

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
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CIARA W.K. KAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARK

Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, February 4, 2026  
9:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1594  
RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION

House Bill 1594 amends Hawai'i Revised Statutes to require proof of sterilization for any dog or cat imported into the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.**

At-large cats are among the most successful predators on earth and have been linked to the extinction of more than 60 small animal species. Hawai'i's native species are especially vulnerable to predation, and cat predation greatly hampers the recovery of birds such as 'ua'u, palila, and nēnē. Free-roaming cats also spread diseases like rabies, toxoplasmosis, roundworms, hookworms, and ringworm, which can infect other cats, humans, and wildlife. These diseases cause harm on land, killing native birds, including nēnē, and at sea, as seen in the deaths of Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins, and other marine mammals due to toxoplasmosis. Feral or free-roaming cats are also less healthy: at-large cats tend to have shorter lifespans and higher rates of disease than indoor pet cats.

Unsupervised dogs also pose a significant threat to Hawai'i's native wildlife, including Hawaiian monk seals.

The Department is encouraged by the Legislature's efforts to address at-large pet issues and urges the enactment of effective, science-based pet management solutions, including: requiring pet owners to license and microchip their pets for identification; implementing requirements, incentives, or educational initiatives for pet owners about keeping cats and dogs indoors or otherwise contained in a fenced or screened enclosure (such as a catio); providing access to free or reduced-cost spay and neuter services for pets; requiring that both existing and newly imported

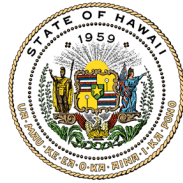
pets be sterilized; establishing mandatory-open-admission animal shelters; creating dog and cat sanctuaries; holding pet owners liable for harm to property and native species; prohibiting the feeding of free-roaming animals; and updating existing animal welfare laws to allow for the expansion of community-led and private partner predator control.

The Department notes that the importation of dogs and cats to Hawai'i has been increasing, with more than 20,000 animals imported in fiscal year 2024. The Department also observes that shelters are operating at or beyond capacity. Requiring proof of sterilization for imported dogs and cats could help prevent unwanted litters of kittens and puppies, reduce strain on public infrastructure, and mitigate negative impacts on our fragile environment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
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**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson  
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026  
9:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1594  
RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION**

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1594. HB 1594 requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions. The regulation, documentation, and verification activities are to be carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB). The measure further required DAB to establish a breeder registry and adopt administrative rules.

The DAB opposes this measure and offers the following comments.

The DAB and its Animal Quarantine (AQ) program are to mitigate the entry of rabies and other diseases and pests associated with dog and cat importation. In contrast, the requirement for surgical sterilization of imported animals, documentation and verification of surgical sterilization, and establishing a breeder registry are not consistent with the program's mission and better characterized under animal control. Animal Control is a county function and should not be that of the state DAB. Furthermore, the significant changes to AQ computer systems, operations, and inspections required will increase cost and add unacceptable time for inspections upon arrival. Amendments to administrative rules further complicate implementation. For these reasons and more, the department does not support HB1594.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:50:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sylvia Dolena	Aloha Animal Advocates	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Animal overpopulation must be addressed HUMANELY and this is a critical bill to pass. Please support this Bill.

MEOW-halo,

Sylvia Dolena

**Written Testimony  
HB 1594 – Relating to Animal Importation**

**Date:** February 2, 2026

**Submitted by:**  
Daylynn Kyles  
CEO, Aloha Ilio Rescue

**Committee:** House Committee

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**Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Daylynn Kyles, and I am the CEO of Aloha Ilio Rescue. I respectfully submit this written testimony regarding HB 1594. Aloha Ilio Rescue has served our community for 16 years and has operated as a nonprofit organization since 2016.

Our organization works extensively with Hawai'i's houseless population by providing medical care and free spay and neuter services for their animals. We also focus on low-income communities, particularly Puna and Hawaiian Ocean View Estates. Our services include emergency veterinary care, pet food, spay and neuter assistance, pet supplies, training support, and boarding for pets whose owners are incarcerated or residing in domestic violence shelters.

In 2025, our highest volume of work involved owner surrenders and stray intakes. We are frequently the resource community members rely on when they encounter stray animals or when pets are left behind following the death of an owner.

My background includes decades of experience in AKC dog shows and dog training, beginning at the age of 12. I was born and raised on the Big Island of Hawai'i and understand the challenges and perspectives within our local communities.

**Based on my professional experience, I do not believe animal importation is a primary driver of pet overpopulation in Hawai'i.** Most animals imported into the state are brought in by responsible families, dog sport enthusiasts, or ethical breeders who place great care into breeding practices and puppy placement. While there may be cases of animals imported for irresponsible breeding purposes, these situations would be more effectively addressed through a clear and enforceable breeder registry.


I strongly support the establishment of a breeder registry. Individuals who do not possess a valid breeding license should be required to spay or neuter their animals. However, legislation related to breeder regulation often faces resistance due to a lack of clarity. Concerns include inspection standards, enforcement authority, penalties, and the classification of violations. Without clearly defined requirements, compliance becomes difficult and opposition increases.

A balanced approach is needed—one that holds irresponsible breeders accountable while protecting ethical AKC breeders who invest significant time, resources, and care into preserving their breeds. A transparent and detailed breeder registry would allow responsible breeders to operate with confidence and pride while addressing the real contributors to animal overpopulation.

Hawai'i's pet overpopulation crisis will not be resolved through funding alone. The root cause lies in unlicensed breeding and the lack of enforceable spay and neuter requirements. Backyard breeders often profit without accountability, abandon unwanted animals, and place financial strain on rescues, animal control agencies, and taxpayers. Strong spay and neuter laws, paired with a comprehensive breeder registry, are essential to creating lasting change.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.

**Respectfully submitted,**

  
Daylynn Kyles  
CEO  
Aloha Ilio Rescue

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:39:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

## Comments:

We strongly support the passage of HB1594, which would stop the entry of intact companion animals into Hawai'i. This has been suggested several times in the past, but had received pushback from the breeders, who consider it a threat to their business. You may expect to receive similar letters from national breeders' organizations in opposition.

Many local breeders claim that it is not a business, but a hobby; however, the puppies and kittens are sold for very high prices, and a backyard breeder who will sell to anyone with money is simply a puppy mill. HB 1594, if passed, would require breeders to be licensed, inspected and pay excise taxes. HB1594 would benefit Hawai'i, by decreasing the number of companion animals entering the state, and shining a spotlight on a source of tax revenue, hitherto hidden.

**Board of Directors**

Alexandra Alton

February 2, 2026

Emma Cobb

Anitra Frazier

**Re: HB 1594**

Bryan Kortis, JD  
National Programs  
Director

To the Honorable Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems:

Dr. Lisa Labrecque,  
DVM

On behalf of Neighborhood Cats, a nonprofit registered in Hawaii, I would like to express our **strong support** for HB 1594

Nancy Peterson

Susan Richmond,  
Executive Director

Hawaii has long dealt with an overpopulation of cats. Requiring new cats (and dogs) entering the state to be spayed or neutered would be an important common sense step towards resolving the issue. With an exemption for responsible breeders, this should be a measure all stakeholders can get behind.

**NYC Community Cat  
Program Director**

Jackie Borodan

Neighborhood Cats is a leader nationally on the management of free-roaming cats and has had a presence on Maui since 2016. We have worked closely with local nonprofits to increase accessibility to affordable spay/neuter and were the lead coordinators for the rescue of over 600 cats from the Lahaina burn zone following the fire in 2023.

Thank you for considering our views,



Bryan Kortis  
National Programs Director



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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB1594. My name is Carita Inoue. I am a registered cat breeder affiliated with an internationally recognized registry and a member of Cat Fanciers of Hawai'i. I respectfully oppose bill HB1594. As responsible breeders, we support Hawai'i's commitment to animal welfare, public health, and the preservation of its rabies-free status. However, this bill would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on ethical breeders while failing to address the primary drivers of animal overpopulation within the State.

Hawai'i already maintains one of the most stringent animal importation and quarantine systems in the nation. Compliance requires extensive advance planning, vaccinations, blood testing, microchipping, documentation, and significant expense. The proposed requirement for surgical sterilization prior to embarkation adds an irreversible medical mandate on top of this already complex framework, increasing cost, risk, and logistical barriers without evidence that imported breeder animals meaningfully contribute to overpopulation in Hawai'i.

This bill also undermines responsible breeding and genetic stewardship. Ethical breeders play a vital role in maintaining healthy bloodlines and maintaining breed standards. Mandatory pre-import sterilization severely restricts the ability to introduce new genetics into Hawai'i, increasing the risk of inbreeding and long-term health problems—outcomes that are inconsistent with sound animal husbandry and welfare practices.

Although the bill includes a breeder registry exemption, it lacks clear eligibility criteria, oversight standards, or procedural safeguards. Without statutory clarity, the registry risks inconsistent application and may disproportionately disadvantage small-scale and hobby breeders who operate ethically and transparently, while favoring larger commercial entities.

Additionally, the timing of sterilization is a veterinary decision that varies by breed, size, age, and intended use. Forcing sterilization prior to transport—particularly for young or large-breed animals—conflicts with accepted veterinary guidance and may pose long-term health risks. These decisions should remain between breeders and licensed veterinarians, not be dictated by a blanket statutory requirement tied to importation.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose this measure and urge the Legislature to pursue targeted, evidence-based approaches that address overpopulation within Hawai'i without placing additional, unnecessary burdens on responsible breeders operating within an already rigorous regulatory system.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Testimony of American Bird Conservancy  
In Support of HB 1594 Relating to Animal Control  
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems | February 4, 2026**

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **support for HB 1594**.

Although cats (*Felis catus*) can make wonderful pets, Hawai'i is experiencing a cat overpopulation crisis that puts cats, other domestic animals, wildlife, and human communities at risk. **To foster a healthy and safe environment for people and animals, it is essential that Hawai'i establish safeguards that bolster responsible cat ownership behaviors, including spaying or neutering pet cats.**

The spaying or neutering of pet cats is a best practice [supported by the American Veterinary Medical Association](#) and highly popular among Hawai'i residents, including current cat owners. **Research of Hawai'i residents conducted by Griffith University in 2024 found that two-thirds of respondents supported making pet cat sterilization mandatory.** Spaying or neutering pet cats not only benefits the cat and owner but also eliminates undesirable breeding, which contributes to the cat overpopulation and resulting environmental and public health risks.

HB 1594 is a common-sense strategy to reduce the cat overpopulation. The entry of new cats to Hawai'i via importation presents a natural checkpoint to ensure cat sterilization and prevent future unintended cat reproduction, which contributes to the ongoing cat overpopulation crisis.

Pet animals brought to Hawai'i are already subject to inspection by the Department of Agriculture and providing proof of necessary preventative medical care. Individuals are required to complete a Dog & Cat Import Form (AQS - 279). This form already includes a check-box for spaying and neutering. HB 1594 merely makes such surgical sterilization a requirement prior to importation to the state.

**This bill is consistent with animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and public health and safety goals.**

### **Cat Overpopulation Risks**

Cats are an invasive species in Hawai'i that have contributed to the extinction of two endemic Hawaiian species, the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail), and the decline of countless

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**Contact**

**abcbirds.org**  
**info@abcbirds.org**  
tel. **540.253.5780**  
fax **540.253.5782**

**Address**

regular, registered, or certified mail:  
**P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198**  
physical address for deliveries:  
**8255 E. Main Street, Suites D & E,  
Marshall, VA 20115**



others. 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 that put people and wildlife at risk. For example, *Toxoplasma gondii*, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis in birds and mammals, is excreted in cat feces. A single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called "oocysts") into the environment via its feces, and these oocysts remain infectious for months to years. This parasite is a serious risk for Hawai'i's wildlife, [including Hawaiian Monk Seals](#), and has long been recognized as a public health risk in the state. The cat overpopulation crisis contributes to environmental contamination with *T. gondii*.

HB 1594 is an important step to addressing the cat overpopulation in Hawai'i. This bill will encourage responsible cat ownership from the time a cat is first brought to the state, reduce risks for Hawai'i's residents, both people and animals, and is the type of action supported by a broad coalition of organizations, such as:

**American Bird Conservancy | Archipelago Research and Conservation  
Big Island Invasive Species Committee | Birds Hawai'i Past and Present LLC  
Center for Biological Diversity | Conservation Council for Hawai'i  
Friends of Kaua'i Wildlife Refuges | Hallux Ecosystem Restoration LLC | Hanalei Watershed  
Hui | Hawai'i Audubon Society | Island Conservation | Kaua'i Albatross Network  
Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project | Kauluakalana | Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project  
Moloka'i Land Trust | Nēnē.org | The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i and Palmyra  
The Wildlife Society, Hawai'i Chapter**

**We respectfully ask that you support HB 1594.**

Mahalo for your consideration,

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

Chris Farmer, Ph.D.  
Hawai'i Program Director

February 2, 2026

Testimony in opposition of HB 1594

Relating to animal importation.

Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

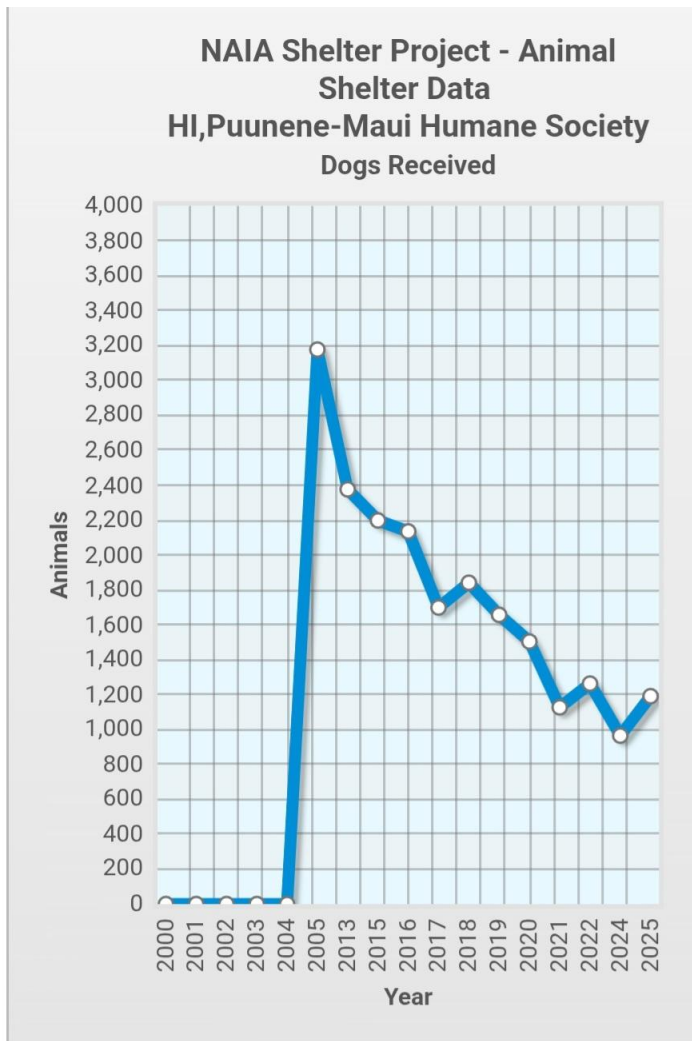
I represent the Pacific Pet Alliance. The Pacific Pet Alliance is a Hawai'i non-profit organization that promotes responsible pet ownership through education and advocacy.

The Pacific Pet Alliance (PPA) opposes HB1594 for the following reasons:

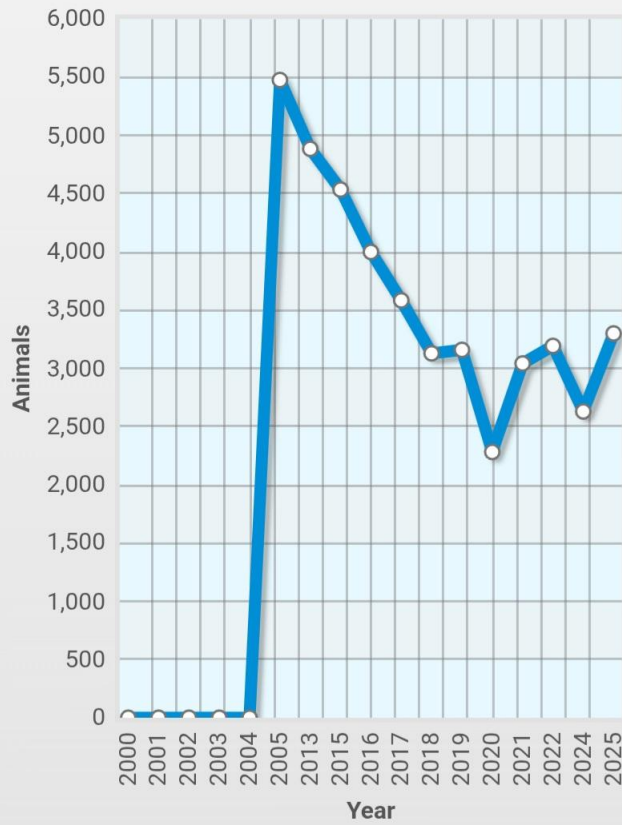
- “The legislature finds that Hawaii's geographic isolation and rabies-free status necessitate stringent regulation of animal importation to protect public health and safety. At the same time, the State continues to experience significant challenges associated with pet overpopulation and the adverse impacts of free-roaming animals on animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems.” The Pacific Pet Alliance agrees with this statement .
- “The purpose of this Act is to decrease the number of fertile, unaltered dogs and cats imported into the State by requiring proof of sterilization prior to embarkation, subject to reasonable exemptions for medical necessity, temporary stays, and registered breeders.” The Pacific Pet Alliance fails to understand how mandatory sterilization and labeling everyone who imports an intact animal a breeder, will change the problems identified.
- Intact animals are often brought to Hawaii to participate in dog shows or cat shows. An altered dog can't be shown in a conformation dog show. Not every intact animal brought to Hawaii is bred. To assume that every intact animal will be bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren't included in the bill is unfair. It's also unfair to imply that these intact animals that cost thousands of dollars to import are the root cause of animal over population and free roaming animals in Hawaii.
- Free roaming animals appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. What has been done to address more public education and to reach out to lower income individuals to assist them with spaying and neutering those animals? Will Oahu follow the lead of the island of Hawaii and ban the feeding of all feral animals in order to protect our fragile native ecosystem?
- The National Animal Interest Alliance based in Portland Oregon has the Shelter Project where they track shelter data across the US from public data sources. There are only 2 shelters listed for Hawaii. Hawaiian Humane Society and Maui Humane Society. Their shelter data is listed below and they have graphed the data to show longitudinal trends. The available data also reflects transparency of the shelter to share it's shelter stats with the public. Obtaining shelter data from Hawaii shelters has always and continues to be challenging for the NAIA. If data were available, it would be helpful to know how many

purebred dogs and pedigreed cats come through the shelter system as it's implied that breeders are the source of the problem.

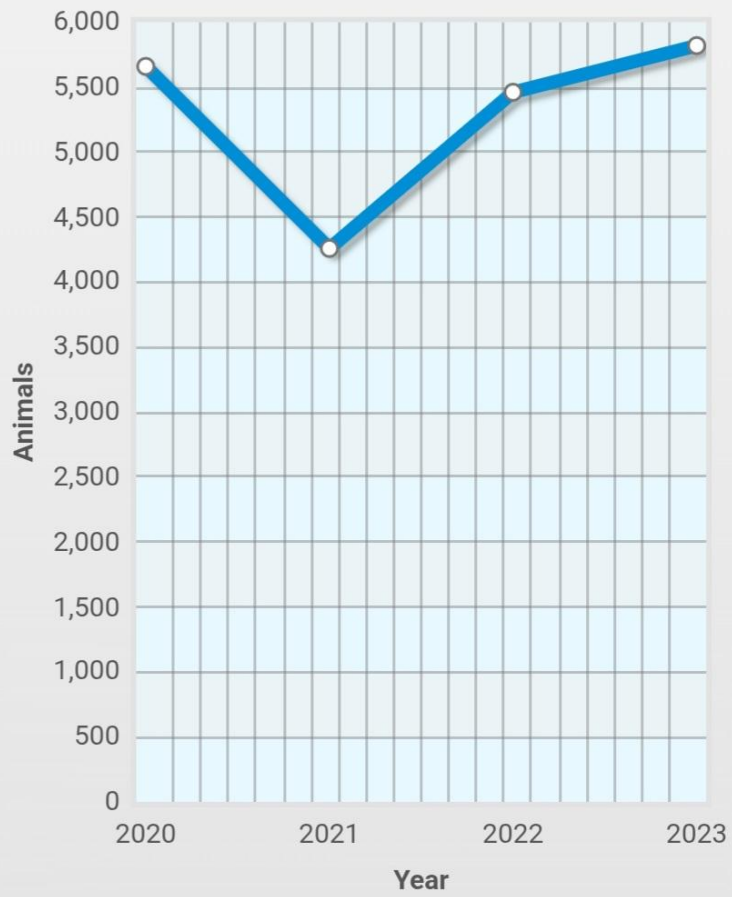
- In Hawaii, it appears that rescue organizations are also a common way to manage the animal overpopulation problem in Hawaii. There's no registry of rescue groups in Hawaii and no way to evaluate their impact on these problems. On a side note, there are some rescues that appear to be doing excellent work but without coordinated statewide data publicly available, how do we know?

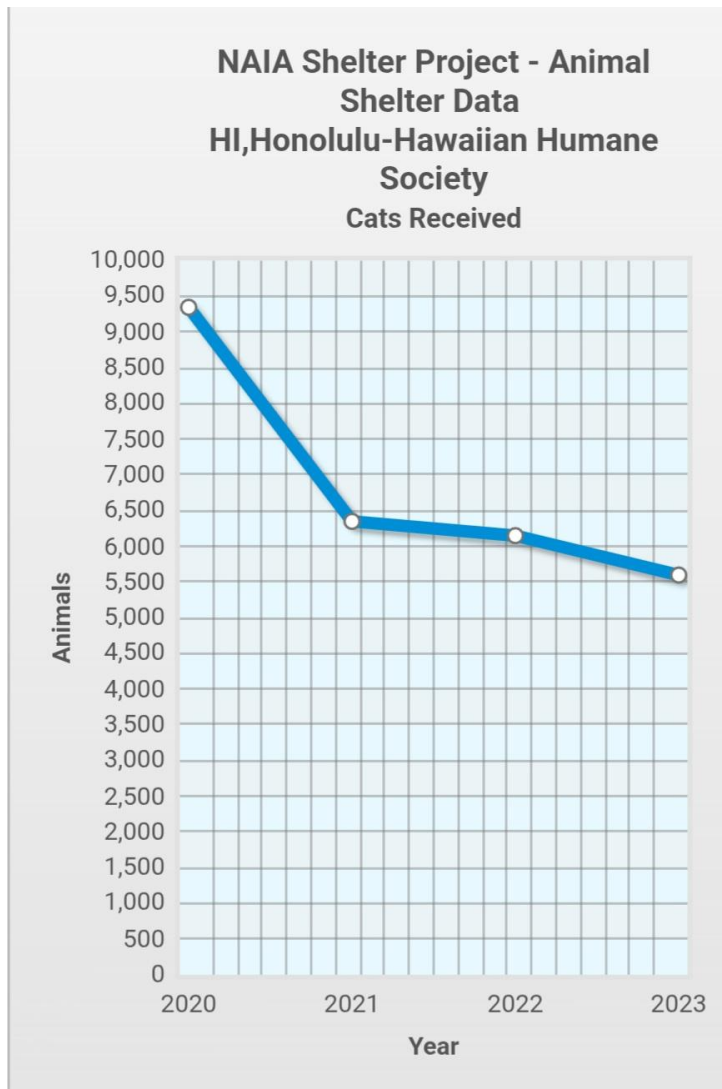


**NAIA Shelter Project - Animal  
Shelter Data  
HI,Puunene-Maui Humane Society  
Cats Received**



**NAIA Shelter Project - Animal  
Shelter Data  
HI, Honolulu-Hawaiian Humane  
Society  
Dogs Received**





- The requirement of providing documentation of surgical sterilization may place a hardship on particularly military families transferred to Hawaii. Military families are uprooted a lot and sometimes records are lost. It is also common for them to “inherit” pets from other military families who are unable to take their pets to the next duty station. According to veterinarians, there is no way to tell via physical examination whether a female animal has been surgically sterilized. An ultrasound is one way but the average cost of an ultrasound done in the US would add an additional \$100+ to the cost of importation. The veterinarian following the State’s quarantine guidelines may not be the veterinarian who surgically sterilized the animal may be unwilling to provide documentation of sterilization. Trying to obtain a health certificate to enter Hawaii is challenging without additional burdens.

The Pacific Pet Alliance respectfully asks the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems to not pass this bill because each island county has their own unique situations and there doesn’t appear to a coordinated effort across the islands on how to address these issues. This bill is more complex than meets the eye. For example, HB1736 specifically targets cats. This bill is from the conservationists and doesn’t target dogs. The island of Hawaii has already banned the feeding of all



feral animals. The Pacific Pet Alliance would support a working group involving all the stakeholders across the islands to try to achieve a coordinated effort.

Lynn Muramaru

Board Member

Pacific Pet Alliance



## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 3, 2026

To: Chair Rep. Cory Chun  
Vice Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch  
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Vice President of Community Engagement  
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in strong support of HB 1594: Relating to Animal Importation  
Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2025, 9:00 a.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

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On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 11594, which requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions; and requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish a breeder registry and adopt rules.

Hawai'i is one of just a handful of states that does not regulate pet animal breeders. While this bill would not change that, it would provide a minimal level of transparency regarding the importation of intact dogs and cats. It imposes a small burden on the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and a small burden on pet owners, toward an important end.

Our state suffers from pet overpopulation. Shelters like Hawaiian Humane struggle to find homes for the amazing animals that come to us for care. Organizations across the state scramble to get pets off island and into homes while more pets come in every day. We don't want to separate pets from their families or tell people they cannot have the breeds they love in their lives. This bill simply asks for accountability.

We know that representatives of animal industry groups like the American Kennel Club and cat fancier groups have attempted to kill this bill without a public hearing. Mahalo nui to the chair and vice chair for allowing the community to weigh in.



## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

In response to the animal industry groups' point that importing an intact animal does not prove that a pet owner intends to breed that animal, we offer possible amendments that clarify that this measure does not regulate breeders. It simply tracks the importation of intact dogs and cats. We hope the committee will consider this compromise language if it feels the need to modify the bill.

This measure sends a message that spay/neuter should be the norm for animals coming into the state. It is the right thing to do for the animals who are already here and in need of homes. I urge you to support HB1594. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB1594 Possible Amendments:

SECTION 2. Chapter 142, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**"§142- Proof of sterilization required for importation of dogs and cats. (a) As a condition of entry into the State under this part, the department of agriculture and biosecurity shall require submission of documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, except as provided in subsection (b).**

**(b) The requirements pursuant to subsection (a) shall not apply if:**

**(1) The animal is being imported for a period of less than ninety days and will not be sold or transferred, or otherwise remain in the State, beyond the ninety day period;**

**(2) A licensed veterinarian certifies that sterilization would jeopardize the animal's health or life; or**

**(3) The owner or importer is registered with the department as ~~a breeder possessing an intact animal~~ pursuant to subsection (c).**

**(c) The department shall establish and maintain a ~~breeder~~ registry for individuals or entities importing intact dogs or cats. The registry shall include, at a minimum, the ~~breeder intact animal owner's~~ name, ~~residential or~~ business address, and species or breeds ~~of intact animals~~ maintained.**

**(d) The department may assess reasonable fees to offset the costs of administering this section, including expenses related to verifying documentation and maintaining the breeder registry.**



## Hawaiian Humane Society

*People for animals. Animals for people.*

(e) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to implement this section. The rules shall address, at a minimum, documentation requirements, acceptable forms of proof of sterilization, and verification procedures in coordination with airlines and other carriers.

(f) For the purposes of this section, "sterilization" means surgical spaying or neutering performed by a licensed veterinarian."

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:08:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ariel Imoto	Nene.org	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in strong support of HB 1594, a bill that promotes responsible pet ownership while addressing Hawai‘i’s ongoing cat overpopulation crisis.

HB 1594 requires pet cats to be spayed or neutered by five months of age, with limited and reasonable exceptions, and establishes a funding mechanism to help cat owners access sterilization services. This approach focuses on prevention and support rather than punishment. Importantly, the bill specifies that no funds may be used to sterilize and release cats into the environment.

Unintended breeding of pet cats continues to contribute to large populations of stray and feral cats across Hawai‘i. While cats can be wonderful companions, unmanaged populations create serious challenges for communities, animal welfare organizations, and public agencies. Animal shelters and animal control programs are already overburdened, and preventable litters increase long term costs and strain limited resources.

Free roaming cats are also an introduced predator in Hawai‘i and pose significant risks to native wildlife. Hawai‘i has more endangered bird species than any other state, and reducing avoidable predation is critical to ongoing conservation and recovery efforts. Addressing pet cat reproduction at the household level is one of the most effective ways to reduce these impacts over time.

HB 1594 offers a practical, humane solution that benefits pets, people, and wildlife alike. By encouraging responsible ownership and providing financial assistance for sterilization, this bill helps reduce suffering, improve public health outcomes, and support healthier communities statewide.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 1594 and move this important legislation forward. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Ariel Imoto

Executive Director

Nene Research and Conservation

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:59:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Hawaiian Humane Society	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Cory M. Chun,

This is Serena from Punalu'u, Oahu, representing the Hawaiian Humane Society. I am testifying in favor of Bill HB1594 because there are too many neglected and abandoned animals in Hawaii.

3-825 Kaumualii  
Hwy, Lihue, HI  
96766  
808-632-0610  
kauaihumane.org



**LATE**

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*The Kaua'i Humane Society is dedicated to fostering respect, responsibility and compassion for all animals and enriching lives by nurturing healthy relationships between pets and people.*

Feb. 3, 2026

To: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

From: Kaua'i Humane Society

Position: Support

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committees:

Kaua'i Humane Society submits testimony in support of HB 1594, which requires documentation that dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i are spayed or neutered, with reasonable exemptions.

As Kaua'i's primary animal welfare organization, we see daily the consequences of pet overpopulation- overcrowded shelters, limited resources, and preventable animal suffering. Animals imported without sterilization contribute directly to this ongoing challenge, placing additional strain on shelters and public resources statewide.

HB 1594 addresses this issue proactively and responsibly by promoting accountability before animals enter the state. The bill includes sensible exemptions for temporary stays, medical necessity, and registered breeders, ensuring a balanced and practical approach.

Spay and neuter requirements are the most effective, proven tool to reduce animal homelessness and improve outcomes for companion animals. By reducing shelter intake and long-term costs, HB 1594 advances humane treatment while supporting fiscal responsibility.

For these reasons, Kaua'i Humane Society urges passage of HB 1594.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,  
Susan Rhee, CEO  
Kaua'i Humane Society



3-825 Kaumualii  
Hwy, Lihue, HI  
96766  
808-632-0610  
[kauaihumane.org](http://kauaihumane.org)



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*The Kaua'i Humane Society is dedicated to fostering respect, responsibility and compassion for all animals and enriching lives by nurturing healthy relationships between pets and people.*

KHS is a local, independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization. KHS has been serving the island of Kaua'i as its only open-intake animal shelter since 1952.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:22:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Even	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is no reason for domesticated animals to have the ability to breed, especially if we do not have ways to monitor breeding practices. I fully support all spay/neuter initiatives.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:49:43 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1594, we have an over population of dogs and cats, and need to reduce those numbers. Animal Control agencies euthanize dogs and cats regularly. Spay Neuter is the humane method.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:55:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clayton Cotton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I oppose HB1594. The Hawaiian Humane Society is coming up with the most ridiculous bills. We have so much other things to worry about on this island then this. When a person imports a dog from another country and they pay thousands of dollars and telling them that they have to sterilize their dog is absolutely ridiculous. Its no one's business but the owner themselves what they want to do with their dogs. Why don't the humane society focus the feral cat, chicken and other animals overpopulation on this island instead. This bill is just a waste of taxpayers money.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 3:35:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Higgins	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I oppose HB1594 on mandatory spa/neuter of dogs entering Hawaii. Over the years I have participated in dog shows, agility, rally and scent work. If I wish to show my dog it must be intact and registered

We have a huge stray and abandoned dog issue in Hawaii. Check our shelters, these are not purebred dogs! If you have paid thousands of dollars for a dog, done health checks and titers, that is not a dog out running the streets. That dog is microchipped before entering Hawaii and becomes a treasured family member. Why are you trying to punish those who are not responsible for the problem, this bill does nothing to solve the problem. It is designed to punish responsible dog owners.

I support [\*\*HB1594\*\*](#) **Relating to Animal Importation**. The bill requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions; and requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish a breeder registry and adopt rules.

Judith Aikawa, MD, 37 Apali Way, Kula, HI 96790

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:41:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Carroll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Lāna`i, board member of the Maui Humane Society, and founder of Lāna`i Cat Sanctuary, I urge the Legislature to pass HB1594 to take this critical step toward addressing pet overpopulation in a humane and effective manner.

Kathy Carroll, Ph.D.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:49:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Oda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I strongly oppose this bill in its entirety. There are definitely things that need to be done to slow down the production of dogs. This bill not only penalizes citizens but assumes they are irresponsible. More can be done to hold irresponsible owners accountable with enforcement, checks, and balances by using a more up to date system. The biggest problem we have in the mass production of dogs stem from the houseless community. More could be done to strengthen laws so outreach programs can help sterilize those animals. A big roadblock is dogs are property. If the houseless community member refuses their dog(s) to be sterilized then nothing will be done thus causing more damage to our 'Āina and furthering the reproduction of unethical breedings. Mahalo nui loa for your time.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Jenna Oda



## **HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:51:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sue chipperton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

### **Testimony in Opposition to HB 1594**

#### **House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems**

**From:** Sue Chipperton, Owner/Operator, Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV (Hawai‘i)

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sue Chipperton. I am a professional animal trainer and animal coordinator for film and television operating in Hawai‘i through my company, **Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV**. I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition** to HB 1594 and respectfully request that the Committee **decline to hear this bill**.

I understand—and agree with—the Legislature’s concern about Hawai‘i’s unique geographic isolation, our rabies-free status, and the importance of protecting public health, animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems. Those concerns are real, and O‘ahu in particular faces ongoing challenges with free-roaming animals and pet overpopulation.

However, HB 1594 does not realistically address the stated problems, and it creates significant unintended consequences for responsible animal owners and professionals who import animals lawfully, humanely, and with clear purpose.

### **HB 1594 is not aligned with the problems it claims to solve**

The bill states its purpose is to decrease the number of “fertile, unaltered dogs and cats” imported into the State by requiring proof of sterilization prior to embarkation, with exemptions. I fail to understand how mandatory sterilization, and the implied labeling of anyone importing an intact animal as a “breeder,” meaningfully reduces the factors driving Hawai‘i’s overpopulation and free-roaming animal issues.

The animals most frequently associated with free-roaming packs and unmanaged populations are not high-value imported purebreds arriving with owners who pay thousands of dollars to transport them legally and safely. Based on community reports and public news coverage, free-roaming dogs often correlate with unstable housing situations, inadequate access to veterinary care, and lack of enforcement of existing laws. Feral cat colony issues are also commonly tied to gaps in coordinated TNR support, public education, and ecosystem-focused policy.

If the real goal is to reduce free-roaming animals and overpopulation, the most effective approach is not to burden responsible importers—it is to expand access to affordable spay/neuter, strengthen public education, improve enforcement of existing animal control laws, and increase transparency and coordination across shelters and rescue organizations.

### **This bill penalizes responsible importers, not irresponsible owners**

In my line of work, I import **purpose-bred, carefully selected puppies**, often **large-breed dogs**, to meet specific temperament, stability, and safety needs for film and television work. These dogs are not imported casually. They are managed professionally, trained extensively, and are under strict control and supervision.

For large-breed dogs in particular, **mandatory sterilization prior to importation can be medically inappropriate and harmful**. Large-breed dogs generally should not be spayed or neutered until they have completed key stages of growth and development and growth plates have fused. Early sterilization can negatively affect orthopedic development and long-term soundness—exactly the opposite of what professionals and responsible owners strive for.

HB 1594 would force owners into either:

- sterilizing too early (risking long-term health and structural problems), or
- being treated as a “breeder” and subjected to undefined or unspecified “breeder regulations” not clearly laid out in the bill.

That is not reasonable regulation—it is overreach and poor policy design.

### **Conformation and responsible exhibition imports are directly impacted**

Many intact dogs are brought to Hawai‘i for **AKC conformation dog shows**, where dogs must remain intact to compete. Not every intact animal is bred. The assumption that intact automatically equals breeding intent is false and unfair.

Further, HB 1594 implies that imported intact dogs are meaningfully contributing to Hawai‘i’s overpopulation problem. That implication is not supported by clear, transparent statewide data—especially considering how difficult it has historically been to obtain complete shelter and intake data across Hawai‘i.

### **Data transparency and accountability should come before sweeping mandates**

The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) Shelter Project tracks shelter data from public sources, but only two Hawai‘i shelters are currently listed (Hawaiian Humane Society and Maui Humane Society), and consistent statewide shelter and rescue data remain limited. Without comprehensive public reporting, it is irresponsible to create broad new restrictions that assume “breeders” (or people importing intact animals) are driving overpopulation.

In addition, Hawai‘i relies heavily on rescue organizations to manage overpopulation, yet there is no clear statewide registry or consistent public reporting that allows policymakers—or the public—to evaluate impacts, outcomes, or trends. Policy should be built on measurable reality, not assumptions.

## **What would help instead**

If the Legislature truly wants to reduce overpopulation and protect the public and native ecosystems, the focus should be on policies that directly address the known sources of the issue:

- targeted, subsidized spay/neuter programs for low-income residents
- community outreach and public education
- enforce existing leash/licensing/animal abandonment laws
- coordinated statewide shelter and rescue reporting requirements
- meaningful strategies to address free-roaming animals linked to encampments and unmanaged colonies
- ecosystem protection policies built on science and enforceable outcomes (not broad import mandates)

## **Conclusion**

HB 1594 is a harmful bill that is **not relevant to the goals it claims to achieve**. It burdens responsible owners, exhibitors and professionals, and while failing to address the underlying drivers of Hawai‘i’s free-roaming animal problems and overpopulation challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems **not hear HB 1594**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

**Sue Chipperton**

Owner/Operator, **Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV** (Hawai‘i)

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:02:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB 1594, Relating to Animal Importation. It is a no-brainer that any dog or cat imported into Hawaii has to have been surgically sterilized (subject to certain exemptions). We do not need more unsterilized cats/dogs in HI, especially those animals that some want to import solely for the purpose to exploit them as breeders. It is high time tht HI adopt measures to regulate the out-of-control breeding industry here. And high time that the life of the animal is paramount.

This is a bill that we have been discussing with conservation groups for several years and I hope it will draw support from all of us who care about both companion animals and wildlife. This bill requires that a person wishing to import an intact dog or cat register with the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, which operates the animal quarantine program. It allows breed enthusiasts to import the animals they care about while allowing the state to have a minimal level of transparency about the intact dog and cat population. Despite its low burden on pet owners, it is opposed by dog and cat breed registries. Hawaii is one of a handful of states that has absolutely no regulation of pet animal breeders. This measure will not change that.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:28:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, I am a resident of Kauai and support HB1594 requiring documentation verifying cats or dogs imported into Hawaii are sterilized. THis helps with overpopulation or feral animals and helps to regulate breeders, with only a small burden of proof.

Mahalo,

Jen Wood  
808-221-7229  
Kalaheo, HI

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:39:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
Representative Cory M. Chun, Chair

I am testifying in support of HB1594 RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION.

This may very well be the most opportune time for the proposed breeder registry and associated rules that would identify appropriate exemptions from the requirement that dogs and cats imported into the State can be certified as being surgically sterilized.

Thank you.  
Alice Saul  
Hawai'i Kai, Honolulu

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:02:01 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

There are way too many unwanted dogs and cats on our islands. So many are euthanized due to health issues that people cannot afford to fix, stray dogs that cannot be socialized, or health issues due to living on the streets, neglect, abuse... One way to stem this is to ensure that dogs and cats brought into our islands are sterilized unless they are coming in for a registered breeder. Hopefully these breeders will have to follow strict laws on care. We've got to stop the tide. It's heartbreaking to see the amount of dogs and cats and their condition that are being brought into the rescue groups. I walk dogs for the Humane Society, and I see them. We've got to stop the indiscriminate breeding!!!

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:43:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aisha Aoki	The Cat Fanciers of Hawaii Cat Club	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am in opposition of this bill. As the VP of the Hawaii Cat Fanciers Cat Club, we are held to a standard by our over seeing association. This bill opens with wanting to "decrease pet overpopulation and the adverse impacts of free-roaming animals on animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems."

First, we responsible breeders who abide by our association's standards practice the utmost responsible practices to help NOT contribute to the over populated FERAL population. However, for us, the PUREBRED cat population is a very small and niche portion of cat ownership. Part of having a purebred cat that people invest in is to NOT allow it outside to free roam. Many breeders who utilize contracts make this a strict part of the contract. With this, many breeders sterilize their pet kittens BEFORE they leave for their new homes so pet owners are not burdended with this and the breeders do not have to worry about the cats contributing to unwanted litters. This bill is not a failsafe. Other bills targeting the FERAL populations are where things need to start. Again, purebred cats/ pets are a very small portion and responsible breeders are already doing neccessary steps to ensure we do not contribute to the island's issues. We responsible breeders will be burdended with these uncessary steps while IRRESPONSIBLE will contiue doing what they want because they do not care and do not follow rules. And what entity will be incharge of this program and HOW will it be enforced? It's just a waste of time and money that we all don't have. Thank you for your consideration.



**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:53:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is so important and will be a great step forward in helping to control dog and cat populations in this state. It's a huge problem and this will help prevent more unwanted animals from being born.

All too often people will abandon their pets fixed or intact. Or even if their intact pet escapes. Ensuring companion animals are fixed will eliminate the unfortunate consequences of escaped or abandoned intact pets reproducing. Mahalo!

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:10:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I support this bill. Those wishing to import an intact dog or cat should be required to register with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. It allows breed enthusiasts to import the animals they care about while allowing the state to have some transparency about the intact dog and cat population. Please move this bill forward.

lynne matusow

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:11:17 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal DeGuzman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to oppose HB1594.

My family has a love for dogs and cats. Especially my daughters! Both of my daughters participate in dog sports and conformation through AKC. These sports and conformation requires “pure bred” dogs. If this is bill moves forward it would eliminate these opportunities for my kids and so many others. “Pure bred” dogs are so important for preserving these sports and jobs for each specific breed. This is why we need dogs to be allowed into the state without sterilization.

Intact animals are often brought to Hawaii to participate in dog shows. An altered dog can’t be shown in a conformation dog show. Not every intact animal is bred. To assume that every intact animal will bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren’t included in the bill is unfair. It’s also unfair to imply that these intact animals that cost thousands of dollars to import are the root cause of animal over population and free roaming animals in Hawaii.

Also, the issue of over population is not one caused by this select group of individuals . Very often I see mixed breed dogs in the shelters with reports of people dumping the dogs and puppies at the shelter. The breeders with AKC are the most responsible and ethical type of breeders. They not only love their dogs but provide them with the best care. They are not the ones over crowding the shelters.

Free roaming animals also appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. What has been done to address more public education and to reach out to lower income individuals to assist them with spaying and neutering those animals? Will Oahu follow the lead of the island of Hawaii and ban the feeding of all feral animals in order to protect our fragile native ecosystem?

**Testimony in Opposition to HB1594**

Relating to Mandatory Sterilization of Imported Animals and a Breeder Registry

Hearing: February 4, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong opposition to HB1594.

While Hawaii's rabies-free status and concerns regarding animal welfare, overpopulation, and environmental protection are serious and deserving of thoughtful policy responses, HB1594 does not meaningfully address the problems it claims to solve.

HB1594 assumes that intact animals imported into Hawaii are a primary driver of pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals. There is no data presented in the bill to support this assumption. Intact animals imported into the state are often purpose-bred dogs and cats brought in for specific purposes such as conformation shows, sports, service work, or companionship. Many are never bred. Labeling every owner who imports an intact animal as a breeder and subjecting them to undefined breeder regulations is unfair, overly broad, and unsupported by evidence.

Mandatory sterilization prior to embarkation would directly impact dog show exhibitors. Dogs must be intact to participate in AKC conformation events. Hawaii hosts licensed dog shows that contribute to the local economy and rely on participants traveling with intact animals. This bill would effectively eliminate participation from many exhibitors without demonstrating any measurable benefit to shelter populations or public safety.

HB1594 would also disproportionately affect military families relocating to Hawaii. Many families receive pets from other military households, and original sterilization records are often unavailable. Veterinarians cannot reliably confirm a spay by physical exam alone and are unlikely to certify a surgery they did not perform. Imaging to confirm sterilization adds financial burden and increases the risk that families abandon pets on the mainland rather than bring them to Hawaii.

If the concern is free-roaming animals, available evidence points toward issues connected to homelessness, unmanaged feral cat colonies, and lack of access to affordable veterinary care. HB1594 does not address public education, access to low-cost spay and neuter services, enforcement of existing animal welfare laws, or transparency in shelter and rescue data. Without statewide data, it is inappropriate to imply that breeders or imported intact animals are the source of Hawaii's animal welfare challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee not advance HB1594. The bill's restrictions are misaligned with its stated goals and would create unnecessary hardship for responsible pet owners, exhibitors, and military families without addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Angel  
Island of Oahu  
(808) 445-8972

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:55:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ROYD GANO	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Re: HB1594 – Relating to Animal Importation

Position: OPPOSE      Submitted by: Royd Gano

Dear Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Royd Gano and I am a resident of Mililani Town. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB1594, which would mandate surgical sterilization for dogs and cats imported into the State of Hawai'i.

While I support responsible pet ownership, I believe HB1594 is a flawed approach for several reasons:

**Conflict with National AKC Rules:** This mandate directly conflicts with the American Kennel Club (AKC) rules for conformation events, which require that participating dogs be intact to be evaluated as potential breeding stock. By requiring sterilization for entry, the State would effectively bar Hawai'i residents from participating in this national sport and prevent the importation of high-quality, health-tested animals necessary to preserve purebred bloodlines.

**Medical & Health Risks:** Modern veterinary science, supported by the AVMA, indicates that "one-size-fits-all" sterilization can lead to increased risks of certain cancers and developmental issues in many breeds. These decisions should be made between an owner and their veterinarian, not mandated by state importation law.

**Economic Burden on Families:** Families and military members moving to Hawai'i already face extreme relocation costs. Adding mandatory surgery as a condition of entry is a significant financial and emotional burden that may discourage responsible pet owners from moving to or returning to our islands.

**Administrative Strain:** Requiring the Department of Agriculture to manage a breeder registry and verify surgical records adds unnecessary bureaucracy to an already complex importation process.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to defer HB1594.

Sincerely,

Royd Gano

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:58:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Fujinaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am a registered voter who lives in Mililani Mauka and I oppose this bill.

I am an individual who competes with purebred dogs in AKC events who travels to the mainland for competitions. I do not breed dogs but have obtained puppies who were bred on the mainland.

My personal contribution to the population of dogs "imported" intact to the state has been 2.

Neither dog has produced any puppies. My locally bred show dogs (all deceased) have resulted in ZERO puppies. I oppose this bill because it does not present a reasonable solution to our current animal overpopulation problem. As a member of the "dog show community" I have personal knowledge that we monitor and manage their reproductive and general health with the utmost vigilance. Unplanned breedings are very uncommon, and planned breedings result in puppies that are placed in homes under the most stringent conditions (usually involving signed contracts). We are not back yard breeders or "puppy mills". A lot of people like me travel to compete and either do not breed at all or rarely breed a litter.

I fail to see how subjecting me to "registration" as a "breeder" (and potentially subjecting me to intrusive and unnecessary "inspection" of my property) will help with the stated intent of the bill.

If the intent of the bill is to control animal overpopulation, why does it not address the irresponsible feeding of feral animals (cats, chickens, pigs etc) by individuals and organizations?

I personally have witnessed people feeding feral cats on Mililani Town Association property attracting them to common areas where people are exercising their dogs or trying to play with their young children. I have had feral cats attempt to attack my dogs as we walk by. Attempts to trap, neuter and release these cats have been completely ineffective as at any given time there are at least one or two litters of kittens in the lower ravine park alone. I have counted as many as 25 cats in the area when I walk my dogs. The feeding of the feral cats also attracts feral chickens and feral pigs to the area. Recently as many as 6 piglets have been browsing next to the sidewalk that circles lower ravine park. I have seen one stray dog (had a collar and tags so must have escaped from his yard, and he was a neutered mixed breed) in the last 15 years of walking my dogs up through lower ravine park.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:05:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Mizuno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill because it unfairly targets those of us who travel for dog sports events with our dogs for competitions. It will also affect our local events here in Hawaii that have participants traveling here to compete.



**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:17:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Dangelmaier	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I think the bill is unfairly targeting people who travel with pets and/or who obtain a pet from another state, with these additional onerous or burdensome regulations. There is no data to support the concept that people who travel should be forced to register or subject their animals to a mandatory sterilization surgery. The proposed bill does nothing to help the excess animals in shelters. This concept adds expenses to the travelers and/or state and discourages visitors traveling into the state with pets. It is already expensive and challenging to meet travel requirements into Hawaii and there is no evidence that the persons who would be affected warrant such additional restrictions or regulation.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:18:38 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anela Joseph	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to this bill.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:43:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason short	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am against this bill this affects the dog show people that takes all the necessary steps and precautions to get the animals from the mainland to Hawaii and making sure to follow all rules and regulations. No dog show people violate any rules. And passing this bill will kill the number of participants that enter because all dogs that enter the shows must be intact not spayed or neutered. And all owners in the dog show community are very responsible...

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:05:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Toma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WE STRONGLY OPPOSE TO HB1594.

We believe that the intention of the bill to address overpopulation and irresponsible breeding will not be dealt with by the passing of this bill.

Irresponsible dog and/or cat owners are already contributing to the problems relating to this bill. What process will be put in place to register them as breeders?

There is no reference as to what the Breeders registry is; process to register, requirements, guidelines, breeders rights to property access, etc

As purebred dog owners who have bred litters in the past, we screen all potential puppy buyers and place our puppies with contracts that state that if the buyer can no longer keep the puppy/dog it comes back to us and does not end up in a shelter. Many of the dogs in shelters and roaming freely are mixed breeds.

Potential dog owners that look to import dogs into the state may not want to breed but are interested in participating in dog shows held by various local clubs. In order to do so the dog/pet must be unaltered. Dog show venues help to educate spectators and future dog owners in responsible dog ownership and specific characteristics of the particular breed they may be considering in owning.

The exception to allow a temporary 90 day stay may jeopardize the health of the animal if a person brings in an already bred female that will give birth in a few days of arrival and be able to remain with litter for 6-8 weeks before being shipped back prior to your proposed 90 days. Also, how are you going to monitor and ensure that the animal is actually shipped back.

Importing unaltered animals into the State is not the solution to overpopulation therefore WE OPPOSE HB1594.

Darrell & Cathy Toma



**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:35:23 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorene Maki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair Cory Chun, Vice Chair Matthias Kusch, and Committee Members,

I strongly oppose this bill that would require any cat or dog imported into the State be spayed or neutered. Also, I oppose the establishment of a breeder register.

It is already extremely difficult to obtain healthy pets within the State of Hawaii, and this measure would undoubtedly make it even more difficult for all of us to have reasonable choices and alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:38:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Chun, Vice Chair Representative Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

Please support HB 1594 which, i think, would be helpful to maintaining a measure of control on the overpopulation of cats and dogs, and the importation of intact cats and dogs.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:22:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We understand that this is a bill that Hawaiian Humane has been discussing with conservation groups for several years and should draw support from all who care about both companion animals and wildlife.

Despite its low burden on companion animal guardians, it is opposed by dog and cat breed registries. Hawaii is one of a handful of states that has absolutely no regulation of pet animal breeders, which we deem to be a serious lack.

We were concerned in Britain about this very issue and campaigned for appropriate legislation.

Viz: (2026 Enforcement Update): Local authorities can now issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of up to £5,000 for strict liability offences, including breaching licence conditions or operating without authorisation. This allows councils to issue fines immediately, without waiting for a lengthy court process.

We beg to endorse HB1594.



# TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1594

**TO:** Chairman Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems: Kirstin Kahaloa, Nicole E. Lowen, Amy A. Perruso, Sean Quinlan, and Lauren Matsumoto

**FROM:** Corinne L. McCreery, Honolulu, HI

**DATE:** February 4, 2026, at 9:00 AM

**RE:** *OPPOSE* House Bill 1594 — RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 1594, which would condition the entry of any dog or cat into Hawaii on documentation of surgical sterilization, with exemptions only for short visits, medical necessity, or registered breeders.

By way of background, I am an animal welfare advocate and pet owner who has adopted, fostered, donated to, and volunteered with multiple rescue organizations and shelters over the last 18 years. I recently lost my beloved Hawaiian Humane Society alumni of 12 years to renal failure, am the owner of a spayed, never-bred purebred dog imported from Maryland in 2013, and am currently in the process of importing a young preservation-bred purebred show prospect under a non-breeding contract that both explicitly prohibits reproduction and requires a delayed spay until after full physical maturity to support proper growth plate development, in accordance with veterinary guidance.

My background and these experiences place me at the intersection of rescue, responsible pet ownership, veterinary best practices, and lawful animal exhibition, enabling me to speak on HB 1594, of which I am in opposition.

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First and foremost, there is no legal or regulatory precedent in the United States for requiring universal sterilization of all imported dogs and cats as a condition of entry into a state. HB 1594 represents a novel and extreme policy approach without demonstrated effectiveness elsewhere.

While overpopulation of dogs and cats in both shelters and the streets *is* a real challenge in Hawaii, the primary drivers of that issue are:

- Backyard breeding operations involving locally born and bred animals
- Unaltered animals associated with homelessness and encampments, often allowed to free roam
- Economic pressures driven by Hawaii's cost of living, resulting in increased animal surrender and abandonment
- High costs associated with exporting pets off-island when families are forced to relocate

- Lack of pet-friendly housing and absence of regulation on pet deposits, pet rent, and pet restrictions
- Limited access to pet-friendly shelters for unhoused individuals and survivors of domestic violence

Hawaii already has one of the strictest import processes in the world:

- All dogs and cats, regardless of age or purpose, must meet Hawaii's dog & cat import requirements under Chapter 4-29 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules.
- Pets must complete serious pre-travel steps, including microchipping, multiple rabies vaccinations, a rabies antibody (OIE-FAVN) test with  $\geq 0.5$  IU/ml titer, and waiting periods before qualifying for entry programs.

Importing an animal to Hawaii takes months and often costs upwards of \$1,000 USD per pet for the vaccinations, titer, and health certificate alone, not including transportation. These requirements already screen out irresponsible actors and ensure that perfunctory compliance is insufficient.

Barring intact animals would impose an unnecessary additional restriction on responsible owners who have already navigated this intensive process to comply with state law. HB 1594 targets the already most heavily regulated group of pet owners while leaving the main drivers of animal overpopulation largely unaddressed.

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Hawaii hosts one of the largest active-duty military populations in the nation. Military families frequently relocate on short notice and already face extraordinary barriers when transporting pets to Hawaii from other states and abroad.

Relocating with a pet is already complicated and costly due to existing quarantine and vaccine rules; the current version and verbiage of this bill would add a mandatory sterilization requirement for pets that may not yet be of age or medically appropriate for spay/neuter before a planned move.

Forcing sterilization as a precondition to entry would:

- Introduce additional veterinary scheduling and recovery time that may conflict with duty assignments
- Penalize military families who already face exceptional stress and logistical hurdles when relocating with dependents, including pets that are an important part of family stability and mental health
- Disincentivize service members from bringing pets with them, negatively affecting morale, well-being, and the supportive role animals play for families coping with frequent moves and deployments.

The passage of this bill could therefore indirectly dampen combat readiness by imposing an additional non-military burden on service members and their families.

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Perhaps most worrisome, HB 1594 fails to account for the reality that mandatory pre-import sterilization interferes with veterinary best practices and ignores nuanced health evidence about the timing of spay/neuter. While sterilization has benefits, the optimal timing varies by species, breed, sex, age, and individual health status.

For example:

- Puppies and kittens below a certain age or weight are often advised to delay surgery due to anesthesia risks, immune development, growth plate closure, and long-term orthopedic outcomes, particularly in medium and large-breed dogs.
- In some dogs, delaying spay/neuter until after maturity reduces the risk of certain orthopedic problems and allows normal hormonal development, which can be beneficial for growth and joint health.
- In large-breed dogs, especially, early sterilization has been associated with increased risk of joint disorders and some cancers (not simply reduced reproduction).

These veterinary considerations mean that, for some pets, scheduling sterilization at a location and time chosen by the owner (in consultation with their veterinarian) is far better for long-term health and welfare than requiring a one-size-fits-all surgical mandate before entry.

Hawaii's current pet import protocols already create developmental timing challenges:

- Puppies and kittens under certain ages often cannot complete the quarantine program requirements in the typical timeline, because they must receive two rabies shots spaced  $\geq 30$  days apart and pass a rabies titer, meaning a young animal will often be 6+ months old by the time all steps are complete

Adding a surgical sterilization requirement on top of this process could effectively prohibit all young animals from lawful entry, even when the owner intends to spay/neuter at the appropriate age after relocation. This outcome penalizes responsible owners simply because their animal has not yet reached surgical age.

Under HB 1594, these animals would be categorically barred from entry, regardless of whether:

- The owner intends to spay/neuter at an appropriate age
- The animal is traveling with a responsible owner under existing import safeguards
- The animal poses no realistic risk of contributing to overpopulation

This creates an unreasonable outcome where:

- Families with young pets are disproportionately impacted

- Responsible owners are punished for following veterinary guidance and best practices

#### Sources:

- AKC Canine Health Foundation – New Study Updates Spay-Neuter Timeline Guidance for Popular Dog Breeds  
<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/study-updates-spay-neuter-guidelines/>
  - Hart et al., *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* (2020)  
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2020.00388/full>
  - Hawai'i Animal Quarantine Program – Import Timeline Guidance  
<https://dab.hawaii.gov/ai/aqs/faq-for-animal-quarantine/>
- 

HB 1594 assumes that intact animals entering Hawaii are at risk of irresponsible breeding. In practice, ethical breeders already regulate this through enforceable contractual mechanisms, making a blanket sterilization mandate unnecessary.

The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA), based in Portland, Oregon, maintains the Shelter Project, which tracks shelter data across the United States using publicly available sources.

In Hawaii, only two shelters currently report data:

- Hawaiian Humane Society
- Maui Humane Society

NAIA has repeatedly noted that obtaining shelter data from Hawaii has historically been difficult and remains inconsistent.

Without transparent, statewide shelter intake and outcome data to answer the following questions, the Legislature lacks sufficient evidence to conclude that imported intact animals are a meaningful contributor to Hawai'i's overpopulation problem:

- How many purebred dogs or pedigreed cats enter shelters vs. mixes?
- Are responsibly bred animals actually contributing to overpopulation?
- The relative impact of rescues versus breeders?

Additionally, Hawaii has no statewide registry of rescue organizations, making it impossible to evaluate their collective impact on overpopulation outcomes — positive or negative — despite their widespread role in animal intake and placement.

It would be unjust for legislation of this scope to proceed without informed data demonstrating that imported intact animals are a measurable contributor to the overpopulation problem.

Reputable, ethical breeders commonly use:

- Non-breeding (pet-only) contracts, often paired with limited registration (e.g., AKC Limited Registration), which prohibit potential offspring from being registered or bred legitimately.
- Mandatory spay/neuter clauses with age requirements, requiring sterilization *after* the animal reaches physical and hormonal maturity, as determined by veterinary guidance.
- Return-to-breeder clauses that prevent resale, abandonment, or uncontrolled breeding if the owner can no longer keep the animal.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) explicitly recognizes and supports these practices:

- AKC Limited Registration is designed specifically to prevent breeding while allowing ownership and participation in non-breeding activities.

**Source:** American Kennel Club – Limited Registration

<https://www.akc.org/register/information/limited-registration/>

- The AKC's Breeder of Merit Program requires breeders to follow best practices, including responsible placement, contractual obligations, and compliance with breed-specific health recommendations.

**Source:** American Kennel Club – Breeder of Merit Program

<https://www.akc.org/breeder-programs/akc-breeder-of-merit-program/>

As a result, many intact animals entering Hawaii are already contractually restricted from breeding, whether it be irresponsible (unintentional) or intentional. Additionally, the majority of ethically bred animals are tracked through breeder networks throughout the animal's lifetime.

However, HB 1594 implicitly *assumes* that:

- All intact animals are intended for breeding, and
- All importers of intact animals should be subject to breeder regulations, despite those regulations being unspecified in the bill.

If provisions within HB 1594 cannot account for distinguishing between ethically bred or the true target, irresponsibly bred, the resulting outcome of a blanket penalty due to bill passage would both be inaccurate and unfair.

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Not every intact animal is bred. To imply that animals costing upwards of a thousand dollars to import and maintain are the root cause of overpopulation and free-roaming animals in Hawai'i is unsupported by evidence.

A significant number of intact animals are imported to Hawaii for legitimate, non-breeding purposes, including participation in dog shows and dog sports.

Under organizations such as the American Kennel Club (AKC), many competitive classes are limited exclusively to unaltered animals. Altered dogs may be barred entirely or relegated to different venues that do not carry the same prestige, qualification pathways, or breeder

evaluations. A dog that is altered may be disqualified for failing to meet the breed standard criteria.

Under rules set by the American Kennel Club (AKC):

- Dogs must be intact to compete in conformation shows
  - Altered dogs are ineligible for championship titles
- Source:** American Kennel Club — Rules Applying to Dog Shows  
<https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RREGS3.pdf>

HB 1594 would:

- Bar Hawai'i-based pet owners from participating in AKC conformation events nationwide without permanently altering their dogs. Many owners travel to different venues in the Continental US. Under HB 1594, these animals would need to be altered to enter the state, even if they left for competition and are returning home
- Deter mainland exhibitors from traveling to Hawaii, who will choose not to travel if pets must be sterilized before entry (and thus cannot compete), resulting in loss of support for local clubs and community engagement surrounding locally-hosted:
  - Conformation shows
  - Performance events
  - Specialty breed shows
- Result in lost tourism revenue, including airfare, lodging, vehicle rentals, dining, and extended stays. Shows attract handlers, judges, spectators, and vendors from outside the state who plan travel around show calendars, and who often are repeat visitors.
- Create a genetic and cultural vacuum within Hawaii's show community, because:
  - Not all breeds are readily available within the state
  - Hawaii's geographic isolation already limits access to rare or preservation-focused breeds
  - Preventing intact imports would shrink competitive diversity and breeder education

The long-term effect would be a narrowing of breeds represented in Hawaii, undermining responsible breed stewardship and reducing opportunities for local handlers, judges, and clubs.

Ironically, this restriction may also encourage informal or underground breeding practices locally, as access to quality, ethically bred animals from outside the state becomes increasingly limited.

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HB 1594 is an unprecedented proposal with no demonstrated analogue anywhere in the world. While the intent of reducing overpopulation is laudable, HB 1594 in its current form:

- Misattributes pet overpopulation to lawful, screened importation rather than to irresponsible backyard breeding practices and unaltered stray populations.

- Penalizes responsible pet owners and ethical breeders through a lack of distinction between irresponsible breeding and legitimate, regulated, and culturally significant animal activities.
- Ignores legitimate veterinary science about the timing and health implications of spay/neuter procedures.
- Unintentionally bars young animals that cannot yet be safely spayed or neutered.
- Undermines the competitiveness and cultural value of animal shows, which benefit the state economically and socially.
- Places unnecessary, burdensome, and redundant requirements on those relocating to or visiting Hawaii with pets, with potential consequences for family stability and readiness.
- Does not meaningfully address public education on responsible ownership, access to affordable spay/neuter for low-income residents and/or homeless populations, or provide any enforcement against unregulated, irresponsible, local backyard breeding already occurring with pre-existing animals already in the state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to either entirely oppose HB 1594 or substantially amend it with more narrowly tailored language to better target the actual drivers of overpopulation without penalizing responsible owners engaging in lawful activities or jeopardizing family and animal welfare.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Corinne L. McCreery

Honolulu, HI

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:35:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Monden	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Quarantine is the sole gateway for all animals entering Hawai‘i, which remains rabies-free. There are no studies or documented evidence demonstrating that imported dogs or cats are the primary cause of pet overpopulation in the state.

Legislation that seeks to remove an individual’s right to own an intact animal raises constitutional concerns. Pets are legally considered personal property, and the forced removal of that right represents an unjustified infringement on individual freedoms.

Rather than addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation, these bills instead penalize responsible pet owners. The population targeted—puppy mills and backyard breeders—represents a small fraction of overall pet owners. Broad restrictions unfairly impact the majority while failing to meaningfully address the problem.

Currently, City and County law requires all dogs to be microchipped. An effective alternative would be to enhance this system by requiring breeder identification and DNA registration. If DNA were collected at the time of microchipping, shelter animals could be traced back to their breeder. The breeder would then be financially responsible for the animal’s care until a new home is secured.

The primary motivation for puppy mills and irresponsible backyard breeders is profit. Holding breeders financially accountable for animals that end up in shelters would directly address the economic incentive driving overbreeding and would likely reduce shelter overpopulation far more effectively than stripping rights from responsible pet owners.



**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:32:01 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherri Gaulke	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am writing as a dedicated member of Hawai‘i’s dog-show community to express my strong opposition to this bill. Responsible dog owners, breeders, and handlers take great pride in the care, training, and ethical breeding of our dogs. Dog shows are not just a hobby for us—they are a way of preserving healthy bloodlines, promoting responsible breeding practices, and celebrating the bond between people and their animals.

Because we live on an island, it is already challenging to access high-quality breeding lines. We often need to bring in dogs from the mainland or other countries to maintain genetic diversity and continue improving our breeds. This bill would make that process significantly harder, and in doing so, it would harm responsible breeders while doing little to address the issues it claims to solve.

Please do not pass this bill. It would take away the rights of responsible dog owners and damage a long-standing community that cares deeply about animal welfare.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sherri Gaulke

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:42:15 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Duane Inoue	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3 February 2026

Testimony in Opposition to H.B. 1594 (As Written)

Relating to Animal Importation; Proof of Sterilization; Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; Documentation; Breeder Registry

Chairs and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

My name is Duane Inoue, and I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to H.B. 1594, as written.

**Executive Summary**

While I support evidence-based measures to reduce pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals, H.B. 1594, as drafted, is overbroad, administratively unworkable, and internally inconsistent with other pending legislation. The bill regulates animal importation status rather than reproductive risk, creates impractical exemption frameworks, imposes unnecessary burdens on veterinarians, and conflicts directly with H.B. 1736. Without substantial revision, H.B. 1594 is unlikely to achieve its stated purpose and may create enforcement and legal challenges.

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**1. Fundamental Policy Defect: Import Status ≠ Reproductive Risk**

H.B. 1594 is premised on the assumption that reducing the importation of unsterilized dogs and cats will meaningfully reduce pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals. This assumption is flawed.

An unsterilized animal that is not “at large” does not contribute to overpopulation. Overpopulation is driven by animals that are allowed to roam and reproduce, not by the mere presence of intact animals in the State. Regulating animals at the point of importation, without regard to post-entry confinement or control, misidentifies the actual source of the problem.

A more effective approach would focus on mandatory sterilization triggered by “at large” status, with narrowly tailored exemptions for age, health, and registered breeding.

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## 2. Exemption (1): Temporary Importation for Less Than 90 Days

H.B. 1594 exempts animals imported for less than ninety days, provided they are not sold, transferred, or retained in the State beyond that period.

This exemption is administratively and legally problematic:

- The bill provides no mechanism to verify the animal’s departure after ninety days.
- No bond, affidavit, return travel documentation, or follow-up enforcement is specified.
- The ninety-day threshold is arbitrary and unrelated to reproductive biology.
- Reproductive risk exists immediately upon entry if the animal is allowed to roam.

Without explicit confinement requirements or enforceable exit verification, this exemption undermines the stated purpose of the bill.

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## 3. Exemption (2): Veterinary Certification for Health or Life Risk

As written, H.B. 1594 effectively requires veterinary certification for nearly all juvenile dogs and cats, since sterilization is not typically performed until certain age milestones:

- Cats are commonly sterilized at 5–6 months (though earlier procedures are safe).
- Dogs are typically sterilized between 6–18 months, depending on breed and size.

Requiring licensed veterinarians—often outside Hawai‘i or outside the United States—to certify that sterilization would jeopardize an animal’s health or life creates:

- unnecessary administrative burden,
- increased costs for owners and veterinarians,
- inconsistent standards across jurisdictions.

Age-based exemptions should be statutory, not dependent on discretionary veterinary certification.

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#### 4. Exemption (3): Breeder Registry Is Underspecified

H.B. 1594 requires the Department to establish a breeder registry but specifies only minimal information. As drafted, the registry would be insufficient for enforcement or accountability.

At a minimum, the statute should require registry information adequate to ensure traceability and compliance, with details delegated to rulemaking. Without this, the registry risks becoming a loophole rather than a safeguard.

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#### 5. Direct Conflict With H.B. 1736

H.B. 1594 conflicts materially with H.B. 1736, which also addresses sterilization and importation of cats but uses different triggers and exemptions.

If both bills are enacted as written:

- An owner could comply with one statute while violating the other.
- Enforcement agencies would face inconsistent mandates.
- The State would be exposed to claims of arbitrary or selective enforcement.

These bills must be harmonized, consolidated, or sequenced prior to enactment to avoid statutory conflict and legal ambiguity.

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#### 6. Consistency and Scope: Dogs and Cats

If the State ultimately determines that import-based sterilization mandates are necessary, similar considerations should apply to dogs as well as cats. Free-roaming dogs, while generally less impactful than cats, do kill birds and other wildlife. Selective application without clear justification raises consistency concerns.

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#### 7. Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Legislature:

1. Delay passage of H.B. 1594 pending coordination with H.B. 1736;
2. Shift from an import-based mandate to a sterilization requirement triggered by “at large” status;
3. Include clear statutory age exemptions;
4. Establish enforceable verification mechanisms for temporary import exemptions;
5. Delegate breeder registry details to administrative rulemaking; and
6. Ensure internal consistency across all animal sterilization legislation.

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### Conclusion

H.B. 1594, as written, does not effectively address the causes of pet overpopulation and creates significant enforcement and legal challenges. With careful revision and coordination, the Legislature can adopt a framework that is both effective and legally sound. I urge you to defer passage and substantially revise this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Inoue

email: gekoboy@gmail.com

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:16:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terry Nii	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a responsible land/farm owner, livestock breeder, and dog breeder/AKC show participant, I would like to speak out against HB1594 before it is scheduled for a hearing.

I support the Humane Society and wish that they would direct their efforts to more spay and neuter, community support helping to capture and rehome stray animals, and helping with the homeless animal population. I contribute monetarily to their cause every year.

HOWEVER, I do think that this bill is not warranted or necessary. It will make it very hard for responsible dog breeders like myself others to improve our breeding stock to improve our programs without additional paper work and being monitored and labeled as breeders. It will also be difficult to enforce, what about the military or pet owners bringing animals in as pets that do not wish to, or have the funds to spay or neuter their animals? Who is going to enforce and pay for the spaying and neutering of these animals?

There is a lot of literature confirming that it is not always in the best interest of the animal to get spayed or neutered due to age, or having them develop correctly.

I feel that it is an infringement on our rights to require the spaying or neutering of pets. I have been monitoring the HHS and they don't even offer those services to the public often or at all. It costs nearly \$1000 to spay a dog right now at any vet clinic.

I humbly ask that you consider these points before advancing bill HB1594.

Thank you for your time.

Terry Nii

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:21:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bret Mossman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of this bill. More than 20k animals were brought into Hawai'i in FY24. Making sure that these animals are sterilized will help protect our community from pet overpopulation and reduce strain on community resources.

Please pass this measure.

Aloha,

Bret Nainoa Mossman



**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:35:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1594. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I am a resident of Sunset Beach, Oahu.



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**LATE**

February 3, 2026

**Re: American Kennel Club Comments on H.B.1594: RELATING TO Animal Importation.**

Dear Chair Chun and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes today on behalf of our 41 Hawaii based kennel clubs and the many responsible dog owners in the state to respectfully ask you to oppose House Bill 1594. This proposal would lead to the sterilization of dogs owned by responsible residents of the state. This bill, while well-intentioned, would have a significant negative impact on dog owners and the local community.

The AKC believes education and outreach are key to promoting responsible dog ownership. A dog should not be subject to mandatory spay-neuter simply because it was imported into the state— especially a young puppy who may have just reached the age where it should be altered. There are number of valid reasons why a dog's owner would not spay/neuter their dog—health, age, participation in AKC dog shows, etc. Further, requiring someone to register as a dog breeder (when they have no intention of breeding dogs) to bring an unaltered dog into the state creates an unnecessary bureaucratic hurdle for Hawaiians to comply with. This breeding registry would not serve as a list of breeders (given the other reasons for bringing in an unaltered dog) and have little benefit to the state.

This bill would also have a negative impact on Hawaii's economy. In 2024, over 7,500 people participated in AKC dog events across the Hawaiian Islands, and many of these participants are Hawaii residents. These events can inject over \$2 million into the economy of local communities through facility rentals, restaurants, hotels, and basic dog care. By mandating that all dogs be sterilized before being imported, you are preventing many Hawaiians from participating in AKC conformation dog shows, which require dogs to be intact.

Inclusive and public outreach and education are key to promoting and instilling a culture of responsible pet ownership. If the state seeks to increase the prevalence of dog owners spaying or neutering their dogs (which the AKC supports), resources should instead be directed toward making sure low-cost spay/neutering programs are both fully funded, and the service is known to state residents. Nothing will reduce the population of unplanned pets than a culture of responsible pet ownership.

To lessen the strain on those who care for pets without a home, improve the conditions inside Hawaii's animal shelters, and to promote the welfare of all animals in the system, AKC proposes the following recommendations:

- Make sure low-cost spay and neuter funds are available to all who need it and ensure that program availability is widely known through community outreach.
- Require all animals received in the animal shelter system to be checked for microchips so lost pets don't languish in shelter system taking up valuable space and resources.
- Consider offering tax credits or other programs to incentivize greater acceptance of pets in residential housing to address issue of pets ending up in shelter system only because of housing issues.

We appreciate the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems' attention to this issue and for their passion for the welfare of animals. Thank you for reviewing and considering our comments.

Regards,

Bob Rilling-Smith  
Legislative Analyst/Community Outreach Coordinator  
American Kennel Club  
(919) 816-3960 | [bxr@akc.org](mailto:bxr@akc.org)

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:14:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antoinette Sardillo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB1594. I am a professional dog trainer in Hawai‘i and an active participant in dog sports. I work closely with pet owners every day and see firsthand how thoughtful, responsible ownership looks in real life.

I care deeply about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership. However, HB1594 takes a one size fits all approach that does not reflect how dogs are actually raised, trained, and cared for. Mandatory sterilization requirements for imported dogs would create unnecessary barriers for responsible owners, working dogs, and sport dogs whose health and development depend on remaining intact for a period of time.

From a training and sport perspective, many dogs benefit physically and mentally from delayed sterilization or remaining intact. Research and veterinary guidance increasingly show that intact dogs may have lower risks of certain orthopedic injuries, joint disorders, and some cancers, especially in large and athletic breeds. These health considerations are especially important for dogs participating in sports such as agility, obedience, protection sports, and working roles where physical soundness matters.

As a trainer, I also see that behavior problems are not solved simply by spaying or neutering. Training, structure, enrichment, and owner education are what truly prevent unwanted behaviors and reduce shelter intake. Responsible breeders and sport dog owners already invest significant time and resources into health testing, training, and lifetime responsibility for their dogs. A mandatory sterilization requirement does not address irresponsible ownership and instead penalizes those who are already doing things right.

Additionally, the proposed breeder registry raises concerns about privacy and fairness and may discourage ethical breeders who prioritize health, temperament, and responsible placement. These breeders are part of the solution, not the problem.

I strongly support education, access to affordable veterinary care, and voluntary sterilization programs for those who choose them. These approaches respect individual circumstances while still promoting animal welfare. HB1594, as written, would place unnecessary restrictions on responsible dog owners, trainers, and sport participants without effectively addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB1594.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:58:51 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles Sloan	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I find this bill to be extremely prejudicial and short sided. Really poorly thought out and doesn't not even address the problem or objective it's wishing to correct. Dogs coming into the state are pets and often prefigured pure bred dogs via responsible and caring pet owners. Pets are often already neutered, and dogs with pedigrees could vary well belong to AKC conformation enthusiasts who already license their animals and take very good care of them including controlling said animals reproduction. These people DO NOT Breed for Profit only do so in hopes of preserving or improving on breed type they are NOT the problem that created our crisis. Many of us have also adopted and fostered dogs working with rescues! The problem is educating at all levels of our society including well meaning people within the humane society, PETA, and similar organization who vilify responsible pet owners and breed organizations and even the AKC! Lease look at the these rescues own websites there is not a glut of pure bred dogs in their rescues there maybe a senior or and I dividual younger animal that's had unfortunatel events occur for them, but by and large those poor dogs are there because of irresponsible pet owners who allowed their dogs to roam free without supervision, neglected/abused them or out abandoned them. The people who will be affected by this bill are not them! We spend money to leave and come back with our animals. Often to attend completions or enjoy vacations. Our dogs are sterilized when it appropriate and we diligently take care of them. This bill only interferes and prohibits us and will kill our dogs working with sports because the choice will be to stop or move away which is also a very real choice as will be voting against politicians who support this kind of poor, short sided lligislation the achieves a small vocal minorities agenda WHILE NOT solving anything.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:04:49 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Parsons	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representatives,

I stand in STRONG OPPOSITION to this proposed legislation. There is no purpose for forcing citizens to register as breeders. The issue with overpopulation of animals in the state is based on those who allow their animals to mate indiscriminately, not preservation breeders. My dogs, will have MAYBE one litter in their lifetimes, most...none....while there are those who allow their animals to roam freely and maye indiscriminately. Any animal who I don't plan to breed are spayed or neutered (as are my two rescues).

I urge you to vote against this measure.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:13:04 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Salazar	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB1594

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Hearing: February 4, 9:00 AM

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Taylor Salazar, and I submit this testimony as a private individual in strong opposition to HB1594, which would require mandatory sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai‘i and establish a breeder registry.

I appreciate the Legislature’s recognition that Hawai‘i’s geographic isolation and rabies-free status require careful regulation of animal importation to protect public health and safety. I also agree that Hawai‘i faces real challenges related to pet overpopulation, free-roaming animals, animal welfare, community safety, and impacts to native ecosystems. These concerns deserve thoughtful, evidence-based solutions.

However, HB1594 does not address the root causes of these problems and will not achieve its stated goals.

Mandatory Sterilization of Imports Will Not Reduce Overpopulation

The stated purpose of HB1594 is to reduce the number of fertile, unaltered animals imported into the State. It is unclear how mandatory sterilization of imports—combined with broadly labeling



anyone who imports an intact animal as a “breeder”—will resolve Hawai‘i’s overpopulation challenges.

This policy does not prevent people from breeding dogs already on island, where the majority of breeding activity occurs. Hawai‘i’s overpopulation problem is driven by animals already here, not by imported animals. Restricting imports will not stop backyard breeding, accidental litters, or irresponsible ownership.

### Ethical Breeders Are Not the Source of the Problem

Ethical breeders do not contribute to shelter intake or stray populations. Reputable breeders require buyers to sign legally binding contracts prohibiting surrender to shelters or rescues, resale, or abandonment, and requiring the dog to be returned to the breeder at any point in its life if the owner cannot keep it.

These safeguards exist specifically to prevent the outcomes HB1594 claims to address. Overpopulation in Hawai‘i is instead driven primarily by unsterilized mixed-breed dogs and cats, combined with gaps in education and owner accountability.

### Intact Does Not Mean “Breeding”

Many intact animals are imported for legitimate, non-breeding purposes, including conformation dog shows, sport, and working roles. Dogs must be intact to compete in conformation events. Not every intact animal is bred.

Automatically assuming that every intact animal will be bred and subjecting owners to undefined breeder regulations is unfair and unsupported by evidence. It is also unreasonable to imply that carefully managed animals costing thousands of dollars to import are responsible for Hawai‘i’s free-roaming or overpopulation issues.

### Reduced Genetic Diversity and Increased Inbreeding

Hawai‘i’s isolation already limits genetic diversity. Responsible importation of intact animals is one of the only tools available to maintain healthy gene pools. Restricting this practice will increase inbreeding, worsen inherited health problems, and negatively impact long-term animal welfare statewide.

### Free-Roaming Animals Require Local Solutions

Free-roaming animals in Hawai‘i are most often associated—based on news reporting and community experience—with homeless encampments, unmanaged dogs, and feral cat colonies, many of which are maintained through informal feeding or TNR efforts.

HB1594 does not address these issues. What is needed instead is public education, targeted outreach, and assistance for lower-income individuals to sterilize animals already in the community, as well as clear policies that protect Hawai‘i’s native ecosystems.

### Education and Behavior Are the Primary Barriers

Hawai‘i already has numerous free and low-cost spay and neuter programs, yet participation remains inconsistent. This demonstrates that the primary barrier is not access, but behavioral resistance driven by misinformation and cultural attitudes about sterilization.

Without education, community engagement, and owner accountability, overpopulation will persist regardless of how many animals are sterilized at the point of import.

### Lack of Transparent Shelter and Rescue Data

The National Animal Interest Alliance’s Shelter Project tracks shelter data nationwide using public sources. Only two Hawai‘i shelters are currently listed due to data availability, highlighting the ongoing challenge of obtaining comprehensive shelter data in this state.

Without transparent, statewide shelter data, it is impossible to determine how many purebred or pedigreed animals actually enter the shelter system, despite implications that breeders are the source of overpopulation.

Rescue organizations also play a major role in Hawai‘i, yet there is no registry or coordinated data to evaluate their overall impact. Policy decisions should be based on measurable outcomes, not assumptions.

### Disproportionate Impact on Military Families

HB1594 will disproportionately affect military families relocating to Hawai‘i. Many families inherit pets from other service members and may not have access to original sterilization records. Veterinarians are often unwilling to certify surgeries they did not perform, and there is no reliable physical exam to confirm that a female animal has been spayed.

Additional diagnostic requirements increase costs and raise the likelihood that families are forced to leave pets behind or surrender them on the mainland.

In conclusion, HB1594 misidentifies the problem and proposes a solution that will not work. It penalizes responsible owners and ethical breeders, restricts genetic diversity, and creates unnecessary barriers for families, while leaving the true causes of animal overpopulation in Hawai'i unaddressed.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems decline to hear HB1594 and instead pursue targeted, data-driven policies that meaningfully address animal welfare challenges across the State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,

Taylor Salazar

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:22:14 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emmylou Anne Kidder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I'm a constituent from Kailua on O'ahu and I would like to express my complete support for HB1594. Mandated sterilization of cats will help curb the number of feral cats on the landscape, which will help preserve Hawaii's natural beauty, protect our endangered wildlife, and safeguard human health. Unchecked breeding of feral cats leads to the predation of endangered endemic waterfowl and seabird species, many of which are rapidly heading towards extinction. Feral cat colonies also transmit parasites that spread of deadly toxoplasmosis disease to monk seals, dolphins, and people. Mandated sterilization will reduce these risks while also supporting cat welfare. HB1594 will alleviate the issue of overcrowding in cat shelters and make it more feasible to find them all loving homes.

Mahalo!

## **I oppose HB 1594**

“The purpose of this Act is to decrease the number of fertile, unaltered dogs and cats imported into the State by **requiring proof of sterilization prior to embarkation**, subject to reasonable exemptions for medical necessity, temporary stays, and registered breeders.” Not every intact animal that is imported to Hawaii is bred. To assume that every intact animal will be bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren’t included in the bill is unfair. It’s also unfair to imply that these intact **animals that cost thousands of dollars to import** are the root cause of animal overpopulation and free roaming animals in Hawaii.

I personally have brought in 4 golden retrievers from New Zealand in the last 23 years. My dogs are registered therapy dogs. They visit hospitals, libraries, schools, the police stations, and senior centers. None of them were neutered prior to their arrival and none of them were a part of any unwanted pregnancies/litters. In addition, among the concerns associated with early spaying or neutering prior to sexual maturity for a golden retriever are increased risks of hip dysplasia and torn cruciate ligaments, possibly decreased life span, some evidence for increased incidence of hypothyroidism, hemangiosarcoma and osteosarcoma. (Canine cancers)

Free roaming animals appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. What has been done to address more public education and to reach out to lower income individuals to assist them with spaying and neutering those animals? **We need more outreach and low or no cost spay/neuter programs to address this population of pets.**

I don’t feel **responsible** pet owners should be punished for those pet owners who fail to monitor and control their animals that are already here in Hawaii.

**PLEASE VOTE NO on HB 1594**

**Barbara Germann RN MPH  
Kailua, Hawaii**

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:05:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Oki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to this bill.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:19:27 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Govier	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The free roaming dogs and cats are not the animals that are being imported. Imposing draconian restrictions on citizens, including military, who abide by current rabbi's requirements plus the costs in time and money to bring a dog or cat here, is not going to effect free roaming animal numbers as those animals are not and don't add to "welfare" or free roaming. I oppose this bill. I ask you to oppose this bill. Thank you.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:48:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raquel Tugaoen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As individual who has several intact dogs who compete in the mainlaind, causing this mandated sterilization, causes me and many others to not partake in such activities. This also does not allow preservations breeders who breed for the preservation of quality dogs to procreate quality and sound dogs.

Hawaii already does not have great dogs to accomplish work on farms, etc, causing this will limit farmers to create ample working dogs to work and protect their animals and familys, in addition to property.

As a military member, I often travel and bring my dogs with me. causing this for me will cause a hardship on me to have to financially take on this burdan.



**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:04:42 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theodore Akimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is outrageous. As someone who travels to the mainland exhibiting and showing Cairns this bill further complicates the already big hassles of flying w/your dog. This bill only penalizes the people who travel w/ their dogs it does not address the backyard breeders who indiscriminately breed for pure profit. Our show dogs are intact b/c it is an AKC rule to show only intact dogs. Thank you for your time. I oppose such a ill written and one sided bill.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:08:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Cregor	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is John Cregor,. I submit in opposition to this bill and I adopt the testimony of the Pacific Pet Alliance. My wife and I are long-time dog owners and participants in events and competitions sponsored by local dog clubs under the rules of the American Kennel Club (AKC). Several hundred people in Hawaii likewise participate in these events. This bill would simply kill this as the AKC requires dogs be intact to participate. It is often necessary to import dogs into the Island to be able to participate.

I further submit that this bill would not fulfill its intended purpose of reducing stray dogs running loose or reducing shelter populations. People who, at significant expense, import dogs jealously protect them.

Thank you for your consideration..

John Cregor

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:26:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MICHAEL ING	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:04:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Stierhoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Emma Stierhoff. I am a Conservation Biologist based in Hilo. I am writing to implore you to vote for HB1594 to help protect native Hawaiian wildlife. This bill will help prevent unwanted animal reproduction, mitigating the threat of feral cats and dogs on our native wildlife. Cats in particular pose a major threat to wildlife as they predate native birds and spread deadly diseases like toxoplasmosis. While cats can make wonderful pets, irresponsible and unintended cat breeding has contributed to a severe overpopulation crisis, resulting in widespread stray and feral cats. HB 1594 helps address this problem by ensuring pets are spayed or neutered before they are allowed into the state, preventing unwanted reproduction. Please vote for HB 1594 to protect our unique native wildlife.

Sincerely,

Emma Stierhoff

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:05:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elena Arinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill. Please pass it.

Mahalo.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:24:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Huck	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, this bill is poorly written and does not solve the problem that it claims to solve, in addition to endangering the health of animals that are neutered too early by increasing their risk of joint disorders (ACL tears, hip displasia), stunted growth, behavioral issues, and several cancers.

No consideration in this bill is given to the age of the pet, and with our history of poor enforcement of Covid protocols and the firework ban, it is not difficult to understand that this bill will just create a cottage industry for veterinarians who are using their judgement to write medical necessity letters for pet owners (many of whom don't even want their pet to reproduce) to delay sterilization of a pet until the proper age.

Let's throw this back to the drawing board until you can come up with something that is clearly enforceable, unlike our park signage which even DPR admits is confusing and hard to understand with respect to where pets are allowed.

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:43:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

**LATE**

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sutanto Widjaja	Hawaiian Hound Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a responsible, small-scale dog breeder, who only breeds once in a blue moon on the mainland. I am opposed HB 1594, because it doesn't addressed the heart of why there is animal overpopulation in Hawaii.

Companion animal overpopulation in Hawai'i is primarily driven by unplanned litters from irresponsible owners - not ethical breeders like members of my hound club, as well as free-roaming and stray animals, which is why local humane organizations focus on expanding affordable spay/neuter programs for residents and community cats.

By focusing on incoming, already well-cared-for pets instead of the real sources of surplus animals and the need for better access to sterilization and enforcement against irresponsible breeding, HB 1594 risks targeting the wrong people while failing to fix the root causes of overpopulation. I urge you to reject this bill and instead support measures that expand spay/neuter access and address genuinely irresponsible breeding practices.

**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:44:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadine Araki Yamanaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill



**LATE**

**HB-1594**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:51:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheila Sumida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Sheila Sumida and strongly oppose to HB1594. I am 80 years old and a long-time dog owner who participates in AKC sanctioned events locally and on the mainland. AKC requires that dogs be intact to participate as pure-bred dogs.

This Bill will have unintended consequences to "kill" dog events where hundreds of dogs participate for their fun and interaction with other dogs and their humans.

I do not know how the bill will reduce stray dogs and reduce the shelter population. The key to the problem is to provide education to pet responsibility and neuter the strays, dogs and many feral cats.

Your consideration is appreciated.

Sheila Sumida