
SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI TO TAKE FURTHER MEANINGFUL ACTION TO ADDRESS THE AXIS DEER OVERPOPULATION.

1 WHEREAS, eating locally-grown food and meats are known to
2 provide a benefit to the local economy and to the citizens of
3 the State; and

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5 WHEREAS, the people of the State deserve to have access to
6 the many local foods, including locally-hunted meat, available
7 on the islands; and

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9 WHEREAS, the overpopulation of axis deer has been a great
10 detriment to Maui by overgrazing native plants that would
11 otherwise aid in mitigating erosion and fire and flood effects;
12 and

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14 WHEREAS, axis deer are a plentiful source of high-quality,
15 delicious protein; and

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17 WHEREAS, other states have successfully implemented
18 programs that process and distribute locally-hunted meat to
19 their community, for example Pennsylvania's Hunters Sharing the
20 Harvest Program, which yearly donates over one hundred thousand
21 pounds of venison to over five thousand food banks; and

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23 WHEREAS, existing United States Department of Agriculture
24 inspection and meat processing requirements severely limit the
25 financial and practical feasibility of the State's local hunters
26 to successfully maintain a reasonably low population of axis
27 deer and to distribute venison to the community; and

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29 WHEREAS, an increase of in-state meat inspectors certified
30 by the United States Department of Agriculture would lower the
31 cost of inspections for local hunters, provide a benefit to the
32 agricultural industry in the State, and make locally-hunted



1 venison more available and safer for the community to consume;
2 now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
6 that the Hawaii Department of Agriculture and Department of
7 Agriculture of the County of Maui are urged to take further
8 meaningful action to address the axis deer overpopulation,
9 including:

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11 (1) Implementing policies to make in-state inspectors
12 certified by the United States Department of
13 Agriculture, certified inspections, and certified
14 processing facilities more accessible, capable, and
15 affordable for local hunters to utilize to sell or
16 gift venison; and

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18 (2) Implementing policies to increase the amount of
19 in-state certified United States Department of
20 Agriculture meat inspectors for game mammals; and

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22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii Department of
23 Agriculture and Department of Agriculture of the County of Maui
24 are urged to convene a joint task force to oversee a County of
25 Maui program that, in coordination with the United States
26 Department of Agriculture certified processing facilities, would
27 aim to investigate and develop plans to make affordable the
28 processing of locally-hunted axis deer meat and the distribution
29 of this venison to the community; and

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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the joint task force is
32 requested to submit a report of the program's accomplishments
33 and barriers to the accomplishment of the program with its
34 findings and recommendations, including any proposed
35 legislation, to the Legislature no later than November 30, 2025;
36 and

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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
39 Resolution be transmitted to the United States Secretary of
40 Agriculture, Administrator of the United States Department of
41 Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, Deputy Director
42 of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Governor,



- 1 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Chairperson of the
- 2 Board of Land and Natural Resources, Mayor of the County of
- 3 Maui, each member of the Maui County Council, and Director of
- 4 the Department of Agriculture of the County of Maui.

