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BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

March 10, 2016
11:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO 34
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO EXAMINE THE
FEASIBILITY OF DECOMMISSIONING THE ANIMAL QUARANTINE STATION IN
HALAWA VALLEY

Chairperson Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 34. The bill requests the Department of Agriculture examine the feasibility of decommissioning the Animal Quarantine Station in Halawa Valley. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports the intent of this measure and offers comments.

The Rabies Quarantine Program is successful in fulfilling its mission of preventing the entry of dogs, cats and other carnivores with the rabies virus. It is important to clarify that since 2003, dogs and cats meeting specified rabies vaccination, serology testing, microchip identification, waiting period and inspection no longer require quarantine to enter Hawaii. Approximately 89% of animals qualified for release after inspection in FY 2015.

The facilities at the Animal Quarantine Station (AQS) were constructed in the early 1980's when the program required that all dogs and cats entering Hawaii be confined and observed for 120 days. In 2003, the Direct Airport Release Program was introduced and has reduced the number of dogs and cats housed at AQS. There is an average daily population of approximately 200-280 dogs and cats. The Department has



requested \$1.5 million from the legislature this session to support the design and construction of facilities to house the Animal Industry Division as a cohesive unit, including the Animal Quarantine Station as part of a single footprint. .

The timeline to accomplish the resolution's objectives for a feasibility study is ambitious. The variety and magnitude of issues to be examined will require expertise in a number of areas such as: land and real property appraisal and evaluation, infrastructure, design and construction review, impact on community, environment and stakeholders, suitability and accessibility, impact on staff and the logistics of relocation. Many of the objectives in the resolution are outside the expertise of the Animal Industry Division and the Department. It is recommended that the Department be allowed additional time and financial support to identify an entity capable of managing the various specialized objectives presented in this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.