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HCR 207 HD 1
REQUESTING ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARTIFICIAL REEF ZONE
FOR RESEARCH AND OTHER NON-CONSUMPTIVE USES

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Agriculture, Energy and Ocean Resources
Public Hearing - April 20, 1988

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HCR 207 HD 1 would require the Department of Land and Natural Resources to designate a site as an Artificial Reef Zone as well as a Marine Life Conservation District for the purpose of conducting research on the design and fishery enhancement attributes of artificial reef structures.

Our statement does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

As appropriately noted in the whereas clauses of this resolution, fishery resources are an important element to Hawaii for both recreational and commercial needs. However, just as suitable housing is essential to the development of a land based "community", so is the availability of suitable housing (coral reefs for example) essential to the development and maintenance of a fish community. Coral growth in Hawaii has been adversely affected by the deleterious products of erosion and runoff from extensive development in the near shore areas. Furthermore, overfishing has reduced the standing crop of fish and thus the potential recruitment of new stock.

HCR 207 HD 1 seeks to address both these problems through the establishment of an artificial reef (housing structure for fish and other marine life) in combination with a marine life conservation district to protect the occupants of the artificial reef.

Artificial reef technology offers the prospect of substantial improvements to nearshore marine communities and fisheries. Wide scale use of such artificial structures occurs in the cooler coastal waters of Japan. Several such structures, have been developed for use in Hawaiian waters and have proven to be quite popular both to the fish and fishermen. However, the locations of the existing artificial reefs and their use by fishermen preclude their use for direct research, measurement and evaluation of their effectiveness. A major benefit of this resolution would be the creation of a suitable, protected region where experimental progress on the effectiveness of the artificial reef to enhance the marine community may be quantitatively evaluated.

We strongly support the intent of this resolution. Implementation of its provisions will greatly augment fisheries research and serve to enhance the fish stock in the Hawaiian Islands.
