



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOWN HALL MEETING TO DISCUSS SHARK BAN LEGISLATION

Representative Gene Ward (R-Hawaii Kai-Kalama Valley) and the Shark Task Force will hold a community meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2009 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Hahaione Elementary School cafeteria to receive input on legislation drafted for the 2010 session.

Speakers invited to comment on the legislative proposal to ban shark tours include Hawaii Shark Encounters of Haleiwa and other industry operators; Professor Carl Meyer, University of Hawaii author of a recent research paper on Haleiwa sharks; a newly formed community group, "Safe Waters For Hawaii" and other community leaders. The Chair of the Task Force is Makani Christensen, small businessman, diver, boater, and Iraqi War veteran.

The Shark Task Force was developed in response to the public outcry of a previous community meeting held in April 2009 and attended by hundreds of angry Hawaii Kai residents and a follow-up Legislative Information Briefing held in May 2009 at the Hawaii State Capitol.

"It is now time to act on all this information in the form of legislation for the 2010 Legislative Session," Ward said. The results of the meeting will shape the final version of the bill to be introduced in January 2010 in the House of Representatives.

"Until we can definitively determine that these operations will not threaten public safety and the well-being of our citizens who are in, under, or on top of our ocean waters, it is our responsibility as legislators to protect the safety of the public," Rep. Ward concluded.

Rep. Ward's current draft legislation includes a ban on any commercial shark feeding activity as well as steep fines for violators. Rep. Ward encourages members of the community to attend the meeting and give their input on the proposed legislation.

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See attached Flier on Town Hall Meeting 8-1-8-09