

For Immediate Release

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Report addresses importance of subsistence fishing on Native Hawaiian health

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—May 13, 2016—The Kohala Center has released a new report with the results of a recent health impact assessment (HIA) demonstrating the positive health effects of approval of the Mo‘omomi Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) on Moloka‘i for Native Hawaiians living in the area.

“It’s important to view all of Hawai‘i’s policy decisions through the lens of health, including consideration of individual and family well-being along with the health of the environment and the preservation of culture,” notes Dr. Kamanamaikalani Beamer, president and CEO of The Kohala Center. “In this HIA of the Mo‘omomi CBSFA we’re pleased to contribute to a thoughtful discussion of how to best manage our resources to the benefit of current and future generations.”

Hawai‘i State law provides pathways for island communities to co-manage culturally significant and ecologically vulnerable nearshore fisheries in collaboration with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). A task force report commissioned in 1994 recommended that the Mo‘omomi fishery area along the northwest coast of Moloka‘i serve as a demonstration area, in which fishing activities would be managed by the Ho‘olehua Homestead community primarily for subsistence rather than commercial use.

HIA is a tool designed to provide decision-makers with information to help them evaluate the potential effects of policy decisions by considering determinants of health and well-being. The assessment indicates that the Hawai‘i Board of Land and Natural Resources’ approval of CBSFA regulations for Mo‘omomi could enhance family and community well-being if there were a clear co-management strategy and adequate resources for CBSFA implementation. Findings demonstrate that the positive effects of supporting the use and teaching of Native Hawaiian resource management could help sustain the health of Mo‘omomi’s nearshore environment, improve community food security by assuring the availability of fish over time, and strengthen social connections through traditional ways of sharing subsistence catch. Findings also suggest that proposed Mo‘omomi CBSFA limitations will not substantially affect income generated from commercial fishing.

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The HIA recommends:

- Continuing education to promote understanding of and support for timely CBSFA regulations;
- Enhancing the development of Mo‘omomi as a focal point for the study and teaching of traditional Native Hawaiian marine management practices, along with the use of contemporary scientific methods to assist in documenting the long-term results of those practices;
- Emphasizing the value of traditional Hawaiian foods in conjunction with subsistence fishing and plant cultivation.

The HIA was conducted by The Kohala Center in partnership with Sust‘āinable Molokai, and researchers from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and the University of California, Davis.

This health impact assessment was supported by a grant from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts. An executive summary and the full report are available on The Kohala Center’s website at kohalacenter.org/research.

About The Kohala Center

Founded in the year 2000, The Kohala Center (<http://www.kohalacenter.org>) is an independent, community-based center for research, conservation, and education. We turn research and ancestral knowledge into action, so that communities in Hawai‘i and around the world can thrive—ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially.