



MARINE RESOURCE COUNCIL

Testimony in support of Bill 17-179 - "Prohibiting the Sale and Use of SPF Sunscreens Containing Oxybenzone and Octinoxate."

Aloha Maui County Councilmembers,

Maui Nui Marine Resource Council is a Maui-based nonprofit organization celebrating 10 years of working with our local community to protect coral reefs, support clean ocean water and restore abundant native fish to Maui County's nearshore ocean areas.

We are strongly in support of passage of Bill 17-179 - "Prohibiting the Sale and Use of SPF Sunscreens Containing Oxybenzone and Octinoxate" because it aligns with our mission of protecting Maui's coral reefs. Protecting our reefs includes taking all reasonable steps to keep known pollutants out of our coastal waters.

Dr. Craig Downs has provided compelling scientific evidence that oxybenzone and octinoxate, ingredients found in many popular sunscreen products, harm and kill corals. This is especially problematic in reef areas that are popular snorkeling locations. The sunscreen used by snorkelers in these areas washes off and pollutes the reef, and damages the coral that is the essential foundation of the reef ecosystem.

We all know the value of our visitor industry. Visitors come to Maui to experience our beautiful coral reefs. Passage of Bill 17-179 will protect both our reefs AND our visitor industry and our economy.

We are convinced that visitors will be grateful and impressed that Maui cares about our coral reefs and takes the necessary step of banning sunscreen ingredients that are harmful to our reefs. We believe that publicity about this new law will be good for Maui and will build upon Maui's appeal as a visitor destination.

Maui Nui Marine Resource Council Board Member Michelle Griffoul has actively worked with snorkel tour operators to help them obtain affordable sunscreens that are free of oxybenzone and octinoxate to dispense on their cruises. This is a good first step and has been positively received by visitors on these cruises. The next step is up to you, as Maui County Councilmembers. Please help protect Maui's coral reefs by passing Bill 17-179 and prohibiting the sale and use of SPF sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate.

Thank you.

Robin Newbold
Chair, Maui Nui Marine Resource Council