



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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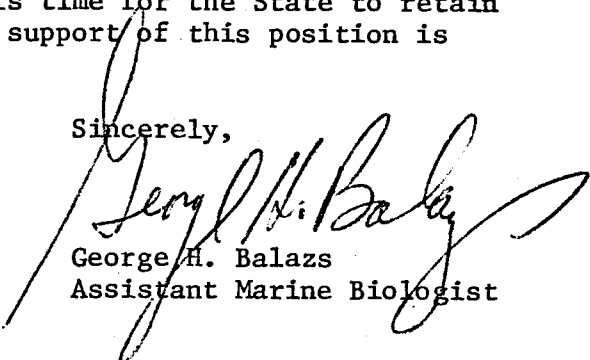
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
United States Senate  
Room 442, Russell Senate Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Inouye:

Thank you for your letter of 26 September concerning my inquiry about the status of pending federal rulemaking relating to green, loggerhead and olive ridley sea turtles. Further information on this case was also provided in correspondence which I received from R. M. Parsons of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and R. W. Schoning of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Copies of these letters are enclosed for reference purposes.

For more than three years now, FWS and NMFS in Washington have been involved in an interagency dispute over who should have jurisdiction over sea turtles. This lengthy disagreement, in my opinion, has been both unwarranted and counterproductive to rational conservation efforts aimed at slowing the decline of sea turtle populations. While inactivity prevailed at the federal level, in 1976 the State of Hawaii took decisive action by making funds available to conduct an in-depth management study of the Hawaiian green turtle population. I am the principal investigator of this project, which has recently entered into its second year of research. Given this fact, along with the history to date of federal involvement with sea turtles, it seems ironic that jurisdiction over Hawaii's green turtles may soon pass to FWS and/or NMFS. In view of the commitment by the State to further our understanding of this native species for the purposes of protection and perpetuation, I believe it is entirely appropriate at this time for the State to retain jurisdiction over its green turtles. Your support of this position is respectfully requested.

Sincerely,

  
George H. Balazs  
Assistant Marine Biologist

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Enclosures

cc: Dr. J. Craven, Marine Affairs Coordinator  
Mr. M. Takata, Director, Div. of Fish & Game