

Aloha Reef Advocates,

The fight continues, and your voice is needed...again!

As many of you know, on December 8, 2023, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) unanimously accepted our petition to enact rules to close the aquarium pet trade statewide and directed the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), which opposed our petition, to begin that rule process and public hearings.

Well, here we are 4 months later with no action on the rules, yet we've just learned of the following outrageous actions to be taken on behalf of aquarium collectors. On Friday, April 12, DAR will:

- Present a plan to the Board for re-opening West Hawai'i to commercial aquarium collection ([Agenda Item F.2](#))
- Ask the Board for permission to entirely rewrite the rule they adopted unanimously so that it *allows* aquarium collection instead of *prohibiting* it – all under the guise of “seeking clarification.” ([Agenda Item F.3](#))

If DARs efforts on behalf of the aquarium trade are not defeated next Friday, DAR plans to ask the Board (in May or June) to issue AQ permits for West Hawai'i.

Please submit testimony in strong OPPOSITION to DARs plan to reopen our reefs to the destructive aquarium trade (instructions below). You can either rename and resubmit your testimony from December supporting the petition for rulemaking to ban the trade, or draft something new expressing why you believe this destructive trade should never be allowed back on our reefs.

Sample talking points:

DARs West Hawai'i Aquarium Plan (Item F.2)

- DARs briefing document:
 - **Completely fails to even mention the negative impacts** of the proposed aquarium collection, just as the trade's deeply flawed EIS failed to
 - **Fails to disclose the 80% - 120% reduction in yellow tang abundance** in areas where collection occurred
 - **Fails to disclose that the proposed level of take exceeds that taken by subsistence, recreational, and commercial fishers, combined**
 - **Excludes any discussion of, or even a reference to, major cultural concerns, enforcement challenges, or climate change**

DARs Request to Redraft the Rule (Item F.3)

- Please **uphold the December 8 vote** and begin the rule process to end the trade
- The trade inherently **conflicts with local culture and native Hawaiian values**, including pono fishing practices to only take what is needed
- Hawai'i's 46 moku that make up **the entire state Aha Moku oppose AQ collecting**
- A published cost/benefit analysis shows Hawai'i **residents receive ZERO benefits from the AQ trade**, but suffer **ALL** the costs
- Scientists forecast that **we'll lose 70% of our reefs by 2030 due to climate change**
- Scientists agree that **reefs need more herbivores if they are to have a fighting chance; and, that DARs herbivore rules for food fish are not strong enough**
- Any legal collection only provides cover for even more **illegal poaching that continues even today!**

Please email your testimony to the Board ASAP.

PRIORITY ACTION 1 - WRITTEN TESTIMONY submitted by Thursday morning, April 11:

Email: BLNR.TESTIMONY@HAWAII.GOV

ACTION 2 – SPREAD THE WORD: Please forward this email to your friends and family and share on social media.

See full meeting agenda with Zoom link/instructions for providing remote testimony [HERE](#). Monitor meeting progress via YouTube live stream [here](#).

The meeting begins at 9:00, and though not in our hands, we will request that the issue be moved up on the agenda.

Mahalo nui,
Rene Umberger
Executive Director