

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

MARCH 27, 2024
3:30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

SENATE BILL NO. 1590, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1590, SD1, HD1 which directs the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors, and to assess fully transferring meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State. The measure appropriates funds for an unspecified number of inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture for meat inspections. The Department supports this measure with reservation.

The department has testified that a meat inspector program supervisor or manager is essential to establish and to operate a meat inspection program. This is because the Division does not have the personnel resources to have one of the existing Veterinary Medical Officers or Veterinary Program Manager oversee this specialized program. This is a key position, and the department recommends the measure be amended to include 1.0 FTE Meat Inspection Supervisor/VMO.

It is estimated it can take approximately a year or more to reestablish state meat inspection positions, reorganize the division, and amend statutes and administrative rules as needed to restart a supplemental program. Additionally, operating costs



including equipment, vehicle(s), office space, travel expenses, laboratory testing, and supplies such as PPE are needed. Payroll and operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures to continue the program once active, which are estimated to be approximately \$1,000,000 annually for a supplemental program. Fully transferring meat inspection authority to the state from the USDA FSIS requires substantially more positions, and expenditures to operate. Subsequently, the required financial and workforce commitment from the state is much higher.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-1590-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 2:00:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

This very flawed bill, in its various iterations, would have a huge impact on the enforcement of federal Humane Methods of Slaughter of Animals. It would transfer ALL oversight would be transferred from the federal government to the State. Considering the ramshackle manner that DoA has handled the livestock industry for the past 40 years that I have been following this the livestock industry, I strongly object to appropriating taxpayer monies and resources without a thorough business plan and consideration of environmental impact issues. I refer you to Beth Fukumoto's excellent piece in Civil Beat, March 24, 2024 "**Hawaii is the only state that doesn't require a fiscal analysis of a bill before lawmakers vote on it.**"

An example of the bad choices DoA has made: choosing to build a slaughterhouse and manure lagoon in a tsunami evacuation zone (Olai St). Plans to build more abattoirs on an adjacent site should trigger an EIS.

Please consider the ramifications of approving SB1590 and table it.

Mahalo!



March 25, 2024

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Testimony in Support of SB 1590, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, Relating to Agriculture (Requires the Department of Agriculture [DOA] to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State. Requires the DOA to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from the federal government to the State. Appropriates funds for the establishment of inspector positions within the DOA to perform meat inspections. Effective 7/1/3000.)

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 3:30 p.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 308 Via Videoconference.

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 1590, S.D. 1, H.D. 1** and for the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture in Hawaii.

SB 1590, S.D. 1, H.D. 1. The purpose of this measure is to 1) direct the DOA to assess steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors; 2) direct the DOA to assess steps necessary to fully transfer meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State; and 3) appropriate funds to the DOA for inspector positions to perform meat inspections.

LURF understands that consumer demand for locally grown beef, together with the surge in the axis deer population in Maui County have resulted in a lack of antemortem meat inspection capacity in the State. Due to the discontinuance of the State's meat inspection program in the mid-1990s, local meat producers now have no alternative but

to comply with inspection requirements of the USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service in order to sell meat to the retail and wholesale market. Supplementing federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors, and eventually effectuating the complete transfer of meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State will bolster and expand Hawaii's livestock industry; address the use of axis deer; and provide the local livestock industry with greater access to the marketplace.

LURF's Position. LURF members include property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider efforts to protect and support agriculture significant to the continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve farming and ranching businesses into the future.

LURF supports SB 1590, S.D. 1, H.D. 1 because the bill could allow local meat facilities to meet the needs of the State's diverse livestock industry by providing an alternative to USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection; assist in meeting the demand of Hawaii consumers; and increase processing capacity and diversify processing options.

This measure makes a significant effort to advance and facilitate needed meat production in Hawaii. By recognizing the issues faced by local farmers and ranchers, and by identifying the need to assist the local agriculture and ranching industries and implement measures which help to support the viability and maintenance of agriculture and ranching in the State, this bill helps to promote economically viable agriculture, increased food production, and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii.

For the reasons stated above, LURF **supports SB 1590, S.D. 1, H.D. 1**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 — 3:30 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1590 SD1 HD 1, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports SB 1590 SD1 HD 1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State; requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal government to the State; and, appropriates funds for the establishment of inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections.

Ulupono supports the State's goal to increase local food production, which includes strengthening the local livestock industry. Establishing a state meat inspection program, with dedicated resources, provides Hawai'i's ranchers with additional tools to process locally raised meat to bring to market. This program directly supports our diverse, local livestock industry, including the efforts to control the axis deer population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

SB1590 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 3:30pm
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1590 SD1 HD1** which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State and requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State.

Access to inspectors to validate safety of harvest and processing of livestock is a necessary part of Hawaii's local meat supply chain. The creation of a state administered meat inspection could increase access to inspectors that facilities can utilize, which would increase the capacity of meat that could be processed – this is vital during a time when the demand for local beef is growing and there is a need to process all types of livestock, including invasive deer. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports the establishment and funding of a meat inspection program. The state program should be **supplemental to the existing federal inspection**, allowing for more options for processors to choose from to get the job done. **We caution against transferring full authority to the State and encourage the DOA to thoroughly assess this, as removing federal inspections may reduce access to inspectors. We also need to consider the resources that will need to be allocated to the DOA to successfully implement a full program.**

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

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 27, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON SB 1590, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
3:30 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports the intent of SB 1590, SD1, HD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State, requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State, and appropriates funds for the establishment of inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections.

Federal law requires that meat and poultry sold for retail/wholesale markets be processed at a federally inspected facility. Currently, 27 states have State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Programs that operate under cooperative inspection agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS). States with MPI programs operate under a cooperative agreement with FSIS and must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and Poultry Products Inspection Act. However, State-inspected meat and poultry products are limited to intrastate commerce only unless a state opts into an additional cooperative program, the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program.

Hawai'i previously had its own meat inspection program, but it was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to cuts in budget and staffing, and since then, the USDA-Food Safety Inspection Service has assumed full responsibility for these obligations in the State. This means that Hawai'i facilities wishing to sell meat to retail/wholesale markets must be inspected by the USDA.

Hawai'i farmers and ranchers who raise livestock and poultry that sell directly to local consumers, restaurants, grocery stores, and farmers' markets are often challenged because they do not have USDA-inspected processing facilities available within a practical distance and at an affordable cost. A Hawai'i State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program could provide an alternative to FSIS inspection. It could help increase processing capacity, diversify processing options and reduce processing bottlenecks, allow producers to find a local facility to slaughter and process livestock in remote/rural locations, reduce transportation time and costs, and support producers' ability to donate locally produced meat to food banks and other community feeding programs. State MPIs are often more flexible and responsive to the unique needs of producers than USDA-FSIS. Under a cooperative agreement, USDA-FSIS can provide up to 50 percent of Hawai'i's operating funds, as well as training and other assistance.

In order to sell Axis deer meat, the meat must first be inspected by a USDA-FSIS inspector under voluntary USDA inspection. The USDA defines Axis Deer as a non-amenable species or exotic meat, which means that the cost of the inspection is not covered by the federal government, unlike other meats such as beef, pork, sheep, and domesticated birds. A Hawai'i State Meat and Poultry Inspection could pay for or subsidize the inspection cost for Axis Deer.

Reestablishing a Hawai'i meat and poultry inspection program will help promote the State's livestock industries. This will increase the ability to conduct local inspections of harvest facilities and help drive the growth of local protein production.

However, we are concerned about Section 2 (b) of the bill, which directs DOA to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State. We are unsure if DOA has the capacity or the resources to perform all meat inspection requirements of the State.

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



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 AT 3:30 P.M.**

To The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

SUPPORT SB1590 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB1590 SD1 HD1.**

The Chamber notes that there is a need to expand Hawaii's meat inspection capacity to fulfill local demand. Consumer demand for locally grown beef, combined with the axis deer population explosion in Maui County, created a reduced antemortem meat inspection capacity.

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

We acknowledge that the State's meat inspection program was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to cuts to budget and staffing mandated by reduction in force initiatives. Restoring and updating the meat inspection program will not only grow Hawaii's livestock industry but address the beneficial use of axis deer and other ungulates. Supplementing existing federal inspection capacity will also assist the livestock industry with greater access to the marketplace.

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

For these reasons, we wholeheartedly **SUPPORT SB1590 SD1 HD1** and respectfully request it be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

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



MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

March 27, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON SB 1590, SD1 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
3:30 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB **strongly supports SB 1590, SD1 HD1** seeking to increase Hawaii's meat inspection capacity.

Food safety is a priority for a healthy community. Inspection of livestock prior to slaughter is a critical step to ensuring safety of our food supply. States across the nation had meat inspection capacity in addition to those provided by the Federal government. During the economic downturn, states, including Hawaii, eliminated these positions wholly relying on Federal inspection capacity.

Maui has an axis deer problem. Expansion of venison meat sales allowed with increased inspection capacity is an integral part of managing this invasive species. Expanded meat processing capacity provides one of the steps needed for a long term solution.

Over the years, small ranches raising a variety of animals have become commonplace and states are realizing the need for local capacity in addition to Federal capacity. Goat meat is becoming popular. Commercialization of this option will also require inspections.

MCFB respectfully requests your support of SB 1590, SD1 HD1 but do have concerns regarding the State having full authority instead of in addition to federal inspections.

Please contact Warren Watanabe at 808-281-9718 if you have any questions.



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Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB1590.**

Localizing meat inspections in Hawaii is crucial for our farmers and ranchers. By giving the Department of Agriculture the authority to perform meat inspections within the state, we can ensure the safety and quality of our local meat products. This not only benefits consumers by providing them with locally sourced meat, but it also supports our local economy and agricultural industry.

The appropriation of funds for three full-time equivalent inspector positions is a necessary step in transferring full authority over meat inspections to the State. This will streamline the inspection process, reduce costs for small processors, and create more opportunities for producers to bring their products to market. Overall, SB1590 Agriculture is a vital measure that will support our farmers, ensure the safety of our food supply, and promote the growth of our local agricultural sector.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF