HB 354
ARTIFICIAL REEF PILOT PROJECT

Statement for
House Committee on
Ocean and Marine Resources

Public Hearing - February 20, 1987

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HB 354 would provide for the appropriation of funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for continuation of the pilot artificial reef project funded in 1986. The statement on this bill does not represent an official position of the University of Hawaii.

It is our understanding that the artificial reef program and the various related fish aggregating devices, so called FADS, have proven to be greatly successful and of significant help to the local fishing community. The artificial habitats serve not only to attract fish to a more centralized area and thereby reduce the costs of fishing but in the case of the artificial reefs, may provide sufficient habitat to actually increase productivity in the area, not just aggregate the existing stock.

We would like to suggest that after the needed use of funds for construction of the artificial reefs that funds be allocated for monitoring of the effectiveness of the artificial reef project. It is particularly important to evaluate the reefs ability to actually increase fish stocks in general as well as its recruitment ability. It would also be helpful for future decision making or expansion of the artificial reef program to include some estimates of the economic returns.

A word of caution is offered with regard to the proposed use of boulders and other objects as noted in Section 1 of the bill. It is essential that some minimum size be established for the use of fill and boulders. Otherwise the nooks, crannies, and crevices so essential for reef biota development will be filled in. We urge that fill be graded and limited to rubble no less than about 2½ feet in minimum dimension.