

Dedicated to the conservation of coastal and marine environments, emphasizing stewardship of the natural resources of Hanauma Bay

The Honorable Jared Huffman Chairman Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee House Natural Resources Committee 1323 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Tom McClintock
Ranking Member
Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Subcommittee
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

9 January 2020

Re: H. R. 1834, the "Defending Our National Marine Sanctuaries from Damaging Chemicals Act of 2019"

Aloha Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in strong support of H.R. 1834**, the Defending Our National Marine Sanctuaries from Damaging Chemicals Act of 2019 that prohibits the use of sunscreen containing oxybenzone or octinoxate in a National Marine Sanctuary that contains coral.

Hanauma Bay is located within the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. Further, it is one of only twelve U. S. Clean Water Act (CWA) Class AA marine embayments in the State of Hawaii, and is also the State of Hawaii's first Marine Life Conservation District established in 1967. It provides a critical marine habitat for Hawaiian Monk Seals and green sea turtles protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as over 450 species of fish and other marine organisms, including twenty five coral species - five of which are endemic to Hawaii.

Despite its Federal and state protected status, Hanauma Bay has the second highest measured level of oxybenzone from sunscreen in the State of Hawaii. This environmental contamination is a grave concern because it has been extensively established in the scientific literature that oxybenzone and/or octinoxate in the marine environment can have irreversibly detrimental effects on all marine life, including changes in fish behavior, pathological changes to fish

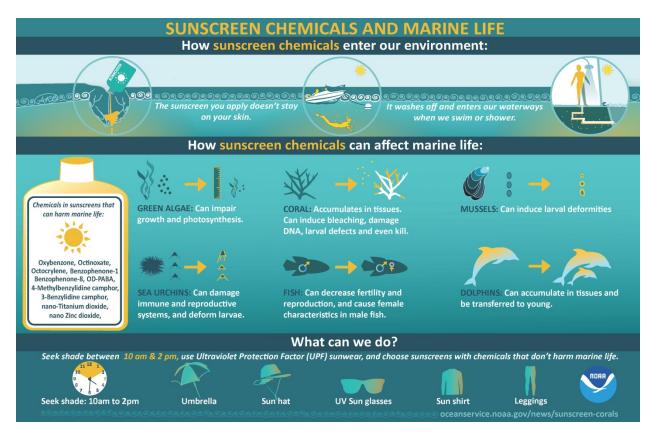


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sexual identity, damage to genomic and DNA integrity, and the developmental success of almost all of Hawaii's marine biodiversity. The chemicals' greatest danger is as bioaccumulating endocrine disruptors that can kill or maim juveniles of corals, sea urchins, shrimp, fish, and algae, which would threaten the restoration of Hawaii's already degraded coral reefs by preventing juvenile marine life from recruiting into an area that is polluted by oxybenzone/octinoxate and by biomagnifying through the food chain.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has already recognized this existential threat to our coral reefs:

https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/sunscreen-corals.html





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Hanauma Bay hosts almost a million visitors every year, more visitors than any other marine protected area in the State of Hawaii. These visitors constantly introduce oxybenzone, octinoxate, and other reef-toxic chemicals to the water through the use of sunscreens that contain these chemicals.

Banning the use of damaging chemicals like oxybenzone and octinoxate in our National Marine Sanctuaries is the most effective and immediate way to eliminate this existential anthropogenic stressor to Hanauma Bay's failing coral reef and the ESA protected species it harbors.

Please support this bipartisan bill that will measurably improve the water quality of our fragile National Marine Sanctuaries and Hanauma Bay!

Thank you again for allowing us to testify in support of H.R. 1834.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bishop President

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CC:

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