

## COMMITTEE FOR EQUITY IN WOMEN'S SURFING

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Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Chair Ikaika Anderson and Councilmembers  
Honolulu City Council  
530 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

### Keala Kennelly's speech in support of Resolution 20-12

Thank you for the opportunity to address the council.

My name is Keala Kennelly I am a big wave world champion, runner up to the world title in 2003 and a former Hawaii Triple Crown Champion.

I got my start in professional surfing competing in pro events right here on the North Shore.

They had events for women along side the men's events at Haleiwa and Sunset as far back as 1990 and in 1997 they announced they would be crowning a women's Hawaii triple crown champion. This continued every year on the North Shore until 2010 when they cancelled the women's competitions.

At that point sponsors and organizers decided to eliminate the women's events all together to make room for the growing number of male competitors.

It is now 2020 which means the women have been completely excluded from the Triple Crown of Surfing for a full decade. Even though there are more women surfing now than ever before there are still no competitions on the North Shore for women and no qualifying events for women at all in the entire state of Hawaii.

As I stand here before you today the men are surfing in a WQS event at Pipeline and yesterday the men wrapped up a qualifying event at Sunset Beach. The men have five qualifying events on the North Shore this winter season; the women have zero.

What this means in layman's terms: If you are an aspiring pro surfer that wants to qualify for the professional circuit and you are a male the opportunities are here for you. If you are a female however you will need to travel to qualifying events in foreign countries at your own expense. So unless their parents are very wealthy, female surfers in Hawaii will have to recalibrate their dreams to match the opportunities they have here, which is none.

Hawaii is the birthplace of surfing and the North Shore is referred to as the Mecca of surfing. Why are we forcing our female athletes to travel to foreign lands to compete?

I consider this to be a travesty. I also consider this to be gender-based discrimination which goes against our Hawaii State Constitution.

I humbly ask that you pass resolution 20-12 so we can right this wrong and bring gender equality and the Women's Triple Crown of Surfing back to Hawaii's North Shore where it belongs.

Thank you for your consideration.