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SB 2617
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES IN HAWAII

Senate Committee
Planning, Land and Water Use Management

February 6, 1992
3:00 pm, Room 504 SOT

By
John T. Harrison, Environmental Center
Clifford Smith, Botany/Cooperative National Park Resources Studies Unit

SB 2617 would appropriate an unspecified sum from the general revenues of the State to promote protection and enhancement of threatened and endangered species in Hawaii.

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

In 1989, the Environmental Center undertook a survey of academic, public, and private sector individuals engaged in environmental management in Hawaii to identify perceived threats to Hawaii's environment. By far, the most commonly cited concern was the loss of native species and critical habitat for the support of native species. The dimensions of the extinction crisis worldwide are mirrored, if not emphatically underscored by Hawaii's own crisis: 28 percent of threatened and endangered birds and plants nationally are found in Hawaii, which constitutes 0.2 percent of the national land area. Within the past 200 years, 100 species, or 0.5 percent of the estimated total number on the mainland, have become extinct. During that same period, 295 species from Hawaii, constituting 11.6 percent of our total, have been lost. Clearly, aggressive relief efforts to sustain critical habitat and protect native flora and fauna are imperative.

We strongly support the intent of this measure. However, as the predominance of public opinion elucidated by our survey indicated, this is not an area towards which token attention may be directed, and the funding needs of this work are considerable. The Nature Conservancy has compiled

the following conservative estimate of annual funding needs for native species protection in their Federal Congressional Proposal:

Federal Support for Programs in Hawaii	\$11.0 million
State Support for Programs in Hawaii	2.5 million
Private Support for Programs in Hawaii	<u>2.0 million</u>
	\$14.5 million

Annual funding at this level would constitute a good start.

However, as with other long term needs, protection of threatened and endangered species will require some form of dedicated funding. Also, as implicit in the Nature Conservancy analysis, substantive progress in these protective efforts will demand the close cooperation of federal, state, and private organizations. A long term commitment by the state would serve to catalyze the cooperative participation of the federal and private sectors.