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February 3, 2006

Permanent ocean council sought

The [Hawaii Ocean and Coastal Council](#), where federal, state and local officials meet ocean policy challenges together, may become a permanent body.

Gov. Linda Lingle created the council last year but it expires at the end of the current legislative session unless bills are passed to keep it alive.

The [Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources](#) announced Thursday that the administration had introduced legislation make that happen.

"This legislation will allow the council to continue its coordinated effort to address issues related to Hawaii's ocean and coastal environment and provide feedback on management issues affecting quality of life standards for Hawaii residents and visitors alike," said DLNR Chairman Peter Young.

Young said the council needs to survive because it's the most efficient way to protect the environment, the culture and the economy, all of which depend on Hawaii's near-shore waters and coastline.

"As the only island state in the nation," Young said, "Hawaii is in a unique position of being able to provide both local and national leadership in cooperative ocean governance."

The council is modeled in part after the successful multiagency [Hawaii Invasive Species Council](#), which responds to issues involving prevention and control of invasive species.

Senate Bill 2361 and House Bill 2398 would formalize the council.

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