



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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PRESS RELEASE

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SHARK TOUR OPERATOR CANNOT BAIT HAWAII KAI COMMUNITY

Over 200 People Attend Townhall Meeting to hear Shark Tour Operator

Rep. Gene Ward (R-Hawaii Kai-Kalama Valley) said today that as a result of last night's Town Hall Meeting East Honolulu residents though angered have sent a clear message to shark tour owner Iolani Lewis that they want nothing with the shark feeding operation in Hawaii Kai.

I think the young man is deceiving himself if he believes he is going to win over the members of the Hawaii Kai community with this strategy, The community is adamantly opposed to this project and will do all in its power to see that such an operation is not opened in Maunalua Bay. George Downing and all of the elected officials in last night's meeting made that quite clear.

"Three positive outcomes resulted from last night's townhall meeting: 1) one lesson is that shark feeding is illegal in state waters out to 3 miles, and also illegal in federal law from 3 miles to 200 miles where international waters begin. That means any shark-feeding business is illegal in the state of Hawaii- full stop," Ward said.

The second lesson was that though better laws against shark feeding tours is needed, and enforcement is really key to lawmaking. At the present rate of attention to this matter, and the amount of resources ready it will likely be some time before. A third lesson of last evening was that the community has already reacted swiftly against this business in making sure that it does not operate out of Maunalua Bay.

Two important decisions were made by the Koko Marina Owner's Association and the Koko Marina Shopping Center. First – the Shopping Center has canceled the Snoopy 5's docking permit and slip in the Marina not wanting to endanger its other tenants watersports businesses. Secondly, the permit required to navigate a boat in the marina area is governed by the Koko Marina Mariners' whose Board of Directors voted unanimously 15-0 not to allow a shark tour boat to operate from in or around the marina waters.

In summary, the shark-feeding operation cannot legally operate in Marina and out of Maunalua Bay. Ward's office is working with community to organize an interim task force and various working groups to settle the issue of shark feeding tours – not only in Maunalua Bay but for the entire state of Hawaii.

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Representative Gene Ward is a member of the State House of Representatives
and represents House District 17, Hawaii Kai-Kalama Valley.