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SR 103/SCR 130
REQUESTING ADOPTION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SYSTEM FOR
HAWAII'S STREAMS AND SPECIFICATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A
STREAMKEEPER POSITION

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Planning, Land and Water Use Management
Public Hearing - March 31, 1992

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SR103/SCR130 requests the Commission on Water Resource Management to finalize, adopt, and establish the stream protection system under the 1987 State Water Code and establish a streamkeeper position.

Our statement on these resolutions do not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

In 1990, the Draft Hawaii Stream Assessment was completed and identified the importance and significance of Hawaii's streams to the State's natural environment. It can not be emphasized enough that streams represent an integral component in the ecological balance throughout all of Hawaii's diverse systems, ranging from the uplands to the tidal estuaries. In addition, various streams on each island are candidate special streams, and one fish species, *Lentipes Concolor* (O'opu Alamo'o), is a candidate for endangered species status. As such, we fully support the intent of the resolutions requesting the finalizing and formal establishment of the stream protection system and streamkeeper position, with the addition of a few recommendations.

Firstly, it must be recognized that there is a need to protect the entirety of Hawaii's streams and their dependent life-cycles, from top to bottom. Selective protection would prove ineffective and possibly destructive to the interdependent systems involved with Hawaii's streams and their surrounding eco-systems.

Secondly, the present position and status of the protection plan and the Commission on Water Resource Management should be established. In addition, it should be determined if the commission has the adequate resources and organization available to implement the stream protection system.

Lastly, the position and duties of streamkeeper need to be defined in the context of the stream protection plan. In addition to representing the public's interests, the streamkeeper should have the responsibility of maintaining and updating the database created by the Hawaii Stream Assessment.

We strongly urge the passage of these resolutions and the formal establishment of the stream protection system in the State of Hawaii.