FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 19, 2014

HAWAII CONVENES FIRST MARINE RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE
Officers, Prosecutors, Lawmakers and Conservationists Meet at UH Law School

HONOLULU – A two-day environmental conference aimed at strengthening Hawaii’s capacity to enforce laws that protect near-shore ocean resources opened July 18, 2014, at the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson Law School. It brought together more than 100 key people – state enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and community stewardship representatives – involved in enforcing the state’s marine protection laws.

William J. Aila, Jr., chairperson of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), said, “The state’s inaugural Hawaii Marine Resources Enforcement Conference examined how Hawaii, despite severely limited staffing and funding, can better enforce state laws that protect the precious and life-giving coral reefs that surround the islands as well as the health of the state’s near-shore fisheries.”

Conference attendees evaluated enforcement policies and practices, assessed whether current laws are strong enough, and discussed cutting-edge issues such as the new “Environmental Court” that adds a new legal tool to the enforcement kit. They also discussed innovative approaches to enforcement such as the highly effective North Maui Community Fisheries Enforcement Unit, which has a specialized boat and team patrolling 13 miles offshore.

“The Law School is honored to join with our state resources enforcement officers and partners to provide this unique forum where everyone in the marine enforcement chain can collaborate to improve the effectiveness of our marine stewardship,” said UH Law School Associate Dean Denise Antolini, one of the key conference planners.

Antolini added: “Everyone agrees that smarter and better enforcement of the marine resources law is a critical priority for Hawaii. The whole idea behind this conference is to find ways to build enforcement capacity and to diversify the state’s toolkit so DLNR can address the chronic violations of marine laws through outreach, education, administrative efforts, and criminal enforcement.”

MORE
Featured speakers included Chair Aila and Maui’s Randy Awo, enforcement chief of DLNR’s Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement (DOCARE). DOCARE serves as state resources enforcement and its officers are dedicated to protect, conserve and manage Hawaii’s natural, cultural and historic resources.

Other speakers included: state Sens. Clayton Hee, Gilbert Keith-Agaran, and Malama Solomon; state Reps. Cindy Evans, Faye Hanohano and (Speaker Emeritus) Calvin Say; and DLNR representatives Frazer McGilvray, Erin Zanre, David Sakoda, Edward Underwood, Kuhea Asiu and Brooks Tamaye.

Additional speakers were: Elizabeth Zack of the State Judiciary; Jerry Villanueva of the Public Defender’s Office; Mark Fox of The Nature Conservancy; Martha Townsend of the Outdoor Circle; Katherine Kealoha from the City and County of Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney’s office; Eric Co from the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation; Jack Kittinger from Conservation International; and, from the Law School, Assistant Professor Malia Akutagawa, Associate Dean Antolini, and DOCARE Law Fellow Kylie Wager.

The conference was sponsored by the following:
- Environmental Law Program, William S. Richardson School of Law
- Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement, Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources
- Hawaii Fish Trust, Conservation International
- Harold K.L. Castle Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii
- Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu

# # #

Photographs, video and interviews from the conference are available at: https://vimeo.com/

**Media Contact:**
Dan Dennison
Senior Communications Manager
Department of Land and Natural Resources
(808) 587-0407