HB 530
RELATING TO FISHING REGULATIONS

Statement for
House Committee on
Ocean and Marine Resources
Public Hearing—February 23, 1987

By

Jacquelin N. Miller, Environmental Center
Sheila Conant, General Science
Richard Brock, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
James Parrish, Hawaii Cooperative Fishery Research Unit
Robert Kinzie, Zoology
Peter Rappa, Sea Grant
Ray Tabata, Sea Grant
Mark Suiso, Sea Grant

HB 530 would add to HRS Chapter 188 a prohibition on the disposal of any fishing net, trap, or gear with netting or parts thereof in the waters of the State. The statement on this bill does not reflect an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

A serious problem exists with the entrapment of fish, turtles, seals and birds in various types of debris commonly lost or deliberately discarded either at the shoreline or in offshore waters. Unfortunately the problem is not limited to fish net but includes many other types of non biodegradable objects, such as fish line and the plastic six-pac rings found on beverage containers. The problem is well documented by both federal and state agencies charged with the responsibility of regulating fisheries. Hence we concur with the intent of the bill but would prefer to see the prohibition broadened to include other types of non biodegradable, potentially harmful debris.

Enforcement, particularly in offshore areas where disposal is likely to go unnoticed, may be exceedingly difficult. It is further complicated by the question of deliberate vs. accidental disposal. Presumably the prohibitions could not apply, in the case of fishing equipment, to accidental or unintentional disposal unless some type of negligence could be shown. Existing litter laws may provide a sufficient basis for the control of the problem in the shoreline area but the frequent occurrence of fishing debris and other litter in the coastal areas suggests that either additional laws or stricter enforcement is needed.

Despite the possible enforcement difficulties, the prohibition provided by HB 530 may have sufficient deterrent value to warrant its adoption, particularly if a public education effort is mounted to inform fishermen and the general public of the hazards posed to marine and coastal fauna by discarded nets and trash.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
The Environmental Center presented the attached statement on HB 530 on February 23, 1987 before the House Committee on Ocean and Marine Resources. The statement presented at that time remains applicable.

Attachment
SB 435
RELATING TO FISHING REGULATIONS

Statement for
House Committee on
Ocean and Marine Resources
Public Hearing - March 23, 1987

SB 435 is identical to HB 530 on which the Environmental Center presented the attached statement on February 23, 1987, before the House Committee on Ocean and Marine Resources. Our statement remains applicable to SB 435.

Attachment
SB 435
RELATING TO FISHING REGULATIONS

Statement for
House Committees on
Judiciary
Ocean and Marine Resources
Joint Public Hearing - March 31, 1987

SB 435 is identical to HB 530 on which the Environmental Center presented the attached statement on February 23, 1987, before the House Committee on Ocean and Marine Resources. Our statement remains applicable to SB 435.

Attachment