



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture and
Economic Development & Business Concerns
March 31, 2006

by
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James R. Gaines, Interim Vice President for Research

HCR 193/HR 147 REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEMPORARY ADVISORY COMMISSION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Aloha Chairs Abinsay and Karamatsu, Vice Chairs Tsuji and Wakai, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR193/HR147 that request the establishment of a temporary advisory commission on biological diversity. I am the UH System Managing Director for the National Science foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) and I am testifying on behalf of Dr Jim Gaines the Vice-president for Research at the University of Hawaii.

As many of you are aware, the formation of this commission has been on the table for several years. During that time the University of Hawaii has fully supported the formation of such a commission and looks forward to participating.

Because this is such an emotionally charged issue the University respectfully offers the following comments on HCR 193/ HR 147. None of the comments below should interfere with your endorsement of the resolutions, but are offered to more clearly resolve the issue and move the work of the commission in a productive direction.

It is troublesome that in the preamble scientific research is put in conflict with preservation. Nothing could be further from the truth, especially when you consider the outstanding work being done in Hawaii in areas of ecology, invasive species, oceanography, fisheries, evolution, genetics, and more. The wording in the fifth whereas statement could be changed to "...public policy to balance development and commercialization with scientific research and conservation of Hawaii's fragile bioresources" to more accurately reflect the contribution of science.

Secondly, the recommendation for policy development includes the topic of bio-safety protocols. This subject does not affect the policy areas identified in the preamble of the resolution or in the LRB bioprospecting report. In fact, it has very little, if anything, to do with the discussions or policy issues surrounding access/development/conservation/rights/sharing. The term is generally associated with laboratory work, workplace safety, and research procedures. This topic might be appropriate if the commission was to look at genetic engineering and laboratory practices, but this is not the case here. Inclusion of this topic will only distract the commission from it primary goals and the UH strongly feels that this is not an appropriate issue for the commission to consider.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin M. Kelly".

Kevin Kelly
UH System Managing Director
EPSCoR