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## **CEQ Chairman Connaughton to Lead Cooperative Conservation “Listening Session” in Honolulu**

### ***Governor Lingle to Provide Welcome and Opening Remarks***

White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman Jim Connaughton will lead a delegation of federal officials in a cooperative conservation “listening session” in Honolulu on Thursday, September 7. The session will take place at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center’s Pikake Room from 9 a.m. to approximately 11:30 a.m.

The session is one in a series of public meetings across the country to solicit and exchange ideas on incentives, partnership programs, and regulations that can improve results and promote cooperative conservation and environmental partnerships. The Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce; the Environmental Protection Agency; and the White House Council on Environmental Quality are sponsoring the sessions.

Governor Linda Lingle will be participating in the event and welcoming the federal officials to Hawaii. In addition to the Governor and Connaughton, those on the listening panel include Dr. Tevi Troy, Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy; Michael Weiss, Deputy Director of NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuary Program; and Ren Lohofener, Acting Pacific Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The listening sessions will give citizens an opportunity to “talk story” and exchange ideas on incentives, partnership programs, and regulations that can improve results and promote cooperative conservation and environmental partnerships. Numerous cooperative activities already underway here in Hawaii will be highlighted, including watershed partnerships, wildlife conservation, invasive species, tropical experimental forests, coral reef conservation, streamflow and stream biodiversity prioritization, and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands protection. Speakers are welcome to address any of these or other conservation topics.

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The meetings are the latest in a series of discussions the Administration has hosted since the President's Conference on Cooperative Conservation in August 2005. The conference identified three broad approaches to improving conservation results: promoting cooperation within the federal government, promoting cooperation between the federal government and others, and eliminating barriers to cooperation in existing policy. Some aspects of these ideas are reflected in a recently released summary of new legislation. Other aspects will be explored in the listening sessions announced today.

The meetings will focus on issues, programs, and policies mentioned frequently at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. Discussion topics will include:

- How can the federal government enhance wildlife habitat, species protection, and other conservation outcomes through regulatory and voluntary conservation programs?
- How can the federal government enhance cooperation among federal agencies and with states, tribes, and local communities in the application of environmental protection and conservation laws?
- How can the federal government work with states, tribes, and other public- and private-sector partners to improve science used in environmental protection and conservation?
- How can the federal government work cooperatively with businesses and landowners to protect the environment and promote conservation?
- How can the federal government better respect the interests of people with ownership in land, water, and other natural resources?

For more information, see: <http://cooperativeconservation.gov/>.

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