HB 20
RELATING TO THE OCEAN CENTER

Statement for
House Committee on
Ocean and Marine Resources

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HB 20 would establish a planning council to study, review and prepare long range plans for the design, construction and development of facilities for a Hawaii Ocean Center. The statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Inasmuch as the coastal resources and marine environment of the State of Hawaii are critical to the quality of life and economy of the State, the development of a world class center devoted to ocean education and research seems fully appropriate.

An Hawaii Ocean Center Planning Council would provide the breadth of expertise necessary to develop the needed plans. We do ask, however, that consideration be given to the following suggestions.

1. The composition of the council as provided by HB 20 would include many agencies and representatives with special expertise in ocean related issues. We suggest that the Waikiki Aquarium be among the specific members listed.

While we recognize that the present proposal includes representatives of the University of Hawaii, which could include the aquarium, we believe that the breadth and quality of the expertise available at the Waikiki Aquarium in education, research, and the visitor industry is sufficiently unique and important to warrant a more directly stated commitment to council membership.

2. The functions of the council include, in item (1) the study and review necessary for the establishment of a world class, self-supporting, education and research ocean center.
We suggest that modification of this direction may be appropriate to reflect more of an educational, interpretative and resource center focus with provision for individual or coordinative research in cooperation with existing marine related research units. The object being to focus, insofar as research is concerned on cooperative, not duplicative, research efforts with existing programs.

3. We suggest that in addition to the four directives given to the council, a directive be given to review and consider, in their planning for the Hawaii Ocean Center, the existing marine oriented programs, organizations and institutes (such as those at Sea Life Park, City of Refuge, Bishop Museum, Hawaii Maritime Center, Waikiki Aquarium, Oceanic Institute, etc.). This would assure that the Ocean Center would complement not duplicate existing education and research programs.