HONOLULU -- Hawaii's environmental enforcement team has a new member to pursue penalties for violators of the state's marine protection laws.

The Department of Land and natural Resources, the Attorney General's office, the Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative and the University of Hawaii Law School on Monday signed an agreement to support a one-year fellowship to add much-needed manpower to the attorney general.

The first awardee is UH Law School graduate Blaine Rogers, who now works with the group to pursue penalties for violators.

"The rules are there for the division of aquatic resources to do it. They just haven't had the capacity to do it in the last few years. So my position is to bring things that either go criminally and don't get the penalty we're looking for, or maybe go criminally and don't get successfully prosecuted," Rogers said.

The $70,000 fellowship allows Rogers to press for civil fines up to $1,000 for a first offense.

The partnership hopes to continue the fellowship next year with new applicants from UH and other law schools.