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**JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**JUDGE LIFTS WEST HAWAI'I AQUARIUM FISHING INJUNCTION**  
***Ruling Does Not Mean Resumption of Collecting***

(HONOLULU) – Today, Hawai'i Circuit Court Judge Jeffrey P. Crabtree lifted an injunction in a case filed by opponents of commercial aquarium fishing, prohibiting the issuance or renewal of aquarium fish permits to commercial collectors pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) § 188-31 in the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area (WHRFMA). An injunction concerning the issuance or renewal of aquarium fish permits in the rest of the State of Hawai'i remains in effect.

The injunction, in the *Umberger* case, was lifted because an environmental review pursuant to the Hawaii Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) is complete for the WHRFMA.

During the hearing, lead counsel for the State, Deputy Attorney General Melissa Goldman, reminded the parties and the public that aquarium fishing in West Hawai'i is not allowed simply because the injunction regarding the issuance or renewal of aquarium fish permits to commercial collectors pursuant to Hawaii Revised Statutes § 188-31 is lifted as to West Hawaii. No aquarium fishing permits have yet been considered or issued for WHRFMA by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and the lifting of the injunction in the WHRFMA does not permit the immediate resumption of commercial aquarium fishing either in the WHRFMA or anywhere else in Hawai'i.

In response to today's ruling, Deputy Attorney General Goldman states:

“Today’s decision returns the management of the State’s aquatic resources in the West Hawai’i Regional Fishery Management Area back to the DLNR, now that the environmental review process for West Hawai’i is complete. Today’s decision does not itself authorize any aquarium fishing. That question may now be taken up by the DLNR, which is the agency charged with managing the State’s aquatic resources.”

Anyone who engages in commercial aquarium collection without the required permit in the West Hawai’i management area or elsewhere in the State will be cited, and DLNR will pursue enforcement to the fullest extent authorized by law.

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