

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

APRIL 11, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 200
MAUI AXIS DEER CONTROL AND VENISON INITIATIVE

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 224. HCR200 resolves that the State Department of Agriculture and the County of Maui Department of Agriculture are urged to take further meaningful action to address the axis deer overpopulation, including:

(1) Implementing policies to make United States Department of Agriculture-certified in-state inspectors, certified inspections, and certified processing facilities more accessible, capable, and affordable for local hunters to utilize in order to sell or gift venison; and

(2) Implementing policies to increase the amount of certified United States Department of Agriculture in-state meat inspectors for game mammals; and convene a joint task force to oversee the County of Maui program that, in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture certified processing facilities, would aim to investigate and develop plans to make affordable the processing of locally hunted axis deer meat and the distribution of this venison to the community; and that the joint task



force is requested to submit a report of the program's accomplishments and barriers to the accomplishment of the program with its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than November 30, 2025.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (department) provides the following comments. The intent to address the axis deer overpopulation has merit as the deer are a hazard to agriculture production the environment and public health. Similarly, investigation into processing facilities and methods to lower production costs benefit agriculture producers. The Department notes that engaging with USDA regarding inspectors and staffing is useful, however, USDA controls their staffing levels.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HCR200

Friday, April 11, 2025, 1:01PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HCR200** which urges the legislature to implement a Maui Axis Deer Control and Venison Initiative.

We commend the Legislature for recognizing the urgent need to address the overpopulation of axis deer on Maui. This invasive species continues to cause significant ecological and agricultural damage while posing safety risks to residents, communities, and agricultural production. A coordinated approach that enables both effective population control and the productive use of venison can support food security and economic opportunity in the region.

We recognize that a task force composed of various entities is already working to address these issues. This resolution can serve to further strengthen and align those efforts by urging the creation of a formal joint task force between the State Department of Agriculture and the County of Maui Department of Agriculture. Collaboration with USDA-certified processing facilities will be key to exploring cost-effective processing and distribution models that make locally hunted venison accessible to the community.

As deer populations continue to encroach on smaller, often residential areas, the need for flexible and inclusive control strategies grows. Increasing the number of USDA-certified inspectors in Hawai'i will work to ensure that harvested game can be processed safely and efficiently for use. Additionally, funding and policy support are needed to sustain herd reduction efforts, incentivize participation, and overcome barriers to implementation.

As the population grows across this region, deer are increasingly moving onto smaller lands – many of which near roads, neighborhoods, and communities. Understanding ways to ensure reliable throughput of deer to a USDA-certified processing facility is key to removing animals and also utilizing the meat for distribution to the community. In addition these measures , funding is needed for herd reduction that allows for a variety of methods of capture for inspected kills, meat processing, and continued incentive payments.



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

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 1:05:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Irene Sprecher	Testifying for Hawaii Forest Industry Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Gabbard and AEN Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), this testimony is in support of HCR200.

Since 1989 HFIA has worked towards actualizing healthy and productive forests across the state of Hawaii. We believe that properly managing and utilizing game resources from forested lands plays a role in revitalizing Hawai'i's Forests.

Expanding the opportunities to process, inspect and distribute wild game meat, such as that of Maui axis deer, poses an opportunity to repair our ungulate burdened lands, all while feeding Hawaii's families and those in need.

Please support HCR200 to support Hawai'i's lands, Hawai'i's hunters, Hawai'i's retailers and Hawai'i's people.

Irene Sprecher,

President of the Hawaii Forest Industry Association

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/11/2025 9:28:59 AM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	Testifying for Roar	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Refer to live video testimony

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 2:37:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HCR200 and stand with Hawaii Cattlemens Council Council testimony. Because of the deer over grazing where cattle graze, it has forced ranchers to destock the their herds and not graze those arears for years. We need help in fencing, deer management, and reseeding lands.

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 3:15:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HCR 200 MAUI AXIS DEER CONTROL AND VENISON INITIATIVE.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/9/2025 4:00:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 7:16:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongy support this resolution.

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 8:38:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
McKenzie Wildey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure. Mahalo!

HCR-200

Submitted on: 4/10/2025 9:52:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 4/11/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jimmy Greenwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Without effectively controlling the Axis deer overpopulation problem on Maui, the islands grazing industry is in peril and with it, so is the risk of losing the rangeland stewardship practices where ranchers strive to keep the resources they are blessed to care for in as healthy and productive condition as possible, both for today and for generations to come.

Please hear the Maui ranchers voices and give them all the support they need. before it is too late. Mahalo