SB 707
RELATING TO MARINE AND COASTAL RESOURCES

Senate Committee on Planning, Land and Water Use

Public Hearing - February 4, 1993
3:00 P.M., Room 405 SOT

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SB 707 would create an office of marine affairs within the Office of State Planning. This is a companion bill to HB 56.

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

Three bills are before the 1993 legislature which create a marine affairs program in OSP, and they all share the intent of implementing the ocean resources management plan which was developed by the ocean and marine resources council. To conserve time and trees, our testimony on these various bills is consolidated.

Creating the office within OSP has certain merits, chiefly in the conveyance of the clout of the governor's office. Also, the deputy would automatically become the chief spokesperson for state ocean affairs. However, there are also some drawbacks:

1. The office is given a broad range of responsibilities, yet little authority of its own to implement its programs.

2. Having the deputy as chair of the council conveys considerable power with regard to calling meetings, setting agendas, etc. Thus, much of the efficacy of the office relies upon the leadership qualities of the deputy.
3. There are clearly areas of jurisdictional overlap between the proposed office and existing agency programs which need to be resolved.

While the ORMP clearly articulated the need for coordination and prioritization of management activities, it seems clear that new research efforts are of paramount importance, yet they are not particularly strongly emphasized. For instance, much of the required coordination and prioritization will depend on the fine tuning of projected sea level rise due to global warming.

In the final analysis, this will require sufficient funding to ensure a comprehensive implementation, and given current budget constraints, it is likely that some stepwise implementation may be required.