

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**FEBRUARY 23, 2023  
11:30 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 415**

**HOUSE BILL NO.609, HD1  
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION**

Chairperson Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 609 HD1. HB609 HD1 appropriates funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services pursuant to chapter 159, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Department supports the measure to review and update the state's meat inspection program requirements where appropriate, while restoring the state meat inspection program. The Department provides comment.

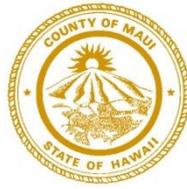
A meat inspector program supervisor or manager must also be established and included to operate a meat inspection program. The Division does not have the personnel resources to have one of the existing Veterinary Medical Officers or Veterinary Program Manager positions to oversee this specialized program. This is a key position. Additionally, operating costs including equipment, vehicle(s), office space, travel expenses, laboratory testing and supplies such as PPE are also needed. Payroll and operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures to continue the program once active, which are estimated to be \$1,000,000.



The Department supports this measure, provided it does not impact the Department's priorities identified in the Executive Budget request. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**KEKUHAUPIO R. AKANA**  
Acting Managing Director



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

February 22, 2023

TO: Honorable Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair  
Honorable Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
Rogerene K.M. Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: February 22, 2023

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 609, HD1, RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services pursuant to chapter 159, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Our administration **SUPPORTS** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Axis deer is an invasive species that poses a continuing threat to Maui County, and despite a current ongoing effort to control the growing deer population, there are an estimate of 60,000 deer roaming Maui County.
2. This measure would support a growing demand for locally grown beef and assist with mitigating the axis deer population in Maui County.
3. Axis deer mitigation is a serious concern in Maui County because they eat cattle food sources and farmer's crops, cause soil erosion from over grazing, and threaten native species.

For the foregoing reasons, we offer our **SUPPORT** of this measure.

**HB-609-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 5:42:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yoshito L'Hote	Aina Ho'okupu o Kilauea	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill with apprehension as many positions are left vacant at the DOA, Still it is good to have funding for them but I am afraid that in this environment today, we will not fill them.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
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February 23, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON HB 609, HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference  
11:30 AM

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 HB 609. HD1**, which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services.

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 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 that 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 need 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 as opposed to 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 have local inspection of harvest facilities and help drive the growth of local protein production.

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



# MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790  
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

## TESTIMONY

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 23, 2023  
11:30 AM  
Conference Room 308

### HB 609 HD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB is a general agriculture advocacy organization representing farm and ranch families and organizations on the island of Maui.

MCFB strongly supports HB 609 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services.

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.

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. This is a link to Oregon that just restored their state inspection capacity.

[https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/oregon-lawmakers-approve-state-meat-inspection-to-strengthen-local-meat/article\\_19bd2b48-b645-11ea-95d0-8fbfd152f006.html](https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/oregon-lawmakers-approve-state-meat-inspection-to-strengthen-local-meat/article_19bd2b48-b645-11ea-95d0-8fbfd152f006.html)

Maui has an axis deer problem. Sale of venison can be expanded with increased inspection capacity. This provides one of the steps needed for a long term solution.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter. Please contact Warren Watanabe at 8082819718 if there are any questions.



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Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hana, Maui

Reba Lopez  
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahalawai,  
Maui

Kaipō Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai  
Molokai

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

Brynn Foster  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki  
Kauai

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

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) 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 HB609.**

This bill provides essential funding to the Department of Agriculture that will go towards the salaries of three full-time inspectors for meat inspection services, thus ensuring the safety and quality of our agricultural outputs.

This investment will open up markets for farmers and ranchers, and it is sure to bring more economic opportunity and security. This bill would really be a win-win for everyone involved in the agricultural industry, from producers and entrepreneurs to consumers.

These critical services are vital for ensuring that the citizens of Hawaii can purchase and consume safe, nutritious and healthy meat products. Our farmers and ranchers need to trust that all livestock, poultry and rabbit meat sold in Hawaii is safe and has been inspected for defects and abnormalities. HB 609 helps to ensure that our food industry here in Hawaii is well regulated and held to the highest standards. We consider this bill to be essential in order to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of our state and its citizens.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipō Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

**HB-609-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 10:33:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leanne Kami	Kohana Family Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou, my name is Leanne Kami. I work in Hilo as a strategy consultant for Kamehameha Schools, focused on sustainable food system development in Hawai‘i. I also own and manage Kohana Family Farms, a small organic farm in Pana‘ewa. I am writing this letter in my capacity as a farmer and member of the Hawai‘i Farmers Union United and the Hawai‘i Farm Bureau Federation.

I strongly support HB609 to restore and update the state meat inspection program. Increasing inspection capacity can help grow Hawaii's livestock industry and address the beneficial use of axis deer and other feral ungulates. Supplementing existing federal inspection capacity will also provide the livestock industry with greater access to the marketplace, strengthening our local economy.



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

**HB609 HD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 9:00 AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

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.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB609 HD1** which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services.

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, and allowing for certification of local veterinarians, could increase access to inspectors that facilities can utilize, which would increase the capacity of meat that could be processed. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports the establishment and funding of a meat inspection program, but 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. The addition of a State inspector should not be an additional requirement for inspection.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director



**HB-609-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 9:10:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

**HB-609-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 10:15:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.

**HB-609-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 11:13:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick M. Mencher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**I support HB 609. HD1**, which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services.

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.

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

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

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher