

October 16, 2010

Dear Sanctuary Representative:

I'm a resident of Hawaii and a part-time fisherman. I've participated in beach clean-ups and invasive plant species removal. I'm a believer in sustainability and "eating local." I would call myself a "green" person.

First off, I'd like to commend your group for such a great job in protecting whales and increasing awareness about their troubles. I think you guys are very dedicated. However, I'm very concerned about all this talk about expansion. I heard about this on the news and read some online history about the sanctuary and how and why it was created. Some from your website and Wikipedia among others. Here are my feelings:

It seems that in the early days (Ariyoshi), the administration did not want any type of sanctuary in Hawaii. Cayetano later agreed to having it here, but drew out the process and only agreed to a scaled down version. Perhaps they were fearful of you overtaking their kulia - the state waters which extend to 3 miles. Is what's happening now the fears they were talking about? It seems like the answer is yes.

The spirit of how the sanctuary was created and accepted by the people was the understanding that this was a sanctuary to protect whales only. While there are ways to legally increase its scope, it violates the spirit of how it was created in the first place. I believe any type of sanctuary that restricted fishing or access would never have been initially accepted in Hawaii. Yet this action appears to be another way of doing it, just in a very slow long term fashion. This is not right and not the intent of congress or the administration when they approved a whale-only sanctuary. If the people of Hawaii want this, they should be able to vote for it or go through the state legislature.

Hawaii has a great protected area in the northwest - now a world heritage site. This is a good thing and covers a huge expanse of ocean. It does not allow for any fishing and limits other activities. Therefore, we do not need more federally restricted areas in the main Hawaiian islands. Bottomfish is already federally regulated with permits and a quota. Turtles, monk seals and dolphins are already protected under various federal and state laws. We do not need to keep piling up more and more laws and regulations. If you want do more protection, hire more DLNR game wardens to protect the already off-limit areas and regulations already on the books.

Fishermen are always unfairly targeted as being the bad guys, yet we have the most incentive to protect and care for our oceans since we directly benefit from its health. I want to see all animals managed and protected.

Thank you for your consideration of my feelings,
Hawaii Resident and Fisherman

