



REPRESENTATIVE GENE WARD, PH.D.  
Minority Leader Emeritus  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL – HONOLULU, HAWAII

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, August 2, 2016

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## **HAWAII KAI'S MAUNALUA BAY TO BECOME A CEMETERY?**

*Ward announces results of survey rejecting an artificial reef made of cremated human ashes in Maunalua Bay.*

Rep. Gene Ward (R-Hawaii Kai-Kalama Valley) today announced the results of a questionnaire survey regarding using Maunalua Bay as a burial ground.

The announcement was in response to a proposal by Hawaii Memorial Reefs LLC to mix cremated human ashes with cement to create "reef balls" enabling coral growth to attract fish and possibly become a destination for diving and fishing in Maunalua Bay. To garner feedback from the community before any official permits were considered or even discussed, Rep. Ward sent out a survey (via Survey Monkey), with his July newsletter to over 15,000 constituents in Hawaii Kai. (See survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/oceancemetery>)

As of **Tuesday, August 2, 2016, 73 percent of the 98 responses** oppose creating a cemetery reef comprised of human ashes mixed with cement. A few days earlier, the Star-Advertiser became equally interested in the proposed cemetery and asked readers in its "Big Q daily poll" if such a reef should be built.

Interestingly, both polls tracked along the same lines even though the question was worded slightly differently in the Star-Advertiser poll and it was open to people throughout the entire state of Hawaii. The Star-Advertiser poll as of Tuesday, August 2, 2016, garnered 858 responses, with a majority (58%) saying the proposed reef is "offensive", while 32% believe it is a "good idea" and 10 percent have "no opinion".

"I totally concur with my community and the residents of our diverse state and do not believe it is respectful to create a graveyard in any of our ocean waters, particularly Maunalua Bay," Ward said.

"There is already much talk about the over-commercialization of Maunalua Bay, and to add an ocean cemetery that some cultures find highly offensive just doesn't make any sense," Ward concluded.

The proposal met its first opposition on Tuesday, July 26, 2016, at the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board, when Hawaii Memorial Reefs LLC explained that they were looking to establish two of these reefs; one in Maunalua Bay in Hawaii Kai and one in Ko Olina in West Oahu. A majority of those in attendance (+-75 residents) rejected the idea.

The Board will formally vote on the proposal in its next meeting on August 30, 2016 at 7 pm at Hahaione Elementary School. Citizens are encouraged to come and voice their opinion.

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