HB 375 would establish within DLNR a seven-member task force to evaluate the state's fishing laws and regulations.

Our statement on this measure is compiled from voluntarily submitted opinions of the listed academic reviewers, and as such, does not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Our reviewers note that ultimately, the protection and sustenance of the resource is the pre-eminent goal of management. To that end, any strategy implemented should be strongly conservative, erring on the side of protection rather than permissiveness. Recent data indicate tremendous declines in populations of many inshore fisheries, with attendant severe skewing of community structure. These data bear out the consensus of long-time fishers who note that the resources aren't what they used to be.

We further note an intrinsic logical flaw in the statement starting on line 19, page 1, and continuing to line 5 on page 2. If the efficacy of Hawaii's fishing laws is compromised by insufficient enforcement, remediation will only be achieved through increasing the level of enforcement. The success of any management strategy will be obscure until it has been adequately implemented.

Finally, we suggest that the makeup of the proposed task force should include at least one member with formal training in fisheries management so that scientific issues may be addressed.