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(Based on Meeting Transcript)

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Thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to bring forward a local Hawaii perspective on the oceans. I also want to thank you for remembering Hawaii. We live here, this is our home. We treat this as the most special place on earth, and we're grateful for your work and any important policies you make to take care of our oceans.

A little background. I was born and raised in Hawaii, and my introduction to the oceans was when I was four years old, in many various areas and activities. In the last 27 years, I have had the privilege and the honor to be a part of cultural research into deep sea voyaging into the Pacific. It's with our voyaging canoes primarily, called Hokule'a. It's looking at the exploration and the colonization of the largest nation on earth called Polynesia, 10,000,000 square miles, bordered by Hawaii and New Zealand. In those, we've sailed about 90,000 nautical miles in seven deep sea voyages. We primarily started it off as a scientific expedition to learn how the Polynesians colonized the largest nation on earth a thousand years before Columbus was born. But it was an evolution into many different powerful learning experiences. And, in the end, wherever we're going in the future, it's not so much figuring out how to get from Point A to Point B, but it's when we arrive, how do we learn from these islands and how do we make better choices in the future with these islands.

We have learned from these voyages that the ocean has reshaped our understanding to the relationship with ourselves, our islands and the oceans. We have learned that, from our ancestry, these people were not just great navigators but, in Hawaii, the estimation is that the first Polynesians came here about 2,000 years ago. Then, by the 13th century, there was evidence that there were population crashes and populating natural resource limits. But by the time of Captain Cook's arrival, he speaks in his journal of a people that have extraordinary systems of understanding the natural environment, where they have the highest level of productivity by sustained practices for generations. And the estimation of the population was about 800,000. We're at 1.2 million now in Hawaii, and we import about 95 of what we consume. So when we look back at our history and our heritage, there are very powerful lessons that tell us about how well these people learned in a very difficult way how to live well on the islands, and I think that has become a philosophical global issue.

I began commercial fishing when I was 15 years old. I stopped commercial fishing when I was about 31. I was the second generation of ocean divers that was using new technology to increase catch. The irony and the contradiction is the more technology we learn to use, the less we catch because of all the fishing and so forth.

When we look at our relationship with our oceans in the Hawaiian Islands, we have great challenges. We use the ocean almost like it's a mirror that reflects the health and well-being of the islands, and we have great challenges. I think that's very interesting and a

bit scary. In Hawaii, we know what the environmental obstructions are. More frightening, we even know the solutions. But we neither have, at least right now, the management nor the values of a society in a long sustained way to make sure primarily that our children's future is maintained. But I think Hawaii is an extraordinary place. It is, in my opinion, the perfect place for the laboratory, learning how to live well in the islands. I think that we have a history and a heritage and a culture that we can reflect back and look at lessons that they have learned and help show us, at least maybe in philosophy and values, the right kind of decisions to take care of the land and live well in relationship with it.

We also have strong science here in Hawaii, and that can help start to spear the right kinds of solutions, as well as we do have an evolving consciousness and concern at the community level. Also, we see that much of the other pieces that are very important in Hawaii, which really is the education, are turning its focus on the area of making sure that conservation stewardship is a part of the learning experience.

Another important asset is when we look at the relationship between the eight major Hawaiian Islands, which we live on, compared to the 10 northwestern Hawaiian Islands, which we don't live on. I think the northwestern Hawaiian Islands are a magnificent place on earth, one of the last most undisturbed coral systems in the world. I understand that it's the largest geographical set-aside marine protection in the United States, and it's the second largest in the world. From our perspective, we see that as the benchmark of defining what a healthy coral reef living system looks like.

Our children born today in Hawaii don't have a clue. We can go there, we can explore, and we can learn. From that learning, we can bring back that benchmark and start to help shape the kinds of solution we need here in the main eight Hawaiian Islands.

I would also like to say that it seems that those are two pieces of who we are in the Hawaiian Islands – one is the importance of protections, and the other is the Northwestern Islands. It helps to look at what we need to do here at home in our backyards.

Speaking about home, I would like to share. About 16 months ago, I was asked to serve as Trustee of Kamehameha Schools, which was set up about 120 years ago. The intent was to create an educational system to help improve what we really were. From my point of view, my job is to hold in trust the well-being of our children. Kamehameha Schools has typically been modeled after traditional Western education. In the year 2000, a court-mandated order required that Kamehameha Schools reexamine itself and come up with a strategic plan, but it required that they needed vast community input. What was extraordinary, what we really looked at and redefined what the goals are that teach what's important to educate our children, there was one major and primary course to be devoted to school children.

When I look at that ship, the ship is reflective of us recognizing our growth in Hawaii and the kinds of impacts that it represents, that my role is now to enforce those goals clearly. That is the mandated fact, that not only is stewardship an important value, but I think, if anything, in the Ocean Policy, that whatever values and direction in leadership you folks head toward, it has to somehow get institutionalized with education so that we can carry those values in a meaningful way for each.

I would just like to end with thanking you again for having me here. I have no more testimony. I'm just speaking from the ocean. I'm here to share and answer any questions.

Thank you.