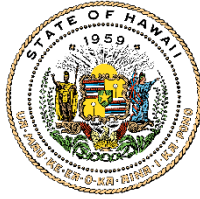


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
HEALTH

Wednesday, February 12, 2025
10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 329, and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1334, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

House Bill 1334, House Draft 1 proposes to exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from specific laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill and offers the following comments.**

The disposition of game species as regulated by the Department's hunting rules, Hawai'i Administrative Rules Chapters 122 and 123, and the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, only restricts the sale or the offer for sale of any game animal or parts of the carcass of any game animal taken from any public hunting area. The Department supports allowing licensed public hunters the discretion to donate their quarry to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations.

While the Department regulates the taking of game animals, it does not oversee the processing or food safety aspects of meat donation. The Department defers to the Department of Health regarding health and safety requirements for donated wild game meat.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FEBRUARY 12, 2025
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 329

HOUSE BILL NO. 1334 HD1
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1334 HD1. HB1334 HD1 exempts the donation of wild game meat or meat products, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy people from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat. The Department supports this measure.

This measure will exempt meat from inspection if the meat is exclusively donated by a hunter for the use or distribution by a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy people pursuant to Chapter 145 (HRS). Donation of meat from wild game, supports people in need while contributing to control of destructive species such as axis deer and feral swine.

The Department supports this measure and will defer to the Hawaii Department of Health as it relates to food.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

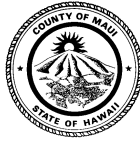


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David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 10, 2025

TO: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: 
Yuki Lei Sugimura
Councilmember

DATE: February 10, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR HB 1334, RELATING TO MEAT DONATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

I SUPPORT this measure as it addresses several important issues, particularly for Maui County. Overpopulation of axis deer, and other wild game animals, in Maui County has resulted in severe damage to our watersheds, ecosystems, and agricultural industry. Additionally, food insecurity is a daily reality for many of our residents. By removing barriers and clarifying the process for meat donations, this bill can help to address both the overpopulation of axis deer and food insecurity in our communities.

While not the only solution to address the damage caused by axis deer, hunters do play an important role in controlling the population. These hunters utilize axis deer meat to feed their families and friends, and have long sought to also donate this lean and healthy source of protein to those in need through local food banks and other organizations.

I respectfully request your support in moving this bill forward. Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony on this important matter.

For the foregoing reasons, I SUPPORT this measure.

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:38:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Kean	Maui Wild Game Management to Feed the Hungry	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334

Relating to Meat Donation

February 10, 2025

To: Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness

My name is Robin Kean, and I am the founder of Maui Wild Game Management, an organization dedicated to sustainable wildlife population management and ethical hunting practices in Hawaii. Our mission is to promote responsible wildlife conservation while providing communities with access to high-quality, locally sourced meat. Through humane harvesting methods, we work to balance ecological health with food security, ensuring that Hawaii's natural resources are utilized efficiently and ethically.

Additionally, I have had the privilege of serving as a past director on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, where I worked to expand food access for vulnerable populations. My experience in both wildlife management and food distribution has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges we face in feeding our communities while maintaining environmental balance.

I am writing today in strong support of House Bill 1334, which seeks to exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from

certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation provides a practical and necessary solution to two of Hawaii's most pressing issues: environmental degradation and food insecurity.

Addressing Environmental Challenges

The overpopulation of axis deer has led to devastating ecological damage in Hawaii, including:

Habitat destruction and deforestation

Soil erosion and water contamination

Severe agricultural losses for local farmers

At Maui Wild Game Management, we work with landowners, conservation groups, and local hunters to responsibly harvest axis deer, reducing their negative impact on Hawaii's fragile ecosystems. However, too much of this harvested meat goes to waste due to outdated and unnecessary regulatory barriers. HB 1334 will allow for responsible game management to benefit both our environment and our communities.

Enhancing Food Security

With Hawaii's high cost of living and reliance on imported food, food insecurity remains a major concern for many residents. High-protein, nutrient-dense food sources like wild game meat are difficult to access for struggling families, yet they exist in abundance on our own islands.

By removing unnecessary barriers to donation, HB 1334 will help food banks, shelters, and community programs provide fresh, healthy, and locally sourced meat to those in need. Having worked with Maui Food Bank, I have witnessed firsthand the growing demand for nutritious food options. This bill represents a common-sense solution to help address hunger while supporting sustainable land management.

Federal Exemptions for Wild Game Donations

Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), wild game meats including venison is already exempt from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented wild game donation programs under these federal exemptions, demonstrating that these donations can be safely handled and distributed.

HB 1334 would bring Hawaii's policies in line with established federal guidelines, ensuring that much-needed food resources are not discarded due to outdated restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a balanced, sustainable, and community-driven solution to two major issues affecting Hawaii: environmental conservation and food insecurity. This bill allows for the safe, responsible donation of wild game meat, ensuring that our conservation efforts benefit those most in need.

I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this legislation, helping to create a more sustainable and food-secure future for our islands.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Kean

Founder, Maui Wild Game Management to Feed the Hungry

Past Director, Board of Directors: Maui Food Bank

www.mauiwildgamemanagement.com



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |

Honolulu, HI 96813

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info@hawaiiifood.com

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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*

Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*

Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*

Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Health

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 12, 2025

TIME: 10am

RE: HB1334 HD1 Relating to Meat Donation

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. Axis deer are an invasive species and keeping the population under control is necessary in order to protect our agricultural lands and ecosystems. Axis deer can be a plentiful source of affordable locally sourced meat, which can help address food insecurity in our state. Right now there are some unnecessary impediments that prevent axis deer meat from being donated. This measure would help remove those roadblocks and allow for meat donation. We encourage the committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:19:53 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alison Pearce, Maui Food Bank Board of Directors	Maui Food Bank Board of Directors	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation****February 10, 2025****To: Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness**

My name is Alison Pearce, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Alison Pearce
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**



February 12, 2025

RE: Support for HB 1334 HD 1, **Relating to Meat Donation**

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for HB 1334 HD 1 Relating to Meat Donation which would exempt the donation of wild game meat or meat products, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

For 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of 170 agency partners. Last year, we served an average of almost 45,000 people each month, distributing a total of 8.7 million pounds of nutritious food, including 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce.

HB 1334 HD 1 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives, Feeding Futures

House Bill 1334 HD 1 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson
CEO, Maui Food Bank



Date: February 12, 2025

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Support of HB 1334 Relating to Meat Donation

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I support for HB 1334, Relating to Meat Donation. This bill exempts the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 225 agency partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

Food insecurity is a growing crisis in Hawai'i, with nearly 1 in 3 households struggling to access adequate food. One in ten households go a whole day without food some or most months. Hawai'i communities benefit from the generosity of farmers and producers whose donations to Hawai'i Foodbank allow many families access to healthy, local foods. Allowing wild game donations would further expand the availability of healthy protein for people we serve. We support this program as a win-win for food security and invasive species management.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like HB 1334.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

February 10, 2025

RE: Support for HB 1334 HD 1, Relating to Meat Donation

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for HB 1334 HD 1 Relating to Meat Donation which would exempt the donation of wild game meat or meat products, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

For 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of 170 agency partners. Last year, we served an average of almost 45,000 people each month, distributing a total of 8.7 million pounds of nutritious food, including 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce.

HB 1334 HD 1 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

House Bill 1334 HD 1 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,


boxSIGN 4PP53RJP-1RY9V796
Joseph Chee

Board Member/Treasurer
Maui Food Bank



COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

HB1334 HD1
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:00 AM
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1334 HD1** which exempts the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

Exempting wild game from the full extent of regulation when used for donation to our communities allows us to better feed these communities high quality sources of protein, while also creating an outlet for efforts to remove invasive species such as deer, goat, and pigs from the environment. Unmanaged ungulates damage our ecosystems and cause detriment to farming and ranching operations. The deer population in Maui County needs to be reduced dramatically in order to maintain the health of the land. Encouraging the hunting and donation of wild game will help us to meet both environmental and social needs.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:29:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Ulene	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation****February 10, 2025****To: Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness**

My name is Steve Ulene, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Steve Ulene
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:14:35 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Moana Lutey	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation****February 10, 2025****To: Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness**

My name is Moana M. Lutey and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

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Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Moana M. Lutey
Board Member, Maui Food Bank



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TESTIMONY ON HB 1334, HD1
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu Lee-Loy, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1334, HD1, which provides an exemption under Chapter 159, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), to facilitate the donation of wild game meat—such as axis deer—to charitable, religious, and nonprofit organizations serving those in need.

Across the state, invasive species are wreaking havoc on agriculture and ecosystems. Maui County's axis deer population has grown uncontrollably, fueled by abundant forage after rainfall events. These deer destroy crops and pastures, consuming any available vegetation. Similarly, feral pigs pose a serious threat—not only eating crops but also uprooting and trampling farmland, damaging pasture grasses, and promoting the spread of invasive weeds. They devastate orchards by consuming fruit, citrus, and nuts, while their rooting can kill young trees, shrubs, and vines or spread soil-based fungal diseases. Additionally, feral pigs break irrigation lines, tear agricultural nets, and damage other essential farming equipment.

Beyond agricultural destruction, unchecked feral animal populations create serious risks to livestock, public health, and the environment. As their numbers grow and food sources dwindle, malnutrition weakens them, making them more susceptible to disease. This raises concerns about the spread of livestock diseases, such as bovine tuberculosis, which has already been documented in Moloka'i due to feral pig transmission.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are dedicated to increasing local food production and self-sufficiency, but they cannot succeed if feral animals continue to consume or destroy their crops and livestock. These invasive species cause widespread economic, environmental, and public health damage—threatening native ecosystems, cultural and historic resources, and even the safety of people, pets, and wildlife. Without effective solutions, the costs and consequences will only escalate.

HRS §145D-2 (ACT 54, 2023) already establishes liability protections for individuals and entities donating food in good faith, including wild game meat, ensuring such donations can be made without fear of legal repercussions. However, despite these protections, existing meat inspection and transportation requirements under Chapter 159 have remained a significant barrier to the donation and distribution of wild game. HB 1334 resolves this issue by explicitly exempting the processing, transportation, and donation of wild game meat from these inspection requirements, provided the meat is not mixed with federally regulated meat products and is transported only between approved locations.

This bill increases access to high-quality protein sources for food-insecure individuals and families by enabling more wild game donations. Without this exemption, much of the wild game harvested by hunters goes to waste due to legal restrictions. HB 1334 allows this resource to be put to good use in feeding our community. While HRS §145D-2 provides liability protections, HB 1334 further clarifies the legal framework surrounding wild game donations, eliminating uncertainties that may currently discourage hunters and organizations from participating.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau urges support of HB 1334 to help mitigate the impact of invasive species while simultaneously addressing food insecurity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:04:52 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Sharpe (nee Fahir)	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation****February 11, 2025****To: Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness**

My name is Marsha Fahir, and I currently serve as the chair on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Marsha Sharpe (nee Fahir)
Board Member, Maui Food Bank**

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:07:17 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele McLean	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1334. I serve as a Board member for the Maui Food Bank; as such, I believe that HB1334 would give the Maui Food Bank another tool to fulfill its mission – to help the hungry in Maui County by collecting and distributing food through community partnerships.

As you know, HB1334 would allow an exemption from certain inspection and transportation regulations for the donation of wild game meat -- including, significantly axis deer! -- to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations. Not only would this bill be a crucial step forward in our ability to expand access to a nutritious, locally-cultivated, high-protein food source, it would also help to address the environmental devastation that axis deer and other invasive species are causing to our watersheds and other ecosystems.

Please support this unique and vital opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs. VOTE YES ON HB1334!

Mahalo for your consideration,

Michele McLean

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:54:42 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Maui Adaptation Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Soy, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am a resident of Lahaina. I am testifying **in support of HB1334**.

Currently, there is a grey area when it comes to goodwill meat donation. Hunters are only supposed to donate to "friends and family," and this prevents larger organizations like food banks and churches from receiving these donations as a part of their work to combat food security.

We need HB1334 to pass to protect hunters from liabilities, allow for expanded meat donation, reduce food waste, and protect our 'aina. Food insecurity in Hawaii is significant, especially in Maui and since the August 2023 wildfires. We need to do everything that we can to make venison donation easier. *I also ask everyone to remember that this bill is strictly about meat donation, while expanded meat slaughtering capacity is an entirely separate issue.*

My one hesitation is that all ungulates are covered under this bill, and there are a couple problems with that. For one, the Federal Meat Inspection Act states that venison *does not* need to be inspected by the USDA for food donation, but that is what the Hawaii DOH currently requires. Second, axis deer do not have the diseases that pigs, sheep, and goats carry.

This bill will also take great strides in addressing the ecological disaster caused by axis deer. They affect ranchers, farmers, and therefore our entire community. The erosion of the 'aina caused by axis deer migration had led to damage to our reefs, as you cannot protect the kai without protecting the 'aina. The way that the DOH currently regulates venison donation limits the ability of hunters who do not have access to a USDA slaughter facility, as the cost burden of having the meat inspected falls on them. Many Maui residents did not realize that the axis deer are truly everywhere now... I've spoken with the Malama Pu'u Kukui crew about the presence of them even on the mauna. Fences don't work. Addressing this crisis is a kako'o thing and the State needs to make the process as simple as possible.

More widespread access to axis deer presents a food security solution in that it is a local, sustainable, healthy source of protein. This bill would allow for Maui to reduce our dependence on imports, which the COVID-19 pandemic made clear is a much greater problem than it is being addressed as. Our people cannot afford to depend on imports any longer.

We need to pass HB1334 to protect the 'aina and feed our people. **Please pass HB1334** through committee and onto the committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Jackie Keefe

Maui Adaptation Project

Lahaina, HI



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 329
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:00 A.M.

To The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Lo, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Health

SUPPORT HB1334 HD1 RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB1334 HD1** which exempts the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

The Chamber would like to point out that axis deer, an invasive species that poses a continuing threat to Hawaii's environment, could provide significant quantities of meat as a protein source for nonprofit food distribution services, such as the State's network of food banks and Feed My Sheep, Inc. of Maui County. However, there is a gap between the hunters and the retailers and nonprofit services because the meat requires processing prior to distribution. For meat donation, other states such as Wisconsin and Michigan offer models that Hawaii can assess to develop processes for plan implementation and program funding, including licensing fees and other funding sources managed by wildlife agencies or nonprofits.

This bill will be one of a few major tools in controlling the over-population of Axis deer on all islands.

For these reasons we **SUPPORT HB1334 HD1** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 1:40:56 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Moore	Kealia Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1334

The deer population in Maui County needs to be reduced dramatically in order to maintain the health of the land. Encouraging the hunting and donation of wild game will help us to meet both environmental and social needs.

Exempting wild game from the full extent of regulation when used for donation to our communities allows us to better feed these communities high quality sources of protein, while also creating an outlet for efforts to remove invasive species such as deer, goat, and pigs from the environment

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:23:23 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support the intent of this bill with safeguards that the animal the meat is coming from looks reasonable healthy, not malnourished or diseased. The cost of living is only grown in the past few years and many ohana are finding it hard to make ends meet and here in Maui County we have an overpopulation of axis deer that is destroying the ecology and contributing to heavy runoff so this could be a win-win.

Mahalo,

Tamara Paltin

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:27:18 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gil Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee:

I serve on the Board of the Maui Food Bank and write to express strong support for HB 1334 HD 1 which would exempt the donation of wild game meat or meat products, including axis deer, to nonprofit organization from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

For three decades, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through a network of 170 agency partners.

The booming population of axis deer on Maui has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. This bill provides yet another tool for addressing the deer overpopulation challenge. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, the legislature can make an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that harvested game does not go to waste.

HB 1334 HD 1 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

House Bill 1334 HD 1 presents an opportunity to fight hunger and support conservation efforts all at once. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:47:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Mack Almasin	Ulupalakua Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because we need as many tools at our disposal as we can get to help us in our battle with the Axis Deer overpopulation. This will provide us with a way to distribute high quality protein to those in need and aid in control efforts.

HB-1334-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 3:21:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Fukuzawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Legislative Member,

I humbly submit my testimony in support of HB1334 HD1.

Sincerely,

David Fukuzawa