

PUBLIC COMMENTS BY DAVE RANEY, CITIZEN

Presented at the August 29, 2008 meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force

Aloha Kakou. My name is Dave Raney, and I am speaking today as a citizen of Hawai'i and the planet Earth. I also speak as one of the few persons in this room born before the attack on Pearl Harbor. I was four years old at the time of that event.

As was Wayne (Nastri) and others, I was very moved by the passion and eloquence of last night's extraordinary panel of Pacific Island leaders. That is why I speak today, and why I am standing up.

At issue is whether the people of the World, and of the United States in particular, will take the dramatic steps required to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that threaten Pacific Islanders and, ultimately, the entire planet.

My parents' generation demonstrated that our people are capable of taking dramatic steps that impact virtually every family in the country.

My uncles joined the Army and the Merchant Marines. My parents opened our modest home to a young Navy pilot, Barney, and his wife, Shirley.

Gasoline was rationed, and factories were converted from making passenger cars to making jeeps, tanks, and half-tracks.

Our family had a victory garden, did our own canning, joined in on paper drives, collected tin foil and other metals for recycling, and rode bicycles. And, our real quality of life may have been higher during that time than otherwise.

The same president who imposed gas rationing and called upon families to make major sacrifices was re-elected more than once.

So, when our people see the threats clearly, and have leaders willing to challenge them to respond as needed, they are capable of doing so.

We have declared war on terrorism, and have shown we can deploy troops and facilities rapidly and systematically. We now need to declare a "peace" on Earth, and make peace with Earth. We can, and must, deploy solar panels, windmills, and energy conservation devices and practices, rapidly and systematically.

So, when we consider a renewed call to action, we must not underestimate the willingness of our people to do what it takes to pass on a healthy planet to our children and theirs.

Mahalo.