



June 16, 2026

The Honorable Harriet M. Hageman - Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Val Hoyle - Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Hageman, Ranking Member Hoyle, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA), which represents all active Hawaii-based longline vessels, I respectfully submit this letter for the record regarding HB 8904. I watched the Committee's hearing on June 3, 2026 with great interest. After reviewing the testimony provided by Dr. Alan Friedlander, I feel compelled to correct several statements that mischaracterize both the Hawaii longline fishery and the effects of marine national monument designations on our fleet.

During the hearing, Dr. Friedlander asserted that catches made by the Hawaii longline fleet have increased by 50 percent since the establishment and expansion of Pacific marine national monuments. This claim is inconsistent with the official fisheries data compiled by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). In fact, NMFS data show that total catch volume and number of fish caught for nearly every major species declined following the 2016 expansion of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The only notable exception is yellowfin tuna, which experienced a modest increase unrelated to monument boundaries and instead driven by basin-wide stock dynamics.

The Hawaii longline fleet operates under some of the most stringent conservation and monitoring requirements in the world, including high levels of observer and/or electronic monitoring coverage, strict protected species mitigation measures, and science-based catch limits. Our vessels fish far offshore—well outside the nearshore ecosystems referenced in Dr. Friedlander's testimony—and do so under a management framework that has repeatedly been recognized as a global model for sustainable, accountable fisheries.

The suggestion that marine national monuments have produced measurable benefits to the Hawaii longline fishery is not supported by the federally held data. To the contrary, the closure of large areas of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone around Hawaii and U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas has displaced effort, reduced operational flexibility, and has corresponded to declines in catch per unit effort for key target species. These impacts are borne entirely by U.S. vessels

while foreign fleets—operating without comparable monitoring or conservation standards—continue to fish just outside U.S. waters.

For the Committee's reference, I have included below a set of figures derived from NMFS data that illustrate the post-2016 declines in catch and CPUE across the fleet.

The Hawaii longline fishery is a critical source of domestically caught seafood for the United States, supporting hundreds of local jobs and providing a stable supply of high-quality, sustainably harvested fish for both Hawaii and U.S. mainland markets. As Congress considers HB 8904 and related legislation, we respectfully request that decisions be grounded in the best available science and the official federal data available for our fishery.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. HLA stands ready to assist the Committee and its staff with any additional data or analysis that may be helpful.

Sincerely,



Eric K. Kingma, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Enclosure: Hawaii longline fleet catch information

Attachment 1: Hawaii longline fishery catch figures: total catch (lbs) and number of fish (pieces)

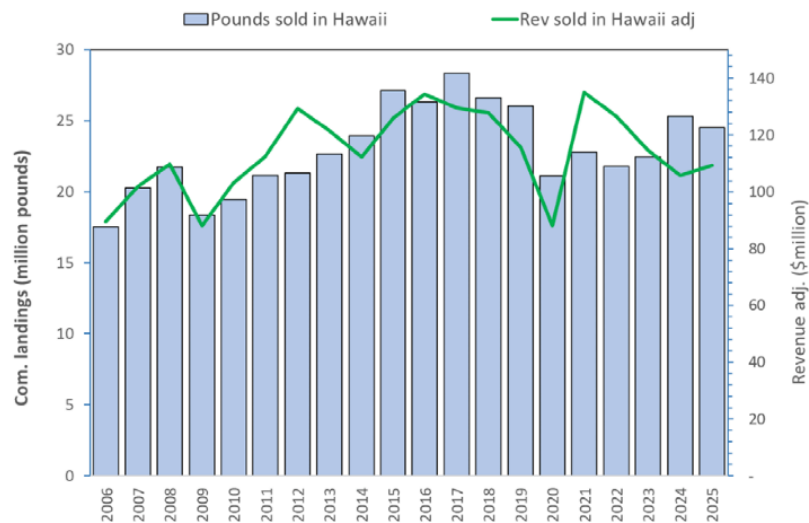


Figure 1: Total annual catch and landed value by the Hawaii longline fishery, 2006-2025

Source: NMFS Hawaii Pelagic SAFE Report, 2025

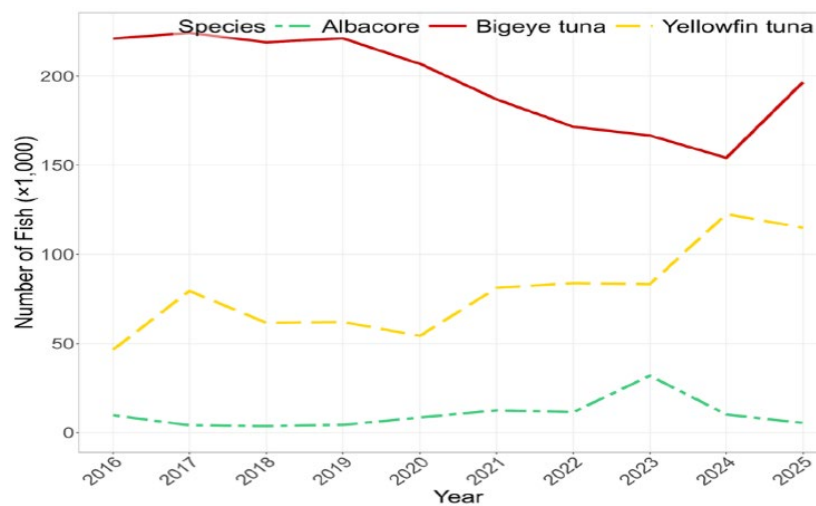


Figure 2: Hawaii longline catch of bigeye, yellowfin, albacore tuna (by number), 2016-2025

Source: NMFS Hawaii Pelagic SAFE Report, 2025

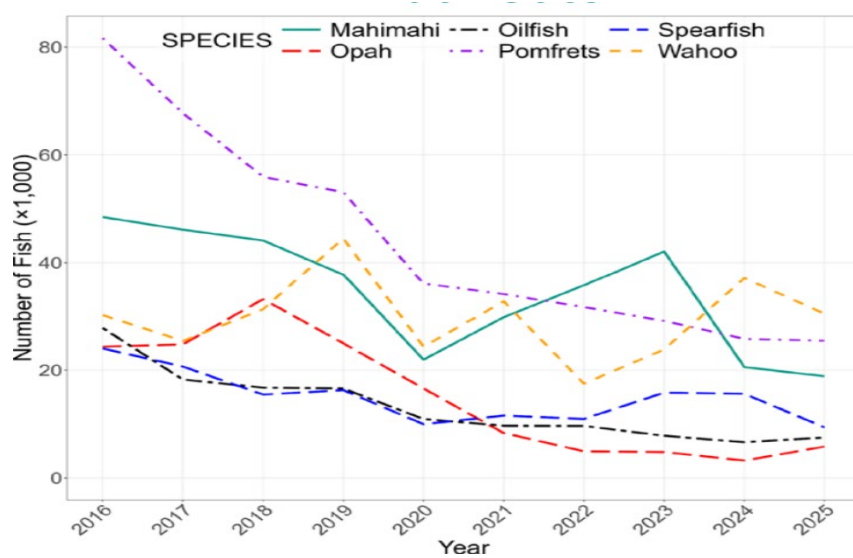


Figure 3: Hawaii longline catch of several pelagic species (by number of fish), 2016-2025
Source: NMFS Hawaii Pelagic SAFE Report, 2025

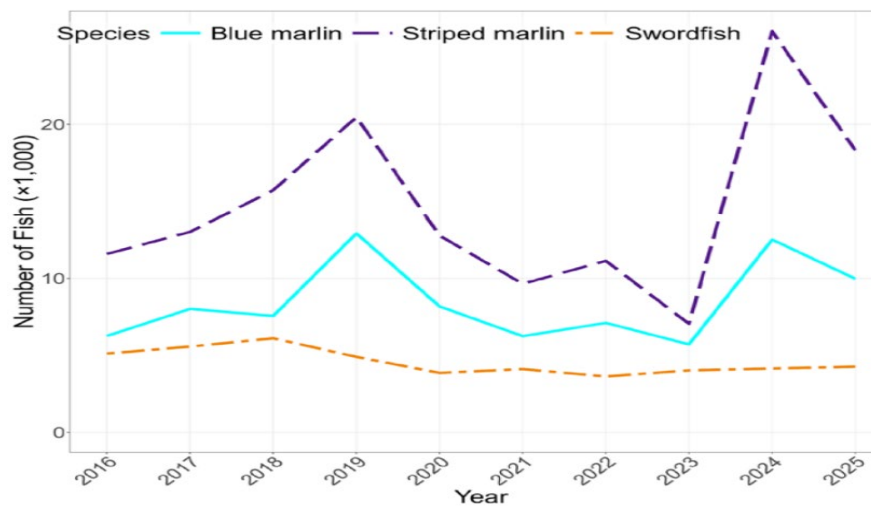


Figure 4: Hawaii longline catch of several pelagic species (by number of fish), 2016-2025
Source: NMFS Hawaii Pelagic SAFE Report, 2025