



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1023, S.D. 1

March 7, 2025
10:30 a.m.
Room 325 and Videoconference

RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 1023, S.D. 1, does the following: 1) establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund (SNSF) within B&F to finance spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free roaming cats; 2) establishes an advisory committee to assist B&F in establishing SNSF disbursement eligibility criteria and procedures; 3) allows taxpayers to contribute \$5 of their income tax refund to be deposited into the SNSF; 4) requires the Directors of Finance for the City and County of Honolulu and Counties of Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui to design and issue a special number plate for registered motor vehicle owners supporting the SNSF; 5) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for both FY 26 and FY 27 for deposit into the SNSF; and 6) appropriates an unspecified amount of special funds out of the SNSF for both FY 26 and FY 27 for the purposes of the SNSF.

B&F strongly believes that it is not the appropriate agency to administer the SNSF and its related program functions. B&F does not possess the required subject-matter expertise on spaying and neutering animals or any other related veterinary services as these subject areas are outside of the purview of the department. Further, with the ongoing statewide financial management replacement project, B&F staff are fully engaged and committed to working on the project and doing its regular work; therefore, additional staff and funding would be necessary to administer the SNSF.

B&F recommends that funds be appropriated directly to the counties instead because they have historically been responsible for animal control functions. The counties can then allocate these funds to entities best able to perform the desired services.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau

P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540

FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. No. 1023, S.D. 1, Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

BEFORE THE:

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

SB1023

DATE: Friday, March 7, 2025

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 325

Chair Kahaloe, Vice-Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding S.B. 1023, S.D. 1, for your consideration.

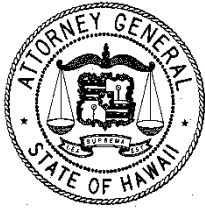
Section 2 of S.B. 1023, S.D. 1, establishes a new "Spay and Neuter Special Fund." Section 4 amends section 235-102.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to establish a source of funding through a new income tax "check-off" option. Individual taxpayers with a refund of \$5 or more may designate \$5 to the fund, and married couples filing jointly with a refund of \$10 or more may designate \$5 per person to the fund.

As with other existing check-off box options, if no initial designation was chosen, a taxpayer may amend their return to choose a designation within 20 months and ten days after the due date for the original return for that taxable year. A designation is nonrevocable once made.

This measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 2050, with Section 3, regarding additional funding from the issuance of special number vehicle license plates effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

DOTAX requests that the effective date of the bill be amended so that section 4 applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 1023, S.D. 1, RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

DATE: Friday, March 7, 2025

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 325

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Kelcie K. Nagata or Christopher J.I. Leong, Deputy Attorneys
General

Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to establish and appropriate funds into a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats. The special fund is to be administered by the Department of Budget and Finance. In addition, the bill allows the counties to print special numbered plates and individuals to designate five dollars of their income tax refund to be deposited into the special fund.

The bill establishes the special fund within the Department of Budget and Finance but codifies it within chapter 143, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the chapter related to the Department of Agriculture. See page 1, line 16, to page 2, line 2. This may cause confusion for both the Department of Budget and Finance and the Department of Agriculture with regard to the administration of the special fund. To ensure clarity and consistency, if the intent is to establish the special fund within the Department of Budget and Finance, it should be codified in the statutes relating to the Department of Budget and Finance (e.g., chapter 36, HRS). Conversely, if the intent is for the Department of Agriculture to administer the special fund, the bill should be amended to designate the Department of Agriculture as the responsible agency.

Additionally, the proposed section 143- (c) establishes an advisory committee "to assist the department of budget and finance in establishing the eligibility criteria and

procedures for disbursements from the special fund." Page 2, line 20, to page 3, line 2. However, article V, section 6, of the Hawaii State Constitution requires "instrumentalities of the state government and their respective powers and duties [to] be allocated by law among and within not more than twenty principal departments[.]" To ensure compliance with the constitutional requirement, if the intent is to place the special fund in the Department of Budget and Finance, we recommend amending the first sentence of section 143- (c) on page 2, line 20, to page 3, line 2, to explicitly place the advisory committee within the Department of Budget and Finance, as follows:

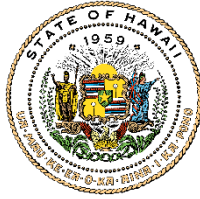
(c) There is established within the department of budget and finance an advisory committee to assist the department of budget and finance in establishing the eligibility criteria and procedures for disbursements from the special fund.

Conversely, if the intent is to place the special fund in the Department of Agriculture, the reference should be changed accordingly to designate the "department of agriculture" instead of the "department of budget and finance" in the above suggested amendments to section 143- (c).

We respectfully ask the Committee to consider our comments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Friday, March 7, 2025
10:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1023, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS

Senate Bill 1023, Senate Draft 1 establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats, and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) provides the following comments.**

Feral cats are a significant threat to Hawai'i's endangered forest birds, seabirds, and other native species. The Department is mandated to protect and manage Hawai'i's natural resources, including its native bird populations, and trap-neuter-return (TNR) is not an effective method to reduce feral cat populations.

The Department controls invasive predators in sensitive habitats. Reducing pet overpopulation and free-roaming cats would benefit both cats and wildlife. If a spay and neuter program could decrease the number of unwanted animals, it would benefit wildlife populations. Still, the Department does not know if this program would effectively reduce the number of free-roaming animals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 5, 2025

To: Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa
Vice Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 1023, SD1:
Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals
Friday, March 7, 2025, 10:30 a.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our strong support for Senate Bill 1023, SD1, which establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of Free-Roaming cats and authorizes various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

This measure is designed to address an urgent need in our community. We have more pet animals than families adopting pets. Puppies, which were historically rare among the wide range of animals to be found at local shelters, are now regularly being surrendered entire litters at a time. Economic challenges and housing insecurity force families to give up beloved pets. The Hawaiian Humane Society is at the forefront of taking a multifaceted, community centered approach to these issues and one undeniable need is for greater access to low-fee and no-fee spay neuter services.

Due to their costs of doing business, private veterinary clinics are no longer able to provide low-cost spay neuter at the levels they once did. Local nonprofits have stepped up to help, but they are under resourced. This bill is designed to help them help our communities.

Convenient and affordable access to spay/neuter is the best way to prevent pet overpopulation. Due to business costs, the number of clinics offering low-fee spay neuter on O'ahu has fallen from more than 20 to five. One of them, Hawaiian Humane's Ginny Tiu Community Spay/Neuter Center in Mō'ili'ili, is regularly booked four months



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

in advance. Our Spay/Neuter Center in 'Ewa Beach has yet to open due to lack of staffing and inadequate funding.

Decades of education around the importance of spay/neuter for improving the health and longevity of animals, reducing nuisance behaviors and curbing pet overpopulation have borne fruit. Demand for services at our community spay/neuter center since its opening in 2018 suggests that most people want to do the right thing for their pets. In a 2024 survey of O'ahu households, 81 percent of pet dogs were reported to be spayed/neutered, as were 68 percent of pet cats. Of those who reported their pets were not spayed/neutered, 30 percent of cat owners and 17 percent of dog owners said it was because the cost was too high.

If we are going to reduce the suffering caused by pet overpopulation, better access to affordable spay/neuter services is needed statewide. We have nonprofits in place eager to do that work with funding support.

The ability to offer no-fee spay/neuter for Free-Roaming cats has had incredible impact on O'ahu. According to the 2024 survey conducted for Hawaiian Humane by Ward Research, the spay/neuter rate for Free-Roaming cats jumped from 38 percent in 2018 to 70 percent in 2024 according to the residents who feed cats they do not consider to be their own. Over those six years, the City and County of Honolulu invested resources into the Feline Fix program, which allows participating clinics to offer no-fee spay/neuter for Free-Roaming cat caregivers. The spay/neuter fund created by this bill could enable similar progress across our state.

There is a clear public interest in reducing the number of unwanted pets and the population of Free-Roaming cats. We hope the state will embrace this opportunity to join the counties and private donors in supporting the local organizations working tirelessly to address this issue and reduce animal suffering.

We urge the committee to pass SB1023, SD1, with a good effective date. Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony of American Bird Conservancy
In Opposition to SB 1023_SD1 Relating the Spaying and Neutering of Animals
House Committee on Agriculture | March 7, 2025

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **opposition to SB 1023_SD1**.

Although American Bird Conservancy supports the sterilization of domestic cats, **this bill is clearly intended to support programs that would trap, sterilize, and then release cats to the landscape**. The use of public funds for such programs is cause for great concern, as it would result in tremendous harm for Hawai'i's people and wildlife. **Cats, whether sterilized or not, continue to attack and kill Threatened and Endangered birds, spread infectious parasites and diseases, and contribute to public nuisances.**

Cats are among the world's most harmful invasive species and instinctive predators that have already contributed to the extinction of two endemic Hawaiian species, the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail), and the decline of countless others. Sadly, Hawai'i is already the bird extinction capital of the world, and **the continued presence of cats on the landscape only increases the likelihood of future extinctions**. Research has repeatedly shown that cats are a [major threat to Hawai'i's unique birds](#), such as 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater) and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), two species which have experienced [94% and 78% population declines](#), respectively.

Cats can also carry a large number of infectious parasites and diseases. Toxoplasmosis, caused by infection with the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, is a cat-transmitted disease of significant concern. The parasite **can only complete its life cycle in a cat**, and a single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called "oocysts") into the environment via its feces. These oocysts remain infectious for months to years and can **infect any bird or mammal**. Infection in people can cause miscarriages, fetal deformities, blindness, organ failure, and death and has also been linked to neurodegenerative diseases, such as schizophrenia. This parasite is the reason women are told to avoid changing cat litter while pregnant, but **cats roaming the landscape, whether sterilized or not, turn the entire environment, including beach parks, gardens, and nature preserves, into one giant, contaminated litterbox.**

Scientific studies in Hawai'i have shown that **feral cats contribute to widespread environmental *T. gondii* contamination**, and this contamination is dangerous for people and wildlife. For example, researchers found that [three of every four feral cat colonies on O'ahu were actively excreting *T. gondii* oocysts](#). On Kaua'i, scientists found the parasite "at nearly every sampled site" and observed [higher coastal contamination at beach parks and harbors](#),

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**8255 E. Main Street, Suites D & E,
Marshall, VA 20115**



which has serious implications for public health because of the increased likelihood of human exposure. Infections in wildlife are not only harmful for the wildlife but also indicative of the widespread and dangerous consequences of human exposures. *T. gondii* infections have been identified [in Nēnē \(Hawaiian Goose\) from Kauaʻi, Maui, and Molokaʻi](#), and *T. gondii* infections in ʻAlalā (Hawaiian Crow) pose a [significant risk to this species' conservation](#). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that toxoplasmosis is also a [leading threat to the recovery of endangered Hawaiian monk seals](#). **Supporting programs that purposely release cats, regardless of their sterilization status, to the landscape contributes to environmental *T. gondii* contamination and puts people and wildlife at risk.**

Programs that intentionally release cats to the landscape (e.g., trap, neuter, release) are also highly unpopular and counterproductive. Research from the University of Hawaiʻi found that 78% of respondents supported removing feral cats from the environment permanently (i.e., without “release”), and the majority of stakeholder groups disapproved of TNR. Research from Griffith University similarly found **strong opposition to TNR among Hawaiʻi residents**, with preferred management including removal and outdoor feeding bans. Research has also overwhelmingly found that TNR programs do not reduce cat populations and instead serve as a convenient **dumping ground for unwanted pets** that, combined with regular feeding, [can actually lead to increased cat populations](#).

American Bird Conservancy supports responsible cat ownership and effective unowned cat management. Unfortunately, **SB 1023_SD1 will facilitate ongoing harms to Hawaiʻi's people and wildlife caused by at-large cats and filter precious public resources toward a program that is highly unpopular.** We respectfully ask that you oppose this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Grant Sizemore, M.S., CWB®
Director of Invasive Species Programs

Chris Farmer, Ph.D.
Hawaiʻi Program Director

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: INCOME TAX; Spay and Neuter Special Fund, Income Tax Check Off

BILL NUMBER: SB 1023 SD 1

INTRODUCED BY: Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment, Transportation and Culture and the Arts, and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new section to chapter 143, HRS, to establish a spay and neuter special fund ("Fund"). Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided that the uses and expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall follow the eligibility criteria established by a new advisory committee created by the bill.

Adds a new section to chapter 249, HRS, providing special number plates for motor vehicles supporting the spay and neuter special Fund. Fees charged for the plates will be deposited into the Fund established by this measure.

Amends section 235-102.5, HRS, to allow an income tax check-off for \$5 to be deposited into the Fund, or for a joint return each spouse may designate \$5.

An appropriation out of the general fund of \$_____, for fiscal year 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 shall be deposited into the special fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2050; provided the tax return check-off shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

STAFF COMMENTS: This bill creates a new special fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats. The fund is fed by legislative appropriations, \$5 State income tax refund designations, and fees from special license number plates. The fund is to be administered by the Department of Budget and Finance.

Special funds are pots of money that exist for a specific purpose and largely bypass the legislative appropriation process. The existence of hundreds of these special funds has often confounded those who seek answers to simple questions like "How much money does the State have?"

Our Legislature is supposed to be the steward of all state moneys, but special funds make it very easy to lose track of where the money is and how it is being spent. Departments are supposed to tell the Legislature if they have special funds and how much is in them, but let's just say they don't always. Recently, in Report No. 20-01, the State Auditor took DBEDT to task for failing to report \$6.5 million in non-general fund moneys. DBEDT's response? Just that they'll "take corrective

action.” Not even a “Whoops! We screwed up and promise to do better next time!” This followed closely on the heels of Report No. 19-16, where the Auditor found that \$1.04 million in non-general fund moneys administered by the Attorney General wasn’t reported. That department responded that they “shall establish procedures to assure required reports are issued.” Is it any wonder that it’s getting harder and harder to follow the money and rein in government spending?

Perhaps as the result of the foregoing concerns, the Legislature has itself established criteria for when a special fund may be maintained (HRS section 37-52.3). The criteria for a special fund are:

(1) Serves a need, as demonstrated by:

(A) The purpose of the program to be supported by the fund;

(B) The scope of the program, including financial information on fees to be charged, sources of projected revenue, and costs; and

(C) An explanation of why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process;

(2) Reflects a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue, as opposed to serving primarily as a means to provide the program or users with an automatic means of support that is removed from the normal budget and appropriation process;

(3) Provides an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity that is used only when essential to the successful operation of the program or activity; and

(4) Demonstrates the capacity to be financially self-sustaining.

Of these, at least two of the criteria are violated because there is no nexus between the purpose (reducing the feral cat population) and the source of revenue (income tax checkoffs and license plate fees), and because there is no indication that the proposed fund can be financially self-sustaining. Establishing this special fund is inappropriate, as is the proposed method of financing the fund.

Additionally, in the long run the cost of administering the income tax checkoff merely siphons resources that should otherwise be used for providing needed public services. If lawmakers believe certain programs are of great importance, then they can prioritize those programs through the appropriations process. With the Hawaii tax burden already so heavy, why should taxpayers turn any more of their hard-earned dollars over to government? What lawmakers also do not recognize is that by creating these checkoffs, they add to the cost of administering the law, a cost which steals funds from other programs including those enumerated for a checkoff designation.

Digested: 3/6/2025

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:16:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** SB1023 SD1!

Feral cats are an environmental problem, including for birds and by spreading the bacterium that causes toxoplasmosis, which can be fatal to some marine mammals. Please pass this bill to control the feral cat population!

Board of Directors

Alexandra Alton

Emma Cobb

Anitra Frazier

Bryan Kortis, Esq.

Nancy Peterson

Susan Richmond,
Executive Director

March 5, 2025

Re: SB 1023, SD 1

To the Honorable Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

I am writing on behalf of Neighborhood Cats, a nonprofit registered in Hawaii, to express our **strong support** for SB 1023, SD 1.

Neighborhood Cats is a national leader on the management of free-roaming cats and has had a chapter on Maui since 2016. We present regularly at conferences and online forums, have produced many of the leading educational materials on the subject, designed commercially popular equipment, and assisted communities throughout the U.S. and abroad in setting up spay/neuter programs.

On Maui, we were the lead organization coordinating the rescue of over 600 cats from the Lahaina burn zone, including many pets who were reunited with their owners. We have also assisted numerous community members with trapping their outdoor cats for purposes of spay/neuter. The births of many thousands of kittens have been prevented as a result, but more is needed. Affordability remains a significant obstacle to caretakers of free-roaming cats and pet owners when it comes to spay/neuter services.

The proposed fund would be a big step forward in solving Hawaii's cat overpopulation. There is no feasible way to reduce the number of cats on the landscape, and to reduce related public health concerns and threats to native wildlife, without spay/neuter for pets and free-roaming felines. It is a win-win solution for all stakeholders.

Thank you for considering our views,



Bryan Kortis
National Programs Director

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:10:03 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB 1023 establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce animal over-population and the reproduction of free-roaming cats, and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

Animal Interfaith Alliance are in strong support in company with Hawaiian Humane and the Hawaii Animal Welfare Association, which represents the largest animal welfare organizations in each county.

This measure allows for grants to organizations that spay/neuter companion animals and/or Free-Roaming cats, supporting the critical goal of reducing animal over-population.

It is the most humane way of managing Free-Roaming Cats so we beg to support the Bill.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 5:26:52 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Swindle	Hawai'i Audubon Society	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:



HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

850 Richards Street, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813-4709

office@hiaudubon.org <https://hiaudubon.org/>

Testimony of the Hawai'i Audubon Society

In Opposition to SB 1023 – Relating to Spaying and Neutering of Animals

Senate Agriculture Committee | March 7, 2025

The Hawai'i Audubon Society (HAS) urges you to vote against SB 1023, which threatens native wildlife, public health, and fails to promote responsible pet ownership.

While we support the trapping and sterilization of free-roaming cats, this bill fails to prevent—and in fact promotes—their re-release. This directly contradicts the conservation goals of the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, as free-roaming cats, regardless of sterilization, continue to harm Hawai'i's endangered birds and marine mammals.

Fewer than 700 'Alae 'ula remain, yet in just four years, feral cats killed over 250 native waterbirds at Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge alone. Free-roaming cats have already driven species like the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail) to extinction and now threaten the Palila, 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater), and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), among others. On O'ahu, HAS has directly witnessed these impacts, as feral cats prey on U'au kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwaters) at our Freeman Seabird Preserve at Black Point in Kahala.

Beyond their impact on wildlife, free-roaming cats spread *Toxoplasma gondii*, a parasite that causes toxoplasmosis, endangering Hawaiian Monk Seals, Spinner Dolphins, and Humpback Whales. This disease also poses serious risks to human health, including miscarriages, birth defects, and fatalities. TNR is not a solution—sterilized free-roaming cats continue to kill native wildlife and spread disease.

Using public or license plate funds for a program that exacerbates this problem is unacceptable. These resources should support conservation, not harm it.

We urge you to oppose SB 1023 or amend it to prohibit the re-release of feral cats and ensure oversight from DLNR and DOH. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Swindle", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Keith Swindle, Executive Director

Hawai'i Audubon Society

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 6:08:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Carroll	Director, Maui Humane Society Board of Directors	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- 1) Spay/neuter is key to addressing the problem of prolific breeding, a root cause of pet and free-roaming cat overpopulation and animal homelessness in Hawaii
- 2) The high cost of spay/neuter surgeries has put spay/neuter surgeries out of reach for many pet owners. Affordable and accessible spay/neuter services are desperately needed for both owned pets and free-roaming cats.
- 3) All of the Hawaiian animal shelters and rescues are facing a high intake crisis, with the number of animal intakes outpacing available resources. Spaying and neutering pets and free-roaming cats is a proven method to decrease animal intake at sheltering facilities.
- 4) Grant funding for spay and neuter surgeries from private foundations has become severely limited. State support is badly needed.



**Testimony in Support of SB 1023
Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals**

**House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
March 7, 2025**

Humane World for Animals (HWFA), the nation's largest animal protection organization, supports passage of SB 1023 and the creation of a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to expand access to vital spay/neuter resources for both pets and free-roaming cats and tackle the challenges of overpopulation in the state.

This legislation is good for the people and animals of Hawaii. There is broad interest in helping companion animals and, by extension, the people who care for them. This legislation would create an opportunity for Hawaii taxpayers to do just that, voluntarily contributing funds to provide needed sterilization and veterinary care to cats and dogs in need.

When such veterinary services are made accessible and costs are subsidized, sterilization rates will increase. The truth is that most people want to do the right thing and are not ideologically opposed to sterilization but simply lack the resources to do so. This is particularly true for those who find themselves caring for a large number of free-roaming cats. Unable to get enough of the cats sterilized in a timely manner, the cats continue to reproduce, making the goal of reducing the population even more of a challenge. When funding is made available to cover the cost of sterilization, organizations which deliver these services to communities can be more effective in their outreach efforts. Not only will this prevent many surplus animal births and deaths but also lowers the cost of animal care and control in the future, reduce public health concerns and decrease threats to wildlife and the environment.

There is an urgent need for practical and effective solutions to the challenges associated with the presence of cats outdoors. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to managing cats in the environment, but with determination, innovation, and collaboration, we can implement and sustain effective programs to humanely resolve human-cat-wildlife conflicts.

This bill creates an opportunity to help many people and animals across the state. HWFA encourages a favorable report on SB 1023.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Susan Rhee

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:24:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Kim	FUR-ANGEL FOUNDATION	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of Hawai‘i House Bill 1023 – Relating to the Spaying & Neutering of Animals

Tiffany Kim
590 Farrington Hwy #524-224
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707
furangelfoundation@gmail.com
March 6, 2025

Aloha Members of the Committee,
As a passionate advocate for animal welfare and a supporter of local rescue organizations, I am submitting this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1023. Any and all efforts to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats, that allow for special funding is necessary at this time. We are in crisis with hundreds of animals without homes and in need of assistance. Addressing overpopulation is critical and absolutely necessary to ensure the health of our communities.

Mahalo,

Tiffany Kim

President

Fur-Angel Foundation

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:42:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Kaaumoana	Hui Hoomalu i ka Aina	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and memebers, we are a hui of hunters, fisher, farmers and weavers. Feral cats are killing our land and waters on Kauai. Without a predator here, they thrive and live mauka and makai poisoning and killing native birds and sea mammals.

Spayed and neutered cats hunt and kill and destroy our land.

Kauai is the last hope, the Noah's ark for many native waterbirds, seabirds and forest birds.

Cats kill and poison our hope for many native species.

We OPPOSE this bill and ask you to hold the bill.

Mahalo.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 10:34:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Animal Rights Hawaii strongly supports SB1023 SD1. Mahalo

6 March 2025
BIISC
23 E Kawili St
Hilo, HI 96771
biisc@hawaii.edu



Attn: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
RE: Comments on SB 1023 SD1

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committees,

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee would like to provide comments on SB1023, which establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund. In Hawai‘i, as in many other island environments, cats are a very destructive invasive species that pose a significant threat to our native wildlife. Many of our native endangered animals, found nowhere else in the world but here, are directly threatened by the presence of cats on the landscape. Cats prey on vulnerable native birds and spread diseases like toxoplasmosis, which has already contributed to the deaths of several nēnē and Hawaiian monk seals.

On Hawai‘i Island, many low-income and working-class families would greatly benefit from improved access to spay/neuter surgery for their family pets. Pet overpopulation has been a severe issue on our island for decades. Thanks to the good work of animal welfare organizations, the demand for spay/neuter has increased, but unfortunately, the supply has not.

We believe that the key to ending the problem of unwanted cats is to “turn off the tap” – stop the flow at its source, sterilizing all pet cats and dogs and encouraging that these domestic pets remain where they belong, in a household. Establishing the Spay and Neuter Special Fund as outlined in SB1023 will play a vital role in addressing this issue.

However, we would suggest changes to the proposed legislation to ensure that the monies go to help our island families to retain and care for their pets, and not to support Trap-Neuter-Return efforts. Free-roaming cats which have been shown to be very damaging to our endangered Hawaii wildlife, particularly seabirds. We encourage the committee to add an amendment that would prohibit release into a community or landscape any animals sterilized with these funds. With such an amendment, this could be a positive bill for all parties interested in the welfare of animals in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Franny Kinslow Brewer
Program Manager
fbrewer@hawaii.edu
(808) 933-3340

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 2:45:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen J McCardel	Hui Pono Holoholona	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB1023 on behalf of the people and animals of Hawai'i. As Treasurer for Hui Pono Holoholona, a 501(c)3 organization that provides free and low-cost spay and neuter options for Hawaii Island cats and operates a sanctuary for feral and displaced cats, I see every day how essential spay and neuter services are for the health and happiness of people and animals in our community.

HPH's home district of Puna, on the Big Island, is home to some of the lowest-income communities on the island, with certain neighborhoods exceeding 30% of households with incomes below the poverty level. Our community is eager to have their animals altered, but the average cost for sterilizing a cat is \$200–300 at most vet clinics, and even low-cost options range from \$50–110. The wait time for a sterilization appointment can be months. Free and subsidized spay/neuter programs enable people to be responsible for their pets and encourage people to engage in efforts to sterilize feral and free-roaming cats for the betterment of their neighborhoods and communities. When you're struggling to cover housing costs, food, utilities, and other basics, veterinary care, especially "elective surgery," is a luxury, and most financially struggling people have no choice but to delay or ignore this need.

Healthy pets and free-roaming animals help to maintain the health of our communities and our environment. Preventing excessive birth rates among cats and dogs improves the health and quality of life of existing animals and of the people with whom they interact. Sterilization in cats reduces roaming, fighting (which passes infectious diseases such as FIV and feline leukemia), unwanted noise, and improper elimination (spraying). Fewer cats being born breaks the cycle of infection of new cats by toxoplasmosis. Cats shed the infectious oocysts of *T. gondii* only briefly after initial infection, which is most common in kittens or in cats newly released to outdoor environments. By breaking the cycle of kitten births, we can reduce the rate of infection of *T. gondii* in cats and thus in other wildlife.

Most people working tirelessly to provide spay and neuter services to our community are doing so from their own pockets or as part of nonprofit organizations. We did not CAUSE the pet overpopulation problem, yet we are working desperately to SOLVE it. This issue is important for improving our soil and water quality, protecting native species, and improving the health and quality of life of people on the islands. Any support the state can provide to assist this endeavor will be greeted with relief and gratitude from the volunteers working so hard to reduce animal overpopulation.

As we say at HPH, "Cats (and dogs) are everyone's kuleana."

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 7:25:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha my name is Vivian S. Toellner, from the east side of the Island of Hawai'i. I would like to see our State support free / low cost Spay Neuter Clinics held by volunteer 501c3 nonprofits here on the Big Island of Hawai'i. This would be a wise use of our tax dollars.

- 1. 686 dogs and cats were sterilized by Petfix Hawaii in January 2025. Just think what an impact that is on animal overpopulation in the community.**
- 2. Of the 753 animals sterilized by Petfix Hawaii in February 2025; 555 were cats Again just think if they had not been fixed!**

Clearly people want this service. Yes, there are that many animals out there to fix. If other methods, such as round up and kill had worked, we would not be discussing this problem today. I too love our native birds and animals and want us to increase their safety with this spay neuter bill. TNRM cats need to be eligible for these funds, as not doing so only creates more cats. Please support the humane reduction in animal overpopulation, the veterinarians, vet techs, volunteers, pet owners, TNRM caretakers, are supporting spay/neuter with their long hours of community work and donations.

Cats are free roaming by nature. Even indoor pet cats get out and never return home. Cats are abandoned at parks and transfer stations. Turning away Trap Neuter Return cats is not productive. It is far better to sterilize all cats that come to a clinic. The breeding of cats in the open environment is the Cat-Tastrophe we have now!!

Consider funding organizations that specialize in Trap-neuter-release practices, provided that they be encouraged not to release back into the environment whenever possible. In fact, Petfix requires all cats at their clinics to have the ear

tipped to show sterilization. This prevents cats returning to the clinic and thereby taking up a much-needed appointment!

Please understand that animal issues are complicated and require looking at all possibilities. Also, I would like to see the Bill to stipulate that volunteer 501c3 nonprofits that provide no cost / low cost spay/neuter services are the organizations eligible for these funds. As most veterinary businesses charge well over \$200 for just one spay!

The Veterinary advisory board representative needs to be an experienced high volume sterilization surgeon that knows what a high-volume clinic needs. I would also like to see the advisory committee have an active spay neuter advocate from each island. Either as a voting or nonvoting member and without expense reimbursement. These people truly have an ACTIVE INTEREST in the humane method of animal overpopulation here in Hawaii.

The reimbursement of advisory committee members should be limited to a low percentage, to ensure the funds are truly used as intended. The annual report and other information should be public information and easily available.

Special number plate design should be kept simple. A paw print with the words "Spay Neuter" is enough and no design fee paid. Are these fundraising fees in line with the other special license plates offered by the State? Again, keep expenses low so funds are spent as intended on spay neuter surgeries.

Please realize the problem grows exponentially the longer we wait. The sooner and harder we act on this problem the sooner the results, thereby saving more native animals. Please support increasing the funding to \$500,000. There is an outer island apprehension about the distribution of funds. An allocation based on population, land area, tax revenue would be fair to each county for contributions made by legislature. The Vehicle Special License and State Income Tax portions could be returned to the individual Counties.

Please realize the magnitude of this problem. We need to spay neuter every cat we can get our hands on. This is no joke, please do not euthanize this bill. I urge you to support this bill with amendments. Sincerely, thank you for your time and Mahalo for allowing me to submit testimony.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:06:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Arinaga	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. We know that feral free roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alaie ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alaie ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:59:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm very sad to see that SB1023 has itself been spayed and neutered. It no longer requires pet cats to be spayed and neutered, and no longer appropriates funds from the general fund for this purpose. Licence plates and tax refund check-offs are fine, but they are not likely to raise enough funding to make much of a dent in what is already a huge problem, and one that needs addressing urgently. I'm very disappointed in the legislators who used a blunt tool to hack away at what started as a very good bill.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 12:58:59 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rae Okawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my **opposition** to SB1023 SD1 relating to the spaying and neutering of animals as it is currently written. I am a Hawai‘i resident, born and raised on O‘ahu, with a degree in Biology and a Masters in Environmental Studies. I am providing this testimony on behalf of myself, and not on behalf of any other individual, group or organization.

I admit, I am late to the game on this particular bill. I was full-in on supporting HB364, which created a special fund that, like this bill, supported spay and neuter services. I did not realize that this bill was running concurrently. One HUGE, deal-breaking difference between the proposed special fund in HB364 that I supported and the proposed special fund in this bill, is that HB364 included language that wisely restricted the use of funds, not allowing it to be used for animals that would be released into the environment and into communities.

I fully support spay and neuter support for owned pets kept indoors. I fully support responsible pet ownership and helping those with limited resources take the steps needed to be a responsible pet owner. I also understand that critical spay and neuter procedures require financial resources – both for the pet owner that wants to do the right thing and for the veterinary professionals providing the service. Having a source of designated funding will help provide that relief.

What I cannot support is funding that provides for the populations of an animal known for its negative impacts on public health, community sanity, and native wildlife, to persist on our landscape. In previous testimony for this bill, Hawai‘i DLNR Chair Chang stated that “Feral cats are a significant threat to Hawai‘i’s endangered forest birds, seabirds, and other native species. The Department is mandated to protect and manage Hawai‘i’s natural resources, including its native bird populations, and trap-neuter-return (TNR) has not been shown to be an effective method to reduce feral cat populations.”. Looking at the impact of spay/neuter on individual cats is short-sighted. On a population-level, there’s no way to spay and neuter enough cats to cause the growth of the current free-roaming cat populations in Hawai‘i to become a decline. The only thing this fund will do as currently written is foster an environment that makes people think that keeping cats on the landscape is financially supported and state-sanctioned, emboldening those maintaining colonies and giving irresponsible cat owners an easy out, potentially increasing abandonment.

I implore you, please look at HB364 and specifically the testimonies. While cat folks and conservationists have historically been at odds, the proposed spay and neuter special fund in HB364 was supported by BOTH the conservation community and animal welfare groups.

Conservationists supported it because of the funding use restriction. The Hawaiian Humane Society was asked by Chair Matayoshi in the CPC hearing for HB364 that even with the funds use restriction, will the bill help? The Hawaiian Humane Society replied yes. HB364 was a compromise bill. I was encouraged to see people who are usually on opposite ends of this issue come together to support it. If subsection 3(b) of this bill can be modified to reflect the subsection(b) from HB364 below, the compromise can be restored.

(b) Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided that spayed or neutered animals are not re-released into the environment and the uses and expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall follow the eligibility criteria established by the advisory committee established under subsection (c).

If you move the bill forward, please restore the compromise that brought conservationists and cat advocates together. Keep the use of any potential funds only for animals that will not be abandoned back onto the landscape.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 1:10:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
marcia greer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. I feed two colonies and with our limited resources, we'll spay two cats and come back to yet another litter of kittens from one unspayed cat. We can't keep up. The populace appears naive about what happens when they dump pregnant cats, unwanted unneutered cats, or entire litters of kittens. And then that same populace berates our efforts to TNR, feed, water, medicate their unwanted pets, sometimes yelling, writing graffiti aimed at us, or just being threatening to old ladies taking care of unwanted pets. We pick up starving kittens who were dumped way too young to understand self feeding, we nurse them and find homes for them. We pick up dying kittens we didn't find in time. It's heartbreaking hopeless work. With this bill, hope will come again that we can keep up. Hopefully, someday, the media and govt will make education a top priority, and enforcement of yet to be established anti-dumping laws. But until then, we really need some help. Thank you for your time.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 1:25:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1023. I volunteer for Hawaiian Humane Society and for Catfriends, both of which offer low-cost spay/neutering of free-roaming cats. A recent survey of Oahu residents by the Humane Society found that the vast majority of those surveyed support TNR (trap/neuter/return) and spaying/neutering of unowned cats. This has been shown to be the most effective way to control the free-roaming cat population. It works much better than killing these cats. Every female cat that is spayed prevents 1000 cats from being born in the next ten years. And because TNR controls the cat population, it benefits wildlife. However, at present there is a shortage of appointments for low-cost spay/neuter surgeries. Funding is part of the problem, and this bill would address that.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way

Honolulu, HI. 96816

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 2:33:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB 1023 Which request more funding for the spaying and neutering of animals.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 4:11:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
helen raine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. We know that feral free roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds. Nor does it provide oversight by state or federal human health and conservation agencies.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alaie ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alaie ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting

our conservation dollars and resources.

Thank-you for your consideration

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 4:38:31 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karim Hanna	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. We know that feral free roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alaie ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alaie ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 4:48:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB1023 SD1.

This bill establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats, and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

I am in strong support, as is the Hawai'i Animal Welfare Association.

This measure allows for grants to organizations that spay/neuter pet animals and/or Free-Roaming cats, supporting the critical goal of reducing animal overpopulation.

Please pass this crucial bill.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 5:04:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruby Pap	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee or to request amended language preventing the release of free-roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee. While the bill supports Trap and Neutering, which I endorse, it fails to prevent the release of feral animals afterward. Feral free-roaming cats pose a significant threat to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds. The stakes are incredibly high. For instance, there are fewer than 700 individual ‘alae ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). These birds evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. A substantial body of evidence shows that cats contribute to the decline of these birds. Over a four-year period (2014 – 2018), feral cats killed over 250 native waterbirds on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alae ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. This is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at risk. Outdoor feral cats pose a health threat to humans as they are vectors for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which spreads through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, causing miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020), and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can and does kill marine mammals.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not a solution. Spayed/neutered cats that remain outside still threaten human health, endangered birds, and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest using public funds or license plate funds for this action when this money could go towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and the public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it or to include language prohibiting the use of funds to re-release cats into the environment and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on the advisory committee. Thank you for your consideration.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 4:55:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joanna p milo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the work 2 save animals

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 5:18:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei-Anne Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB1023 to support organizations that spay/neuter pet animals and/or free-roaming cats to reduce overpopulation. Thank you for your time.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 5:18:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alberta J Freidus-Flagg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support 1023 SB RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 5:33:05 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Skow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Stephanie Skow and I support SB1023. As Bob Barker always said:

“Help control the pet population. Have your pets spayed or neutered.”

Thank you!

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 5:34:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dain Christensen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 as written.

I respectfully request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not an answer for management and is wasteful of taxpayer dollars.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alaie ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alaie ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration

Dain Christensen

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 5:39:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
katherine skow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Spay and neuter is a much more humane way to help control the animal population.

Mahalo,

Katherine Skow

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:06:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats. We are in strong support, as is the Hawaii Animal Welfare Association. We have participated in spay neuter since 1992 in Hawaii Kai. Bill much needed. to achieve the critical goal of reducing animal overpopulation.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:50:27 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia F Tucker PsyD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

Cynthia F Tucker, PsyD

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 6:55:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I volunteer at the Hawaiian Humane Society (on Oahu), and I can tell you it is truly heartbreaking to see the dogs (and cats) coming in needing care. Most are strays who are unneutered, abandoned, abused, and many females already pregnant. Their beautiful innocent puppies are born at the center, and they have nobody there to love them, as there is barely enough staff to handle their physical care. Nowadays their facilities are always maxed out, and this isn't the only care center on Oahu. This has got to stop. There IS a solution, and that is to increase awareness and availability of spay/neuter programs. This bill facilitates the spay/neutering of free-roaming cats, which is the biggest problem here, especially because of the danger to our precious Monk Seals from these animals. ANY spay/neuter programs are sorely needed to reduce the suffering of these animals. Please help by passing this bill.

March 5, 2025

Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair & Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

RE: SB1023 SD1, Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

Dear Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

As a practicing veterinarian in Hawaii dedicated to animal health and conservation of native wildlife, I am writing to express my opposition to SB 1023 SD1 as written. While I am grateful for the support of so many legislators in desiring to address our animal overpopulation crisis and reduce the free-roaming cat population, I am concerned that use of these special funds for popular “trap-neuter-release” (TNR) programs will be ineffective in reducing these populations and protecting native wildlife.

Most scientific reviews and mathematical models support the conclusion that TNR is **ineffective** in decreasing free-roaming populations in real world situations. The failure of this approach is multifactorial: high breeding frequency and large litter sizes, lower actual rates of trapping and sterilization than necessary to stop population growth, overabundance of food provided to free-roaming colonies, and continual abandonment of unwanted pet cats. Any successful population reduction with TNR programs has been attributed primarily to **concurrent adoption and/or euthanasia of over 50%** of the estimated colony population.

Multiple national and international organizations do not support TNR as an effective method of managing free-roaming cat populations, including the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, The Wildlife Society, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, PETA, and the American Bird Conservancy.

The negative health impacts of free-roaming cats on native wildlife are especially poignant in Hawaii due to our unique native biodiversity that is threatened by increasing environmental pressures. Native birds such as honeycreepers, nene, and alala, and marine mammals such as monk seals and spinner dolphins are increasingly at risk from either direct predation or indirect spread of disease such as toxoplasmosis which is only spread by infected cats.

Additionally, free-roaming cat colonies are often afflicted with infectious diseases such as upper respiratory viruses, leukemia and immunodeficiency viruses, internal and external parasites, and ringworm, which lead to chronic health issues and poor quality of life for affected animals. TNR programs do not focus on finding permanent homes for cats or improving the quality of life for cats that are re-released, and can inadvertently increase cat abandonment rather than encouraging responsible pet ownership or surrender of unwanted pets to shelter or rescue groups.

As there are multiple introduced bills regarding spay/neuter special funds before the legislature this session, I ask that you strongly consider amending this bill with language from HB 364, specifically the following:

“Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; **provided that spayed or neutered animals are not re-released into the environment.**”

This specific language would ensure public funds are used toward **effective** sterilization and population control programs that restrict re-release of sterilized animals. Without clear guidelines on how these funds will be used, please OPPOSE SB 1023 SD1 as written. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Jill Yoshicedo, DVM

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 8:28:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to add my very strong support for SB 1023 by Sen. Lee, which creates a spay and neuter fund for pets and free-roaming cats. Since the revenue comes from the sale of special license plates and from state income tax check-off, the fund is voluntary. The state has a cat overpopulation problem. I am currently fostering cats in lower Puna, working as a volunteer with Action4Animals on Big Island. Our model is adoption as the optimal outcome for abandoned cats and kittens. All the animals we foster are spayed or neutered prior to adoption. We depend on the medical services that organizations like PetFix and Good Karma provide for us, so that we can match people and pets without running the risk of adding to cat overpopulation. SB 1023 would be a great benefit for the environment, for neighborhoods, and for the cats themselves.

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI. 96749

Big Island

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 9:17:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Cigainero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair and Members, Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of passage of SB 1023. I am involved with rescue and foster for adoption through Action 4 Animals-Hawaii. The demand for low or no-cost spay and neuter far surpasses the availability. It is critical that we fund effective strategies for controlling the population of cats and dogs. This bill creates voluntary funding mechanisms for services in high demand on each of our islands. Mahalo for your consideration of these comments in strong support of SB 1023.

Respectfully,

Barbara Cigainero,

Puna Region of Big Island

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 9:35:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paisley Veilleux	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an animal lover and someone who cares for our environment, I support SB1023. Community-led efforts by our nonprofits are bearing the brunt of the cost of spay and neutering animals, which in turn decreases invasive feral populations and helps us to maintain equilibrium with our environment. Funding these programs would allow for expansion and more animals to be spayed in a reasonable window of time (waitlists for free and reduced cost clinics are often months long.)

Mahalo.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 10:07:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:08:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Warashina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,

I am in support of SB1023 SD1 which helps to address pet over population in the State of Hawaii. Special funds will used to control the number of unwanted pets from being born only to be euthanized. Please help end this unnecessary cycle.and support SB1023 SD1. .

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2025 11:12:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Kahaloa, Vice Chair Representative Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

Please vote for SB 1023 SD 1, which I strongly support, to reduce the over population of pets and free roaming cats.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 1:34:58 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
eva marie kelnhofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

i support this bill we need more funding and resources to get the cat population under control. TNR is a great way to do this but the organization need the funds to make this happen. Please approve this bill it is money well spent.

Thank you,

Eva Marie Kelnhofer

Aiea, Hi

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 5:08:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1023. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 5:24:53 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill 1023.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 6:31:04 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to establish a statewide fund for pet population control with an advisory committee to oversee the fund to provide support neutering and spaying and reduce pet overpopulation. This is a much more effective way than pet euthanasia for overpopulation

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 7:17:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Bagshaw	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. These are NOT native animals, we must prioritize native species. In my 36 years in Hawaii I have adopted two cats from the MHS and both have lived their long happy lives INDOORS. We know that feral free roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual 'ālae 'ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua'i, including around 100 'ālae 'ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

'Trap-Neuter-Release' (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai'i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes,

it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 7:37:51 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support efforts helping with critical TNR. Mahalo

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:22:39 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Parker Powell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. We know that feral free roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alaie ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alaie ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:32:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Bache	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We oppose SB1023_HD1 because the funds go to TNR and do nothing to protect the native environment of Hawai'i. Programs that intentionally leave cats on the landscape, such as Trap-Neuter-Release/TNR, are not the answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds, and marine mammals. Please put the protection of indigenous species and human health over that of an invasive species and oppose this bill. Thank you.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:41:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this Bill. It will allow us to take better care of our cat friends on this island, reduce complaints by people upset by them, and, reduce the number of cats born and treated with abandon.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:48:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy McDavid	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of SB1023. I volunteer with animal rescue, and the situation on our island is dire. The amount of dogs euthanized on Hawaii Island is insane & unacceptable. Cats are even worse, as they are not even accepted by animal control. The most important we can do is spay and neuter our pets. To get this done, we must provide free. accessible spay and neuter options & encourage the community to do this!

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 8:54:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stong support.

West-side organizations are already spaying/neutering approximately **500 cats per month**. And this is just on the west side! There are already dozens maybe hundreds of trained *volunteers* so no salaries to pay. There's also no *facilities* to acquire and then maintain.

The people and processes are already in place to *efficiently and expediently* put resources to use to help cats. And helping the overpopulation problem our island faces helps improve people's lives.

Strong support. Please support this bill.

Thank you.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:06:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
linda willaby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because there definitely needs to be more support and funding for spay/neuter clinics for pets and free roaming cats to try to control the animal overpopulation on this island. Unchecked breeding is a threat to wildlife and bird populations. So many people here have limited resources and veterinarians are too expensive for a lot of people and some veterinarians are not accepting new clients. Private non-profit animal rescue organizations are doing the work and taking the pressure off of the county, so funding is of utmost importance.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:09:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Rothe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

While I support the trapping and neutering of cats, I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. We know that feral free-roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual 'alae 'ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge on Kaua'i, including around 100 'alae 'ula and 40 koloa ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al. 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish et al. 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian monk seals, Hawaiian spinner dolphins (NOAA 2020) and humpback whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

'Trap-Neuter-Release' (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds, and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai'i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk (2014) revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of

carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration,

Jennifer Rothe

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:27:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY OPPOSING SB 1023**TO:**

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen

Rep. Sean Quinlan

Rep. Amy A. Perruso

Rep. Gene Ward

Dear Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

As a biologist with 35 years of experience working in Hawai‘i, I am deeply familiar with the severe impacts that free-roaming feral cats have on our endangered native wildlife. I strongly oppose SB 1023 in its current form and urge you to vote against it. If the bill advances, I strongly recommend amending it to explicitly prohibit the re-release of feral cats and to require the inclusion of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Department of Health (DOH) on the advisory committee.

While I support Trap-Neuter efforts, this bill does not prevent the re-release of sterilized feral cats back into the environment. Extensive research has shown that free-roaming feral cats are deadly to Hawai‘i’s native and endangered birds. The stakes could not be higher. For example, there are fewer than 700 ‘alae ‘ula (Hawaiian Common Gallinules) remaining in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). These birds evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. Scientific data clearly demonstrates that feral cats are a primary cause of their decline. Between 2014 and 2018, feral cats killed over 250 native waterbirds at Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge, including approximately 100 ‘alae ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. For an endangered species, these losses are catastrophic.

The risks extend beyond wildlife. Feral cats also pose a direct threat to human health. They are a known vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), a parasite transmitted through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis can cause miscarriages, birth defects, and fatalities in humans (Kheirandish et al., 2019). It is also deadly to marine life, including Hawaiian Monk Seals, Spinner Dolphins, and

Humpback Whales (NOAA, 2020). The continued presence of outdoor feral cats in our environment endangers both public health and our fragile ecosystems.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not a viable solution. Even sterilized feral cats continue to hunt and kill endangered birds and remain a persistent source of disease transmission. A 2014 study by Lohr and Lepczyk found that the vast majority of Hawai‘i residents agree that cats should be kept indoors to prevent these harms. We must not allow a small minority of individuals to push native species toward extinction in an island ecosystem that is already struggling with invasive species.

Furthermore, it is deeply concerning that public funds, including license plate funds, could be used to support the re-release of feral cats. These funds should be directed toward conservation efforts, not activities that undermine them. Those of us in the conservation community have repeatedly witnessed the devastating consequences of feral cats on our native wildlife. Every year, we find the carcasses of endangered birds, ripped apart by these non-native predators. If this bill passes as written, it will perpetuate this destruction, wasting conservation dollars and undermining efforts to protect Hawai‘i’s unique biodiversity.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote against SB 1023 or, at the very least, amend it to:

1. Prohibit the use of funds for the re-release of feral cats into the environment.
2. Require the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on the advisory committee to ensure environmental and public health concerns are addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aloha ‘Āina,
Benton K. Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 9:50:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helene Navaro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support this very humane and compassionate bill to reduce pet and free roaming cats' overpopulation for our state. Money allocated for spay and neuter fund is absolutely crucial and needed.

Your support for this bill is greatly appreciated!

Mahalo Nui loa!

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 10:04:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Shaughnessy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 10:29:24 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to help fund spay and neuter for Hawai'i's cats and dogs.

It is vital to reducing the state's population of feral pets and will reduce the suffering of these poor animals.

With aloha,

Malia

Testimony in support of SB 1023 by Judith Aikawa, MD, Vice-Chair
Maui Humane Society Board of Directors

I am in support of SB 1023 because:

- 1) Spay/neuter is key to addressing the problem of prolific breeding, a root cause of pet and free-roaming cat overpopulation and animal homelessness in Hawaii
- 2) The high cost of spay/neuter surgeries has put spay/neuter surgeries out of reach for many pet owners. Affordable and accessible spay/neuter services are desperately needed for both owned pets and free-roaming cats.
- 3) All of the Hawaiian animal shelters and rescues are facing a high intake crisis, with the number of animal intakes outpacing available resources. Spaying and neutering pets and free-roaming cats is a proven method to decrease animal intake at sheltering facilities.
- 4) Grant funding for spay and neuter surgeries from private foundations has become severely limited. State support is badly needed.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 12:20:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ian Cole	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill SB 1023 and urge you to vote against it when it comes before your Committee OR to request amended language preventing the release of free roaming feral cats, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on an advisory committee.

The bill as written allows for Trap and Neutering, which I support, but does not prevent the release of feral animals afterwards. We know that feral free roaming cats are deadly to our culturally and ecologically important endangered Hawaiian birds.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alaie ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alaie ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014 revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds or license plate funds for this action, when this money could be going towards conservation efforts. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

I urge you to vote against it OR to include the language around a prohibition on use of funds to re-release cats into the environment, and the inclusion of DLNR and DOH on advisory committee.

Thank-you for your consideration

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 3:04:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Am writing in support of SB1023 SD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals.

While there appears to be widespread agreement that reducing overpopulation of free-roaming cats is beneficial, achieving it requires resources to implement the procedures.

It is my hope that establishment of a Spay and Neuter Special Fund will get us there with the help from the animal welfare organizations we are fortunate to have that can offer the service.

Thank you.
Alice Saul
Hawaii Kai, Honolulu

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 3:29:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Kane	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We oppose SB 1023 because the funds go to TNR and do nothing to protect our Hawaiian endangered birds.

I strongly urge your opposition to SB 1023_SD1. This bill will intentionally keep stray and feral cats roaming the landscape, where they are a nuisance, a human health risk, and a threat to Hawai‘i’s endangered birds and marine mammals.

The stakes are very high. For example, there are less than 700 individual ‘alae ‘ula in the world (Gorreson et al., 2024). They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them. There is a huge body of evidence to show that cats are contributing to the decline in these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kaua‘i, including around 100 ‘alae ‘ula and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

Human and wildlife health is also at risk from cat-transmitted parasites and diseases. Outdoor cats are nearly three times more likely to be infected with parasites (Chalkowski et al. 2019) and are the sole source of toxoplasmosis in Hawai‘i, which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it can cause miscarriage, blindness, birth defects, and death, and also threatens our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins and Humpback Whales (Aguirre et al., 2019; NOAA, 2020).

Programs that intentionally leave cats on the landscape, such as ‘Trap-Neuter-Release’ (TNR), are not the answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds, and marine mammals. TNR is also not popular. A comprehensive study of Hawai‘i residents by Lohr and Lepczyk (2014) revealed that the vast majority of Hawai‘i residents agreed with this stance. Members of the conservation community and public, including myself, are tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by stray and feral cats every year. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats

have on an isolated island ecosystem.

It is particularly egregious to suggest the use of public funds for this action, especially when other conservation resources have been gutted by the federal government. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate the slaughter of Hawai'i's native wildlife, undermining efforts to protect endangered species and putting the entire community at risk.

I urge you to OPPOSE SB 1023_SD1.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/6/2025 4:11:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/7/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelley Dunbar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Spay and neuter programs are key to addressing the serious problem of prolific breeding, a root cause of pet and free-roaming cat overpopulation and animal homelessness in Hawaii. Greater access to affordable spay/neuter services are desperately needed for both owned pets and free-roaming cats. At the same time, our community is facing tough economic conditions and with the high costs to spay/neuter with private vets, these vital procedures are out of reach for many of your pet owning constituents.

In addition, across all the Hawaiian islands, animal shelters and rescues are facing a high intake crisis, with the number of animal intakes outpacing available resources. Spaying and neutering pets and free-roaming cats is a proven method to decrease animal intake at sheltering facilities.

Furthermore, by investing in spay and neuter - a proven and humane method to reduce the free-roaming cat populations - these efforts will mitigate their impact on native wildlife and public spaces.

SB1023 provides a sustainable funding mechanism to expand access to spay and neuter services, ensuring that more pet owners and community cat caregivers can prevent unwanted litters. By establishing a special fund dedicated to this purpose, Hawaii will join other states that have successfully implemented similar measures, leading to fewer animals entering shelters, reduced euthanasia rates, and better outcomes for pets, wildlife, and communities alike.

Please support SB1023, a critical step toward addressing pet overpopulation in a humane and effective manner. Thank you for your consideration!