

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'ŌIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2561
RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS

REPRESENTATIVE CORY M. CHUN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Hearing Date, Time: 2/06/2026, 9:01 A.M. Room Number: 325 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.

2 **Department Position:** The Department offers support for HB2561.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD), Vector Control
4 Branch (VCB), provides the following comments on behalf of the Department.

5 The Department of Health (Department) supports HB2561, which proposes
6 strengthening and complementing local rules in cities with population of three hundred
7 thousand or more by designating feral chickens on public lands as a controllable pest for
8 purposes of public health and nuisance prevention. The Department also supports the
9 prohibition of intentional keeping, maintaining, or supporting of feral chickens on state or
10 certain city lands, including by feeding or placing chickens in such areas and abandonment of
11 chickens on public lands or on private property without consent.

12 Feral chickens, and feral animals in general, threaten local ecosystems and can transmit
13 diseases affecting both public and environmental health. Efforts to reduce feral chicken
14 populations has multiple positive effects; it will reduce the risk of horizontal transmission of
15 avian diseases such as avian influenza, it will reduce the risk of zoonotic transmission to

1 humans, and most pressing, it will reduce the nuisance caused by uncontrolled populations of
2 feral animals.

3 However, the Department notes that animal control for purposes not associated with
4 public health activities such as outbreak containment and response is inconsistent with the
5 Department's mission. Local governmental agencies, landowners and private sector businesses
6 are often the entities most appropriate to provide pest control.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

8
9 **Offered Amendments:** None.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

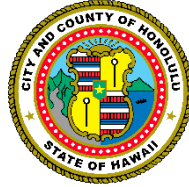
DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELawe KUPA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

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KIMBERLY M. HASHIRO
DIRECTOR
PO'O

MEGAN JOHNSON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O



February 4, 2026

The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Chair
The Honorable Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
State Capitol, Conference Room 325
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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

SUBJECT: H.B. No. 2561 - Relating To Feral Animals
HEARING: Friday, February 6, 2026, 9:01 a.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD),
appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support** of H.B. No. 2561, which would add a
new chapter to the Hawai'i Revised Statutes regarding feral chickens.

In addition to administering the City's feral chicken mitigation contracts that
support humane capture and disposal services, CSD's Customer Care section serves
as the primary point of contact for public complaints related to feral chickens. These
complaints frequently involve excessive noise, sanitation issues, attraction of other
pests, and impacts to public facilities and neighborhood quality of life.

H.B. No. 2561 provides important statutory clarity by designating feral chickens
on public lands as a controllable pest for purposes of public health and nuisance
prevention. The measure strengthens existing local rules by prohibiting the feeding,
abandonment, or intentional support of feral chickens on public lands, affirming the
authority of private property owners to humanely control feral chickens on their own
property, and establishing clear enforcement authority and civil penalties. The bill
complements existing county practices and does not expand enforcement beyond
current roles.

Testimony for H.B. No. 2561
February 4, 2026
Page 2

While the measure does not include an appropriation, the clear standards and enforcement tools established by H.B. No. 2561 support more consistent, coordinated, and humane management of feral chickens on public lands.

For these reasons, CSD **supports** H.B. No. 2561 and appreciates the Legislature's consideration of this practical and targeted approach to addressing an ongoing public nuisance issue.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. No. 2561.

Sincerely,

for Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:08:36 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Animal Rights Hawai'i strongly opposes this measure. We know that many people don't like roosters crowing during the night, but to allow wholesale slaughter of any animal is very troubling. I question the validity of removing chickens from the taxonomy of birds. Carl Linneaus would be rolling in his tomb to hear such unscientific actions by our legislature.

I would remind the sponsors of this bill that when Iniki devastated Kaua'i, thousands of fighting chickens escaped and reproduced...I have lived in Hawai'i for 55 years, and session after session, politicians have defeated multiple attempts to seriously address the criminal activity that goes on in your neighborhoods, treated with a wink and a nod. That sadly demonstrates that Hawai'i is still, essentially, at heart, a banana republic.



Trooper's Chicken Rescue
92-113 Hihialou Place
Kapolei, HI 96707
+1 601 772-1107
brian@trooperschickenrescue.org

To: Hawai'i House of Representatives
and Governor Green

February 03, 2026

Aloha Hawai'i Representatives, Governor Green,

I am writing on behalf of Trooper's Chicken Rescue, a Hawai'i based nonprofit dedicated to the humane rescue, rehabilitation, and long-term care of abused, neglected, abandoned, and cockfighting impacted chickens across the Hawaiian Islands.

We respectfully oppose HB 2561 as currently written; however, we strongly believe this bill presents a powerful opportunity for the State to pursue a truly effective and humane solution by formally partnering with Trooper's Chicken Rescue and the growing network of volunteers ready to help address Hawai'i's feral chicken crisis.

Across our islands, there is already what can only be described as an army of compassionate, committed volunteers: residents, animal advocates, veterinary professionals, students, and community members who stand ready to be part of the solution. What we lack is not willingness, expertise, or community support. What we need is the partnership, coordination, and backing of the State to transform grassroots rescue into a scalable, humane infrastructure capable of producing real results.

Without collaboration, enforcement-only approaches risk pushing the problem out of sight rather than solving it. With partnership, Hawai'i can build a model rooted in compassion, public safety, fiscal responsibility, and community trust. Illegal cockfighting continues to be one of the primary drivers of chicken overpopulation on the islands. Birds bred for fighting are frequently abandoned when they no longer serve a purpose, released when operations are threatened, or left injured after fights. This cycle fuels the very population concerns the Legislature is seeking to address.

Even more troubling is the normalization of violence that accompanies it. Our organization routinely encounters situations where young boys, having witnessed or been exposed to cockfighting culture, engage in acts of cruelty toward these animals. When violence toward living beings becomes entertainment, it shapes behavior and erodes the values we strive to teach our keiki.

Hawai'i has an opportunity to interrupt that cycle.

By partnering with Trooper's Chicken Rescue, the State would not simply be managing a nuisance. It would be investing in prevention, education, and long-term cultural change. We are actively working to secure appropriate land where rescued feral chickens can be safely relocated and allowed to live out their lives in a stable, humane environment, further supporting long-term population reduction.

Trooper's Chicken Rescue is fully prepared to partner directly with legislators, state agencies, local businesses, veterinarians, veterinary students, landowners, and law enforcement to:

- Rescue feral, abandoned, abused, and cockfighting impacted chickens
- Provide veterinary care, rehabilitation, and long-term sanctuary on designated properties
- Assist law enforcement by receiving and caring for seized animals from cockfighting operations
- Build a coordinated volunteer response network to support humane population management
- Implement education programs that teach keiki and adults that chickens are intelligent, social animals deserving of care
- Develop containment, placement, and oversight strategies that reduce outdoor populations over time
- Create mentorship and hands-on learning opportunities for future veterinary professionals





Trooper's Chicken Rescue
92-113 Hihialou Place
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brian@trooperschickenrescue.org ✉️

February 03, 2026

Rather than directing significant public funds toward pest control models that rely primarily on eradication, a partnership-centered approach redirects resources into humane management, community service, and education, addressing the root causes of the issue instead of repeating it.

This is not simply an animal welfare matter. It is a public safety issue, a community values issue, and an opportunity for Hawai'i to lead with an aloha-centered approach that reduces violence rather than perpetuating it.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to amend HB 2561 to include language that:

- Establishes a formal partnership pathway between the State and qualified nonprofit rescue organizations
- Creates a framework for receiving and caring for animals seized from illegal cockfighting operations
- Supports humane population management strategies
- Encourages volunteer engagement under structured oversight
- Prioritizes rehabilitation and prevention alongside enforcement

We are not asking the State to solve this alone. We are asking the State to allow those already doing the work to stand beside you.

Please help us build a better alternative.

Help us replace cycles of abandonment and cruelty with systems of care. Help us show our keiki that Hawai'i chooses compassion. Help us create a durable, humane solution that communities can believe in.

Trooper's Chicken Rescue would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss how this bill can be refined to reflect these shared goals and to explore a formal partnership moving forward.

Mahalo for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to solutions that reflect the very best of Hawai'i.

With respect and aloha,
Brian Burns
President and Founder
Trooper's Chicken Rescue
brian@trooperschickenrescue.org
610-772-1107





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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 6, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2561
RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:01 AM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2561, which establishes a framework to address feral chicken populations on public lands in cities with a population of three hundred thousand or more.

Feral chickens remain a persistent issue across the state, particularly in agricultural areas, where they damage crops, spread weeds, attract pests, and pose public health and safety concerns. HFB has consistently supported reasonable and practical efforts to manage feral chicken populations in ways that protect agriculture, communities, and the environment.

HFB appreciates that HB 2561 focuses on public lands and is intended to complement existing county ordinances rather than impose new regulatory burdens on farmers or agricultural operations. The bill's emphasis on discouraging the feeding, dumping, or intentional support of feral chickens on public lands aligns with the need for responsible, coordinated management and public education. These behaviors often exacerbate feral population growth and shift impacts into neighboring agricultural and residential properties.

At the same time, HFB encourages continued coordination to ensure that feral chicken control efforts are practical, humane, and effectively enforced. Enforcement alone is not sufficient; long-term success will depend on public awareness, consistent application of rules, and adequate resources for implementation.

Hawaii's farmers and ranchers are working to increase local food production and self-sufficiency, but these efforts are undermined when feral animal populations continue to damage crops, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Addressing feral chickens is important for protecting agriculture, public health, and the environment.

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

Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President



Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminka
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB2561.**

Feral chickens have long been a source of frustration and detriment to farmers and residents. They damage crops and contribute to noise pollution, affecting the livelihood of Hawaii's farmers and quality of life for urban residents. By designating feral chickens as a controllable pest and prohibiting their intentional support or release on public lands, this bill acknowledges the adverse impacts of feral chickens and takes substantial measures to mitigate these effects. The establishment of fines and authorized enforcement agencies will ensure that these regulations are effectively upheld and that the necessary actions are taken to control the feral chicken population.

Establishing clear guidelines and penalties for abandonment and support of feral chickens represents a pragmatic approach to lessen their impact while promoting effective management practices. Supporting HB2561 aligns with the goals of preserving Hawaii's agricultural resources and maintaining the well-being of its communities, ensuring a harmonious coexistence between public spaces, urban living, and farming activities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

Animal Law Section
A Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association

LATE

Chair: Savannah Sherman, Esq.
shermansavannah8@gmail.com

The Animal Law Section of HSBA **opposes** HB 2561: Relating to Feral Animals.

HB 2561, while well-intentioned, would have the impact of increasing cruelty and violence in our community. This Bill lacks adequate enforcement mechanisms for preventing inhumane methods of killing wild chickens. If enacted, many wild chickens will face unnecessarily painful deaths.

This would also impact our children and the community as a whole. Children who witness violence towards animals are shown to have adverse social impacts and a heightened risk for future violent behavior.¹ While wild chickens may cause issues, allowing people to freely kill them opens the door for increased violence and harm to the overall community.

This testimony represents the views of the Animal Law Section only and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Hawaii State Bar Association as a whole.

Respectfully,



Savannah Sherman, Esq.
Animal Law Section Chair

¹ See Roshni Trehan Ladny, et al., *Traumatized Witnesses: Review of Childhood Exposure to Animal Cruelty*, Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma, Vol. 13, Issue 4, Pg. 527-37 (Jul. 2019).

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:47:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
G Garner	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I strongly oppose HB1852, which allows the killing of feral chickens and removes them from protections under Hawai‘i’s animal cruelty statutes.

While the bill attempts to soften its impact by referencing “humane” practices, this language is deeply flawed and inadequate in real-world application.

“Humane” Standards Are Vague, Unenforceable, and Unrealistic

The bill provides no clear definition of what constitutes “humane practices” - no required training, and no enforcement mechanism? Expecting members of the general public to understand—and correctly apply—veterinary euthanasia standards is unrealistic. Humane practices require specialized training, equipment, and professional oversight. Most laypeople do not possess this knowledge, nor are they likely to seek it out.

Even if humane methods are referenced in statute, there is no assurance they will be followed. In practice, this bill risks encouraging ad hoc, improvised, and painful killing methods carried out without professional supervision. The result is likely unnecessary suffering and CRUELTY, precisely what cruelty laws exist to prevent.

HB1852 does not require permits, reporting, inspections, or proof of compliance with humane standards. Without accountability, the language functions as a legal shield rather than a meaningful safeguard. It protects the act of killing, not the welfare of the animal. No accountability or oversight.

By exempting feral chickens from cruelty statutes while relying on undefined humane language, the bill sets a dangerous precedent that animal welfare protections can be waived. This undermines the integrity of Hawai‘i’s animal protection laws as a whole. Who is assessing if a chicken is feral or someone's pet? People's pet cats roam freely, why not someone's pet chicken?

If the Legislature’s intent is truly humane population management, proven non-lethal options—such as egg addling, reproductive control, managed feeding policies, and public education—should be prioritized. HB1852 instead defaults to lethal action while offering only illusory humane guardrails.

In reality, this bill asks the public to self-regulate complex standards without training, oversight, or consequences. That is neither humane nor responsible. It is unrealistic, and only serves to sanction further cruelty to these birds that already suffer much human cruelty in this State.

While jurisdictions across the U.S. are **strengthening**, clarifying, and **enforcing animal cruelty laws**, HB1852 would do the *OPPOSITE* by creating a category of animals that can be killed without accountability. This sharp divergence from nationwide legislative trends highlights why the bill should be opposed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reject HB1852.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,
G. Garner

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:14:19 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Venus Gonsalves Henriques	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Senator Richards,

I oppose this bill. It is not in our best interest to constantly "kill" animals on our island or any island. Practise kapu aloha! Many animals are food and we need them. New comers who complain, are the problem. Food sources should never be killed while living on an island unless you are hungry. I have captured many feral chickens to use as an egg layer or food for our ohana and pets. It is like someone is likely to distinguish between a feral chicken/rooster or their neighbors birds, that accidently got loose. There will be many law suits, if people start killing their neighbors birds. Mahalo for you time.

Aloha,

Venus Gonsalves Henriques

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:39:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara S	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561.

Chickens are social, intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They are already among the most abused animals in Hawai‘i due to widespread cockfighting and neglect. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing killing only deepens the harm.

If our representatives truly want to change the narrative that Hawai‘i is serious about preventing animal abuse, we cannot commit this level of abuse ourselves.

Across our islands we have recently seen feral cats shot, dogs on video being violently mistreated by young people, farms attacked to steal and kill animals and their caregivers, tourists harming sea creatures, and an ongoing cockfighting crisis. Study after study shows that animal abuse is often the first step toward broader violent crime. Violence begets violence.

By passing bills that normalize cruelty, the Legislature opens a Pandora’s box. These policies send a message that harming animals is acceptable, even encouraged. That is a dangerous message with real consequences for public safety and community wellbeing.

Hawai‘i should be reducing violence, not modeling it. I urge you to reject these bills and instead invest in humane, preventative, and educational solutions that reflect our shared values.

Please do not make animal cruelty the law of our land.

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:53:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa McKinney	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUBJECT: REJECT HB2561,HB980, HB1852,

VIOLENCE IS NOT ALOHA!

I am writing to express my deep outrage and opposition to HB 2561, 1852 and 980. I was appauled and disheartened to learn that there are representatives in Hawaii supporting these bills (which promote animal cruelty instead of looking for genuinely peaceful and humane solutions).

Hawaii should be leading the way in promoting positive solutions to animal population overgrowth with kindness and respect for all of the creations we share this earth--not resorting to violence. My family and friends in the mainland were shocked to here of these bills. And if they pass, it will absolutuely ruin Hawaii's image of gentle Aloha, spiritual connectedness and compassion extended to all. It makes the leadership of Hawaii appear out of touch, under-educated and irresponsible as these bills promote and encourage animal abuse.

These policies send a message that harming animals is acceptable and encouraged. Hawaii should be reducing violence, not modeling it. Many studies have proven that animal abuse is the often the first step toward broader criminal violence. Is this want we want for our children?

I urge you to reject these bills and instead invest in humane, preventative and educational solutions that reflect our shared values.

Sincerely,

Dr. Melissa McKinney

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:00:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodi Nishida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To our esteemed Representatives,

I am a small business owner in Kaimuki who has witnessed elementary and intermediate school boys catch and torture feral roosters in our parking lot numerous times. It's not uncommon knowledge that violence begets violence and I personally feel this Bill would only further this type of behavior in our youth.

In a state who already struggles with illegal animal cruelty aka cockfighting, this feels like support of animal cruelty. Will parameters be defined? How will "killing" take place? Will our customers have to continue seeing young boys torture and kill roosters in our municipal parking lot for their boredom and entertainment now that it's "legal?"

This Bill invites and opens a huge can of worms. As someone who has supported our community and paid taxes here for 5 decades, it's disappointing that our lawmakers feel this Bill is a solution more than a problem. Why can't some of our tax dollars be allocated towards programs to humanely catch and euthanize feral chickens? Why haven't we implemented programs to humanely catch and raise these animals for eggs? Didn't we face an egg shortage last year? How come we in Hawaii never learn from these things?

As a taxpayer and business owner I demand a better solution. This is unacceptable and there only be negative consequences to this. Please have the foresight to see that.

Dr. Jodi Nishida

Resident of Kaimuki

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:20:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Wakukawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this. Chickens have been out of control and pose a health and safety risk to everyone in our community.

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:19:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Agemy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561.

Chickens are social, intelligent animals that form bonds with humans and with one another. In Hawai‘i, they are already among the most exploited and abused animals due to the ongoing cockfighting crisis and widespread neglect. Labeling them as “pests” and authorizing their killing does not solve these issues—it compounds them.

If our Legislature truly intends to demonstrate that Hawai‘i takes animal abuse seriously, we cannot respond by codifying cruelty into law.

Across our islands, we have recently witnessed deeply troubling incidents: feral cats being shot, dogs violently mistreated by youth and shared on video, farms targeted for animal theft and killing, tourists harming protected marine life, and the continued prevalence of cockfighting. Research consistently shows that animal abuse is often an early indicator of broader violent behavior. Violence toward animals does not exist in a vacuum—it escalates.

By passing legislation that normalizes harm to animals, the State risks sending a dangerous message: that cruelty is acceptable, or even sanctioned. That message has real consequences for public safety, community wellbeing, and the moral fabric of our islands.

Hawai‘i should be leading with compassion and prevention, not modeling violence. I urge you to reject these bills and instead pursue humane, preventative, and educational approaches that reflect the values of our communities.

Please do not make animal cruelty the law of our land.

Respectfully,
Michelle D. Agemy
JBPHH, Honolulu

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:39:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roberta Mau	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my deep outrage and opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561, including the proposal to classify chickens on public land as pests.

These bills promote violence and cruelty as public policy. That is not who we are as Hawai'i. Our 'āina is not something to dominate or destroy. It is a living system that deserves respect, care, and compassion. All living beings who share this land are worthy of humane treatment.

Killing is not the approach we want from our leadership. It does not reflect our culture, our values, or the meaning of aloha. Violence carried out in the name of the government is still violence, and it teaches the wrong lesson to our keiki and our communities.

We are already living in a violent world and killing animals should be the least of our concerns. I'm more afraid of humans and the crime rate has gotten worse. Animals have committed no crime and they suffer the ultimate price because humans created the problem. I love that the free-roaming chickens who forage in my yard are eating the insects. Please, please, I beg of you to not pass this cruel bill. Killing animals will not solve the problem and it just creates more violence and another problem.

Hawai'i should be leading with compassion, innovation, and mālama 'āina, not bloodshed. These bills move us in the opposite direction and damage trust between the people and those elected to serve them.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 and to support humane, nonviolent, community-based solutions instead.

Our islands deserve better. Mahalo for your time.

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:57:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aleksandra Varlamova	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561.

Chickens are social, intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They are already among the most abused animals in Hawai‘i due to widespread cockfighting and neglect. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing killing only deepens the harm.

If our representatives truly want to change the narrative that Hawai‘i is serious about preventing animal abuse, we cannot commit this level of abuse ourselves.

Across our islands we have recently seen feral cats shot, dogs on video being violently mistreated by young people, farms attacked to steal and kill animals and their caregivers, tourists harming sea creatures, and an ongoing cockfighting crisis.

Study after study shows that animal abuse is often the first step toward broader violent crime. Violence begets violence.

By passing bills that normalize cruelty, the Legislature opens a Pandora’s box. These policies send a message that harming animals is acceptable, even encouraged. That is a dangerous message with real consequences for public safety and community wellbeing.

Hawai‘i should be reducing violence, not modeling it. I urge you to reject these bills and instead invest in humane, preventative, and educational solutions that reflect our shared values.

Please do not make animal cruelty the law of Hawaiian land.

Respectfully,

Aleksandra Varlamova,

Ewa Beach

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:38:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexis Bryant	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Alexis, and I am a resident of Hawai‘i. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to HB2561, HB980, and HB1852. I am also representing thousands of residents who rescue, rehabilitate, and provide lifelong care to feral chickens across the island.

While this bill is presented as a public health and nuisance measure, its provisions risk increasing animal abuse, enabling illegal cockfighting activity, and sending harmful messages to children about the acceptability of cruelty toward animals. Hawai‘i already struggles with widespread cockfighting, and any law that weakens protections for chickens and roosters, or reframes them as pests, creates dangerous loopholes that can be exploited.

Classifying feral chickens as a “controllable pest” on public lands is deeply concerning. This language devalues living animals and opens the door to inhumane treatment under the guise of control, including shooting, violent trapping, or other abusive acts carried out without proper oversight. In a state where cockfighting remains a persistent problem, this classification risks further normalizing violence toward these animals.

The bill’s prohibition on feeding or supporting feral chickens on public lands may appear reasonable on its surface, but in practice it discourages compassion while failing to address the root causes of the issue, such as abandonment, illegal breeding, and cockfighting-related dumping. Criminalizing care without providing meaningful, humane alternatives will not reduce suffering; it will only hide it.

Humane population control options already exist and should be prioritized over lethal or abusive methods. These include egg management, such as collecting freshly laid eggs or humanely addling eggs to prevent hatching; partnerships with animal rescues or sanctuaries to relocate

excess roosters; humane trapping conducted by trained personnel with birds transferred to rescue organizations; and stronger enforcement and education to prevent dumping, particularly related to cockfighting activity. These approaches reduce population growth responsibly without normalizing cruelty.

There are also successful models from other island communities that Hawai‘i should seriously consider. In Key West, Florida, feral chickens are legally protected and recognized as part of the island’s character. It is illegal there to abuse, harm, or kill them. Instead of punitive or violent control, Key West works with a wildlife center that assists with the relocation and rehabilitation of chickens when needed. This approach demonstrates that humane treatment, public accountability, and coexistence are both achievable and effective.

Most troubling is the normalization of animal abuse among children, which I personally witness far too often. I have repeatedly seen children capture, harm, and torture chickens in public areas. I have called authorities numerous times while these acts were actively occurring and waited on site, yet no law enforcement response ever came.

In one instance, a child told me directly that he wanted one hundred dollars for a chicken he had just caught, stating that the chicken was intended for fighting and that the cops would not do anything. This interaction was deeply disturbing and demonstrates that children already understand there are no real consequences for this behavior. It reflects a failure of enforcement and a legal environment where animal abuse is effectively tolerated.

When children grow up believing that harming animals is acceptable, ignored, or excused, it creates far greater problems for the future of our communities. This is not only an animal welfare issue, it is a public safety and child development issue. Numerous studies link animal cruelty to future violent behavior, and our laws should be working to prevent this, not reinforce it.

It is also deeply concerning that Hawai‘i already carries a widely documented reputation for weak animal protection and high rates of animal cruelty, something that can be easily confirmed through public reports and national rankings. This image does not align with the values Hawai‘i publicly promotes of compassion, stewardship, and respect for life, and legislation like HB2561 risks reinforcing that reputation rather than correcting it.

Animal abuse should never be dismissed or defended as culture. Cockfighting and the torture of animals are not part of Hawaiian culture, and labeling cruelty as cultural tradition is a harmful excuse that enables further abuse while disrespecting true Hawaiian values of mālama, kuleana, and respect for life.

Feral chickens and roosters are sentient beings who deserve humane treatment and legal protection. Hawai'i's laws should be closing loopholes, not creating new ones that make abuse easier to justify or ignore. The Legislature must decide whether Hawai'i will continue to be seen as a place that tolerates cruelty, or choose to lead with compassion, accountability, and humane solutions that reflect the values it claims to uphold.

As engaged residents and voters, many of us are paying close attention to how our legislators act on this issue. Decisions made on bills like HB2561 will be remembered when voting time comes, and I, along with many others, will continue to advocate for these animals and for laws that reflect what is right and humane.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB2561, and the following bills HB 980 HB1852.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Alexis

Oahu, HI

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:06:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gretchen Savedra	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Gretchen, and I am a resident of Hawai‘i. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to HB2561.

While this bill is presented as a public health and nuisance measure, its provisions risk increasing animal abuse, enabling illegal cockfighting activity, and sending harmful messages to children about the acceptability of cruelty toward animals. Hawai‘i already struggles with widespread cockfighting, and any law that weakens protections for chickens and roosters, or reframes them as pests, creates dangerous loopholes that can be exploited.

Classifying feral chickens as a “controllable pest” on public lands is deeply concerning. This language devalues living animals and opens the door to inhumane treatment under the guise of control, including shooting, violent trapping, or other abusive acts carried out without proper oversight. In a state where cockfighting remains a persistent problem, this classification risks further normalizing violence toward these animals.

The bill’s prohibition on feeding or supporting feral chickens on public lands may appear reasonable on its surface, but in practice it discourages compassion while failing to address the root causes of the issue, such as abandonment, illegal breeding, and cockfighting-related dumping. Criminalizing care without providing meaningful, humane alternatives will not reduce suffering; it will only hide it.

Humane population control options already exist and should be prioritized over lethal or abusive methods. These include egg management, such as collecting freshly laid eggs or humanely adding eggs to prevent hatching; partnerships with animal rescues or sanctuaries to relocate excess roosters; humane trapping conducted by trained personnel with birds transferred to rescue organizations; and stronger enforcement and education to prevent dumping, particularly related to cockfighting activity. These approaches reduce population growth responsibly without normalizing cruelty.

There are also successful models from other island communities that Hawai‘i should seriously consider. In Key West, Florida, feral chickens are legally protected and recognized as part of the island’s character. It is illegal there to abuse, harm, or kill them. Instead of punitive or violent control, Key West works with a wildlife center that assists with the relocation and rehabilitation of chickens when needed. This approach demonstrates that humane treatment, public accountability, and coexistence are both achievable and effective.

Most troubling is the normalization of animal abuse among children, which I personally witness far too often. I have repeatedly seen children capture, harm, and torture chickens in public areas. I have called authorities numerous times while these acts were actively occurring and waited on site, yet no law enforcement response ever came.

In one instance, a child told me directly that he wanted one hundred dollars for a chicken he had just caught, stating that the chicken was intended for fighting and that the cops would not do anything. This interaction was deeply disturbing and demonstrates that children already understand there are no real consequences for this behavior. It reflects a failure of enforcement and a legal environment where animal abuse is effectively tolerated.

When children grow up believing that harming animals is acceptable, ignored, or excused, it creates far greater problems for the future of our communities. This is not only an animal welfare issue, it is a public safety and child development issue. Numerous studies link animal cruelty to future violent behavior, and our laws should be working to prevent this, not reinforce it.

It is also deeply concerning that Hawai‘i already carries a widely documented reputation for weak animal protection and high rates of animal cruelty, something that can be easily confirmed through public reports and national rankings. This image does not align with the values Hawai‘i publicly promotes of compassion, stewardship, and respect for life, and legislation like HB2561 risks reinforcing that reputation rather than correcting it.

Animal abuse should never be dismissed or defended as culture. Cockfighting and the torture of animals are not part of Hawaiian culture, and labeling cruelty as cultural tradition is a harmful excuse that enables further abuse while disrespecting true Hawaiian values of mālama, kuleana, and respect for life.

Feral chickens and roosters are sentient beings who deserve humane treatment and legal protection. Hawai‘i’s laws should be closing loopholes, not creating new ones that make abuse easier to justify or ignore. The Legislature must decide whether Hawai‘i will continue to be seen as a place that tolerates cruelty, or choose to lead with compassion, accountability, and humane solutions that reflect the values it claims to uphold.

As engaged residents and voters, many of us are paying close attention to how

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:54:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Fiorillo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing on behalf of the thousands of island residents who rescue, rehabilitate, and provide lifelong care to chickens, wild birds, and native and non native species across Hawai'i.

This is not a fringe community. It is a deeply rooted network of caregivers who have built close knit support systems, small businesses, and local economies around humane animal care. Especially in rural communities, people spend thousands of dollars of their own money on feed, veterinary care, habitat maintenance, transportation, education and supplies. This work supports local stores, farmers, veterinarians, our keiki and service providers.

HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 ignore this reality and threaten to dismantle years of responsible, community driven solutions. There are organizations ready and willing to help manage populations humanely, without poisoning our land with pesticides, harming non-targeted animals, executing innocent chickens or empowering violent vigilantes.

Choosing the easy way out through killing and pest control contracts is not leadership. It is a failure of those who lead from behind.

Support and work directly with the organizations that care for the lives of these chickens and for our 'āina. Reject policies that normalize cruelty, contaminate our environment, and divide our communities into us versus them. If these bills move forward, many of us will remember this choice at the ballot box.

We vote. We organize. And we expect better.

With aloha and determination,

Jessica Fiorillo

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:21:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Fenton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUBJ: Reject HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 – Violence Is Not Aloha

Aloha,

I am writing to express my deep outrage and opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561, including the proposal to classify chickens on public land as pests.

These bills promote violence and cruelty as public policy. That is not who we are as Hawai‘i. Our ‘āina is not something to dominate or destroy. It is a living system that deserves respect, care, and compassion. All living beings who share this land are worthy of humane treatment.

Killing is not the approach we want from our leadership. It does not reflect our culture, our values, or the meaning of aloha. Violence carried out in the name of the government is still violence, and it teaches the wrong lesson to our keiki and our communities.

Hawai‘i should be leading with compassion, innovation, and mālama ‘āina, not bloodshed. These bills move us in the opposite direction and damage trust between the people and those elected to serve them.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 and to support humane, nonviolent, community based solutions instead.

Chickens are social, intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They are already among the most abused animals in Hawai‘i due to widespread cockfighting and neglect. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing killing only deepens the harm.

If our representatives truly want to change the narrative that Hawai‘i is serious about preventing animal abuse, we cannot commit this level of abuse ourselves.

Across our islands we have recently seen feral cats shot, dogs on video being violently mistreated by young people, farms attacked to steal and kill animals and their caregivers, tourists harming sea creatures, and an ongoing cockfighting crisis. Study after study shows that animal abuse is often the first step toward broader violent crime. Violence begets violence. My profession is a licensed therapist, I can assure you that our state does not have enough of the

necessary resources or infrastructure to address the long standing and far reaching consequences and effects these bills will have if allowe to pass - allowing and condoning animal abuse is not helpful and will create much larger problems for our community than we can imagine or actually solve given our current lack of providers, health care system and shortage of qualified staff. Do we really want to make things worse than they already currently are at this point in time?

By passing bills that normalize cruelty, the Legislature opens a Pandora's box. These policies send a message that harming animals is acceptable, even encouraged. That is a dangerous message with real consequences for public safety and community wellbeing.

I humbly ask for your support in not perpetuating the cycle of violence and oppose these bills. Animals do not have voices to speak up for themselves, so it is our kuleana to do it for them, and help NOT harm the vulnerable. The choice is yours. What will you do?

Warmly with aloha and gratitude,

M. Fenton

Kailua, Kaneohe

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:57:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

SUBJ: REJECT HB 980, HB 1852, AND HB 2561 – VIOLENCE IS NOT ALOHA

BODY: Aloha Senator or Representative,

I am writing to express my deep outrage and opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561, including the proposal to classify chickens on public land as pests.

These bills promote violence and cruelty as public policy. That is not who we are as Hawai‘i. Our ‘āina is not something to dominate or destroy. It is a living system that deserves respect, care, and compassion. All living beings who share this land are worthy of humane treatment.

Killing is not the approach we want from our leadership. It does not reflect our culture, our values, or the meaning of aloha. Violence carried out in the name of the government is still violence, and it teaches the wrong lesson to our keiki and our communities.

Hawai‘i should be leading with compassion, innovation, and mālama ‘āina, not bloodshed. These bills move us in the opposite direction and damage trust between the people and those elected to serve them.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 and to support humane, nonviolent, community based solutions instead.

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,
Jennifer Alohilani Morgan
Honolulu

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:47:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcella Alohalani Boido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

Marcella Alohalani Boido, M. A.

Moili'ili, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:29:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharon Cloud	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUBJ: Reject HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 – Violence Is Not Aloha

I am writing to express my deep outrage and opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561, including the proposal to classify chickens on public land as pests.

These bills promote violence and cruelty as public policy. That is not who we are as Hawai‘i. Our ‘āina is not something to dominate or destroy. It is a living system that deserves respect, care, and compassion. All living beings who share this land are worthy of humane treatment.

Killing is not the approach we want from our leadership. It does not reflect our culture, our values, or the meaning of aloha. Violence carried out in the name of the government is still violence, and it teaches the wrong lesson to our keiki and our communities.

Many people don't realize these feral chickens actually help with keeping the invasive pests in check. They eat invasive frogs like the coqui and the greenhouse frog, as well as young cane toads. They also dig up and eat the larvae of the CRB and Oriental beetles. Ticks, Cockroaches, Centipedes, spiders, invasive earthworms, mice and lizards, etc. They are basically an organic means to control these pests from getting out of hand. Removal of the feral chickens will guarantee an extreme uptick in those invasive pests, which will lead people into using dangerous chemicals to combat those pests, which can leach into the groundwater and land. We need to care for and respect the aina as the ancestors of these islands did before us.

Hawai‘i should be leading with compassion, innovation, and mālama ‘āina, not bloodshed. These bills move us in the opposite direction and damage trust between the people and those elected to serve them.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 and to support humane, nonviolent, community based solutions instead.

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Sharon Cloud

District Honolulu

Aloha Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems,

First and foremost, thank you for hearing this bill. As a Honolulu resident, we have a county law which limits private residents to two chickens per property. However, when someone uses state property to raise, tend to, feed, or otherwise keep chickens as pets, there is currently no recourse for the public to address such an issue. As a result, our communities can become overrun when overzealous feeders abuse this oversight and populations explode. I **support** this measure and offer the following reasons and photo evidence.

The impacts of feral chickens are many.

1. **‘Āina.** Chickens scratch and dig the ground to feed. This in turn causes erosion and destruction of our environment and further endangers the habitat of our fragile native species.
2. **Property.** Chickens are animals and they move. As they move, a path of destruction follows. Gardens are torn up, vegetables, plants, and saplings are ripped to shreds. This causes a **financial** impact on residents as we try our best to chicken-proof our yards with fencing, nets, and repair damage. However, no yard is truly chicken-proof.
3. **Noise.** Chickens are loud and crow at ALL hours of the day. Poor sleep is linked to many adverse health impacts including cognitive impairments, mood disturbances, and an increased risk of chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. Yes, feral chickens are a public health issue.
4. **Sanitation & Disease.** Chickens can harbor disease such as avian flu. Chickens are avians, but can only fly for short periods and spend more time on the ground at the same level as humans making them a more likely vector for diseases. As populations grow, so does the health risk. Their droppings are large and exacerbate this issue.
5. **A Widening Problem.** Feeding of chickens can lead to other wild animals following the food source and entering urban environments such as boars. Illegal cock fighters also visit to train their birds and capture new ones.

I provide the following photos as an example of the impacts feral chickens have on our community in Pālolo.

Photo 1. Taken July 2019 by Google Maps Street View, Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Note the grass along the sidewalk and dense undergrowth.

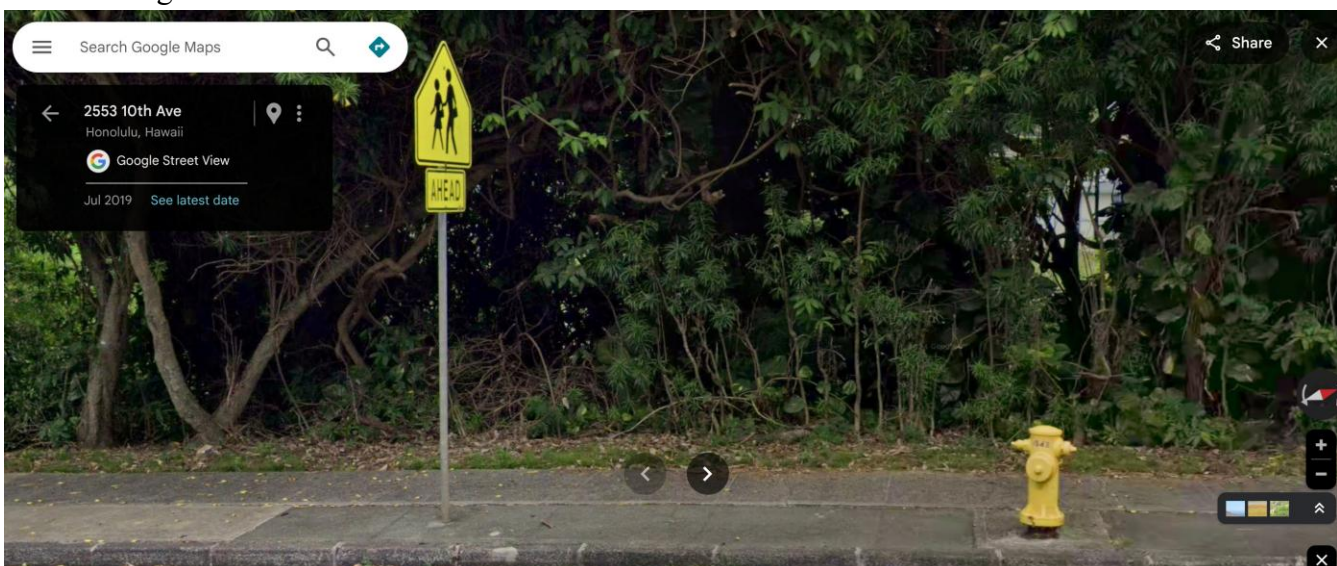


Photo 2. Taken November 2024 by Google Maps Street View, Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Same location as Photo 1. Note the bare ground and the more visible background beyond the trees.



Photo 3. Taken July 2019 by Google Maps Street View, Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Note the groundcover.



Photo 4. Taken November 2024 by Google Maps Street View, Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Same location as Photo 3. Notice the lack of grassy groundcover.

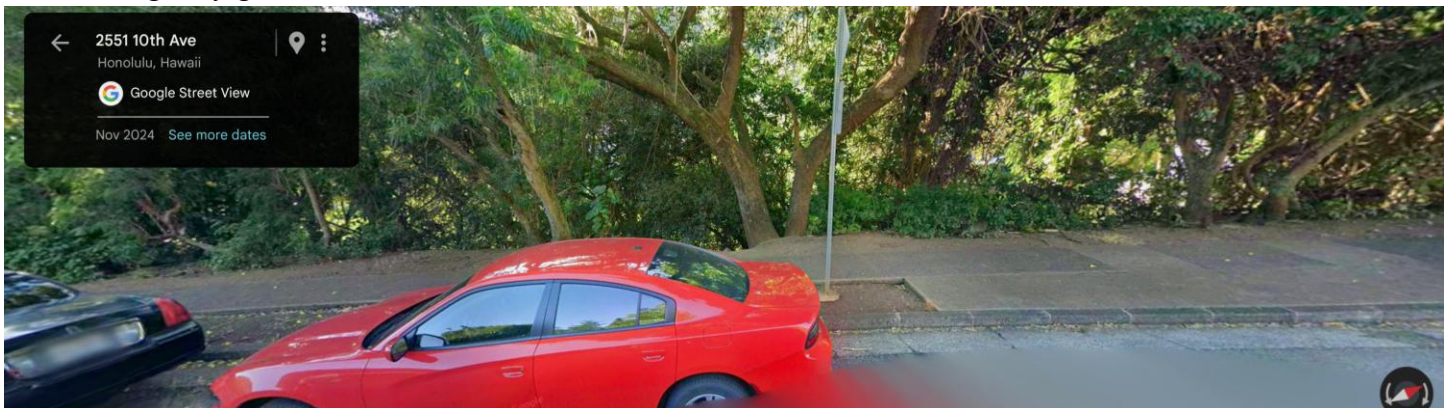


Photo 5. Taken at Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Populations explode when overzealous feeders make state land into their own personal chicken sanctuary.



Scan for video:



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/mBVy3PSQqmAXZtuF9>

Photo 6. Taken at Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Populations explode when overzealous feeders make state land into their own personal chicken sanctuary.



Photo 7. Taken at Pālolo, Ō‘ahu. Wild boars descend the mountains for easy eats making for a bigger problem.



Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Sincerely,

Mishka Sulva

I am testifying in strong opposition to HB 2561.

Chickens, specifically the red jungle fowl, have a long, shared history with kānaka maoli. Helumoa or “chicken scratch” in Waikīkī was home to many ali‘i. Helumoa was supposedly named after Ka‘auhelumoa¹, the mythical chicken who flew from Ka‘au Crater to the area we know as Helumoa. After scratching the dirt at Kākuhihewa’s feet, the ali‘i ordered a coconut tree to be planted at the site where Ka‘auhelumoa scratched. The coconut tree later became a larger grove of trees, which was eventually named the King’s Grove. Other ali‘i including Mā‘ilikūkahi, Lā‘ieloheloheikawai, Kamehameha V Lot Kapuāiwa, and Kamehameha Schools’ beloved founder Bernice Pauahi Bishop were all said to have lived in Helumoa at different times. Kākuhihewa’s encounter with Ka‘auhelumoa led to a historical place rich with connection to our ali‘i.

There are countless residents who rescue, rehabilitate, and provide lifelong care to chickens, wild birds, and indigenous and non-native species across Hawai‘i. Chickens are intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They are already among the most abused animals in Hawai‘i due to widespread cockfighting, neglect, and human-caused harm. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing their starvation only perpetuates these harmful stigmas.

If our representatives truly want to change the narrative that Hawai‘i is serious about preventing animal abuse, we cannot commit the level of abuse that starvation entails.

I urge this House to consider and invest in empathetic, humane solutions such as providing funding and contracts to organizations that should actually help with the booming populations that the Hawaiian Humane Society chooses to ignore and say they don’t have the space, capacity, or funding to help; researching and distributing contraceptives for our invasive species; funding State-run spaying/neutering/sterilization/or even humane and compassionate euthanasia treatments to cull growing populations if necessary; and/or actually pursuing the ruthless and unbounded amount of people fighting chickens for money, which calls for barbaric violence toward chickens, clandestine gambling, and larger populations of feral birds in specific areas. Do not allow the loudest voices of residents who participate in illicit activities and/or support abhorrent policies like starvation to determine which beings get to live and who is forced to die. People don’t get to take other human lives on their own terms, so we shouldn’t be allowed to do the same to animals.

Once again, I am in strong opposition to HB 2561.

Noelle Kakimoto

¹ <https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/article/essays-kamehameha-schools-revitalizes-one-of-waikikiis-landmarks>

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:04:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noah Beran	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral chickens are an important part of Hawai'i, they've been alongside humans here for a thousand years. They help with keeping invasive populations of bugs and small animals down. Due to their history and importance here, it wouldn't be right to pass this bill. It would also be cruel, letting people kill intelligent animals isn't a good precedent to be set. Please consider these points when thinking about our chickens.

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:06:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Skye Rhoden	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB2561.

I am deeply concerned about the real-world consequences of this bill. In my own neighborhood, there are individuals who have openly expressed a desire to harm or kill feral chickens in cruel ways. HB2561 risks legitimizing and enabling such behavior by broadly classifying these animals as a “controllable pest” without sufficient humane safeguards, oversight, or enforcement mechanisms.

When the State labels animals as pests and expands authority for their capture or removal, it creates an environment where people with malicious or violent intent feel emboldened, believing their actions will be tolerated or overlooked. This bill does not adequately address how abuse, cruelty, or vigilantism would be prevented—especially in residential neighborhoods where enforcement is limited.

This is not a hypothetical concern. Hawai‘i already faces challenges with animal cruelty and illegal cockfighting, and increasing access to unregulated capture or harm of chickens raises the risk of further abuse. Without strict controls, tracking, or humane disposition requirements, HB2561 may unintentionally provide cover for individuals seeking to harm animals for gratification rather than legitimate management purposes.

Equally troubling is the message this sends to children and young people. Normalizing harm toward animals as a solution to inconvenience teaches that cruelty is acceptable and undermines community values of compassion, responsibility, and mālama.

If the Legislature is serious about addressing nuisance concerns, it must require:

- Clear, enforceable humane standards
- Oversight and accountability for any removal or control
- Evidence that such measures reduce harm rather than escalate it

HB2561, as written, fails to protect against abuse and creates dangerous ambiguity that could be exploited by bad actors.

I urge you to reject this bill in its current form and pursue humane, evidence-based alternatives that protect both communities and animals.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Skye Rhoden.

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:15:17 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Kakimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I am writing to express my deep outrage and opposition to HB 2561 including the proposal to classify chickens on public land as pests. These bills promote violence and cruelty as public policy. I cannot believe that the only option all of you could come up with is to allow the general public to starve or kill the chickens who are just basically existing. There should be a more humane solution that you all should be able to come up with. Killing is not the approach that I would want the leaders of this state to come up with as a solution. It does not reflect our culture, our values, or the meaning of aloha. Allowing violence to happen to the chickens teaches the wrong lesson to our keiki and our communities. There are many good people out there who are trying their best to help the chicken situation in their neighborhoods. They help with rescue, rehabilitation, and with providing lifelong care to chickens as well as wild birds and native and non native species across Hawai'i. Maybe you all could work with the community that help with the chickens and work together to come up with humane solutions. Killing any animal is never a humane solution at all.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2561 and to support humane, nonviolent, community based solutions instead.

Sincerely,

Natalie Kakimoto

Salt Lake

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:54:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Royelen Lee Boykie	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB2561

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in opposition to SB2561.

While I understand the desire to reduce conflict related to free-roaming chickens, SB2561 takes an approach that criminalizes humane care while leaving harmful outcomes largely unaddressed. By broadly prohibiting feeding, watering, sheltering, harboring, or otherwise supporting feral chickens on public land, the bill removes the very actions that reduce suffering, stabilize populations, and prevent escalation.

In practice, this bill does not eliminate chickens. It eliminates responsible human behavior.

People who provide food, water, and monitoring are often the same people who reduce noise by preventing hunger-driven agitation, discourage dangerous scavenging near roads, notice illness or injury early, and facilitate relocation or long-term solutions. By defining these actions as illegal “support,” SB2561 forces a false choice between neglect and lethal control.

The bill also creates serious enforcement problems. Determining intent, duration, and degree of “support” is subjective and difficult to police fairly. Casual acts of kindness, such as leaving water during heat, intervening to prevent suffering, or temporarily stabilizing animals prior to relocation, could become violations. This places an unreasonable burden on both residents and enforcement agencies and invites selective or inconsistent application.

Policy choices shape social norms. When care is prohibited and harm is permitted, communities become more polarized and less safe. Humane stewardship reduces conflict; criminalizing it increases tension and resentment among neighbors.

Free-roaming chickens in Hawai‘i are not accidental. They are historically rooted and shaped by human activity over generations. Their presence is a shared community condition, not a problem created by individual caregivers. Management policies should reflect communal responsibility, not penalize those acting to reduce harm.

Finally, visitor expectations are increasingly values-driven. Many people choose destinations that reflect stewardship, compassion, and thoughtful coexistence with animals. Policies that discourage humane treatment risk quietly damaging Hawai‘i’s reputation as a place guided by aloha and care.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB2561 and instead pursue approaches that are humane, enforceable, and effective, including education, prevention, relocation partnerships, and targeted enforcement of truly harmful practices.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Royelen Lee Boykie

Kea‘au, Hawai‘i

February 4, 2026

HB2561: RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

At the outset I would like to clarify that I am writing this comment as a private citizen and not in my position as Public Defender for the State of Hawai'i.

I oppose HB2561 for the following reasons.

1) The term “humanely control” is vague and contradictory

HB2561 makes several references to “humanely control” without providing a specific definition for this term. In the context of the proposed statute, it appears that “humanely control” refers to euthanizing feral chickens. This bill purports to limit the means by which a private owner can “humanely control” feral chickens by requiring that the actions “comply with state laws prohibiting cruelty to animals, including provisions as prescribed in section 711-1108.5 [(Cruelty to Animals in the First Degree)] or 711-1109 [(Cruelty to Animals in the Second Degree)], and any applicable city requirements.” However, the provisions of HRS § 711-1108.5 only refer to “pet animals” or “equine animals.” As this bill defines “feral chicken” as “a chicken that is free-roaming and not under the custody and control of an owner or keeper,” HRS § 711-1108.5 would offer no protections for feral chickens and this reference in the bill is useless and superfluous. HRS § 711-1109(a) prohibits in relevant part acts such as “tortures, beats, causes substantial bodily injury to, or starves any animal, or causes the ... torture, torment, beating or starving of any animal.” This would presumably apply to feral chickens. However, as the bill defines feral chickens as a “public nuisance and controllable pest,” HRS § 711-1109(c) would not consider as cruelty allowing a feral chicken to be mutilated, poisoned or killed in accordance with standard and acceptable pest control practices and all applicable laws and regulations. As the bill fails to define what constitutes “standard and acceptable pest control practices and all applicable laws and regulations,” private property owners are left with no guidance as to the specific means by which they can “humanely control” chickens and are left with the choice of simply mutilating, poisoning or killing chickens with whatever method they choose or not taking any action because of the lack of guidance. While HB2561 purports to limit methods that are used to “humanely control” feral chickens to methods that do not constitute animal cruelty, it fails at this attempt and would instead allow chickens to be killed indiscriminately and cruelly.

There are many means of euthanizing chickens and opinions will differ greatly as to whether a particular method should be considered “humane control” or cruelty. An example of the methods private property owners are currently using to “humanely control chickens” are pellet guns and blowdart guns. Unfortunately, these methods are rarely immediately fatal leading the chicken to suffer needlessly for days or weeks until infection or internal damage causes their death. A property owner in Makiki “humanely controlled” feral chickens in Makiki using a blowdart gun. One survived for several weeks with a blowdart through its head and another survived for several weeks with a blowdart through its body.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/06/24/very-angry-makiki-residents-outraged-over-chickens-shot-with-blow-darts/>



Another person in Makiki used a pellet gun as a means of “humanely controlling” feral chickens. This feral chicken went weeks with its leg partially severed from a pellet before it died from infection.



HB2561 would also allow the use of poison by private property owners as a means of “humanely controlling” feral chickens on their property. Again, the bill fails to define what constitutes “standard and acceptable pest control practices and all applicable laws and regulations,” thus private property owners may indiscriminately and irresponsibly use poisons. The irresponsible use of poisons endangers people, pets and the environment. Dead and dying chickens will cause distinct health hazards. Pets may eat the poisoned

chickens or the poison. Children may eat the poison as well. Poison used indiscriminately can leach into the water table and contaminate streams and native wildlife.

<https://www.royalgazette.com/environment/news/article/20240627/residents-urged-not-to-poison-feral-chickens/>

<https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/news-events/the-buzz/wildlife-unnintended-victims-of-rat-poison/>

<https://cwhl.vet.cornell.edu/article/mice-and-wildlife-rodent-roulette>

2) HB2561 fails to give a clear, objective basis by which a distinction can be made between “feral chickens” and the moa that are a part of Hawaiian history and culture and should not be “humanely controlled”

While the bill defines “chicken” as “any domestic fowl of the species *Gallus gallus domesticus*” it does nothing to clarify how a layperson or even an untrained exterminator or government employee can distinguish between a “feral chicken” which is covered under this bill and other species of fowl that resemble “chickens” but are not subject to be “humanely controlled” under this bill.

For example:



One of these photos is of *Gallus gallus domesticus* the specific species that is covered under HB2561. The other is *Gallus gallus*, the Red Junglefowl that is not covered under this bill. How would anyone other than a trained biologist be expected to make this distinction?¹

The failure to distinguish between domestic chicken hybrids and the moa has distinct cultural implications. Feral chickens in Hawai‘i are either a type of Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*) or “moa” which were brought to the Hawaiian islands by Polynesians around 1200 AD, or a hybridization of the Junglefowl with modern domestic breeds of chickens brought to

¹ The left photo is of *Gallus gallus domesticus* and the right photo is of *Gallus gallus*.

Hawai'i by European and Western settlers in the late 18th century.² The generally-accepted explanation for the proliferation of chickens in the community is the release of chickens due to the destruction caused by Hurricane Iwa (1982) and Hurricane Iniki (1992). These chickens, many of which were domestic birds, mixed again with the feral population. Although many of the “feral chickens” that are the subject of this bill are these hybrids, the bill does not distinguish between the hybrid stock and the descendants of the moa that were brought to Hawai'i by Polynesians in 1200 AD.

The moa have a place in Hawaiian history and mythology. The land on which the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center in Waikiki is built was known as Helumoa or “chicken scratch.” Helumoa was “once the seat of Hawaiian nobility, a thriving community famed for its abundance and beauty.”³

One story of how Helumoa came upon its name involves Kākuhihewa, ruling chief of O'ahu from 1640 to 1660. It is said that the supernatural chicken, Ka'auhelemoa, one day flew down from his home in Ka'au Crater, in Pālolo, and landed at Helumoa. The rooster scratched the dirt at Kākuhihewa's feet, then disappeared as suddenly and mysteriously as he had appeared. Kākuhihewa immediately ordered his people to plant a coconut tree at the exact site upon which Ka'auhelemoa had kicked up the dirt. This tree, which grew to be the tallest in the area, is said to be the parent of what would become an entire grove of coconut trees, and the land became known as Helumoa, 'chicken scratch' [3]. This is the same coconut grove that would later be called the King's Grove, or the Royal Grove, and would be cited in numerous historical accounts for its pleasantness and lush surroundings.[⁴]

The provisions of HB2561 give no clear and objective means by which laypersons or non-experts can distinguish between “feral chickens” which may be “humanely controlled” and the moa which are a part of Hawaiian cultural and history and are not subject to being “humanely controlled” or which should not be designated as “controllable pests.” Simply put, this bill is culturally offensive.

² “Why Are There So Many Wild Chickens in Hawaii?” Scienceinsights (<https://scienceinsights.org/why-are-there-so-many-wild-chickens-in-hawaii/>)

³ Groves, M., “Kamehameha Schools Revitalizes One of Waikiki's Landmarks” Ka'awakiloumoku Pacific Indigenous Institute, Kamehameha Schools (<https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/article/essays-kamehameha-schools-revitalizes-one-of-waikikiis-landmarks>)

⁴ Id.

3) The “prohibited acts” would adversely affect efforts by private citizens who are involved in the rescue, rehabilitation and relocation of feral chickens

Under HB2561, “prohibited acts on public land” include feeding or placing food or other attractants on public land. Many persons involved in the rescue, rehabilitation and relocation of chickens (to consenting private property such as farms) as a means of controlling feral chicken populations use baiting to attract the chickens so that the chickens can be secured via nets or traps. Baiting can also be used to catch sick or injured birds so that they can be treated, relocated to private property or humanely euthanized. Pest control companies also use baiting as a technique to draw chickens to traps. In numerous instances, persons have placed food on State or county property (“feeding” or “placing food or other attractants” under the bill) in the course of controlling feral chicken populations. The efforts of these persons who are acting in the interest of the welfare of the chickens and the community should not be discouraged by prohibiting feeding or placing food or other attractants on public land when the intention is not simply to feed the chickens but to work at a solution to the feral chicken issue. At a minimum, an exception should be made for persons engaged in acts which are meant to facilitate the humane control of feral chicken populations.

As an aside, HB2561 assigns the police departments to enforce its “prohibited acts on public land.” Police departments are already understaffed and officers are overworked handling matters of public safety. It is a waste of limited police resources and a detriment to public safety to divert officers from critical functions that require police assistance such as investigating serious crimes, enforcing traffic laws that protect drivers and pedestrians, or assisting in emergency situations, to issue a \$250 citation to a senior citizen who is feeding feral chickens at the park.

4) Feral chickens have become a modern symbol of Hawai‘i

One final consideration, residents and visitors have begun to associate feral chickens and Hawai‘i in a positive way.⁵ Feral chickens have been described as a “memorable cultural symbol” and part of Hawai‘i’s living cultural landscape.⁶ The unchecked and cruel killing of

⁵ <https://www.honolulumagazine.com/afterthoughts-chickens-are-taking-over-hawaii/>

⁶ <https://nszipline.com/blog/hawaii-chickens/>; <https://www.oreateai.com/blog/the-curious-case-of-hawaiis-chickens-a-feathered-legacy/2462bd1f9ca6bb51b875b95615b4b27a>; <https://www.islands.com/1902188/hawaiian-island-stunning-views-chicken-population-outnumbers-residents-kauai/>

feral chickens could lead to negative publicity for the State and be offensive to residents and visitors.

5) Conclusion

I appreciate the effort to address the feral chicken population issue. However, the practical effect of HB2561 would be to allow the unchecked and cruel killing of feral chickens without any realistic guardrails.

1) The contradictory language of HB256 does not adequately define “humanely control” and would allow persons to kill chickens by methods and means that are objectively cruel.

2) HB2561 is also culturally offensive as it fails to give any useful, objective guidance on how its provisions can be targeted at domesticated species of chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) without inadvertently killing moa (*Gallus gallus*) that have been a part of Hawaiian culture since the arrival of Polynesian settlers in 1200 AD.

3) HB2561 does not take into account the efforts of community members who are seeking to control feral chicken populations by methods that do not include cruelty or the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent animals.

I am urging the Legislature to not rush unchecked and uninformed into making a decision on the feral chicken issue which is culturally insensitive and simply cruel. In recent years this Legislature has made efforts to stop cruelty to animals, even the federal government has joined in this endeavor⁷, yet HB2561 would legalize cruelty against innocent animals that are simply seeking to exist.

Please take a careful, measured and informed path in seeking a solution to this issue rather than a quick fix. Instead of passing a bill that has numerous issues and is based on a knee-jerk reaction and hasty attempt to appease a vocal minority, the Legislature should form a working group consisting of members of the community, members of chicken rescue/rehabilitation organizations, representatives from the humane societies of each island, animal welfare groups, veterinarians, and DLNR and law enforcement members to discuss this issue and come up with a well-thought out approach to this issue.

I strongly oppose HB2561. Thank you for your consideration.

⁷ <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/25/782842651/trump-signs-law-making-cruelty-to-animals-a-federal-crime>

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:13:05 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Streitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support anything that can be done to address the feral chicken infestation that has occurred across the islands, and this bill allows us to take one more step forward.

As for the bill objectives, the problem with the current feral chicken programs on Oahu is that funding has not been allocated to allow 100% free drop-off of caught chickens to be handled by a company, like Humane Society did many years ago. The only way to get this problem under control is to help enable residents to do it themselves without fear of any legal problems, and then also have a proper place to dispose of the chickens.

City and State programs alone can't erradicate this problem, and people doing it themselves for free are not likely to want to pay to drop off their caught chickens, which is why they dump them anywhere else away from their house. This is all wasted energy, because it then requires someone else to go after the same chicken, rather than resulting in a net decrease of the chicken population.

I encourage you to go further in this bill to enable do-it-yourselfers to contribute to erradicating the feral chicken infestations that physically and mentally affect your constituents. For example, authorize anyone to go onto public property to catch feral chickens, and expand the allowable uses of catching chickens on both public and private property (passive trapping is least effective). Strict penalties need to be applied to anyone who interferes with chicken trapping, such as damaging traps. Another key consideration would be for urban areas where chickens cross multiple property lines. Similar to how police can cross over properties in pursuit of a suspect, the same should be authorized for at least pest control companies to make their job more efficient and enable them to focus on active trapping, rather than just passive cage trapping.

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:03:40 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valéry Atkinson	Rubber Boots Rescue	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Opposition to HB2561

TO: Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee **FROM:** Valéry Atkinson, Founder of Rubber Boots Rescue **MEASURE:** HB2561 **POSITION:** STRONGLY OPPOSE

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Valéry Atkinson, and I am the founder of **Rubber Boots Rescue**. I started this organization a year ago because I was at a loss after watching years of unchecked abuse. I founded it in memory of two of my rescues, **Walter and Frankie**, who I lost after only a short time. They spent their lives in pain and fear before they found me; today, I write in opposition to this bill for them and for the thousands of others who endure daily abuse.

I represent the independent rescuers across our islands who give everything: their time, their personal savings, and their emotional well-being to provide a safety net for animals that the state has abandoned. We operate with zero public support, cleaning up a crisis of abuse that we did not create.

The Failure of Current Enforcement

To suggest that HB2561 will prohibit inhumane killing is disingenuous at best. I have reported active torture on several occasions, only to be met with systemic indifference. The **Humane Society** labels these incidents a "police issue," while **HPD** offers no response at all. By officially classifying these birds as "pests," this bill does not solve a nuisance. Instead, it validates the existing neglect and invites further torture by stripping away the few legal protections these animals have left.

An Eyewitness to the Epidemic of Suffering

Eight years ago, my wife discovered a small rooster near death on the side of the road. That experience forced me to see the reality of the abuse happening in my own neighborhood. Since then, I have rescued countless others and felt a profound sense of helplessness because those in power refuse to address this suffering.

- **The Bait Birds:** My rescue currently cares for unreleasable birds with deep physical and emotional scars. Our rescue community has cared for countless "bait" birds: animals with their spurs clipped, who were tied to ropes, and forced to fight while being kicked by children to "rile them up."
- **The Normalization of Backyard Mutilation:** I have witnessed grown men teaching young boys how to clip the combs of birds. Major animal welfare organizations recognize comb clipping as a cruel and inhumane practice; in our neighborhoods, it is performed in backyards with household scissors and absolutely no pain management. These children are being trained to perform bloody, painful procedures on living beings who are screaming in distress. This is what we are teaching our keiki: that abuse is tolerated and, under this bill, effectively sanctioned by the state.

The Real Solution: Stricter Penalties, Not "Pest" Labels

If the authors of this bill want to improve the health and safety of our islands, they should focus on stricter penalties for cockfighting and animal abuse of all kinds.

- **Addressing the Root Cause:** Much of the feral population is driven by the illegal fighting industry, where birds are discarded as "trash" the moment they are no longer useful. Cracking down on these crimes at the source is the only way to reduce the population humanely.
- **Upholding True Hawaiian Values:** Defending cruelty as "tradition" is a false narrative. Chicken fighting is in direct opposition to **mālama ‘āina, kuleana**, and the requirement to be **pono**.

Conclusion

We are a network of dedicated residents who are already doing the work the state refuses to do. We are ready to work with you on humane, community-based solutions, but we will not support legislation that codifies cruelty.

I respectfully urge you to **vote NO on HB2561**.

Mahalo,

Valéry Atkinson, Founder, Rubber Boots Rescue, Waianae, HI (District 45).

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

I am writing to express **my strong opposition to HB 2561**. By formally designating feral chickens as “controllable pests,” this bill invites a wave of community violence, ignores the root causes of the population surge, and sets a dangerous precedent for all stray animals in Hawaii.

The Need for Humane Treatment

While this bill claims to promote “humane handling,” the reality on the ground highlights the need for truly compassionate approaches. I had a personal experience of finding an injured rooster that had clearly been harmed—cut wings, and a wattle and comb that were cut and burnt black. This rooster died while I was trying to get it help. This kind of suffering shows the urgent need for addressing the root causes of the issue and ensuring that any management strategies prioritize humane treatment. If HB 2561 passes, it can lead to further suffering if humane methods are not strictly enforced.

Link to Future Violence

As a local resident, I’ve seen keiki in the neighborhood mistreating these birds. This is not a minor issue; the FBI and numerous psychological studies confirm that animal cruelty is a primary indicator of future domestic abuse and interpersonal violence. Labeling animals as “pests” could inadvertently send a message that some lives are worthless and that violence is an acceptable way to handle a “nuisance.”

The Expert Stance

It is telling that Hawaiian Humane Society has consistently opposed similar measures, such as HB 980, noting that lethal control is ineffective and inhumane. Instead, they advocate for shutting down **illegal cockfighting operations**—the true source of, “abandoned” and “dumped” birds—which this bill fails to address entirely. Moreover, lethal culling creates a “vacuum effect” where the surviving birds would breed faster to fill the void. Also, chickens are not the threat to native birds; cats, mosquitos, rats and mongoose are the threat. I urge the committee to consider human alternatives or a sanctuary relocation. There are several organizations/groups dedicated to bird rescue, rehabilitation, humane trapping and relocation.

Hold the Breeders Accountable

While I acknowledge the frustrations regarding noise and property maintenance, HB 2561 is a flawed solution. Nuisance from chickens is a symptom of human criminal activity. To control the “nuisance” **illegal dumping from cockfighting operations** must be stopped. This bill punishes the animals for human negligence and illegal activity. Labeling these animals “pests” provide a way for those engaged in cruel practices to further disregard the welfare of these animals.

A Slippery Slope for All Strays

If the state can designate chickens as “pests” to bypass welfare standards, what stops the same logic from being applied to stray cats or dogs? HB 2561 erodes the ethical foundation of animal protection in Hawaii and replaces it with a “kill-first” policy for anything inconvenient.

This bill does not fully address the nuisance concerns and could potentially exacerbate issues of animal welfare in communities. A **NO vote on HB2561** is a way to advocate for alternative solutions that prioritize community concerns and animal welfare.

With aloha and determination,

Megan Viernes

Ewa

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:49:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2561. I understand that feral chickens may be considered a nuisance, however, this bills creates a pathway for animal cruelty. How will the "humane" eradication of chickens on property be regulated? There won't be any regulation.

What law enforcement resources will be directed to enforce laws against feeding chickens?

I think we have more important things on which to direct resources.

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 11:47:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ty Tamagawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am opposed to this bill because it is inevitable it would lead to inhumane treatment of feral chickens. Owners are able to trap chickens? Then what? The language of the bill is grey on what happens after, but it is obvious this will lead to killing of the chicken. If so, are they capable of killing them humanely? Who regulates that? Who regulates if the chicken was actually on their private land?

Most of the complaints come from a place of annoyance and hate, so this bill would be a green light to essentially hunt chickens down and dispose of them. There needs to be a more direct and clear procedure to make sure the chickens caught are either given a home or put down humanely. There needs to be a penalty/fine as well if people are caught capturing chickens outside their private land, or putting down chickens on their own.

The bill itself is too opened ended, and though it says it is concerned about keeping things humane, there is no language in the bill that actually promotes any procedures or checks and balances for that to happen.

That is why I oppose this bill.

Mahal for your time and consideration.

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 11:57:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Tjoeng	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote no on this bill.

Mahalo,

Rachel Tjoeng

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 1:29:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Jaworowski	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is confusing because it delicately tipped toes around the main problem with feral chickens, which is that private home owners In urban Honolulu want to dispose of feral chickens In their neighborhoods. By dispose I mean kill or otherwise remove. This bill does not make it clear what "humanely control" means, which makes it a flawed bill compare this to house bill 1852, which clearly indicates that private homeowners may kill feral chickens on their property. That is a clear bill, and someone can decide if they like it or not. For this bill, I can't even decide if I'm supporting or opposing because even after reading all of the bill, as well as the sections of the penal code referenced, I still can't figure out what "humanely controls" means. If people can't figure out what it means, it cannot be enforced.

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 2:59:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
SANDRA YAHIRO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I apologize for this late testimony, I only heard about this bill minutes ago. I strongly support this bill. My house is located on upper 10th Ave. near Anuenue School. There is a population of 50-75 feral chickens/roosters that live across the street. They are an extreme nuisance crowing loudly all day long and in the early morning hours. They roam the neighborhood creating an unsanitary mess and lay eggs in various parts of my property. A woman comes nearly daily to feed them, despite being asked many, many times not to do so. She claims she has the legal right to feed them and she claims she feeds them birth control food. This cannot be factual because the number of chickens continues to grow. Please pass this bill-we need legal authority to eliminate this growing nuisance problem as well as punish those that continue to feed them.

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:34:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paddy Sell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representative Terez Amato,

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561

Chickens are social, intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They already already among the most abused animals in hawaii due to widespread cockfighting and neglect. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing killing only deepens the harm

If our representatives truly want to change the narrative that Hawaii is serious about preventing animal abuse, we cannot commit this level of abuse ourselves.

Across our islands we have recently seen feral cats shot, dogs on video being violently mistreated by young people, farms attacked to steal and kill animals and their caregivers, tourists harming sea creatures, and an ongoing cockfighting crisis. Study after study shows that animal abuse is often the first step toward broader violent crime. Violence begets violence.

By passing bills that normalize cruelty, the legislature opens a Pandora box. These policies send a message that harming animals is acceptable, even encouraged. That is a dangerous message with real consequences for public safety and community wellbeing

Hawaii should be reducing Violence, not modeling it. I urge you to reject these bills and instead invest in humane, preventative, and educational solutions that reflect our shared values

Please do not make animal cruelty the law of our land

Respectfully

Paddy Sell

Kailua district

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:15:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KAITHLEEN CONOEPAN	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resident of Honolulu and I strongly oppose HB2561, relating to the classification and control of feral chickens on public lands.

I was born and raised in Miami, Florida, a place where free-roaming chickens and roosters are not only tolerated, but are woven into the cultural identity of the neighborhood. Based on my background, **I believe this bill risks doing more harm than good:**

1. In Miami's Calle Ocho or Little Havana, and throughout Key West, chickens and roosters roam freely. They're considered *part of the city's character*:

- Key West has public art celebrating them as symbols of the island's culture.
- Chickens are protected under local ordinances, and harming them can result in penalties.
- Residents and tourists alike see them as part of the landscape like the iguanas or the roaming cats.
- Roosters are tied to cultural memory and heritage. They're not "pests" but rather a part of the city's story.

This shows that there are culturally and successful alternative approaches than what is proposed in this bill.

2. The Honolulu Police Department and the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources are stretched thin. Adding chickens to their workload diverts resources to bigger issues such as homelessness, drug and violent crimes, and even basic conservation for DLNR. Expecting officers to answer to rooster calls, chicken feeding complaints and alleged abandonment is unrealistic and creates tension between residents and the government.

3. This will lead to increased abandonment by residents who will dump unwanted chickens to avoid fines. This is exactly how feral populations grow and will make the current problem worse.

4. Allowing private property owners to "capture and humanely control" chickens sounds reasonable, but residents lack the training to do this safely. This will lead to unsafe methods like improvised traps, shooting (and therefore stray bullets and more violence), and unintentional animal cruelty. This will create more community conflict and require additional enforcement.

5. Hawai‘i, like Miami and Key West, has a long history with free-roaming chickens. They’re part of plantation-era stories and everyday life. A bill that frames them solely as “pests” without acknowledging cultural context risks alienating the very communities it aims to serve. Policy works best when it respects local identity.

I suggest the following:

1. An egg removal program or working with farmers in the community and include an incentive for the farmer such as feeding subsidies, or discount vouchers for feed per hen, tax credits, or public recognition for their support. Chicken feces offer natural fertilization.

2. Hawai‘i can borrow from how Key West and Miami dealt with this issue and feature roosters in agritourism maps and include information about humane chicken sanctuary partners or farmers. They could even include features of them on county websites, signage, and do branding support.

3. People change behavior when they understand the ecological and cultural impact — not when they’re threatened with penalties so education on their identity would benefit the community.

4. Reduce food waste in parks by creating better compost controls.

5. Use penalties only as a last resort and educate residents on capturing and humanely controlling them.

As someone who has grown up next to roosters and chickens, and in a place where they were handled with cultural respect, humane management, and community education, and seen those strategies work, I believe Hawai‘i can do better than enacting a heavy and punitive approach that will create more problems down the road.

I respectfully ask the committee to reconsider this bill and pursue a more effective, humane, and culturally aware solution.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Kaithleen Conoepan

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 10:14:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stefano Di Maio	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposition to Bill HB2561

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing to respectfully urge you to oppose the proposed bill that would allow residents to kill feral chickens.

I am deeply concerned that this measure is neither humane nor ethical, and that it may create serious unintended consequences for our communities. Allowing individuals to kill animals in public spaces raises significant public safety concerns, particularly if weapons or improvised killing methods are involved. This could increase the risk of accidents, normalize violence, and lead to disturbing situations in residential neighborhoods, parks, and community gardens.

From an animal welfare perspective, this bill lowers the standard of humane treatment. Unregulated killing by untrained individuals can lead to prolonged suffering rather than humane outcomes. Hawai'i has long valued compassion, respect for life, and responsible stewardship of its environment. This proposal moves us away from those principles.

Importantly, feral chicken populations can be managed through more humane and effective alternatives, such as:

- Professional trapping and relocation where feasible
- Controlled, regulated management conducted by trained personnel
- Fertility control and population-management programs
- Improved waste management and public education to reduce food sources

These approaches prioritize public safety, minimize suffering, and reflect a more thoughtful, ethical response to a complex issue.

I understand that feral chickens can be a nuisance in certain areas, and I agree that action is needed. However, authorizing residents to kill animals is not a responsible or compassionate solution. It sets a troubling precedent and risks encouraging cruelty rather than cooperation.

I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill and instead support humane, science-based solutions that reflect Hawai'i's values and protect both people and animals.

I also want to add that chickens are intelligent, social creatures with their own personalities. They don't deserve to be treated as pests

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our community.

Sincerely,

Stefano Di Maio

Honolulu, Waikiki

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 11:09:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

While I understand the intent of HB2561, as I personally have been impacted by roosters waking me up since I moved to Hawaii, this bill as written is very concerning to me (and clearly to the many opposing it).

First and foremost, I and many others have a great love of animals, as I'm sure those on this committee do and many legislators do. With this in mind, please know that HB2561 as written, will result in the deaths of many chickens and roosters, often by euthanization in a gas chamber.

I have also seen the cruelty that some exhibit, when I was called to help a rooster lying in a parking lot behind my building, apparently shot with a pellet gun (which I later learned was reported to have been from my building). X-rays confirmed the rooster was shot with pellets, and thanks to Aloha Bird Rescue who took the injured rooster and paid for his surgery to remove the pellets, he survived. Aloha Bird Rescue also rehabbed and took care of him, and the last report I had was that he was hanging out with a hen he seemed fond of.

The most amazing part of turning one act of cruelty into a good story where many came together to help, is the look the rooster gave me when he was injured and knew I was there to help him. His aloha was clear and strong.

I ask all on this committee to please show aloha to the chickens, and if you need to enact a bill to mitigate the population (that I realize is expanding), please do so with aloha and ensure that the chickens are placed into a sanctuary or private farms, where they will not be killed.

Respectfully,

Gregory Misakian

LATE

HB-2561

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 5:22:46 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/6/2026 9:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L Elento	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Feral roosters are more than a nuisance; **roosters are detrimental to my health as well as for other citizens who suffer from certain health conditions.** Roosters crow at all hours of the day, interrupting sleep and intensifying migraine headaches. These conditions interfere with an individual's ability to function at work, perform activities of daily living, and care for family members.

We appreciate the Committee's consideration to schedule a **HEARING FOR HB1852** as a simpler way to manage the feral chicken problems.