



*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-coral.html>

**SUNSCREEN CHEMICALS AND MARINE LIFE**  
How **sunscreen chemicals** enter our environment:

The sunscreen you apply doesn't stay on your skin. It washes off and enters our waterways when we swim or shower.

**How sunscreen chemicals can affect marine life:**

**Chemicals in sunscreens that can harm marine life:**  
Oxybenzone, Octinoxate, Octocrylene, Benzophenone-1, Benzophenone-8, OD-PABA, 4-Methylbenzylidene camphor, 3-Benzylidene camphor, nano-Titanium dioxide, nano Zinc dioxide.

**GREEN ALGAE:** Can impair growth and photosynthesis.

**CORAL:** Accumulates in tissues. Can induce bleaching, damage DNA, larval defects and even kill.

**MUSSELS:** Can induce larval deformities.

**SEA URCHINS:** Can damage immune and reproductive systems, and deform larvae.

**FISH:** Can decrease fertility and reproduction, and cause female characteristics in male fish.

**DOLPHINS:** Can accumulate in tissues and be transferred to young.

**What can we do?**  
Seek shade between **10 am & 2 pm**, use **Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF)** sunwear, and choose sunscreens with chemicals that don't harm marine life.

Seek shade: 10am to 2pm | Umbrella | Sun hat | UV Sun glasses | Sun shirt | Leggings | NOAA

[oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/sunscreen-coral.html](https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/sunscreen-coral.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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