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SCR 242 and SR 214
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
TO REPORT ON THE ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
OF CERTAIN ACTIVITIES IN MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Agriculture
Public Hearing - April 11, 1989

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SCR 242 and SR 214 request the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to prepare a report on the ecological and environmental impact of certain activities in marine conservation areas.

Our statement on this resolution does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The major increase in the use of marine conservation areas by the local public, dive charter businesses and other recreational groups has prompted concerns as to the ability of these areas to sustain their high quality environments. As a result, the studies requested by SCR 242 and SR 214 are quite appropriate and would serve a valued purpose by providing certain baseline data for ongoing monitoring and informed management of these special areas. Hence we strongly support the intent of SCR 242 and SR 214. It should be recognized, however, that if such studies are to be adequate to meet environmental management needs, considerable costs will be involved. Funding will be needed to carry out the directives of these resolutions.

We would like to call your attention to related ongoing studies by the University of Hawaii Sea Grant Office. Sea Grant is just finishing a statewide review of the dive industry's use of all Marine Life Conservation Districts and as such, the use of Molokini is part of their study. The project focuses on identifying users of offshore areas and the nature or characteristics of the industry in terms of number of companies, the size,

capacity and number of boats, and the number of tours per unit time. In addition to the compilation of this information on the dive industry, Sea Grant has been involved in a cooperative program with DLNR, the University of Hawaii's Institute of Geophysics, the Molokini dive and snorkel tour boat operators, and The Ocean Recreation Council of Hawaii (TORCH), to develop environmentally benign day-use mooring systems so as to reduce the destruction of coral caused by anchoring. In addition to their studies at Molokini, Sea Grant has some limited data on the use of dive sites in the Hanalei area. The Environmental Center in cooperation with DLNR, is coordinating certain environmentally related studies in the Hanalei river estuary area. The forthcoming results of these studies may be of use in providing certain general background information on the Hanalei Bay area.