HB 2186 would amend Chapter 188, HRS, to establish permit requirements for aquarium fish collection, and charges the department of land and natural resources (DLNR) to actively pursue enforcement of fishing regulations, improve data collection, encourage development of artificial reefs, and promote a tropical fish aquaculture industry.

Our statement on this measure does not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The intent of this measure appears to be a limitation of the number of people engaged in the aquarium fish fishery in order to conserve the aquarium fish resource. The number of permits to be allowed thus is crucial, and should be specified, along with some rational method by which that number was determined.

The measure, if passed, surely will affect the aquarium fish trade, and as with other measures proposed this session, there needs to be recognition of the impact of this proposal on peoples’ livelihoods. The $1,000 figure for a permit fee seems high; why aren’t other permits, such as for charter or recreational fishermen, similarly priced?