

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
POLICY COMMITTEE

November 7, 2008

**Committee
Report No.**

08-140

Honorable Chair and Members
of the County Council
County of Maui
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Chair and Members:

Your Policy Committee, having met on October 28, 2008, makes reference to County Communication No. 08-226, from the Council Chair, transmitting a proposed resolution entitled "SUPPORTING THE RECOVERY OF THE HAWAII STATE MAMMAL, THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL".

The purpose of the proposed resolution is to support the recovery of the Hawaii State Mammal, the critically endangered endemic Hawaiian Monk Seal.

By separate correspondences dated October 27, 2008, Marjorie Bonar and Lori Buchanan, Field and Outreach Coordinator, Molokai/Maui Invasive Species Committee, submitted testimony in support of the resolution.

By correspondence dated October 28, 2008, your Committee's Chair transmitted testimony, dated October 27, 2008, from David Amack in support of the resolution.

At its meeting, your Committee met with a Deputy Corporation Counsel.

Your Committee received public testimony from three individuals in support of the resolution. Your Committee also received oral and written testimony from Keiko Bonk, Hawaii Program Director, Marine Conservation Biology Institute, in support of the resolution.

Your Committee discussed that the Hawaiian Monk Seal is one of only two endemic mammals in the State of Hawaii and is critically endangered. Your Committee decided that it is important to advocate for this species and ask the Federal and State governments to fund the recovery efforts of the Hawaiian Monk Seal.

Your Committee voted to recommend adoption of the proposed resolution and filing of the communication.

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Your Policy Committee RECOMMENDS the following:

1. That Resolution No. _____, attached hereto, entitled "SUPPORTING THE RECOVERY OF THE HAWAII STATE MAMMAL, THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL", be ADOPTED; and

2. That County Communication No. 08-226 be FILED.


Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.

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Resolution

No. _____

SUPPORTING THE RECOVERY OF THE HAWAII STATE MAMMAL, THE CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ENDEMIC HAWAIIAN MONK SEAL

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Monk Seal, *Monachus schauinslandi*, is a critically endangered seal that is endemic to the waters off the Hawaiian Islands and was known to the native Hawaiians as *Ilio-holo-i-ka-uaua*, or “dog that runs in rough waters”; and

WHEREAS, to raise awareness of the species’ plight, the Hawaiian Monk Seal was declared Hawaii’s official State Mammal on June 11, 2008, by Lieutenant Governor James Aiona; and

WHEREAS, Hawaiian Monk Seals are among the most endangered species of all seals, although the Mediterranean Monk Seal is even rarer, and the Caribbean Monk Seal, last sighted in the 1950s, was officially declared extinct in June 2008; and

WHEREAS, the population of the Hawaiian Monk Seal continues to decline, and in 2008, it is estimated that only 1,200 remain throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, human and environmental factors such as habitat loss, competition for food supply, marine debris entanglement, disease, shark predation, and climate change have contributed to the species decline; and

WHEREAS, Hawaiian Monk Seals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which listed the Hawaiian Monk Seal endangered in 1976; and

WHEREAS, the MMPA and ESA protect the species and the ecosystems upon which they depend, and individuals harming, harassing, taking, or killing these animals are subject to fines of up to \$50,000; and

WHEREAS, most of the Hawaiian Monk Seal population exists in the Northwest Hawaiian Island, the small islands and atolls in the Hawaiian island chain located northwest of the islands of Kauai and Niihau, where the seals are declining rapidly; and

WHEREAS, there are 100-150 seals found elsewhere in the State and this subpopulation is increasing; and

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, saving the Hawaiian Monk Seal from extinction requires developing government and private partnerships to raise public and visitor awareness about response and recovery programs; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan, signed by the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Administrator on August 2007 requires a budget of approximately \$7 million to adequately fund the recovery programs in this plan; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 Federal budget approved for the recovery plan was approximately \$2.1 million, which may possibly receive an increase of up to \$4 million; and

WHEREAS, the ESA and MMPA require the State of Hawaii to write an Incidental Take Plan for mammals taken in commercial and recreational fisheries, which includes ~~adequate responses to fishing interactions, other harmful interactions, and human disturbances;~~ now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it hereby urges the Federal Administration and Congress to adequately fund the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan with a budget of \$7 million in 2010; and
2. That it urges the State of Hawaii to adequately fund the Main Hawaiian Island Monk Seal Response and the Incidental Take Plan programs within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Aquatics Division, with a \$1 million annual budget; and
3. That it urges the four counties of Hawaii to partner with the appropriate Federal and State agencies to develop public awareness of the Hawaiian Monk Seal and establish a program for regulating human-seal interactions at State and County beaches and parks frequented by monk seals; and

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4. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Under Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Administrator; Jim Balsiger, Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA; the Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Senator, United States Senate; the Honorable Daniel K. Akaka, Senator, United States Senate; the Honorable Neil Abercrombie, Representative, United States House of Representatives; the Honorable Mazie K. Hirono, Representative, United States House of Representatives; the Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor, State of Hawaii; the Honorable Colleen Hanabusa, President, Hawaii State Legislature; the Honorable Calvin K. Y. Say, Speaker of the House, Hawaii State Legislature; the Honorable Charmaine Tavares, Mayor, County of Maui; the Honorable Harry Kim, Mayor, County of Hawaii; the Honorable Mufi Hanneman, Mayor, City and County of Honolulu; the Honorable Bill "Kaipo" Asing, Mayor, County of Kauai; the Honorable Pete Hoffman, Council Chair, Hawaii County Council; the Honorable Jay Furfaro, Council Chair, Kauai County Council; and the Honorable Barbara Marshall, Council Chair, Honolulu City Council.