



## Research ship gets Inouye's praise

UH staff showcase key studies conducted aboard the Navy vessel Kilo Moana

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"National interests are well-served," U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye commented after touring a unique ship in the Navy's research fleet at the University of Hawaii marine center.

The Senate Appropriations Committee chairman had asked for a tour of the Kilo Moana, operated by the UH School of Ocean & Earth Science & Technology from Sand Island.

Brian Taylor, the school's dean, and other scientists who have used the ship since its first cruise in 2002 gave Hawaii's senior senator a sampling yesterday of the cutting-edge science they're doing throughout the Pacific.

The Democratic senator recalled that his late first wife, Maggie, christened the Kilo Moana in Jacksonville, Fla., in 2001.

The cost initially was \$45 million but rose to about \$58 million, including \$2 million from the Office of Naval Research and UH for a novel SWATH (small water-plane area twin hull) design. It's the only ship in the Navy's university research fleet with that design, providing a stable platform for ocean work.

It has two multibeam swath mapping systems for shallow and deep water, dynamic positioning and a sophisticated information system, among other advanced features.

The vessel is leaving tomorrow on a four-day cruise to Station Aloha, an ocean site about 60 miles north of Oahu where scientists have made monthly observations of the water column since 1988. A sister program is operated in Bermuda.

UH oceanographers Roger Lukas and Dave Karl began the Hawaii Ocean Time-series program, making repeated measurements of the ocean chemistry, biology and hydrography.

The National Science Foundation has just awarded \$6 million to continue the HOT program for four years.

Lukas and oceanographer Matthew Church, taking over for Karl in the program, described how it works and changes they've seen in the ocean because of El Ninos, global warming and climate variability over decades.

Inouye asked about global warming, which Church said is a complicated problem that involves more

than the greenhouse effect.

"Numerous processes are going on. ... Our underlying goal is to understand the connections," he said.

Dan Sadler, research specialist in oceanography, said the ocean acts like a sponge, soaking up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The result is increased acidification of the oceans with negative impacts on coral reefs and marine life, he said.

Inouye toured laboratories and the ship's bridge, saw products of the ship's work in detailed sea floor maps for the Hawaiian Islands and inspected the sleeping quarters. He asked about the food and was assured there is no scrimping in that area.

Before leaving to catch a plane to Kona, he asked Taylor for a wish list. One wish Taylor said would be to refit the UH vessel Kaimalino and park it at Station Aloha for six months or a year with personnel "so all the things we do partially we can do continuously." He estimated the conversion would cost about \$6 million.

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