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HR 259 and HCR 240
URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
TO REMAIN STEADFAST IN ITS EFFORTS TO MANAGE AND
PROTECT CRITICAL HABITATS IN HALEAKALA NATIONAL PARK

Statement for
House Committee on
Planning, Energy and Environmental Protection
Public Hearing - April 6, 1989

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HR 259 and HCR 240 recognize the unique and critical habitats in Haleakala National Park and urge the United States Department of Interior to oppose developments on the summit that could degrade or overburden the serenity of the park or threaten endangered species.

Our statement on these resolutions does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The fragility of the environment associated with Haleakala National Park is appropriately recognized in the various whereas clauses of these resolutions. We note in particular the importance of the Park as the critical habitat for threatened or endangered species such as the nene, dark-rumped petrel and silversword. Protection of critical habitats is essential if we are to protect populations of these species.

We also note that the Management Plan developed by the National Park Service has specifically examined the capacity of the Park and concluded that the Park is already at full capacity if environmental values are not to be jeopardized by excess visitor traffic.

Concern has been expressed by our reviewers that a major increase in visitor use of the summit area, as would be encouraged with the suggested aerial tramway, may significantly impact the sensitive ecosystems of the

Park. In particular, additional visitor traffic increases the potential for the introduction of exotic plants and weeds; may disrupt the nesting habits and habitats of the petrels; and increases risk to the habitat by decreasing the supervision per visitor ratio of the National Park Service.

We support the intent of the resolutions to encourage the National Park Service to protect the summit of Haleakala from activities that could overburden facilities or otherwise impact the unique and critical habitats.