



April 19, 2021

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Congressman Ed Case  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Honolulu Office  
1003 Bishop Street Suite 1110  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Congressman Case:

My name is Herb Lee, Jr. and I am the CEO of the Pacific American Foundation. Established in 1993, the Pacific American Foundation (PAF) is a national 501c (3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization with the mission to “improve the lives of Pacific Americans through service with dignity, courage, humility, and competence.”

The Pacific American Foundation strongly supports a proposed project at the Hawaiʻi Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB) to examine ecologically friendly alternative solutions to conventional seawall structures. As an organization that manages a Native Hawaiian fishpond (Waikalua Loko Iʻa), we fully understand the need for seawall designs and structures that work with the environment, not against it.

We began restoration of Fishpond in the southern end of Kāneʻohe Bay in 1995 and in 2017 surpassed the 100,000 mark in community participation and education programs at the site. We have developed award winning instruction curricula and have now trained over 6,000 teachers statewide and formed over 200 partnerships locally and around the world. We are committed to the windward side and have worked closely with HIMB in all aspects of our education and stewardship programs for over 25 years.

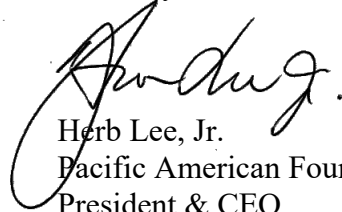
The seawalls around Moku o Loʻe are deteriorating and must be repaired for HIMB to be able to continue conducting its important research on coral reefs and other marine ecosystems. HIMB recognizes the need to find more sustainable solutions to seawall structures that are currently used in the state. They are looking to identify and test bio-enhancing materials and designs that will protect shoreline infrastructure as well as enhance coral reef habitats, a win-win proposition.

Healthy coral reefs are of paramount importance in supporting the marine resources that provide sustenance to local communities in Hawai‘i. Yet, we are currently losing them to global warming, disease, and land-based runoff. The hybrid seawall project at HIMB could provide new habitat for corals and other organisms, which would help to increase ecologically and nutritionally important reef fish populations.

HIMB has been an excellent and trusted community partner with PAF and our continuing partnership is crucial in areas of stewardship, sustainability, science and bio-cultural education. The research conducted at HIMB informs a wide variety of organizations and agencies about a multitude of marine conservation issues. Many properties in Kāne‘ohe Bay are also suffering from seawall failure, and the work done at HIMB on testing new ecologically sustainable seawall designs will be greatly beneficial to the local community and statewide.

If there are any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [herblee@thepaf.org](mailto:herblee@thepaf.org). Mahalo for your consideration and support of this very important and innovative effort around a very sensitive issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Lee, Jr.", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Herb Lee, Jr.  
Pacific American Foundation  
President & CEO