

**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**  
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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**FEBRUARY 12, 2024  
1:31 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1590  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1590 which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors, and also to assess fully transferring meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State. The measure appropriates funds for three full-time equivalent inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections. The Department supports this measure with reservation.

The 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. It is estimated it can take 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 also 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures to continue the program once active, which are estimated to be approximately \$1,000,000 annually.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 1590**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees:

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**, 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 three full-time equivalent 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 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 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.

However, we are concerned about Section 2 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.



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND  
ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**SB1590**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, February 12, 2024, 1:31 PM  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1590** 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



**SB-1590**

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 2:58:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/12/2024 1:31:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inga Gibson	Testifying for Animal Welfare Institute	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Gabbard,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide one suggested amendment to the preamble of SB1590, to ensure all animals subject to inspection for slaughter/sale, will be covered under any and all regulations and requirements for humane handling and humane slaughter. This is included in other bills however it was not referenced in SB1590.

**Page 2, line 3 add "ensure the humane handling and slaughter of all animals subject to inspections"**

The legislature further finds that federal laws have changed, and the state meat inspection program should be restored and updated to comply with new requirements, meet the needs of the State's diverse livestock industry and local demand, **ensure the humane handling and slaughter of all animals subject to inspection**, and ensure the livestock industry remains a productive part of the State's economic engine.

Thank you, Inga Gibson

On behalf of Animal Welfare Institute