



Ko`olau Foundation

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U. S. Congressman Ed Case
1003 Bishop Street, Suite 1110
Pauahi Tower
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Support for Funding Emergency Seawall at Moku o Lo`e (HIMB/Coconut Island)

Aloha Congressman Case:

The Ko`olau Foundation strongly urges your support of funding for urgently needed seawalls located around the island of Moku o Lo`e, also known as "Coconut Island", which is managed by the University of Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology.

The Ko`olau Foundation is a federally-recognized nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of the historic and culturally-important places of these islands. We serve as one of the cultural advisors and support groups to the vital research being done at HIMB.

Coral reefs are culturally, ecologically, and economically important to communities in Hawaii. They are the foundation to our ancestral connection to the sea, and they support a multitude of other marine life, including the fish, mollusks, and crustaceans that nourish and sustain us. They also protect our shorelines by dissipating wave energy. But these coral reefs are in trouble, suffering from the impacts of global climate change as well as local stressors such as sedimentation, algal overgrowth, and pollution.

As an island state, Hawai'i has relied too heavily on artificial shoreline structures such as seawalls, groins, and breakwaters to protect our coastal resources and properties. This protection comes at a high price, often destroying the very resources they were designed to protect, and inhibiting coral growth.

The Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology is a leading partner in the He`eia National Estuarine Research Reserve and an active and collaborative member of the community. HIMB also serves a critical role in conducting research aimed at protecting our marine environment and resources. The seawalls around Moku o Lo`e, the island home of HIMB, are badly in need of repair, which provides an excellent opportunity to explore new solutions for seawall restoration. We are very supportive of the efforts of HIMB to test new designs and materials on Moku o Lo`e so that alternatives to current seawall construction can be identified and implemented in other areas of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui,

AARON MAHI
President