Hawaii should look like. Our reefs should be teeming with beautiful reef fish and not scooped off the reef to die in transport so someone on the mainland can have a pretty fish in their home aquarium. The benefits of leaving our fish on the reefs FAR OUTWEIGH the monetary gains of a handful of people who rake them off the reef for sale to the Aquarium pet trade outside Hawaii.
-
- Scientists say we must increase fish abundance if our reefs are to have a fighting chance against climate change impacts. Sacrificing tens to hundreds of thousands of important herbivores to an unnecessary and destructive activity contradicts best available science and common sense.
-
- The Aquarium trade fundamentally conflicts with local, cultural, and broad social values of our Hawaii home.
-
- BLNR should be the ultimate decision-makers on whether or not to issue AQ permits, not just the Chair of DAR staff.
-
- Yours truly,

Linda Willaby