

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1954

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 25, 2025

RE: H.C.R. No. 200

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.C.R. No. 200 entitled:

"HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MAUI AXIS DEER CONTROL AND VENISON INITIATIVE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to urge the State Department of Agriculture and the County of Maui Department of Agriculture to:

- (1) Take further meaningful action to address the axis deer overpopulations by implementing policies to make United States Department of Agriculture-certified in-state inspectors, certified inspections, and certified processing facilities more accessible, capable, and affordable for local hunters to utilize and by implementing policies to increase the amount of certified United States Department of Agriculture in-state meat inspectors for game mammals; and
- (2) To convene a joint task force to oversee the County of Maui program that, in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture certified processing facilities, would aim to investigate and develop plans to make affordable the processing of locally hunted axis deer meat and the distribution of this venison to the community; and

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- (3) Request the joint task force to submit a report of the program's accomplishments and barriers with its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than November 30, 2025.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture.

Your Committee finds that eating locally grown food and meats benefits the local economy and our citizens, and the people of the State deserve access to many local foods, including locally hunted meat. Your Committee further finds that the overpopulation of axis deer on Maui has led to the overgrazing of native plants that would otherwise aid in mitigating erosion, wildfires, and flooding. Your Committee recognizes that axis deer are a plentiful source of high-quality protein and that other states have successfully implemented programs that process and distribute locally hunted meat to their communities. An increase of in-state United States Department of Agriculture-certified meat inspectors would lower the cost of inspections for local hunters, provide a benefit to the agricultural industry in the State, and make locally hunted venison more available and safer for the community to consume. This measure urges the State Department of Agriculture and the County of Maui Department of Agriculture to take further action to address axis deer overpopulation by improving access to USDA-certified inspectors and processing facilities, convening a joint task force to develop an affordable venison processing and distribution program, and requiring the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by November 30, 2025.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.C.R. No. 200 and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture & Food
Systems,


KIRSTIN KAHALOA, Chair



