



PMNM-2025-004

Testimony Position: Support

Aloha Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

On behalf of Futureswell, we are writing in strong support of Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project whose work has strongly benefitted Hawai'i in the face of increasing marine debris pollution. Without their annual expeditions, the fragile coastal and shoreline ecosystems of the northwestern Hawaiian Islands would be accumulating over 100,000 pounds of plastic pollution every single year. The environmental benefit is further compounded by the local workforce opportunities provided to early-career conservationists as field technicians to take care of this place.

With aloha,

Carissa Cabrera

CEO, Futureswell

From: [Pott, Caroline M](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PMDP PMNM-2025-004 testimony
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 3:35:54 PM

Aloha,

I write following a request by Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project (PMDP) for testimonials regarding their work.

As Deputy Refuge Manager for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, I have worked with PMDP over 1 full season of fieldwork and am now in the midst of preparations for a second. PMDP's work addresses an ongoing need for the removal of tidal trash within the Monument which poses a near constant threat to marine wildlife of all kinds, both on land and in the sea. Due to its remote location and the effort required to reach and operate within it, many locations in the Monument do not see regular human visitation. PMDP represents a herculean effort to not only reach those places, but remove the omnipresent products of humankind's addiction to plastic. PMDP runs a very complex operation in the furthest reaches of the remotest archipelago on earth. Their communications and preparations as well as the operations they conduct are exemplary, with human and animal safety at top of mind. Their work, and the consistency of its application, has demonstrated impacts on the survival of imperiled species endemic to the Hawaiian archipelago. Without their dedication, effort and professionalism, the backlog of trash in Monument waters and beaches would grow to the untenable levels seen in the past. PMDP is an integral partner in maintaining quality habitat within the Monument and fills an important need unable to be met by the ensemble of co-management agencies.

Caroline Pott
Deputy Refuge Manager
[Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge & Battle of Midway National Memorial](#) | Kuaihelani | Pihemanu
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From: [Forest O'Neill](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Support of PMDP's Work and PMNM-2025-004 Permit
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 2:04:46 PM

Aloha Chairperson and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project (PMDP) and their permit application, PMNM-2025-004. As Vice President at IBSS, a NOAA vendor and corporate partner with PMDP, I have seen firsthand the critical work PMDP does in preserving the ecological and cultural integrity of Papahānaumokuākea. Their efforts to remove marine debris protect endangered wildlife, maintain the sacred nature of these islands, and ensure the health of Hawai'i's marine ecosystems for future generations. In addition to the direct environmental impact, PMDP has demonstrated their ability to shine a light on a critical habitat increasing public awareness and appreciation of these often forgotten parts of our archipelago.

Approving this permit will allow PMDP to continue its essential work in safeguarding one of the most pristine marine environments in the world. I respectfully urge the Board to grant this permit to support the ongoing conservation of Papahānaumokuākea.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Forest O'Neill

Vice President, Fisheries, Oceans and Atmospheric Sciences

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From: [James Morioka](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Support of PMDP – PMNM-2024-005 Permit Application
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 2:17:22 PM

Aloha Board of Land and Natural Resources,

My name is James Morioka, and I am the Executive Director and Co-founder of the Kailua, O‘ahu-based nonprofit Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project (PMDP) (www.pmdphawaii.org). I am writing to submit testimony in support of PMDP’s critical work and our PMNM Conservation and Management Permit application, PMNM-2024-005.

At PMDP, our mission is to protect and preserve the sensitive wildlife and habitats of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument by removing harmful marine debris through annual large-scale cleanup efforts. On average, we remove 200,000 pounds of marine debris each year, with last year’s efforts surpassing 330,000 pounds, bringing our four-year total to over 1 million pounds.

To learn more about our work, you can watch this 9-minute film: [Salesforce Ecopreneurs: PMDP](#). I have also attached a 6-minute video highlighting our “[Mission to a Million Pounds](#)”

Prior to founding PMDP in 2019 with Kevin O’Brien, Kevin and I led and managed this same project under NOAA’s Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) Ecosystem Sciences Division (ESD). We have worked together on this initiative for over 12 years, building a proven track record of success. Beyond debris removal, we are deeply committed to protecting Hawai‘i’s marine ecosystems and mentoring the next generation of marine scientists and conservationists. Through rigorous field training and hands-on experience, we provide emerging professionals with skills that translate across various sectors, strengthening the future of Hawai‘i’s natural resource management.

We actively collaborate with the Co-Trustees of Papahānaumokuākea and the Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group, to ensure that our work respects and protects both the natural and cultural resources of this sacred place. Over the past four years, across 260 days in the Monument, we have not only removed over 1 million pounds of marine debris but also rescued and disentangled 15 green sea turtles and 3 Hawaiian monk seals from derelict fishing nets.

We appreciate the opportunity to present at the Land Board meeting on Friday and look forward to meaningful discussions on how we can collaborate to protect Hawai‘i’s natural resources and cultivate the next generation of marine stewards.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
James Morioka

James Morioka

Executive Director
Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project
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