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Greetings from Save The Waves Coalition. We are an international nonprofit conservation organization based in Santa Cruz California. Our mission is to protect surf ecosystems across the globe. Over the last 17 years, we have protected waves and coastal ecosystems from various threats and have an ambitious goal to protect 1,000 waves by 2030. We work together at the invitation of local communities to protect and preserve outstanding waves and their associated environmental characteristics for the benefit of nature and people.

This year, we received a request from the Association Conservation Group for the Protection of Amami's Rainforests, Rivers and Coastal Ecosystems (CGPARCE) to join their campaign to protect Katoku Beach, one of the last remaining natural dune and river mouth ecosystems in Amami from a seawall project. Save The Waves considered this project carefully and agrees with CGPARCE that this project would cause irretrievable harm to the famous beach and surf spot of Katoku. Hard armoring inevitably leads to coastal erosion and would interrupt the flow and movement of sand along Katoku beach, a process that is absolutely necessary for the surfing wave to continue to function, as well as the dune ecosystem that exists at the edge of the beach.

Along those same lines, the Katoku river is the only free-flowing river in Amami-Oshima and a free-flowing river is essential for sand distribution along the beach and provides a natural buffer to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.

While Save The Waves applauds the designation of Amami Oshima as a World Heritage Site, we believe that the construction of the seawall at Katoku Beach is not consistent with the goals of the World Heritage Site program as it would permanently

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damage the incredible pristine ecosystem that the World Heritage Site intends to recognize.

Save The Waves runs a program that was inspired by the World Heritage Site program entitled World Surfing Reserves. We recognize one surf ecosystem each year to be awarded the prestigious honor and each reserve must abide by a strict set of criteria in order to receive the award. As an organization that runs a similar program for surf zones, we are concerned that the seawall project would severely impact the coastal environment at Katoku and would damage its status as a World Heritage Site.

Save The Waves is currently working with CGPARCE and other local organizations to relaunch a public campaign to bring awareness to this project with the goal of ensuring that the river mouth and beach dune ecosystem remain intact. More than 35,000 individuals have signed a petition in opposition to this project and Save The Waves intends to elevate this petition within the international surfing community to show the broad opposition to this project.

We ask that UNESCO and the IUCN World Heritage Site program consider the impacts of the seawall project before officially designating Amami-Oshima as a World Heritage Site and implore IUCN to join us in requesting that the Kagoshima prefecture reject the project as designed.

There is an incredible opportunity to protect the last pristine and uninterrupted beach in Katoku for the benefit of the coastal ecosystem as well as the many tourists and surfers who will continue to enjoy the beach as nature has shaped it for thousands of years.

Please kindly reply at your earliest convenience to our request. We would appreciate looking for ways to collaborate on the mutual goal of protecting and recognizing the incredible natural assets of Amami-Oshima.

Sincerely,

Trent Hodges
Conservation Programs Manager
Save The Waves Coalition

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trent Hodges".

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