

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau

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**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 1736, H.D.1, Relating to Animal Control

BEFORE THE:

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

DATE: Tuesday, February 10, 2026
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol, Conference Room 325

Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 1736, H.D. 1, for your consideration.

H.B. 1736, H.D.1, adds a new section to chapter 36, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to establish the "Spay and Neuter Special Fund" to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, and authorizes an income tax designation to provide revenues into the special fund.

Section 3 of the bill amends section 235-102.5, HRS, by adding a new subsection (e), which authorizes a new income "check-off" option. Individual taxpayers with a refund of \$5 or more may designate \$5 to the fund, and married couples filing jointly with a refund of \$10 or more may designate \$5 per person to the fund.

As with other existing check-off boxes, if no initial designation was chosen, taxpayers will be allowed to amend a return to choose a designation within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for that taxable year. A designation is nonrevocable once made.

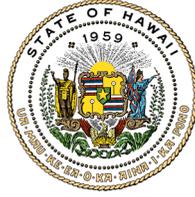
The bill has a defective effective date of July 1, 3000, provided that section 3 applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2026, and sections 4 and 5 take effect on July 1, 2026.

DOTAX notes that it can administer section 3 of this bill for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2026.

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

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY
CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER
AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARK

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

**Before the House Committee on
JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1736 HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL**

House Bill 1736, House Draft 1, creates the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to help reduce pet overpopulation, including free-roaming cats. It allows an income tax designation to fund the special fund account. The bill requires cats over five months old to be surgically sterilized and bans unsterilized cats from entering the State, with certain exceptions. Funds are allocated for these efforts. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this bill.**

Cats that roam freely are among the most successful predators on Earth and have been linked to the extinction of over 60 small animal species. Hawai'i's native wildlife are especially vulnerable to predation, and cat predation significantly hampers the recovery of birds such as 'ua'u, palila, and nēnē. Free-roaming cats also spread diseases like rabies, toxoplasmosis, roundworms, hookworms, and ringworm, which can infect other cats, humans, and wildlife. The impacts of these diseases are evident both on land, where native bird species including nēnē have been killed, and at sea, as shown by the deaths of Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins, and other marine mammals due to toxoplasmosis. Feral or free-ranging cats are also less healthy: at-large cats tend to have shorter lifespans and higher disease rates compared to indoor pet cats.

The Department is encouraged by the Legislature's efforts to address at-large cat issues and urges the enactment of effective, science-based cat management solutions, including: requiring cat owners to license and microchip their cats for identification; providing requirements, incentives, or educational efforts for pet owners about keeping cats indoors or otherwise contained in a fenced or screened enclosure; offering access to free or reduced-cost spay and neuter services for pet cats; requiring that cats (both existing and newly imported) be sterilized; establishing mandatory open-admission animal shelters; creating cat sanctuaries; holding cat

owners liable for damage to property and native species; prohibiting the feeding of free-roaming animals; and updating existing animal welfare laws to expand community-led and private partner predator control.

The Department notes that the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council adopted Resolution 19-2 in January 2019, supporting the practice of keeping cats indoors and using peer-reviewed science to make recommendations for reducing the impacts of cats.

Cats are widespread throughout Hawai'i and have been reported in every habitat from sea level to over 11,000 ft on Maunakea. They pose an ecological threat to native ecosystems and species that must be addressed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 6:54:08 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

We are pleased to support HB1736, which would appropriate funds for sterilization for free roaming cats and also require cats entering our state to be spayed or neutered prior to entry. The S/N requirement would close a puka that is long overdue in controlling overpopulation of companion animals entering Hawai'i.



February 7, 2026

House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Testimony RE: HB1736

Aloha e Distinguished Members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee –

I am writing to you in my capacity as Executive Director of the Friends of Kaua'i Wildlife Refuges to express our support for HB1736. Our organization serves as the nonprofit Friends Group that supports the environmental and wildlife conservation, historic preservation and community education programs of the Kaua'i National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes Kīlauea Point NWR, Hanalei NWR and Hulē'ia NWR.

Within these precious protected lands, which are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, our colleagues work tirelessly to protect, preserve, support, study and advocate for the threatened and endangered native Hawaiian birds that need our support and protection. Feral cats remain a constant threat to the seabirds and wetland birds that evolved on this beautiful island without defenses against mammalian predators. Cats were introduced by humans, and I believe that it is our job, as stewards of this place, to work together to reduce the population of these predators. Feral and free roaming cats living freely across our island are inconsistent with the delicate balance of our island ecosystem. They can live for up to 15 years preying upon threatened and endangered native birds, even while being fed by well-meaning community members.

I have personally seen footage of feral cats preying upon native birds at Hanalei NWR. It is truly heartbreaking to see defenseless chicks and their parents taken from their nest on federally protected land by feral cats that are regularly dumped and fed in Princeville by community members. This bill will help reduce the incidence of these terrible experiences and help us make our refuges, and our entire island, safer for birds like the koloa (Hawaiian Duck) and the 'alae 'ula (Hawaiian Common Gallinule). Kaua'i is home to 90% of the remaining genetically pure koloa and there are fewer than 700 individual 'alae 'ula left in our world. These birds are on the brink of collapse and they need our help.

We respectfully request that you vote in support of HB1736, which will work to help reduce feral cat populations across our island.

On behalf of our wildlife conservation partners, public health advocates and concerned community members who care deeply about the health and vitality of our delicate island ecosystem, mahalo nui loa! We deeply appreciate all that you and your colleagues do to support the health and safety of our islands, and the wildlife that we share them with.

With warm aloha,

Thomas Daubert
Executive Director



Nene Research and Conservation
Nene.org

February 7, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ariel Imoto, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Nēnē Research and Conservation (nene.org) in strong support of HB 1736.

HB 1736 advances responsible pet ownership by addressing one of the primary drivers of Hawai‘i’s persistent stray and feral cat crisis: unintended reproduction. Requiring pet cats to be spayed or neutered, with limited and appropriate exceptions, is a proven and humane approach to reducing overpopulation while improving animal welfare outcomes statewide.

Cats are an introduced and highly effective predator in Hawai‘i and pose a significant threat to native wildlife, particularly birds that evolved without mammalian predators. Impacts extend from direct predation on ground-nesting seabirds to indirect effects on forest bird populations. While cats can be wonderful pets, uncontrolled breeding and abandonment have resulted in widespread stray and feral populations that place ongoing pressure on ecosystems, shelters, rescues, and local communities.

HB 1736 also establishes a dedicated funding mechanism to support pet cat sterilization, increasing access while ensuring that publicly funded sterilization does not contribute to the continued release of cats into the environment. This provision is critical for aligning animal welfare goals with native species protection.

HB 1736 represents a practical, science-based step toward reducing long-term harm to Hawai‘i’s wildlife while easing the burden on animal control agencies and rescue organizations. For these reasons, Nēnē Research and Conservation strongly supports HB 1736 and urges its passage. Mahalo for your time and thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Ariel Imoto
Executive Director
Nene Research and Conservation

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 11:06:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaiian Humane was unsuccessful in urging the committee to require spay/neuter of any cat over the age of six months who is allowed outdoors. This is unfortunate as it is the only way to enforce a spay/neuter requirement.

Instead, the bill allows an exemption for cats registered with a cat fancier group. With no framework for regulating breeders, there is no way for law enforcement to determine a breeder's legitimacy. The spay/neuter import requirement in the bill is also unenforceable as it defers to the counties which do not regulate pet importation.

And without sufficient funding the Bill would not be workable.

We therefore have to oppose HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:32:12 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hob Osterlund	Kauai Albatross Network	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committe,

I stand in the strongest possible support of HB 1736. It will make a big contribution to our efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i. As you know, cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife. Free-roaming cats also pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis, which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriages as well as birth defects. In additon, Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins and Humpback Whales are at risk, as toxoplasmosis can kill marine mammals.

Reducing the feral cat population is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai‘i’s Endangered Species Act. **THERE IS NO TIME FOR DELAY.** The koloa maoli (Hawaiian duck), for example, is now down to only 700 individuals in the world. **PLEASE HELP!**

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 12:05:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Kaaumoana	Hanalei Watershed Hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hanalei Watershed Hui strongly supports this vital legislation to protect our Hawaii lands, waters and native birds.

Mahalo Makaala



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 9, 2026

To: Chair Rep. David Tarnas
Vice Chair Rep. Mahina Poepoe
and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

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

RE: Testimony in opposition to HB 1736 HD1: Relating to Animal Control
Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our opposition to House Bill 1736, House Draft 1, which establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, and authorizes an income tax designation to provide revenues into the special fund; requires cats over the age of five months to be surgically sterilized and prohibits cats that are not surgically sterilized from being brought into the State, with certain exceptions; and appropriates funds.

While we are in strong support of the intent of this measure, as written it will not accomplish any of its stated aims.

The counties have no framework to enforce a spay/neuter requirement that exempts cats owned by cat fanciers. Also, pure-bred cats allowed outdoors are no less of a threat to pet overpopulation and wildlife predation than any other cat. The counties also have no authority or mechanism to enforce a spay/neuter import requirement for cats.

There is a clear public interest in reducing the harms caused by pet overpopulation and the number of Free-Roaming cats. We will continue to advocate for state support for enforceable spay/neuter requirements, as well as funding for spay/neuter efforts statewide. Unfortunately, HB1736, HD1, does not move us any closer to those important goals.

We urge the committee to defer this measure. Mahalo for your consideration.

**Testimony of American Bird Conservancy
In Support of HB 1736_HD1 Relating to Animal Control
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs | February 4, 2026 | 2:00 PM**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **strong support for HB 1736_HD1**.

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

Key components of this bill include:

1. A requirement that all pet cats above a certain age be spayed or neutered, with certain exceptions, including for responsible breeders; and
2. Financial support for reducing the cat overpopulation, including free-roaming cats, that is consistent with reducing environmental and public health risks.

The spaying or neutering of pet cats is highly popular among all Hawai'i residents, including cat owners. Research of Hawai'i residents conducted by Griffith University in 2024 found that **two-thirds of respondents supported making pet cat sterilization mandatory**. Many of Hawai'i's cat owners have already chosen to spay or neuter their cat voluntarily, but further encouragement and support is needed to spay or neuter the rest. Spaying or neutering pet cats not only benefits the cat and owner but also eliminates undesirable breeding, which contributes to the cat overpopulation and resulting environmental and public health risks.

Cat Overpopulation Risks

Cats are an invasive species in Hawai'i that have contributed to the extinction of two endemic Hawaiian species, the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail), and the decline of countless others. Research has repeatedly shown that cats are a [major threat to Hawai'i's unique birds](#), such as 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater) and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), two species which have experienced [94% and 78% population declines](#), respectively.

Cats can also carry a large number of infectious parasites and diseases that put people and wildlife at risk. For example, *Toxoplasma gondii*, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis in birds



and mammals, is excreted in cat feces. A single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called “oocysts”) into the environment via its feces, and these oocysts remain infectious for months to years. This parasite is a serious risk for Hawai‘i’s wildlife, [including Hawaiian Monk Seals](#), and has long been recognized as a public health risk in the state.

HB 1736_HD1 is an essential and common-sense strategy to reduce the cat overpopulation in Hawai‘i that is consistent with animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and public health and safety goals. This bill will encourage responsible cat ownership, reduce risks for Hawai‘i’s residents, both people and animals, and is the type of action supported by a broad coalition of organizations, such as:

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

Mahalo for your consideration,

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

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



February 9, 2025

The Kauai Community Cat Project (KCCP) conditionally supports HB 1736, to provide public funds for sterilization of cats. Such funding will reduce the number of breeding cats, but it does not go far enough.

We propose to amend the section that provides public funding only if fixed cats are not released into the environment:

“Section 36. The counties shall expend funds to reduce pet overpopulation, including free-roaming cat population, by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; [~~provided the spayed or neutered animals are not released into the environment~~]”. This section, unless amended, would only work if all the fixed cats could be accommodated in shelters, catios, sanctuaries, or adopted into homes]. There is not sufficient space or funding to do that.

Groups, including KCCP, currently provide spay and neuter services. KCCP fixes 2,000 cats per year with private donations. We place many fixed cats for adoption in Hawaii and the mainland. Some cats are also placed in catios and private fenced sanctuaries. But there is inadequate funding to place all the cats and many are returned to their outside managed colonies.

Trap, neuter, return (TNR) significantly reduces the cat population, which contributes to the goal of reducing the number of cats and protecting native species. TNR'd cats should be eligible for the public funds in HB 1736.

One unaltered female cat can produce 3 litters of kittens a year averaging 4 kittens per litter. After 2 years that unaltered female cat and unaltered offsprings can produce 144 kitten and after 3 years up to 1,728 kittens. After 4 years one unaltered cat and unaltered offspring can produce over 20,000 kittens. So you can understand the urgency in getting all cats spay/neutered regardless of where they are.

Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan M Rowe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Rowe

Secretary/Treasurer

Kauai Community Cat Project

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:00:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carita Inoue	Cat Fanciers of Hawaii	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in opposition** to this measure.

While the goal of reducing pet overpopulation is shared by many in our communities, this bill adopts an overly punitive, impractical approach that will likely **worsen animal welfare outcomes**, strain county resources, and disproportionately impact low-income residents, caregivers, and responsible pet owners across Hawai‘i.

Requiring all cats over five months of age to be surgically sterilized, under threat of fines of \$500 to \$1,000 per cat, is unrealistic and punitive. Hawai‘i already faces a severe shortage of veterinary professionals, limited access to affordable spay/neuter services, and long wait times—particularly in rural areas and on neighbor islands. Imposing criminal penalties without first ensuring adequate access to services will inevitably lead to **noncompliance, abandonment, and underground ownership**, rather than improved population control.

Reducing pet overpopulation requires collaboration, education, access to affordable veterinary care, and support for humane, community-based solutions—not punitive mandates and prohibitions that ignore on-the-ground realities in Hawai‘i.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **reject this measure** and instead work with counties, veterinarians, animal welfare organizations, and community members to develop policies that are humane, effective, and equitable.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Carita Inoue

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 2:02:08 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Action for Animals Hawaii	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I'm Renee Rabb and I am testifying in opposition to HB 1736 on behalf of Action 4 Animals Hawai'i (A4A). A4A is an all-volunteer organization on the east side of Big Island that receives no funds from the state of Hawai'i. We fundraise and we contribute our own money to cat and dog rescue. We work with Hawai'i County Animal Control to place adoptable cats and dogs with loving homes, and we maintain the kittens and cats in the cubbies at Petco in Hilo. In 2025, we placed 613 cats with stable and secure families. A4A Hawai'i has as a part of its mission to trap, spay/neuter and adopt. While we have a vibrant dog adoption program, I am here today to talk about cats.

Session after session, we have supported a spay and neuter fund through income tax checkoff to reduce the overpopulation of unwanted cats and dogs on the island. Animal abandonment is a prime contributor to the problem. Lack of low cost or free spay/neuter programs is a huge cause of the out of control companion animal population. This bill, however, has several flaws that will not make any problem better. One of the most egregious faults of this bill, is the language that says that the spay and neuter fund cannot be used to spay and neuter animals that are re-released into the environment. We have a working cat program. We rescue and remove less social cats from outdoor environments, particularly cat colonies, work to get them more socialized and healthy, and then place them in pairs on rural farms as barn cats. These cats have a job; they protect the farmer's grain and feed and provide rodent control. Obviously, these cats are re-released into the environment. They must be outside in order to provide pest control. The language in this bill does not exempt farm cats and does not clarify environment. This prohibition will make it impossible for us to do exactly what we now do to reduce the number of cats in cat colonies.

There is a provision in the bill which prohibits importation of unsterilized cats. This provision should also apply to dogs and it does not. There should be reasonable exceptions provided for legitimate animal breeders, and they should apply to all companion animals not just to cats.

We wanted to be able to support a spay and neuter fund as we have done in the past. Unfortunately, this bill has so many problems we cannot in good conscience see this as anything other than a mechanism to criminalize someone who has an unaltered cat, and to make things much more difficult for those of us who engage in rescue work.

Thank you for your time.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 6:04:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LYNN Y MURAMARU	Pacific Pet Alliance	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

February 8, 2026

Testimony in opposition of HB 1736 HD1

Relating to spay/neuter fund and registering pedigreed cats.

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

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

Mrs. Abrams is a “preservationist breeder”. She’s breeding lilac point Siamese cats where there were only about 1000 produced last year in the US.

The Pacific Pet Alliance fully supports the intent of spay/neuter bills and there are a number of them. We object to the portion of bill that calls for a “breeder registry”. We respectfully request that be entirely deleted because registering the handful of pedigreed cat that enter the State will not help alleviate pet overpopulation and shelter/rescue conditions. After spending thousands of dollars to import these animals, whether cats or dogs, these responsible owners are not the root cause of free roaming animals. The Hawaiian cat fanciers are so few. 40 belong to a club and less than 10 breed kittens. At this time there are more entries of spayed/neutered cats at Hawaii cat shows than intact cats. CFA cat shows allow for competition of neutered pedigreed and household cats. This bill unfairly singles out the pedigreed cat breeder. We fully support and respect the public’s right to own the pet of their choice whether it be pedigreed, purebred, or adopted from a shelter /rescue. Many people seek purebred animals for a variety of reasons but regardless of the animal, it’s the human-companion animal bond that takes priority.

We at the Pacific Pet Alliance fully support the efforts of our conservationists and agree that there has to be a way for our domestic animals and wildlife to coexist. The Hawaiian Humane Society stated at the last hearing that they have been holding informal meetings prior to the opening of this session however they neglected to invite a representative of the CFA cat fancy, namely the Cat Fanciers of Hawaii or Hula Cats Club. These are very small clubs and their membership does overlap. Last session Rep. Tarnus from Waikaloa suggested a working group to bring the parties together. That is a great idea and we would fully support that. Thank you for

modifying the effective date to encourage more discussion and collaboration. We were pleased to see that amendment.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of Charlee Abrams who continues to recover from surgery.

Lynn Muramaru standing in for Charlee Abrams

Board Members

Hula Cat Club

Pacific Pet Alliance

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 7:08:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aisha Aoki	cat fanciers of hawaii cat club	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

We, breeders/ pet owners of the Cat Fanciers of Hawaii Cat Club (CFH), strongly OPPOSE this bill as it is written. The CFH is a local club that is part of the larger international Cat Fanciers Association. We are breed preservationists, passionate about preserving the healthy lines of breed specific cats. Many cats are “rare” with very few breeders available and take the commitment of special people to carry on healthy lines and genetics. These people are NOT “in it for the money” as many responsible breeders do not make any money from this hobby. They care about carrying on the cat breed and lines, no matter what it costs. With this, breeders expend costs for genetic and health testing, large veterinary costs for health maintenance, top tier food brands and supplements, as well as the importation of new breeding stock to ensure genetic diversity, among other things.

As a breeder/ purebred cat owner, none of our cats are allowed to free roam per breeder contract. A purebred cat is not a cheap “investment”, and it would not be wise to allow it to free roam where it could potentially get hurt, killed, or pick up various diseases. This requirement is stated multiple times throughout the “adoption” process” and is a clear stipulation in contracts that kittens/ cats are to be indoor only, absolutely no free roaming cats. Per one breeder, “any potential owner stating they want an outdoor cat or may hint that a cat has free access to outdoors will be turned down”. Many of the breeders we work with within the CFH already send their kittens home fixed or have contract stipulations requiring the owner to fix their kitten by 6 months old due to being physically too small to fix before being sent home. We, breeders and pet owners within the CFH, are already registered with our overall national registration in which we follow strict standards, bylaws, pay our dues, hold at least quarterly local club meetings, and attend an annual international association meeting. Realistically, responsible breeders of purebred cats are NOT contributors to the state’s feral over-population. While we support a spay/neuter fund and assistance to the public to be able to fix their pets, responsible breeders should not be penalized for problems that they did not contribute to. Our concern is that these statues are created and only the handful of responsible breeders/ pet owners will follow it, and the irresponsible people will continue to do as they do, in turn there will be no change to the target issue of the FERAL CAT population. We believe that the wrong groups are being targeted and blamed for the overpopulation issues.



Hawai'i Audubon Society

850 Richards St., Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813-4709
office@hiaudubon.org <https://hiaudubon.org>

Testimony of the Hawai'i Audubon Society In Support of HB 1736 – Relating to Cat Sterilization & Bird Protection

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Committee Members,

I am writing to urge your support for HB 1736. This legislation would require all pet cats to be spayed or neutered, with reasonable exceptions, and would enable private donations to support pet cat sterilization efforts statewide. Cats can make wonderful pets, but cat overpopulation has reached a crisis level and poses a serious threat to Hawai'i's native wildlife.

Fewer than 700 'Alae 'ula remain, yet in just four years, feral cats killed over 250 native waterbirds at Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge alone. Free-roaming cats have already driven species like the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail) to extinction and now threaten the Palila, 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater), and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), among others. On O'ahu, HAS has directly witnessed these impacts, as feral cats prey on U'au kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwaters) at our Freeman Seabird Preserve at Black Point in Kahala.

As an introduced predator, roaming cats too frequently kill Hawai'i's native birds, spread infectious parasites and diseases, and create challenges for local communities. HB 1736 represents a crucial step forward. By preventing negligent and unintended cat breeding, an essential step to cat population management, this bill would benefit cats, wildlife, and communities across the state — while also reducing strains on animal control services.

Sincerely,

Keith Swindle,
Executive Director
Hawai'i Audubon Society
850 Richards St, Ste 505
Honolulu, HI 96813

6 Feb 2026

Thank you for allowing Cat Fanciers of Hawaii and me to comment on H.B. No. 1736 H.D.1, Relating to Animal Control. I'm Duane Inoue, a member of the Cat Fanciers of Hawaii (CFH) and a cat preservation breeder.

Cat preservation breeders focus on maintaining and enhancing the distinctive traits of specific pedigreed cat breeds that face decline or endangerment, ensuring their genetic health, temperament, and overall future by carefully selecting breeding pairs, conducting genetic testing, and working to keep these breeds from disappearing. They are distinct from those who breed for profit, prioritizing monetary gain over the breed's well-being.

We fully support funding the spay/neuter fund and increasing the amount to lower the cost of sterilization.

However, we have concerns on the following:

A. §36- Spay and neuter special fund, (b) states in part:

The counties shall expend funds to reduce pet overpopulation, including free-roaming cat population, by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided the spayed or neutered animals are **not released into the environment**.

This conflicts with Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) science and widely adopted municipal practice. It risks increasing shelter intake and euthanasia. It is inconsistent with bill's state goal of reducing free-roaming cat populations.

Recommend revising to something like:

“provided that counties may utilize evidence-based population control strategies, including trap-neuter-return, targeted sterilization, and adoption.”

B. I recommend following changes for §143- Cat Sterilization:

1. §143- Cat Sterilization states:

“§143- Cat Sterilization. (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to:

(1) Own a cat over the age of five months, unless the cat is surgically sterilized; or

(2) Bring a cat that is not surgically sterilized into the State.

Comment: As written, subpar (1) means that any owner of unsterilized cat over the age of five months has “broken” a law based on mere ownership of cat; albeit, there are health and breed registry exemptions. This is extremely unreasonable since a unsterilized cat that is not “at large” will not cause increase in free-roaming cat population.

Subpar (2) should not be added in this bill since this requirement is addressed in H.B. No. 1594 and S.B. No. 3012. I will provide comments to this bills separately. I stress that the exemptions used in these bills are different from H.B. No. 1736 H.D. 1.

2. Recommend that subpar (b) changed as follows to add clarity:

“(b) A cat may be exempted from sterilization requirement under subsection (a) if:

(1) A duly licensed veterinarian certifies in writing, **with veterinarian’s license number**, that the cat is not suitable for sterilization due to health or age considerations; provided that the certification **due to health** shall only be applicable for a period up to one year.

(2) Arrangement to sterilize within thirty days after the date the cat has been identified to be at large to be over 6 months old by Animal Control Authority and the cat has is sterilized within that thirty days. Proof of sterilization shall be verified through a veterinarian’s certification.

(3) The owner of the can provide verifiable proof upon request by the applicable Animal Control Authority that the cat is:

(A) Approved by and registered with a national or international breed registry or association that, at minimum, requires verification of:

(i) Name of cat

(ii) Description of cat, including breed

(iii) Date of birth;

(iv) Name of registered sire and dam;

(v) Name of the **owner and breeder;**”

3. “§143- (c) states:

“(C) Any person violating this shall be fined no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000 per violation per cat.”

What is the basis for the penalty amounts? Does it cover administrative cost, Animal Control Authority cost, cost to cover cat housing/feeding/medical care, etc.?

The penalty amounts are excessive compared to dog at large fines. In Honolulu, a dog at large (off-leash/unconfined) violation typically results in fines of \$50 for a first offense, \$100 for a second, and \$500–\$1,000 for subsequent offenses within two years. Other counties like Maui also enforce similar fines, including \$50 for the first violation and up to \$500 for repeated violations.

The cat fine seems excessive when the fine for First Offense DUI and theft in the fourth degree (Petty Misdemeanor) is \$500 to \$1,000. Courts frequently impose \$500+ fines for violations with prior history only.

The Legislature should consider whether these penalties are proportional, defensible, and likely to withstand judicial scrutiny.

4. Supar (d) states:

“(d) This section shall not apply to cats brought into the State exclusively for the purpose of entering them in a cat show or exhibition and not allowed to run at large. “

This is conflict with H.B. No. 1594 (deferred) and S.B. No. 3012 which states:

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

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

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

(3) The owner or importer is registered with the department as a breeder pursuant to subsection (c).

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

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

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

The State needs to revise these bills, as necessary, to ensure consistency.

D. Unlike previous “Spay and Neuter” bills from 2025, this proposed bill does not identify who shall enforce this section and may issue citations. Recommend adding something like:

“() The applicable county animal control authority shall enforce this section and may issue citations.”

The State will need to add “police” and others to above, if they are also able to enforce and issue citations based on the subsection.

=====

As I have stated before, this is a very complicated problem that requires lots of research and planning. I think that we need State/County personnel, Animal Control Authorities/Contractors, veterinarians, attorneys, scientists, wildlife experts, Humane Society, animal welfare groups, and pet owners to develop the law that will help reduce cat “at large” and the impact it has on the environment and wildlife.

v/r

Duane Inoue
Email: gekoboy@gmail.com
Cell: (808) 372-1162

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 9:02:54 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Januszewski	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Samantha Januszewski, and I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB1736-1.

I am a registered **preservation breeder** operating an ethical cattery in Hawai‘i. All of my litters are registered with the Cat Fanciers’ Association (CFA), and all cats from my cattery are fully registered, papered, and traceable. Through CFA registration my breeding cats and litters are documented, monitored, and held to established standards of ethics and animal welfare.

The premise that CFA registered preservation breeders contribute to the feral cat overpopulation is inaccurate. All pet kittens from my cattery are spayed or neutered prior to placement, and all breeding cats are kept strictly indoors and never allowed to roam. As a preservation breeder of purebred felines, I would never allow my cats to breed indiscriminately or with stray domestic cats.

Feral cat overpopulation is driven by unowned, free-roaming, and unregulated cats—not by registered preservation breeders who carefully plan litters, screen homes, and ensure accountability for every kitten produced. A blanket mandate requiring spay or neuter by five months of age would not address the root cause of feral populations and would instead force ethical preservation breeders to close, diminishing genetic diversity and eliminating responsible breeding programs in Hawai‘i.

HB1736-1 would also negatively impact organizations such as the Cat Fanciers of Hawai‘i, which promote education, responsible ownership, and animal welfare.

I respectfully urge you to oppose HB1736-1 in its current form or amend it to exempt registered CFA Preservation Breeders

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Samantha Januszewski
Faith&Whiskers LLC

Registered CFA Preservation Breeder
Hawai'i

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 10:02:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Okaa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill strikes me as yet another one size fits none solution as it will be impossible to enforce and draconian at the same time.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 11:21:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Danielle Rae	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Danielle, and I respectfully oppose **HB1736**, which would require sterilization of all cats imported into Hawai'i.

Preservation breeding plays a critical role in maintaining healthy, genetically diverse animal populations. Dynamic pedigreed breeds exist because of preservation of those breeds for centuries and generations of breeders have carefully protected their health and genetic viability. Eliminating the ability to continue this work risks permanent loss of breeds and limits access to animals with known health and temperament histories.

This bill does not differentiate between ethical breeding and the unmanaged feral population, which is the true source of overpopulation concerns. Hawai'i's existing import safeguards already protect public health and animal welfare.

I urge the Legislature to **oppose HB1736**.

Mahalo,
Dr. Danielle Daniel

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 11:26:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Rae	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Danielle, and I am submitting testimony **in opposition to HB1736**.

I support humane, responsible approaches to animal population control. However, this bill takes an overly restrictive approach that fails to recognize the role of ethical breeders in promoting animal health, genetic diversity, and responsible placement. Preservation breeding is a proactive solution—not a problem—and should not be eliminated by broad mandates.

Hawai‘i’s current animal import and health regulations are already robust. Adding mandatory sterilization does not address the root causes of overpopulation and may result in long-term harm to responsible breeding programs.

I respectfully request that **HB1736 not advance**.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.
Danielle Rae

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 12:10:08 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 12:23:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Genobia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern, I oppose this bill which mandates sterilization of cats and dogs imported into Hawaii.

While I support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce overpopulation, this bill goes too far. Hawai'i already has strict animal import and public health protections in place. Adding a mandatory sterilization requirement risks unintended harm without clearly addressing the root causes of pet overpopulation.

I urge the Legislature to reject HB1736.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Donna Genobia

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 12:49:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
helen raine	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas,

I would like to voice my strong support for this bill. I work in conservation and see first hand how the uncontrolled presence of feral cats, outdoors and on the landscape, is leading towards the extinction of our unique, endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, as well as other native wildlife. This bill is an excellent step towards reducing the population boom amongst feral cats. This will have benefits not just for wildlife, but for human health, as cats are the only host of the toxoplasmosis parasite which can cause miscarriage and birth defects. I urge you to pass this bill for public safety and for native Hawaiian wildlife.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 2:37:26 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joanna p milo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 3:21:04 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fran White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill 1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i:

- Cats are a key factor in the decline of our Endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, Endangered seabirds and other native wildlife. They are a great danger to Kaua‘i’s amazing but seriously declining bird population - Laysan Albatross as well as all our forest birds such as the Akikiki, Akeke‘e, I‘iwi, ‘Elepaio and so on.

- Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats can spread toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), through their feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriages, birth defects, and can be fatal.

- Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

- Reducing the feral cat population will protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems in the isolated Hawaiian Islands; this is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai‘i’s Endangered Species Act.

There is no time left; our unique birds & sea creatures are in serious decline now – please act before we lose them all.

Mahalo nui loa for your kokua,

Fran White

Kaua‘i

HB1736 Testimony OPPOSING current version of this animal control bill.

The current version of [HB1736](#) Relating to Animal Control, which was intended to mandate the spay/neuter of cats and establish a Spay and Neuter Special Fund, has several fatal flaws. Unfortunately the bill allows an exemption for cats registered with a cat fancier group. With no framework for regulating breeders, there is no way for law enforcement to determine a breeder's legitimacy. Also, pure-bred cats are no less of a threat to pet overpopulation and wildlife predation if allowed to roam than any other cat.

The spay/neuter import requirement in the bill is also unenforceable as it defers to the counties which do not regulate pet importation.

Finally, there is no general fund appropriation in the bill and given the state budget concerns, there is unlikely to be any funding added.

For these reasons I oppose HB1736.

Signed Judith Aikawa, MD
37 Apali Way
Kula, Hi 96790

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 4:06:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Responsible breeding of cats and dogs should be allowed -- it helps preserve extinction of specific breeds and preserve purebred lines, without which specific lineages would fade into non-existence.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 5:36:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Diegmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am writing in full support of House Bill 1763. Please protect Hawai'i's native species by helping to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai'i. This will not only directly help our native birds, but also our marine mammals. Hawai'i's native species are declining at an alarming rate and our time to protect them is running out. Please act now and pass this bill.

Dr, Julia Diegmann

2755 Ohana Aina Place

Kalaheo HI 96741

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 7:01:58 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Nakao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1736 as it would help control feral cat populations that decimate native wildlife and spread disease through feces that affect the human population as well. Hawaii is home to many special bird species and ocean mammals found nowhere else in the world. This Bill reflects responsible measures in protecting Hawaii's native wildlife and its very special and fragile ecosystem. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 7:51:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei Fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** this measure. Feral cats are an invasive species taking over our native ecosystems, killing vulnerable native birds, and poisoning even our nearshore marine life with toxoplasmosis. While I love pet cats like many others, they belong in doors & are happier in loving homes with responsible cat owners. They do not belong outdoors & the whole "trap & release" movement is clearly not working. The feral cat population keeps getting worse everywhere across Hawaii, please do something & **PASS** this measure.

mahalo nui,

Lei Fisher

Dear Members of the House

We are writing to SUPPORT HB 1736 which protects native endangered wildlife by controlling the free roaming feral cat overpopulation in Hawaii.

We, as stewards of Hawaii, have the kuleana to protect our native wildlife, especially our native *endangered* wildlife. When possible, it is our duty to prevent harm that may lead to the extinction of our native species.

30 of our 71 species of native birds are endangered or threatened. Cats are natural predators of birds, and pose a particular risk to ground-nesting birds. Increasing numbers of feral cats are a key factor in the decline of our native species.

- The Hawaiian duck (koloa maoli) numbers are reduced to less than 700 individuals
- The Hawaiian common gallinule (‘alae ‘ula) numbers are around 700 individuals
- The beautiful Hawaiian stilt (ae’o) numbers are around 1,500 individuals
- The Hawaiian coot (‘alae ke’oke’o) numbers are around 1,500 individuals
- Our magnificent Nene goose numbers are around 3,800 individuals

We must not wait until it is too late to act. Extinction is forever.

We see first-hand the problems that feral cats cause in our Ko Olina neighborhood. Endangered gallinules, Hawaiian stilts, and Hawaiian coots nest on the Ko Olina Golf Course. We are alarmed that an increasing number of feral cats with kittens roaming these grounds.

Our precious Hawaiian monk seals (down to only 1,600 individuals), are at risk from the feral cat population as well. In Ko Olina, where monk seals frequent Paradise Cove beach and Secret Beach, we have seen feral cats roam freely – and they are multiplying, as we see more and more kittens.

Cats are a known vector of toxoplasmosis (Aguire et al., 2019). For this reason, pregnant women are told to avoid changing kitty litter as this exposure may kill the fetus. Toxoplasmosis can be fatal to our beloved Hawaiian monk seals, Hawaiian spinner dolphins, and our Humpback whales as well.

Our endangered native birds and monk seals are protected by Federal laws and the State of Hawaii’s Endangered Species Acts. Let’s put this protection into action by controlling the feral cat population, and removing them from the sensitive habitat of our endangered native wildlife.

Every life is precious. Cats can be wonderful pets and companions, and every cat deserves a good home. However, the feral and free-roaming cat population – and multiplication – must be controlled.

Feral cats put our precious native wildlife directly at risk by predation and risk of transmitting diseases such as toxoplasmosis. The time to act is now. Let us fulfill our kuleana to protect our endangered native species. Please vote yes on HB 1736.

Mahalo nui,



Michael Hasler



Gloria Hasler

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 10:15:26 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 1736, Relating to Animal Control

February 7, 2026

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

I am writing today in support of House Bill 1736 for several reasons.

First, I believe that the creation of a “Spay and Neuter Special Fund” to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, which authorizes an income tax designation via a Check-off option is a clean, clear choice for taxpayers as a helpful contribution to a sizable problem, especially for our unique island chain with our varied vulnerable species.

Second, I hope that such a fund will help further educate people about the problems posed by pet overpopulation and free-roaming cats, especially the dangers posed to our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, seabirds, and other native wildlife. I have personally witnessed both feral and domesticated pet cats destroying the lives of chicks, birds, and other wildlife. And I have read about the sad demise of monk seals due to toxoplasmosis. Reducing feral cat populations will help protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

Of note, I am not a cat hater. I love cats! I believe it’s important to share that.

Finally, I really love our endangered wetland birds and our magnificent Mōlī, our Laysan albatross, in particular. All of these special birds are at risk and have suffered from the claws and jaws of feral cats. These special bird species certainly deserve our help in protecting and potentially saving their species.

I sincerely hope HB 1736 passes. I applaud that the measure is before the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems within the Department of Taxation.

Mahalo for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Tina Ferrato
Kilauea, Kauai

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:59:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Tarnas, Vice Chair Representative Poepoe and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

Please oppose HB 1736 HD 1. While I strongly support state funding for spaying and neutering of cats and dogs to reduce pet overpopulation, it's my understanding that amendments were made to HB 1736 that are not helpful to the issue of pet overpopulation. First, the requirement to spay or neuter any cat over the age of six months was removed. Second, an amendment allows exemption for cats registered with a cat fancier group. This amendment causes a law enforcement problem. Furthermore, purebred cats, just as easily as non-purebred cats, can worsen pet overpopulation if allowed to roam. Third, there is no general fund appropriation to this bill. For all of these reasons, please oppose HB 1736 HD 1.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 6:34:09 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Fonarow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good morning Hawaii State Legislators,

My name is Amy Fonarow. I am a lifelong ocean advocate, and a former Hawai'i resident of over 11 years on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai.

I'm writing in support of HB 1736.

Many of Hawaii seabirds are ground and burrow nesters who did not evolve alongside predators like the domestic cat (a relatively recent addition to the islands), so they cannot defend themselves or their annual single chick against them.

Seabirds are an integral part of your archipelago's ecosystem; even their guano boosts nutrients in your soil and assists the growth of your plants.

I care about all animals, and I used to run my own pet sitting company. I like this bill because not only would it help seabird populations to thrive, but it doesn't involve killing cats - it's just about not producing more.

While living on Kauai in 2025, I noticed feral cat colonies in Waimea and Kīlauea.

The Kauai Community Cat Project website states "One unspayed female cat, her mate, and their offspring producing an average of 2.8 surviving kittens per litter at a rate of two litters a year adds up quickly.

1 year: 12 cats

2 years: 67 cats

3 years: 376 cats

4 years: 2107 cats

5 years: 11801 cats

6 years: 66,088 cats

7 years: 370,092 cats

8 years: 2,072,514 cats

9 years, 11,606,077 cats"

Thank you for considering those numbers along with the health and well-being of the seabirds, cats, and people living in Hawaii.

Please consider voting in support of HB 1736, and thank you for all of your hard work.

We truly appreciate it!

Warm regards,

Amy Fonarow

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:42:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill allows an exemption for cats registered with a cat fancier group. With no framework for regulating breeders, there is no way for law enforcement to determine a breeder's legitimacy. Also, pure-bred cats are no less of a threat to pet overpopulation and wildlife predation if allowed to roam than any other cat.

The spay/neuter import requirement in the bill is also unenforceable as it defers to the counties which do not regulate pet importation.

Finally, there is no general fund appropriation in the bill and given the state budget concerns, there is unlikely to be any funding added.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:09:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jerome Riley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I volunteer with Save Our Shearwaters and Na Aina Kai on Kauai. Both organizations care for, rescue and monitor our endangered seabirds.

Our shearwaters nest in mountain burrows. They are seriously depleted by feral cats despite the efforts of various organizations to save them. Their burrows are one way and the chicks are helpless against attack and predation.

Hundreds of Newells and Wedgetail shearwaters and petrels are saved every fall season by SOS. The world population of Newells is 90 % on Kauai.

As a docent at Na Aina Kai we care for a large colony of Laysan Albatross. We work diligently with both PMRF and USFW to relocate , band and care for these birds.

An adult pair has only one egg per year.

They are lifelong mated - long lived birds that return to their same breeding spot every fall.

They jointly parent their egg for approx 62 days and then do the same for their chick all spring and summer for 5 1/2 months until mature enough to leave on their own.

Their care of their young is extraordinary and inspiring as they fly thousands of miles regularly to secure proper food for their chicks.

Yet every season we lose chicks to feral cats as it is very difficult and very expensive to fence ravine and steep hillside areas.

When a precious chick is indiscriminately killed by a feral cat it seems a heinous act/ deeply upsetting and one that can be stopped. The team at Na Aina Kai and many others dedicate countless hours to caring for these birds. The adult albatross perform remarkable duties in support of their family.

it is long over due to help control feral cat killings of endangered seabirds!!!

if we are serious about their conservation we must act! Feral cats were once cute pets - they should stay that way - anything you can do to reinforce that wil help stop undermining the

myriad efforts of so many dedicated humans and the instinctual inspiring parenting of the albatross.

Please act now !!!

I hope you will hear similar testimony from the entire conservation community.

I am available for further discussion or comment for any legislators as they wish.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment and best regards to all .

Jerome Riley - Kilauea

Albatross docent and volunteer.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:14:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Sadly, the way this bill is worded plus having no funding measures attached renders it ineffective. Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:20:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hector Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill provided there is a process in place to allow pedigree breeders to import intact dogs and cats. These pedigree breeders must be registered, certified by the corresponding breeding accredited organizations, have a good business and customer and progenie record, pay an annual fee per breeding animal, and update breeding records and animal inventory. Pedigree breeders are to contribute to the city fund to help the feral cat suffering. Pedigree breeders should pass the extra costs to the customers, which will make trade more responsible. My local cat show club is terrified that the bill will put an end to importing breeding cats!

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:01:42 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carole richelieu	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The original bill was intended to mandate the spay/neuter of cats and establish a Spay and Neuter Special Fun. This version has several fatal flaws. Thus, oppose.

Hawaii Kai voter

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:24:39 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard J Janik, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a physician, the risk to the community and the native bird colonies, and the threat to Hawaiian monk seals from toxoplasmosis, demand that the feral cat explosion in population be controlled.

Catch, neuter, and release is the most humane, but does not solve the remote populations of feral cats. Unfortunately the only other solution is mass culling of cats. Half of the feral cat populations suffer from Feline Immunodeficiency Virus and die a horrible painful death.

For these reasons I support HB 1736.

Richard Janik

Lihue, HI 96766

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:24:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair Representative Tarnas, Vice Chair Representative Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose the portion of the bill which requires all cats over the age of 5 months old to be spayed or neutered.

Please consider deleting this portion of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:32:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adrian Dougherty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am supporting HB1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai'i. This will protect our endangered Hawaiian wildlife (including waterbirds, seabirds, and monk seals!). Cats are one of the biggest predators of our native birds, which are culturally and ecologically important and already face so many threats. Additionally, cats are vectors for toxoplasmosis which can KILL marine mammals like monk seals, dolphins, and whales. All of these animals are federally protected under the Endangered Species and Marine Mammal Protection Acts, and we have an obligation to protect them.

This bill will also aid in reducing human health risks associated with toxoplasmosis, especially for pregnant women.

I also believe that allowing cats to breed with no control is inhumane for the feral cats themselves. Allowing them to breed unchecked is putting many cats into areas is straining resources, making unhealthy cats.

This bill is not threatening to kill cats; it is only trying to ensure cats are sterilized so that breeding does not go unchecked and contribute to all these problems. Please consider my testimony as a voice for those that cannot speak.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:36:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brett Schumacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1736 because we absolutely need to reduce the feral cat populations. Feral cats are an ecological menace, and a significant contributor to the decline of our endangered native birds. This is also a risk to human health, particularly pregnant women. Feral cats main way that toxoplasmosis spread through. This disease can cause miscarriages, birth defects, and can even be fatal. This is not only a danger to humans, but also to native and endemic marine mammals such as monk seals.

Please take this important action to reduce feral cat populations and protect our natural and human environment.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:43:01 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose the current version of this bill. SB3012 is a much better bill, and I support that instead of HB1736

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 11:36:18 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Blackburn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support HB1736 and it's effort to help control the free-roaming and feral cat population and ease the burden on Hawaii's Humane Societies. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 11:37:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1736, and strongly urge our legislature to pass this crucial bill.

Cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife. Human health is also at stake as outdoor feral cats are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can kill marine mammals.

Reducing the feral cat population will protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems in the isolated Hawaiian Islands. This is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai'i's Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now - we need to act.

Cats make great pets, but we need to work together to help reduce the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape, for the sake of ourselves and for wildlife.

Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:06:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Kiessling	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think it is a good idea of too look into ways to help with the over population of cats in Hawaii but this bill does go to the extremes. Especially, for responsible brewers and those that buy bred animals in the islands.

I am in opposition to HB1736, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i.

Hawai'i already has strict animal import and public health protections in place. I had to leave my pet in Los Angeles due to the fact that they would not allow me to bring in my cat that was sterile and chipped.

I urge the Legislature to reject HB1736.

Aloha,

Laura Kiessling

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:33:26 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Adolfo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- I support HB 1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i.
- Cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife.
- Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal.
- Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.
- Reducing the feral cat population will protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems in the isolated Hawaiian Islands. This is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai‘i’s Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now - we need to act.
- Cats make great pets, but we need to work together to help reduce the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape.

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION

H.B. 1736, H.D. 1

Relating to Animal Control

My name is _____, DVM. I am a licensed veterinarian practicing in the State of Hawaii. I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to H.B. 1736, H.D. 1.

While I strongly support responsible pet ownership and accessible spay and neuter services, this bill raises serious veterinary, animal welfare, and enforcement concerns.

First, the bill mandates sterilization of all cats at five months of age, regardless of individual health or development. Peer-reviewed veterinary literature establishes that the optimal timing for gonadectomy varies by animal and that no single age is medically appropriate for all cats.¹ This mandate substitutes legislative judgment for individualized veterinary medical decision-making and places veterinarians in a compliance role rather than a clinical one.

The bill does not identify how the animal control officer will determine the age of cat found at large. Previous versions of spay/neuter bills have noted that microchip can be used to determine the age of the cat, as well as, sterilization status. However, the microchip does not provide sterilization status. A pet microchip typically stores, in a secure database, a unique identification number linked to the owner's contact information. Furthermore, the the microchip may not be scanned if it's not working or it's been moved within the cat's body.

It's difficult to ascertain the age of a cat. It's even harder to determine if a cat has been spayed or neutered. You can examine if a cat has a spay scar, tattoo, ear notch, or even do a blood test called "Anti-Müllerian Hormone Assay" which is very effective in determining whether a cat is spayed or still intact. Veterinarians would have a difficult time identifying female unspayed cats without medical records and/or careful physical examination. There would be no way that animal control authority will be able to make such determinations out in the field. Will veterinarian be required by law to report such information? Will they be required to report this to the Animal Control Authority?

Second, the bill prohibits the importation of intact cats into the State, even when sterilization is delayed for legitimate medical or developmental reasons. Such blanket restrictions risk interfering with responsible relocation, rescue, fostering, and adoption efforts, and may unintentionally increase abandonment or surrender of animals upon arrival.

Third, the bill prohibits the re-release of sterilized cats, effectively eliminating Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) as a population management option. TNR is widely recognized by the

veterinary profession as a humane and effective method for stabilizing and reducing free-roaming cat populations when properly implemented.^{2 3} Removal-only strategies have been shown to increase shelter intake, euthanasia, and rapid recolonization of areas through the vacuum effect.⁴

Fourth, enforcement of mandatory sterilization through fines of \$500–\$1,000 per cat is likely to be inequitable and ineffective. Such penalties will disproportionately impact low-income residents and caretakers, while requiring significant county resources for enforcement with little evidence of long-term population benefit.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Legislature to reject H.B. 1736, H.D. 1 in its current form and instead pursue evidence-based, humane strategies that support voluntary sterilization, preserve veterinary discretion, and allow counties flexibility to use proven population-management tools.

Respectfully submitted,

[Name], DVM
Licensed Veterinarian, State of Hawaii

FOOTNOTES

1. Root Kustritz, M.V. Determining the optimal age for gonadectomy of dogs and cats. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, Vol. 224, No. 3 (2004).
2. American Veterinary Medical Association. AVMA Policy: Free-Roaming Cat Management.
3. Levy, J.K., Isaza, N.M., & Scott, K.C. Effect of high-impact targeted trap-neuter-return and adoption of community cats on shelter intake. *The Veterinary Journal*, Vol. 201 (2014).
4. Levy, J.K., Gale, D.W., & Gale, L.A. Evaluation of the effect of a long-term trap-neuter-return and adoption program on a free-roaming cat population. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, Vol. 222, No. 1 (2003).

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:54:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose this target on my family and friends-and military persons- who love and take care of their cats. Their cats are not free roaming/feral. This bill will not reduce free roaming, feral, cats. Please do something that will work. Leave normal voting, citizens alone. Please oppose this. It is not the answer to the problem. Mahalo, SG

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:44:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassidy Jones	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair and Members of the Committee

From: Cassidy Jones

Date: 08Feb2026

Subject: **STRONGLY OPPOSE HB1736 HD1** – Relating to Animal Mandatory Sterilization

Dear Honorable Members,

As a dedicated participant in AKC-recognized dog sports and a long-time animal advocate in Hawai‘i, I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to HB1736 HD1. While the bill's stated intent is to manage cat populations, the proposed framework of mandatory sterilization and registries sets a troubling precedent that threatens the health of all companion animals and the rights of responsible owners.

My opposition is based on three primary concerns:

1. Scientific Evidence Over One-Size-Fits-All Mandates

Mandatory sterilization ignores critical, breed-specific health data. For instance, peer-reviewed research published in the [Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association \(JAVMA\)](#) has shown that early sterilization significantly increases the risk of several cancers, including **mast cell tumors, hemangiosarcoma, and lymphoma**. In fact, some larger spayed female dogs showed a nearly nine-fold increase in hemangiosarcoma compared to intact females. Forcing medical procedures through legislation rather than veterinary consultation is fundamentally inhumane.

2. The Risk of Legislative Creep

Though this bill currently targets cats, the creation of a registry for intact animals is a well-known precursor to broader mandates. The American Kennel Club (AKC) has frequently highlighted how "temporary" registries or cat-only mandates are later expanded to include dogs. We must reject this framework before it destabilizes the rights of responsible dog breeders and fanciers in our state.

3. Negative Impact on Public Health and Compliance

Hawai‘i’s unique rabies-free status relies on the transparency and cooperation of pet owners.

When the state imposes restrictive mandates, it drives owners "underground," increasing the risk of undocumented animal movements and illegal breeding. Instead of mandates, the state should focus on:

- Supporting Hawaiian Humane Society programs that provide **voluntary, low-cost services**.
- Expanding education on responsible ownership.
- Collaborating with breed-specific experts to create science-based policies.

Conclusion

We should not solve overcrowding by overriding the medical judgment of veterinarians and the informed choices of responsible owners. I respectfully urge your committee to **HOLD HB1736 HD1** and instead pursue collaborative, incentive-based solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Cassidy Jones

Concerned Hawai'i Resident & Animal Advocate & AKC Responsible Breeder

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:47:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Angel	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill!

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:44:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:58:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Penniman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Members of the committee, Please pass this very reasonable legislation! We are losing our native wildlife to predation by cats at an alarming rate! We are spending millions of dollars every year trying to limit this predation as we struggle to recover endangered species! We have to act now and this measure is a good start to limiting the number of cats roaming free on the landscape eating and poisoning our native wildlife. Cats are obligate hosts for *Toxoplasma gondii*, the organism that causes toxoplasmosis in humans, nene, monk seals, spinner dolphins, and humpback whales in Hawai'i. The eggs of this organism persist on land and in the water for at least a year! Slowing the number of cats roaming free can be achieved with this legislation. please vote yes and pass this bill! Mahalo Nui!

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 5:13:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anela Joseph	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I have read HB1736 HD1 multiple times, and I am submitting my testimony in strong opposition to this bill.

I am a long-time dog fancier actively involved in multiple AKC-recognized sports. While this bill is presented as addressing cat overpopulation, its implications reach far beyond cats and raise serious concerns for all responsible animal owners and breeders in Hawai'i.

HB1736 proposes mandatory sterilization requirements and a registry of intact imported cats. While increasing access to voluntary spay and neuter programs is a worthwhile goal, mandating sterilization and creating registries is not a humane, science-based, or balanced solution—and it opens the door to dangerous precedent.

Sterilization is not always in the best interest of an animal's health. Peer-reviewed veterinary research has shown that early spay/neuter is associated with increased risk of certain cancers and orthopedic disorders in multiple breeds. In Golden Retrievers, for example, early sterilization has been linked to higher rates of hemangiosarcoma and lymphoma. Similar concerns exist across other breeds.

Responsible owners and ethical breeders already make informed, veterinary-guided decisions about if and when sterilization is appropriate. A one-size-fits-all mandate ignores science, individual health considerations, and responsible ownership.

Additionally, this bill raises serious enforcement concerns. Animals may change ownership, records may be lost, and confirmation of sterilization is not always possible without invasive procedures. Many veterinarians will not certify sterilization without definitive proof. This creates unnecessary legal and ethical complications for owners acting in good faith.

Of particular concern to the dog community is the very real risk that this registry concept could later be expanded to include dogs. This is not speculation—it is a well-documented pattern in animal legislation nationwide. Once a registry framework exists, expansion becomes far easier. The AKC has acknowledged this risk, but cannot testify on a bill that currently applies only to cats. That responsibility now falls on us as citizens and animal advocates.

Furthermore, these types of mandates can unintentionally increase illegal activity, including underground breeding and animal smuggling. Hawai‘i’s rabies-free status depends on strict, transparent compliance. Policies that push owners underground put that status at risk.

Hawaiian Humane Society’s stated mission is to promote the human-animal bond and humane treatment of animals. Mandates that override veterinary judgment, disregard breed-specific health data, and penalize responsible owners do not support that mission. Overcrowding should not be solved by imposing medical decisions on the public.

There are better, collaborative solutions:

- Expand voluntary, accessible spay/neuter programs for truly at-risk populations
- Increase outreach and education, especially in underserved and transient communities
- Partner with established registries and parent clubs such as AKC, TICA, CFA, IBKC, and others
- Address free-roaming animal issues with enforceable, science-based policies rather than symbolic mandates

Finally, for a community-driven nonprofit, it is troubling that broad stakeholder input—including fanciers, breeders, veterinarians, and registry organizations—was not meaningfully sought before advancing this bill.

Working together leads to sustainable solutions. Imposing mandates without community support does not.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE HB1736 HD1.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Anela Joseph
Concerned Hawai‘i Animal Fancier & AKC Sports Participant

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 5:56:58 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1736. I feel that it should left up to the owner if they want to spay or neuter their cats. The Hawaiian Humane Society needs to change their focus on other important issues. They are spending time on nonsense. There are responsible cat owners that either enter shows or raise and breed purebred cats for the breed standards. Let them enjoy their hobby. Focus on feral animals that are invading our native species instead.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:03:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill and hope that more will be done to control the cat and feral cat population so that our native birds can begin to thrive again. Cat owners should be held accountable and those who release cats, if caught, should be punished. We shouldn’t be allowing any more cats into the state since the population is currently not under control.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:06:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee,

Please Support Bill 1736 to contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i.

Feral and free-roaming cats threaten our native species, including endangered birds, monk seals, and many other aquatic wildlife. Cats kill our endangered Hawaiian birds—waterbirds, seabirds, and forest birds as well as other native wildlife—directly through hunting, even when being fed.

Cats are disease vectors, carrying *Toxoplasmosis gondii*, which is carried through cat feces (Aguirre et al., 2019) and threatens the endangered Hawaiian monk seal, other aquatic wildlife, and also infects humans. *Toxoplasmosis* is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as *Toxoplasmosis* kills marine mammals.

Further, feral cats live miserable lives, often getting diseases, getting hit by cars, and in some cases starving. Even when fed, these cats still hunt native wildlife species—many which are endangered.

Reducing the feral cat population will protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems in the isolated Hawaiian Islands; this is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai‘i’s Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now - we need to act.

Mahalo for your time,

Kaleiheana Stormcrow, Mountain View

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:10:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose the currnt version of the bill HB1736, as it was intended to mandate the neutering of cats and establish a spay/neuter fund. There is no general fund appropriation.

Additionally the bill allows an exemption for cats registered with a cat fancier group. With no framework for regulating breeders, there is no way for law enforcement to determine a breeder's legitimacy. Also, pure-bred cats are no less of a threat to pet overpopulation and wildlife predation if allowed to roam than any other cat.

The spay/neuter import requirement in the bill is also unenforceable as it defers to the counties which do not regulate pet importation.

For the above reasons, as it bill has been altered from its original intent. I oppose it as it is currently proposed.

Sincerely,

Sherri Foster

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:17:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Leibrecht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Statement of Support: Bill 1736

To the Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Bill 1736. As a resident deeply committed to the protection of our unique natural heritage, I believe this legislation is a critical step toward managing the free-roaming feral cat population and safeguarding the delicate balance of our island ecosystems.

Why This Matters for Hawai‘i:

- **Protecting Native Wildlife:** Our endangered waterbirds and seabirds are under constant threat. Feral cats are a primary driver of their decline, and without immediate intervention, we risk losing species that exist nowhere else on Earth.
- **Mitigating Disease and Public Health Risks:** Beyond predation, the spread of *Toxoplasma gondii* (toxoplasmosis) through cat feces poses a severe risk. This parasite is not just a threat to human health—linked to miscarriages and birth defects—but is also a proven killer of our "beloveds": the Hawaiian Monk Seal, Spinner Dolphin, and Humpback Whale.
- **Legal and Ethical Obligation:** Many of our native birds are legally protected under Federal and State Endangered Species Acts. We have a duty to act before these populations reach a point of no return.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 12:16:28 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miguel (Micco) Godinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For all the reason we already know we should be sterilizing cats to protect our environment.

Mahalo,

Miguel/Micco Godinez

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 7:24:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

In strong support of. Multiple volunteer organizations have been doing the heavy lifting in neutering 300+ Big Island cats per month for far too long. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 8:26:06 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Kawasaki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I opppse HB1736. The specific language that is included in HB1736 is not clear regarding the importation and the confusion will incur negative consequences for our community of responsible pet owners and veterinary professionals.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Kawasaki

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:17:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill.

I support it because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i:

- Cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife.
- Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal.
- Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.
- Reducing the feral cat population will protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems in the isolated Hawaiian Islands. This is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai‘i’s Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now - we need to ACT.
- Cats make great pets, but we need to work together to help reduce the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape.

Please pass this important bill.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:22:58 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca M Holmes	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I oppose the current version of this bill related to animal control of stray and neuter of cats.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:08:54 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher A. Lepczyk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I have worked on cat related issues in Hawaii for two decades and since day one there has been a need for sterilizing pet cats. Cat ownership is a responsibility and requiring spay/neuter of cats is a simple and valuable way to mitigate unwanted cats on the landscape. In addition, there is overwhelming public and scientific support for requiring sterilization. Please support this bill,

Christopher A. Lepczyk

Certified Senior Ecologist

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:15:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an important measure that will help people be responsible pet owners. It is also important that the language "provided that spayed or neutered animals are not re-released into the environment" remain in the bill. If any amendments are made, please keep that part intact!
Mahalo nui.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:17:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support the passage of HB 1736

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:34:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Uyehara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Speaker Nakamura & Members of the House,

I'm writing to support HB 1736 to establish a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to help reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, and authorize an income tax designation to provide revenues for the fund.

I grew up with "fixed" indoor cats as endeared family members, and they lived long happy lives, 13-14 years.

Free-roaming cats, however, are a detriment to our island birds and their habitats. I experienced this firsthand, as the former Wildlife Biologist for Kauai National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

I applaud you for taking this progressive stand for Hawaii. Please pass HB 1736.

Sincerely,

Kimberly. J. Uyehara

P.O. Box 351

Kilauea, Hawaii 96754

To the Chair and Members of the Committee:

I have carefully reviewed Senate Bill 3012 and respectfully submit this written testimony in **strong opposition** to the proposed measure.

By way of my background, I am a long-time and deeply invested animal owner and advocate. I am a pet owner who is a “foster fail,” having adopted a mixed-breed dog that was previously homeless. My daughter adopted a shelter puppy in Santa Monica, California, which she brought with her to O‘ahu upon relocating home who has since passed. In addition, my family and I currently own purebred dogs that participate in American Kennel Club (AKC) conformation shows and dog sports. Dogs not entered in shows are voluntarily sterilized at my discretion, while several of my imported AKC show dogs remain intact for legitimate breeding and competition purposes. I am also an advocate for animal welfare and have donated to numerous grassroots rescue organizations on O‘ahu. Collectively, these experiences have provided me with a broad and informed perspective on animal welfare efforts, which is the basis for my **opposition** to SB3012.

The Hawaiian Humane Society (“HHS”) has not presented data demonstrating that imported dogs and cats are a significant contributor to animal overpopulation or abandonment in Hawai‘i. Moreover, SB3012 fails to adequately account for broader systemic factors that impact pet ownership, including the escalating cost of veterinary care and the persistent shortage of affordable, pet-friendly housing across the state.

Additionally, HHS currently imposes a \$50 surrender fee and requires scheduled appointments for the surrender of dogs. For individuals facing financial hardship, these requirements may present a substantial barrier. In such circumstances, surrendering an animal through HHS may not be a viable option, which could inadvertently contribute to increased abandonment rather than prevent it.

HHS receives substantial public and private funding, including more than \$6 million annually from the City and County of Honolulu, over \$6 million in grant funding, and additional millions from corporate donors, bequests, and individual contributors. However, it remains unclear how much of this funding is allocated toward comprehensive research and data collection to identify the true causes of animal overpopulation in Hawai‘i. Notably, no data has been provided regarding the proportion of shelter, abandoned, or free-roaming animals that are imported purebred dogs or cats.

I respectfully urge the Board of Directors of the Hawaiian Humane Society to fully consider the broader implications of SB3012. If enacted, this legislation may adversely affect future funding from government agencies, grant programs, and private donors, as well as undermine long-standing relationships with members of the community who have consistently supported animal welfare efforts.

According to HHS’s own “Humane Treatment” statement on its website, under the section addressing “Pet Sales,” prospective pet owners are encouraged to obtain animals from shelters, pet stores offering shelter animals for adoption, or responsible breeders. The statement further acknowledges that responsible breeders will accept animals back if they are not a suitable fit for

a family. By this definition, HHS recognizes and supports responsible breeders, including those who may ethically import animals into the State of Hawai'i.

Dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i are often brought in by responsible owners, dog sport enthusiasts, and ethical breeders who adhere to high standards of care. These individuals fully comply with Hawai'i Department of Agriculture import requirements, including health testing, rabies prevention protocols, and microchipping prior to arrival. Given these safeguards, it should be feasible to determine whether imported animals meaningfully contribute to shelter overpopulation; however, no such evidence has been presented.

Addressing animal overpopulation in Hawai'i requires collaborative, data-driven, and sustainable solutions that do not create unnecessary division or undermine trust within the animal welfare community. Greater emphasis should be placed on enforcing accountability for irresponsible ownership and unethical breeding practices. Broadly penalizing responsible pet owners and ethical breeders is neither appropriate nor effective.

SB3012 represents a legislative overreach that is not supported by comprehensive research or clear, statewide data. Mandating universal sterilization of all imported dogs and cats is not a measured or evidence-based approach and raises serious concerns regarding both its effectiveness and unintended consequences.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your thoughtful consideration of these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda K. Teruya

Concerned and Caring Animal Owner

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 12:34:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Koa Grabar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i. Cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife. As an individual working in the field of waterbird conservation and environmental science, I have seen first hand the amount of destruction that a single cat is able to do towards our birds' populations. Reducing the number of cats in our ecosystems is vital for the recovery of our many endangered avian species. The measures in this bill should be implemented, as well as additional removal strategies, to effectively control the cat populations wreaking havoc on our native species.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

Thank you for your time and I urge you to support this important bill.
Mahalo, Koa Grabar

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 1:17:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jerrisa Ching Choe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear JHA committee,

My name is Dr. Jerrisa Ching Choe, I live in Senate District 15 and Senate House District 32. I am testifying today in **support of HB 1736** because the bill will overall address the health threats and population control posed by free roaming cats in Hawaii. This bill will also alleviate the financial burden of spaying and neutering cats and overcrowding of animal shelters. Thank you for your time and consideration in my testimony.

Sincerely,

Jerrisa Ching Choe, DVM, MPH

Written Testimony in Favor of HB 1736

09 February 2026

I support HB 1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai'i. This is necessary because cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal.

Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

Reducing the feral cat population will protect the delicate balance of our ecosystems in the isolated Hawaiian Islands. This is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai'i's Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now, and we need to act.

Indoor cats make great pets, but we need to work together to help reduce the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape.

Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 3:09:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rokero	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Renee Rokero and I am a resident of the State of Hawaii. I respectfully submit this written testimony in **strong opposition to HB1736**.

There is no data to support the assumptions made in this bill. Public policies, regulations, and laws should be grounded in factual evidence and designed to protect both the well-being of Hawaii’s residents and its fragile ecosystem. HB1736 implies that cats imported into Hawaii—whether by military families, families relocating back to the State, pet owners, show breeders or individuals participating in AKC CAT sports—are significantly contributing to animal overpopulation and posing risks to public health and the environment. Based on this implication, the bill proposes mandatory sterilization of all cats entering the State.

This position appears to align with the Hawaiian Humane Society’s goal of reducing shelter populations; however, the bill contains a critical flaw: there is absolutely no data demonstrating that imported cats are a significant contributor to shelter intake or animal abandonment in Hawaii.

Accurate data is readily obtainable. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture’s Animal Quarantine Branch maintains a public database that tracks every cat entering and leaving the State through a unique microchip number, as required under Hawaii’s rabies quarantine laws. This information is publicly accessible. By cross-referencing this database with microchip records from the Hawaiian Humane Society and other shelters statewide, it would be possible to determine how many imported animals actually enter shelters.

Additionally, any cat entering a shelter without a microchip could not have been legally imported into Hawaii, as state law mandates microchipping for all imported animals. Therefore, cats in shelters without microchips are not to be grouped together with imported cats.

Despite the availability of this data, no comprehensive analysis or public reporting has been conducted to substantiate the claims made in this bill. The Hawaiian Humane Society does not publicly release shelter intake data in a manner that allows for this comparison, yet HB1736 was introduced without factual evidence to support its underlying assumptions. However, no such data currently exists. Passing legislation without supporting evidence is irresponsible and premature.

Furthermore, implementing this bill would impose a significant financial hardship on Hawaii taxpayers. Establishing new departments, databases, staffing, and enforcement mechanisms to track every imported cat will likely cost thousands, if not millions, of dollars.

While Bill 1736 may be well-intentioned, it is not supported by data. Until transparent, verifiable evidence demonstrates that imported cats are a measurable contributor to Hawaii's shelter population or ecosystem risk, the passage of this bill is unjustified.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Rokero

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 6:02:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alison W Jayne	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a veterinarian practicing at Blue Cross Animal Hospital. I oppose the wording of this bill. I highly support the funding of subsidized or low cost spay/neuter for cats. At my clinic costs are kept affordable, but many trap and release, low income and elderly fixed income clients are still hard pressed to pay for the many cats in their care. The city and county vouchers for low income citizens were useful to help them pay for the surgeries in the past, but now it seems that they are harder to acquire.

I do not believe citizens who import unsterilized animals are the source of the overpopulation of dogs and cats in Hawaii. They are more likely to be responsible in the improved breeding of purebred dogs and cats. They go through many expensive hurdles to import animals through our stringent Quarantine requirements in order that Hawaii can keep its Rabies free status. They are not likely to want their pets producing unplanned litters. Progeny of these purebred pets are generally sold to well screened buyers also contracted to not produce unplanned litters. The fines for violations seem excessive and aiming regulations at the most responsible pet owners upon importation does not seem to be the best way to deal with the problem.

Alison W. Jayne, DVM
Opposed to current version
HB1736

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 7:31:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Watanabe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting my testimony in strong opposition to this bill. As a long time dog fancier and participant in AKC-sanctioned dog sports, there are some aspects of this bill that are deeply troubling to me.

While this bill is presented as addressing cat overpopulation, its implications reach far beyond cats and raise serious concerns for all responsible animal owners and breeders in Hawai'i.

HB1736 proposes mandatory sterilization requirements and a registry of intact imported cats. While increasing access to voluntary spay and neuter programs is a worthwhile goal, mandating sterilization and creating registries is not a humane, science-based, or balanced solution—and it opens the door to dangerous precedent.

Sterilization is not always in the best interest of an animal's health. Peer-reviewed veterinary research has shown that early spay/neuter is associated with increased risk of certain cancers and orthopedic disorders in multiple breeds. In Golden Retrievers, for example, early sterilization has been linked to higher rates of hemangiosarcoma and lymphoma. Similar concerns exist across other breeds.

Responsible owners and ethical breeders already make informed, veterinary-guided decisions about if and when sterilization is appropriate. A one-size-fits-all mandate ignores science, individual health considerations, and responsible ownership.

There is not evidence that proved that imported, intact cats are responsible for the overpopulation of free-roaming cats. In fact, cat owners who have gone thru the expense of importing their cat are more prone to keep their cats indoors rather than risk exposing them to illness and injury or death.

Additionally, this bill raises serious enforcement concerns. Animals may change ownership, records may be lost, and confirmation of sterilization is not always possible without invasive procedures. Many veterinarians will not certify sterilization without definitive proof. This creates unnecessary legal and ethical complications for owners acting in good faith.

Of particular concern to the dog community is the very real risk that this registry concept could later be expanded to include dogs. This is not speculation—it is a well-documented pattern in animal legislation nationwide. Once a registry framework exists, expansion becomes far easier. The AKC has acknowledged this risk, but cannot testify on a bill that currently applies only to cats. That responsibility now falls on us as citizens and animal advocates.

Furthermore, these types of mandates can unintentionally increase illegal activity, including underground breeding and animal smuggling. Hawai'i's rabies-free status depends on strict, transparent compliance. Policies that push owners underground put that status at risk.

Hawaiian Humane Society's stated mission is to promote the human-animal bond and humane treatment of animals. Mandates that override veterinary judgment, disregard breed-specific health data, and penalize responsible owners do not support that mission. Overcrowding should not be solved by imposing medical decisions on the public.

There are better, collaborative solutions:

- Expand voluntary, accessible spay/neuter programs for truly at-risk populations
- Increase outreach and education, especially in underserved and transient communities
- Partner with established registries and parent clubs such as AKC, TICA, CFA, IBKC, and others
 - Address free-roaming animal issues with enforceable, science-based policies rather than symbolic mandates

Working together leads to sustainable solutions. Imposing mandates without community support does not.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE HB1736 HD1.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:03:39 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri O’Neal, DVM	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While this bill is presented as addressing cat overpopulation, its implications reach far beyond cats and raise serious concerns for all responsible animal owners and breeders in Hawai‘i.

HB1736 proposes mandatory sterilization requirements and a registry of intact imported cats. While increasing access to voluntary spay and neuter programs is a worthwhile goal, mandating sterilization and creating registries is not a humane, science-based, or balanced solution—and it opens the door to dangerous precedent.

Sterilization is not always in the best interest of an animal’s health.

Responsible owners and ethical breeders already make informed, veterinary-guided decisions about if and when sterilization is appropriate. A one-size-fits-all mandate ignores science, individual health considerations, and responsible ownership.

Additionally, this bill raises serious enforcement concerns. Animals may change ownership, records may be lost, and confirmation of sterilization is not always possible without invasive or costly procedures. There is no way for a veterinarian to determine if an animal has been spayed or neutered on physical exam alone. This creates unnecessary legal and ethical complications for owners and their veterinarians acting in good faith.

Of particular concern to the dog community is the very real risk that this registry concept could later be expanded to include dogs. This is not speculation—it is a well-documented pattern in animal legislation nationwide. Once a registry framework exists, expansion becomes far easier. The AKC has acknowledged this risk, but cannot testify on a bill that currently applies only to cats. That responsibility now falls on us as citizens and animal advocates.

Furthermore, these types of mandates can unintentionally increase illegal activity, including underground breeding and animal smuggling. Hawai‘i’s rabies-free status depends on strict, transparent compliance. Policies that push owners underground put that status at risk.

Hawaiian Humane Society’s stated mission is to promote the human-animal bond and humane treatment of animals. Mandates that override veterinary judgment, disregard breed-specific health data, and penalize responsible owners do not support that mission. Overcrowding should not be solved by imposing medical decisions on the public.

There are better, collaborative solutions:

- Expand voluntary, accessible spay/neuter programs for truly at-risk populations
- Increase outreach and education, especially in underserved and transient communities
- Partner with established registries and parent clubs such as AKC, TICA, CFA, IBKC, and others
- Address free-roaming animal issues with enforceable, science-based policies rather than symbolic mandates

Finally, for a community-driven nonprofit, it is troubling that broad stakeholder input—including fanciers, breeders, veterinarians, and registry organizations—was not meaningfully sought before advancing this bill.

Please help us come up with solutions to work together on this issue rather than mandating a one size fits all approach that penalizes responsible owners and their veterinarians.

Please oppose HB1736.

Respectfully,

Keri O'Neal, DVM

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 7:01:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steven C Hess	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a citizen of the Island of Hawaii, I strongly support legislation to require sterilization of all cats. Cats are now so overabundant that our public lands and open spaces have all become dumping grounds. Where cat feeding has been prohibited, the problem just gets moved to a different place. Shelters cannot accommodate the sheer number of cats that continue to reproduce. While cat breeders may oppose this measure, they may continue to acquire cats from the mainland or other countries, as we do with virtually all our other goods. Ironically, it is the cat breeders that elect to sterilize designer and other fancy cat breeds to control the market share. We simply do not need any more cats in Hawaii period.

Respectfully, Steven Hess

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:30:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
bobbie becker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please SUPPORT HB1736.

I am writing because the number of feral cats on Maui is out of control. They can now be found at all elevations and in most all of our regions. This is most concerning because as you know, the islands are already known as "the extinction capitol of the world." Feral cats spread diseases that are affecting our wildlife and they KILL our highly endangered Honeycreepers.

Please support this bill. It is good animal welfare policy.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:04:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose HB1736.

Law enforcement does not have the right to enter people's homes and check the spay/neuter status of their pets.

With no framework for regulating breeders, there is no way for law enforcement to determine a breeder's legitimacy. Also, pure-bred cats are no less of a threat to pet overpopulation and wildlife predation if allowed to roam than any other cat.

Please do not pass this bill as it is also unenforceable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

My name is Dr. Tracey Mullins and I OPPOSE HB1736. I am a General Practitioner Veterinarian in Ewa Beach. This bill is a misguided way to encourage/enforce sterilization of cats on this island for several reasons.

1. On any given day, the number of intact cats I see in general practice are NOT brought from the mainland or other countries, they are local. I see a LARGE number of local residents keep their pets intact for numerous reasons, the WORST reason being they want to “get their money back” after purchasing a poorly bred animal from a back-yard breeder or pet store. This bill does NOT address encouraging sterilization of island cats.
2. The feral cat overpopulation problem stems from inadequate trap, neuter, release policies from the state and local levels to control these animals. I currently have a feral, intact male (from the golf course behind my house), urinating/spraying all around my house, to include my patio cushions.
3. While I support sterilizing all cats by 5 months of age (which is actually recommended by the American Association of Feline Practitioners, the focus MUST be getting LOCALS to sterilize their animals. Far too many elect to keep them intact.
4. The bulk of individuals who bring pets from the mainland or other countries are the military families on our island. What if they can’t find a sterilization certificate on their 13-year-old cat, who was spayed at a Veterinary Treatment Facility in Germany? What if they adopted an animal from a friend and were not given that information? You are penalizing these families who overwhelmingly contribute to the culture of our island.
5. One way to address this problem is to commit more funding for low-cost spay/neuter clinics or revive the previously used “Spay/Neuter Certificates” for low-income families to use to get their pet sterilized.

There are numerous more reasons I could list for why this bill is not a solution to the pet overpopulation problem on this island, but that could take hours. I’m disappointed that the representatives pushing for this bill took the strategic goals of the Hawaiian Humane Society as “best practices” for managing this crisis without consulting local veterinarians from **all** sides of the island who see this problem on a regular basis.

Some residents in Ewa Beach don’t spay/neuter their pets for various reasons. I hear finances as a common reason daily, but there is also a cultural mentality that having intact pets makes them “bigger, stronger, more natural”.

Instead of regulating pets coming into the state, the state needs to figure out how to reduce the local population of pets. I would even support some form of breeder registration to ensure we are promoting “good” breeders (breeding to a standard, not “mixing” breeds, weeding out congenital defects, etc) and limiting those who are only breeding for profit.

I would love to have some open dialogue on this topic. Please feel free to reach out to me at (808) 689-1797 or my cell (254) 458-9610.

Sincerely,

Tracey L. Mullins, DVM, MBA

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:14:37 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. Outdoor feral cats are causing the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife, among them Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins and Humpback Whales.

We need to act now to save our endangered wildlife.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:34:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassidy Butler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote YES on HB1736. While this bill does not fully solve the threats that large feral cat populations pose to our ecosystems and communities, it is an important step in the right direction. Advancing this measure supports the protection of Hawai'i's native species as well as public health. Protecting both should always be a priority.

HB-1736-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:35:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Sarasa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of this committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1736, which will establish the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation, require cats over the age of five months to be surgically sterilized, and prohibit cats that are not surgically sterilized from being brought into the State.

The cat overpopulation issue in Hawai'i is well-documented, primarily because of free-roaming cats devastating native wildlife. Hawai'i must take action to protect its wildlife and address the overpopulation of cats in its shelters. This bill is a common-sense measure to ensure that companion cats coming to the islands will not contribute to these problems, and that funds exist to address the problem. It includes appropriate exemptions to address the concerns of the cat breeder community. Their interests do not outweigh the interests of the broader community in protecting wildlife and combating shelter overpopulation.

This bill is an important step toward normalizing the sterilization of cats. That should be the rule, with limited exceptions, as this bill provides for. Please vote to pass HB 1736 and prioritize the community and its ecosystems.

Mahalo nui,
Emily Sarasa