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HB 721 and HB 840

RELATING TO SHARK CONTROL

Statement for
House Committee on Water, Land Use Development and Hawaiian Homes
Public Hearing, 2 March 1977

by

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HB 721 would make an appropriation to a shark control revolving fund, and authorize payment from the fund of \$5.00 per shark caught. HB 840 would establish a bounty program for sharks (or more properly for the catching of sharks). This statement on these bills has been submitted for review to the legislative subcommittee of the Environmental Center of the University of Hawaii. It does not represent an institutional position of the University.

The theory behind both bills is that a fisherman who catches a shark will receive payment from the State. The theory behind HB 721 is that the State will sell the sharks brought in, thus reimbursing the revolving fund. There will be several problems in practice, however. The Department of Land and Natural Resources will have no way of knowing whether the shark was caught in waters around the major islands. The catch of a pregnant shark with keikis near birth might result in a payment in excess of \$100. Sharks of significant size would not be turned in to DLNR because they would be worth more than \$5.00 on the open market. HB 840 does not even indicate that it is DLNR that should administer the bounty program or indicate what the bounty shall be.

A more effective means of shark control is to increase the market value of sharks through encouragement of the use of shark meat as food. The State is already providing such encouragement.