

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 6, 2023
1:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

SENATE BILL NO. 1132
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1132. This bill appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture to identify a central area on Maui, then plan, design, and construct a hemp decorticator facility for the use of interested parties in the area. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) supports the intent of this measure provided it does not impact the priorities set in the Governor's executive biennium budget and requests the following changes.

The HDOA respectfully requests that the bill be amended to reflect planning funding only. Capital improvement funds typically don't become available until September of the appropriated fiscal year. Procurement of a consultant to perform the search takes approximately another three months. We anticipate the study itself will take six to nine months, followed by Chapter 343 requirements which can take another nine to twelve months if it's a simple environmental assessment. If it becomes an environmental impact statement, it will take at least a year to complete, more likely two years or more. It is our understanding that General Fund appropriations lapse on June 30 of the appropriated fiscal year. The timing involved does not allow the design phase, much less the construction phase to begin. The HDOA would be happy to request design and construction funds upon the completion of the planning phase.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





www.hawaiihempfarmersassociation.org

February 5, 2023

RE: Defer SB 1132 and HB 657 with Amendments (Decorticator)

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

Thank you for your continued support of Hawaii Hemp farmers. It is true that the Hawaii hemp industry and hemp farmers are in great need of processing infrastructure and we applaud the forward thinking of this bill. The islands do need more than one decorticator. However, we hope this bill will be deferred until it is amended to,

- Include the infrastructure needs of farmers on each of the islands: 44% of all hemp farmers are on Hawaii Island, 29% on Oahu, 23% on Maui, and 3% on Kauai. A smaller mobile decorticator, not a large, landed facility on one island, may make more sense for some islands.
- Ensure Hawaii hemp farmers and industry experts shall significantly inform the type and size of infrastructure to be selected, as well as location, and equitable use by farmers and clear definitions of ownership and storage. The Hawaii hemp farmers and industry members are in contact with processing experts around the U.S. and world, while the Department of Agriculture does not have this expertise in-house. Infrastructure equipment is evolving at a very quick pace. We support HB 1270 and SB 964, SB1589 that call for the Departments of Agriculture and Health to create a task force to identify farming and industry needs and strategies and policies that will support a vibrant hemp industry.
- Include the use of associated harvesting equipment and the post-decorticating baling and storage. Additionally, infrastructure for fiber and seed for food and fuel as well as small processing support for hemp CBD farmers is needed. We support a bill that recognizes or leaves the door open for these other processing needs to be addressed.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Respectfully,

Gail Byrne Baber

Gail Byrne Baber

President and Farmer

Ray Maki

Ray Maki

Co-Vice President and Farmer

Brittany Neal

Brittany Neal

Co-Vice President and Farmer

SB 1132 and HB 637

Maui Hemp Decorticator



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
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February 6, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 1132
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 SB 1132, which appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture to identify a central area on Maui, then plan, design, and construct a hemp decorticator facility for the use of interested parties in the area.

Industrial hemp continues to provide an opportunity for our farmers to diversify and expand agriculture production into new areas. Hemp is a very versatile agricultural product that is used to make a variety of products including clothing, food, animal feed, paper, biofuels, construction material, medicinal products, and various non-medicinal products.

This measure will continue to support and grow Hawai'i's hemp industry by building a processing facility for Hawai'i's hemp farmers to process hemp-derived products.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Bringing back the birds

2/1/2023

The Honorable Mike Gabbard
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 201
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Gabbard:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **opposition to SB 998 as written and to suggest amendments.**

Although American Bird Conservancy supports the sterilization of domestic cats, the potential use of the funds collected as part of this bill for programs that would trap, sterilize, and then release unowned cats to the landscape is cause for great concern. The use of public funds for such programs would cause 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 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](#),



Bringing back the birds

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.**

Consequently, we ask that you please consider the following **two amendments** to this bill to protect Hawaiʻi's people and wildlife:

1. To prevent the release of unowned cats to the landscape, **limit the use of funds exclusively to sterilizations for owned cats.**
2. Should an advisory committee continue to be needed, **include a representative from the Hawaiʻi Department of Health and Hawaiʻi Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry and Wildlife** to ensure that actions will not inadvertently put Hawaiʻi's residents and vulnerable wildlife at risk.

With these amendments, American Bird Conservancy would be happy to support SB 998. As it is, however, this bill has the potential to facilitate ongoing harms caused by at-large cats and to filter precious public resources toward a program that will only contribute to ongoing harms to Hawaiʻi's people and wildlife.

Mahalo for your consideration,

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

Chris Farmer, Ph.D.
Hawaiʻi Program Director

Suggested Amendments to SB 998

Page 1

15 §143-____ Spay and neuter special fund. (a) There is
16 established in the state treasury the spay and neuter special

Page 2

1 fund to be administered by the department of budget
2 and finance. Moneys received by the department from:
3 (1) State income tax refund designations to the special
4 fund pursuant to section 235-102.5(e); and
5 (2) Appropriations or other moneys made available,
6 shall be deposited into the special fund. All interest earned
7 or accrued on moneys deposited in the special fund shall
8 become part of the special fund. Moneys in the special fund
9 shall be expended to reduce the pet overpopulation and the
10 reproduction of **owned**, free-roaming cats by providing spaying and
11 neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided that
12 the uses and expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall
13 **only apply to owned cats and** follow the eligibility criteria established by
14 the advisory committee established under subsection (b).
15 (b) There is established an advisory committee to assist
16 the department of budget and finance in establishing the
17 eligibility criteria and procedures for disbursements from the
18 special fund; ~~provided that, in establishing the eligibility~~
19 ~~criteria, the advisory committee shall prioritize funding to~~
20 ~~organizations that specialize in trap-neuter-release practices.~~

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1 The advisory committee members shall be selected by the
2 director of finance and shall include the following:
3 (1) One representative from the department of budget and
4 finance;
5 (2) **One representative from the department of land and**
natural resources division of forestry and wildlife;
~~(23)~~ **One representative from the department of health;**
~~(34)~~ One representative from the Hawaii Animal Welfare
6 Association or its successor organization, who shall
7 be invited to participate;
8 ~~(35)~~ One representative from the Hawaii Veterinary Medical
9 Association, who shall be invited to participate;
10 ~~(46)~~ One member from a Hawaii-based private non-profit

11 animal welfare organization, who shall be invited to
12 participate; and
13 (57) Two members from the general public, who shall be
14 invited to participate.

15 The advisory committee shall select a chairperson from among its
16 members. All members of the advisory committee shall be
17 residents of the State and shall serve three-year terms. All
18 members shall have an active interest in humanely reducing the pet
19 overpopulation and reducing the number of free-roaming cats in
20 the State.

Page 4

1 (c) The advisory committee shall submit an annual report
2 to the director of finance, in a form prescribed by the
3 director, that identifies the total amount of funds that were
4 disbursed from the special fund in the previous fiscal year and
5 the amount of funds to be carried over to the next fiscal year.
6 The advisory committee shall submit the report to the director
7 of finance within ninety days from the close of each fiscal
8 year.

9 (d) The members of the advisory committee shall serve
10 without pay but shall be reimbursed for their actual and
11 necessary expenses, including travel expenses incurred in
12 carrying out their duties.

SB-1132

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 1:47:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/6/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.

SB-1132

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 10:47:46 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/6/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Boscole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB1132. Hawaii needs more diversification of its economy, and the growing and processing of hemp would provide for another crop based industry that has many beneficial uses.

SB-1132

Submitted on: 2/4/2023 11:04:23 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/6/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Oppose.*if* this is for medical marijuana. Marijuana use causes brain shrinkage, lowers testosterone, is addictive and has other drawbacks..

Users typically aren't aware of the drawbacks of marijuana use so taxpayer money shouldn't be used to help further the use of it.

Sone articles by Dr. Daniel Amen, a prominent brain doctor:

<https://www.amenclinics.com/blog/7-surprising-reasons-why-marijuana-is-not-a-health-food/>

<https://www.amenclinics.com/blog/amen-research-marijuana-affects-blood-flow-brain/>

To Whom it may concern,

I am a Kaua'i resident, cat lover, and wildlife biologist writing to you with great concern regarding SB998, especially its blatant support and endorsement of Trap-Neuter-Release practices and organizations. Before I dive into my testimony, I must urge you to listen to the science, the facts, and the evidence. The loudest voices in this situation will always be those advocating in support of free-ranging cats on the landscape, but the voices that need your support the most are the ones which cannot advocate for themselves and will cease to exist without it. Those voices belong to Hawaii's wildlife.

Hawaii is the extinction capital of the world, having lost 95 of Hawaii's 142 endemic bird species (found nowhere else in the world) since the arrival of humans: we can still make changes to save what precious few native species we have left. Of the 44 remaining Hawaii endemic birds, 33 of them (75%) are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Advocates of Trap Neuter Release (TNR) will tell you many things about TNR which are false or misleading. One common misleading statement TNR advocates make is that cats, when fed and spayed/neutered don't hunt. This is definitively false, and in fact cats, even ones which live in a home and are allowed to roam, kill regardless of hunger or sexual status. Scientific studies estimate that free-ranging (owned and unowned) cats kill 1.3–4.0 billion birds and 6.3–22.3 billion mammals annually, and that the majority of diet items are native species (Loss et al. 2013). Even owned and fed cats hunt prey in addition to provided food, and often do not consume it (Woods et al. 2003). According to a study using animal-borne cameras, owned free-ranging cats only bring 23% of their killed and injured prey items to owners, consuming only 28% of prey at the kill site, and leaving 49% behind (Lloyd et al. 2013). Based on these studies, it's understandable why cat owners self-report lower estimates of wildlife kill, as they cannot observe everything their pet does at all hours.

TNR advocates will also tell you that spaying/neutering reduces cat home ranges and prevents them from dispersing, but science has shown that sexual status (neutered/spayed vs. unneutered/unspayed) has been found to have little influence over home range size (Horn et al. 2011, Thomas et al. 2014). Proponents of free-ranging cats on the landscape will argue that predation by such cats on wildlife is negligible when compared to other sources of mortality, however many studies have shown that cats are a major, if not the greatest, source of mortality to native birds, mammals and herpetofauna (Lloyd et al. 2013, Loss et al. 2013, Lepczyk et al. 2003, Van Heezik et al. 2010, Beckerman et al. 2007). While loss of habitat is the primary cause of many

species extinctions, cats are specifically responsible for the extinction of at least 63 species around the world (Doherty et al. 2016).

Beyond direct predation, cats are the obligate host of *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite, which is lethal to monk seals, and other marine mammals as well as the Hawaiian Crow, 'Alalā. *Toxoplasma* seroprevalence was recently found to be almost 40% in chickens on Kaua'i, and will only become a bigger problem if cats are not controlled island-wide (Chalkowski 2020). The sexual status of cats has no bearing on their ability to contract and spread this deadly parasite, and there is no vaccine or cure for any species.

TNR does not reduce feral cats on the landscape, opposite of what advocates claim (Castillo and Clarke, 2003), and scientists researching the topic stress that TNR is not an advisable solution in "ecologically sensitive areas" (Schmidt et al. 2009). Please notice that, in Hawai'i and on Kaua'i specifically, we can see native species, susceptible to negative impacts from outdoor cats, across the entire island and in every watershed. Gallinule (alae 'ula) in golf courses, and the Hanalei refuge, Hawaiian stilts on the Lihue Safeway property and the mana wetland, monk seals at Lydgate beach and Poipu beach, and nene from the Hono o na Pali bogs to Puhi Park.

Even animal welfare groups including PETA oppose TNR, saying "Many (outdoor cats) are in "managed" colonies, which usually means that they are fed. Having witnessed the painful deaths of countless feral cats, we cannot in good conscience advocate trapping, altering, and releasing as a humane way to deal with overpopulation and homelessness." The safest place for a cat is indoors, where it cannot cause harm or be harmed.

Unequivocally the scientific consensus is that TNR is not a humane or ecologically-responsible solution for Hawaii and that lethal control of cats is not only a permissible solution but a recommended one. TNR is an agenda pushed by advocates who value the lives of cats above all else, and we as caretakers, residents, and dependents of this land must do all we can to protect the species native to it, not its invaders.

Sincerely,

Alex Dutcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Dutcher', written in a cursive style.

Invasive Species Biologist, Kaua'i HI

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