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HR 207

URGING PROMPT EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP THE ALA WAI CANAL

Statement for
House Committee on Water, Land Use, Development and Hawaiian Homes
Public Hearing 18 March 1977

by

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HR 207 requests that the Department of Land and Natural Resources give the greatest priority to pending projects designed to maintain and clean up the Ala Wai Canal and to ameliorate present conditions as soon as possible. This statement on HR 207 is being submitted to the Legislative Subcommittee of the Environmental Center for their review. It does not represent an institutional position of the University.

The Environmental Center has assisted in coordinating and reviewing various studies dealing with the Ala Wai Canal for the past 6 years. Our most recent efforts have been in coordinating a study to evaluate both environmentally and economically, the feasibility of various schemes for permanent improvements to the water quality in the canal. A copy of this latest report, Improvement of the Ala Wai Canal, is being submitted for your information.

Although the resolution itself specifies priority to projects designed to maintain and clean-up the canal, there is no reference in the rationale statement paragraphs of what is anticipated under the term "maintain." It appears that periodic dredging is the only maintenance being considered. Although dredging per se is a necessary first step, it will not result in a visually significant change in the appearance of the water of the canal. Dredging will temporarily improve circulation and will temporarily eliminate exposed sediment bars and trash.

What will improve the water quality and visual appearance of the canal as well as its utility for recreation by the people of the State is a mechanical flushing system. Such a system could provide water of sufficient quality to promote all forms of aquatic recreational activities including swimming, sailing, fishing, and canoeing. Such activities would be enjoyed not only by local residents but would also provide a major asset to the tourist industry in Waikiki.

We would suggest that an additional paragraph be added to the resolution to recognize the need, not only for periodic dredging, but also the need for mechanical flushing if the water quality and visual appearance of the canal are to be improved.