



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Water and Land  
Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

By

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### HB 553 – RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF SHARKS

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Blanco, and members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i and the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology respectfully submit the following comments on HB 553.

While there is currently no indication that shark populations are declining or at risk in Hawai'i, we recognize the ecological and cultural importance of sharks in Hawai'i and support the intent of this measure to help protect sharks within state waters. At the same time, scientific research is a critical tool for understanding the behaviors and ecology of sharks, as well as any potential anthropogenic threats that could impact their survival. Research on any vertebrate, including sharks, is overseen at the university by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC): "As a condition of agreement between the NIH, USDA, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Science Foundation (NSF), Veterans Administration (VA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) funding of live vertebrate animal research and testing, institutions must ensure that such activities conducted at or sponsored by the institution, irrespective of funding shall comply with regulations and policies of the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW), NIH. This committee is comprised of volunteer faculty and staff represented from its campuses and community colleges. The University of Hawai'i IACUC is also represented by volunteer community members unaffiliated to the University that express an interest in ensuring that live vertebrate research, testing, and instruction is conducted humanely and ethically. The members are appointed to the committee by the system-wide program Institutional Official on the behalf of the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation". HIMB also regularly consults with a group of cultural advisors regarding our research practices.

For these reasons, we suggest the following amended language to the bill:

(e) This section shall not apply to:

- (1) Special activity permits issued under section 187A-6 for any person who holds a license or permit issued by the department to conduct research; or to research overseen by a state approved institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC).