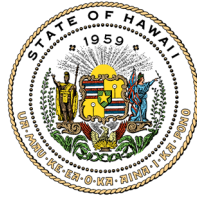


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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 PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committees on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
and
ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
3:10 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1736, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL

House Bill 1736, House Draft 2 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 is 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 adoption 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, endorsing keeping cats indoors and utilizing peer-reviewed science to make recommendations for reducing the impacts of cats.

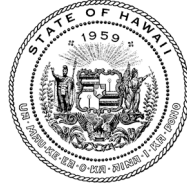
Cats are widespread throughout Hawai'i and have been found in every habitat from sea level to over 11,000 ft on Maunakea. They pose an ecological threat to native ecosystems and species, and this threat must be addressed.

The Department supports all seven amendments made by the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, especially amendments one and two, which include the use of fully enclosed cat sanctuaries and the declaration of intact cats entering the state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540

FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

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

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 1736, H.D.2, Relating to Animal Control

BEFORE THE

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment, and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

DATE: Wednesday, March 18, 2026
TIME: 3:10 p.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice-Chairs Richards, III, and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 1736, H.D.2, for your consideration.

H.B. 1736, H.D.2, 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. The Spay and Neuter Special Fund shall receive deposits from State income tax refund designations, legislative appropriations, private gifts or donations, and other sources.

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 20 months

and 10 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.

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.

March 17, 2026

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1736 HD2

Hawaii State Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)

Re: Relating to Animal Control — Mandatory Cat Sterilization

Senator Gabbard, Senator Richards and the Members of the Committee:

My name is Lynn Muramaru, and I represent the Pacific Pet Alliance.. I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HB 1736 HD2.

While I support the bill's goal of establishing a Spay and Neuter Special Fund — a measure that has earned broad, bipartisan support from animal welfare advocates and conservationists alike — I urge this Committee to remove the mandatory sterilization and import prohibition provisions from the bill, or to defer the measure until those provisions can be reconsidered.

Mandatory sterilization criminalizes responsible ownership.

Fines for failing to comply with the sterilization or declaration requirements would range from \$500 to \$1,000 per violation per cat. (Star-Advertiser) This means a responsible, indoor cat owner who has not yet sterilized their pet — perhaps because appointments fill up months in advance — could face steep financial penalties through no fault of their own. Honolulu's Hawaiian Humane Society offers low-cost spay/neuter services, but appointments fill up months in advance (Star-Advertiser) , and private veterinarians may charge as much as \$200 to \$250 to neuter or spay a cat on Oahu. (Star-Advertiser) Mandating surgery while accessible, affordable services remain scarce is an unfair burden on working families.

The bill penalizes people before infrastructure exists to support compliance.

The spay and neuter fund created by this bill has not yet been deployed. Counties do not yet have the veterinary capacity to accommodate a surge in sterilization demand that a statewide mandate would create overnight. Passing a mandate before the fund is operational and county services are scaled up will result in widespread unintentional non-compliance — and punish the very pet owners who are trying to do the right thing.

The import prohibition is overly broad and raises serious due process concerns.

HB 1736 would make it illegal to own a cat older than five months that has not been surgically sterilized, with narrow exemptions (Hoodline) , and restricts importation of intact cats. Critics argue the language may be too broad and could affect responsible indoor owners, hobby breeders, and even travelers. (Hoodline) The exemptions as written are difficult to navigate and create uncertainty for cat owners traveling to Hawaii.

While this bill singles out cats while ignoring dogs, it has come to our attention the Hawaiian Humane Society intends to propose amendments to include dogs to this bill. Should this committee decide to adopt an amendment to include dogs, this would be unfair to the canine community

stakeholders who have not been involved in the prior proceedings of this bill. We respectfully request that dogs not be included in this bill.

Some testifiers questioned why there were no requirements that dogs be sterilized at an appropriate age, if dogs are included in the spay and neuter fund (The Garden Island) , noting that overpopulation of dogs also causes serious harm in rural areas. Applying sterilization mandates exclusively to cats — while drawing funds from a broader pet overpopulation account — is inconsistent and opens the bill to legal challenge on equal treatment grounds.

The TNR conflict remains unresolved.

Money from the special fund could not be used to spay or neuter free-roaming cats that are re-released to the environment (Star-Advertiser) , which directly conflicts with Honolulu County's established Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM) program. Counties have invested significant resources in community-based cat management. This provision would effectively defund the very approach that many counties currently rely upon, with no viable replacement at scale.

A Better Path Forward

The Spay and Neuter Special Fund, the income tax check-off provision, and public education efforts are the parts of this bill that will actually work — and they deserve to pass on their own merits. I urge the Committee to separate the fund provisions from the mandatory sterilization and import prohibition requirements, and to study the latter with adequate time for input from veterinarians, county officials, cat owners, and community caregivers before imposing criminal penalties.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that this Committee hold or amend HB 1736 HD2 to remove the mandatory sterilization and import prohibition requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Muramaru

Board Member

Pacific Pet Alliance

pacificpetalliance@gmail.com



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 16, 2026

To: Chairs Sens. Mike Gabbard & Glenn Wakai
Vice Chairs Sens. Tim Richards & Stanley Chang
and Members of the Committees on Agriculture & Environment
and Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs

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

RE: Testimony in support of HB 1736, HD2: Relating to Animal Control
Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 3:10 p.m., Room 224 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 1736, House Draft 2, 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 five months of age to be surgically sterilized unless covered by an intact cat declaration, and conditions the importation of intact cats on state and county declaration requirements, with certain exceptions; and appropriates funds.

There is a clear public interest in reducing the harms caused by pet overpopulation and the number of Free-Roaming cats and this measure seeks to address that public interest. Demand for spay/neuter services exceeds access to such services throughout the state. Having a statewide funding source would allow providers to ramp up their operations to meet this demand.

We are requesting several amendments to further strengthen the bill.

The changes in Section 1 address concerns about being able to use the collected funds for cat spay/neuter at all as shelters and foster-based rescues cannot control what a pet owner will do once a cat is adopted.

Changes in Section 2 apply the spay/neuter import requirement to dogs as well as cats. This requirement was previously heard and passed by the committee on Agriculture and Environment as SB3012. Unfortunately, that bill did not get the JDC/WAM hearing that it



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needed to advance. Changes to this section also remove the requirement that veterinary exemptions be renewed annually. That is not a requirement anywhere else in ordinance or statute where veterinary exemptions are mentioned.

The final changes in Section 2 reduce the penalties to be in line with fines for offenses like stray dogs and the Honolulu cat sterilization ordinance.

We want to acknowledge the work that the bill sponsor has put into this measure, particularly in reducing the administrative burden on the state Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, as well as minimizing the requirements of cat fanciers who want to import and protect specific breeds.

This measure has benefits for animal welfare, native wildlife and the environment. We urge the committees to lend their strong support. Mahalo for your consideration.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 1736
PROPOSED
SD1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. Chapter 36, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§36- Spay and neuter special fund. (a) There is established in the state treasury the spay and neuter special fund to be administered by the department of budget and finance. Moneys received by the department of budget and finance from:



Hawaiian Humane Society
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(1) State income tax refund designations to the special fund pursuant to section 235-102.5(e); and

(2) Legislative appropriations, private gifts or donations, and other sources, shall be deposited into the special fund. All interest earned or accrued on moneys deposited into the special fund shall become part of the special fund.

(b) The director of finance shall disburse moneys from the special fund quarterly to the counties. The amount disbursed shall be prorated based on each county's share of the state population. The counties shall expend the disbursed funds to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; ~~provided that spayed or neutered animals shall not be re-released into the environment; provided further that placement into a fully enclosed cat sanctuary shall not be considered re-release into the environment.~~

(c) ~~Animals spayed or neutered using these funds must be adopted into homes or placed into a fully enclosed cat sanctuary. The residential or sanctuary address where an animal will reside must be recorded at the time of spay/neuter or adoption. Pet owners seeking spay/neuter services may not access these funds more than three times in a 12-month period.~~

SECTION 2. Chapter 143, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§143- **Cat sterilization.** (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to:



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(1) Own a cat over the age of five months, unless the cat is surgically sterilized or covered by a valid intact cat declaration filed with the applicable county animal control authority or its contractor pursuant to subsection (b) (3); or

(2) Bring a cat ~~or dog over the age of five months~~ that is not surgically sterilized into the State unless the importer files a declaration with the department of agriculture and biosecurity upon arrival, in a form determined by the department, and the department forwards the declaration to the applicable county animal control authority in the county where the cat ~~or dog~~ will be housed. A declaration filed with the department of agriculture and biosecurity pursuant to this paragraph shall not authorize a cat ~~or dog~~ to be at large and shall not substitute for any declaration required by the applicable county animal control authority. Any imported intact cat ~~or dog~~ shall be declared with the applicable county animal control authority or its contractor within fourteen days after importation.

(b) An ~~animal~~ ~~cat~~ may be exempt from the sterilization requirement under subsection (a) if:

(1) A duly licensed veterinarian certifies in writing that the cat ~~or dog~~ is not suitable for sterilization due to health or age considerations; ~~provided that the certification shall be applicable for a period of up to one year, as specified in writing by the veterinarian, and contain the veterinarian's license number;~~

(2) Arrangements have been made to sterilize the cat within sixty days after the date the person assumes ownership of the cat and the cat is sterilized within that sixty-day period; or



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(3) The owner of the cat submits an intact cat declaration to the applicable county animal control authority or its contractor. The applicable county animal control authority may administer an intact cat declaration process for cats already in the State and shall charge a fee of \$100 per declaration. Fees collected pursuant to this paragraph shall be retained by the applicable county animal control authority and may be used without restriction.

(c) Any declaration required under this section, including a declaration filed with the department of agriculture and biosecurity and an intact cat declaration filed with the applicable county animal control authority or its contractor, shall include, at minimum:

(1) The name and address or contact information of the owner;

(2) The county in which the cat ~~or dog~~ will be housed; and

(3) The cat ~~or dog~~'s microchip number or other unique identifier, and any additional information required by the department of agriculture and biosecurity or the applicable county animal control authority. The department of agriculture and biosecurity and applicable county animal control authority shall provide a record of the declaration that may be used for enforcement purposes.

(d) Any person violating this section shall be fined no less than ~~\$500~~ \$50 and no more than ~~\$1,000~~ \$100 per violation ~~per cat~~.

(e) For the purposes of this section, "county animal control authority" means the county agency that enforces animal control or the county's contracted society or organization for animal control."

**Testimony of American Bird Conservancy
In Support of HB 1736_HD2 Relating to Animal Control
Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment, Energy and Intergovernmental
Affairs | March 18, 2026 | 3:10 PM**

Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **strong support for HB 1736_HD2**.

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; 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**. 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. Critically, any free-roaming cats sterilized using the Spay and Neuter Special Fund cannot be released into the environment.

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.

Contact

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

Address

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



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. Infections in people can cause miscarriages, fetal deformities, blindness, organ failure, and death, to name a few of the many harms.

HB 1736_HD2 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



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

March 17, 2026

RE: Opposition to the Inclusion of Dogs in HB 1736

Dear Chair Gabbard, Chair Wakai, and Members of the AEN and EIG Committees,:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes today on behalf of our 41 Hawaii based kennel clubs and the many responsible dog owners in the state to respectfully **in opposition to any amendment to House Bill 1736 that would extend its mandatory sterilization requirements to dogs**. The AKC is the nation's oldest and largest purebred dog registry, dedicated to the promotion of responsible dog ownership, the preservation of purebred breeds, and the health and welfare of all dogs. **While the AKC does not take a position on the provisions of HB 1736 as they pertain exclusively to cats, we are compelled to act if proposed amendments seek to bring dogs within the scope of this legislation.**

The AKC strongly opposes mandatory spay/neuter policies for dogs as a matter of principle and evidence-based policy. **No state in the United States has enacted a statewide mandatory spay/neuter law for dogs — and for good reason.** Decades of experience at the state and local level have demonstrated that these mandates are ineffective at reducing shelter intake, difficult to enforce, and impose significant burdens on responsible dog owners and breeders. The scientific and veterinary communities have increasingly recognized that early or mandatory sterilization can carry serious health consequences for dogs—including increased risks of certain cancers. Responsible owners and their veterinarians are best positioned to make individualized health decisions for their animals.

Critically, the Hawaii Legislature has already considered and rejected substantially similar proposals targeting dogs during this very legislative session. House Bill 1594, which would have mandated sterilization documentation as a condition of importing dogs into the State, was deferred by the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems following significant opposition; Senate Bill 3012, the companion measure, similarly did not advance. **Amending HB 1736 to include dogs would effectively circumvent this deliberate legislative outcome and reintroduce a policy that lawmakers have already declined to pursue this session.**

The stated purpose of HB 1736 is to address Hawaii's free-roaming cat overpopulation crisis. Dogs do not present the same free-roaming overpopulation dynamic, and extending this legislation to dogs would represent a significant and unjustified expansion of the bill's original scope. Applying a one-size-fits-all sterilization mandate to dogs would penalize responsible owners and disrupt the activities of high-quality breeders.

The AKC supports evidence-based approaches to reducing animal overpopulation that emphasize voluntary access to low-cost spay/neuter services and community education initiatives that promote responsible ownership.

For these reasons, the AKC respectfully urges the Legislature to reject any amendment to HB 1736 that would subject dogs to mandatory sterilization requirements. We ask that this measure be kept within its original scope and that any future proposals regarding dogs be addressed through a separate, deliberate legislative process that allows for full and proper consideration. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and welcome further dialogue on the AKC's policies and recommendations.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to this issue and for their passion for the welfare of animals. Thank you for reviewing and considering our comments.

Regards,



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

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:13:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg "Pu'uwai Aloha" Baker	Testifying for Hawai'i Animal Advocacy	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Relating to Animal Control / Spay and Neuter Programs

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

My name is Greg Pu'uwai Aloha Baker, founder of Hawai'i Animal Advocacy and Hawai'i island resident of 23 years. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1736.

I support the goal of HB1736 to expand access to spay and neuter services across Hawai'i. Increasing access to sterilization is an important step toward preventing unwanted litters, reducing abandonment, and addressing cat overpopulation over time.

However, I respectfully request one important amendment to ensure the bill can achieve its intended population management goals.

The current language prohibits sterilized cats funded through the program from being returned to their colony or territory. While this provision may have been intended to address concerns about outdoor cats, it unintentionally prevents sterilization programs from reaching the population where reproduction actually occurs.

Animal population science consistently recognizes three key principles relevant to this issue.

First, population growth is driven primarily by reproduction. When births exceed deaths, populations increase. Sterilization programs reduce reproduction and therefore represent one of the most reliable long-term tools for stabilizing and gradually reducing animal populations.

Second, cats are territorial animals. When territorial animals are removed from an area while habitat and food resources remain available, new animals often move into the same territory. This replacement dynamic means that removal alone may produce only temporary reductions in population unless reproduction is also reduced.

Third, sterilized animals retain territorial behavior but can no longer reproduce. When sterilized cats remain in their territory, they occupy the available habitat while preventing new intact cats from moving in and breeding. Over time, as sterilized cats age and die naturally, the population gradually declines.

These principles explain why sterilization programs for free-roaming cats typically involve three steps:

- humane trapping
- sterilization and vaccination
- return to the original territory

This approach allows programs to reach the outdoor population where reproduction occurs while preventing future breeding.

If sterilized cats cannot be returned to their territory, the only alternatives become adoption, permanent sanctuary placement, or euthanasia. In practice, these options cannot accommodate the large numbers of free-roaming cats that exist in human landscapes.

Many free-roaming cats are not socialized for adoption. Sanctuary space is extremely limited. As a result, prohibiting return can significantly limit the number of outdoor cats that sterilization programs are able to process.

When sterilization programs cannot reach outdoor populations, reproduction continues and population growth persists.

For counties and animal control systems, this also raises fiscal and operational considerations. Housing large numbers of unsocialized cats in shelters can create substantial costs associated with space, staffing, veterinary care, and euthanasia services. In contrast, sterilization programs that allow cats to remain in their colony prevent reproduction while avoiding many of these ongoing costs.

In many communities, volunteer colony caretakers provide food and monitoring at little or no cost to local government, further reducing public expense.

Effective policy also recognizes that not all cats occupy the same environments.

In Hawai‘i there are generally three different cat populations:

- **pet cats living in homes**
- **community cats living in human landscapes such as neighborhoods, farms, and commercial areas**
- **feral cats in remote or sensitive wildlife habitats**

HB1736’s expansion of spay and neuter services primarily addresses pet cats and community cats living in human landscapes. These are the populations where sterilization programs are most commonly used to reduce reproduction.

Sensitive wildlife habitats may require different management tools directed by conservation agencies. Distinguishing between these environments allows policymakers to apply appropriate strategies in each setting.

Allowing sterilized community cats to return to their territory after surgery ensures that sterilization programs can reach the outdoor population where reproduction occurs. Without this ability, the sterilization fund proposed by HB1736 may not achieve its intended population management goals.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that HB1736 be amended to allow sterilized community cats to be returned to their colony or territory following surgery when appropriate.

This small change would align the bill with established population management principles and help ensure that the state's investment in sterilization programs can effectively reduce cat overpopulation over time.

Mahalo for your time and for your work addressing animal welfare and community concerns across Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Pu'uwai Aloha Baker
Founder, Hawai'i Animal Advocacy
greg@HawaiiAnimalAdvocacy.org
808-747-4134
www.HawaiiAnimalAdvocacy.org

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:03:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members.

We have spent the last 30 years restoring and protecting the natural, cultural and economic resources of Hanalei.

This is the most important measure you can pass to support the native resources we all hold dear in Hawaii to date.

We urge your passage.

me ka pono,

Makaala Kaaumoana

Executive Director

17 March 2026
BIISC
23 E Kawili St
Hilo, HI 96771
biisc@hawaii.edu



Attn: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
RE: HB1736

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Richards, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committees,

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee would like to express strong support for HB1736, which establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund. In Hawai‘i, as in many other island environments, cats are a very destructive invasive species that pose a significant threat to our native wildlife. Many of our native endangered animals, found nowhere else in the world but here, are directly threatened by the presence of cats on the landscape. Cats prey on vulnerable native birds and spread diseases like toxoplasmosis, which has already contributed to the deaths of several nēnē and Hawaiian monk seals.

On Hawai‘i Island, many low-income and working-class families would greatly benefit from improved access to spay/neuter surgery for their family pets. Pet overpopulation has been a severe issue on our island for decades. Thanks to the good work of Hawai‘i Island Humane Society (HIHS) and other animal welfare organizations, the demand for spay/neuter has increased, but unfortunately, the supply has not.

We believe that the key to ending the problem of unwanted cats is to “turn off the tap” – stop the flow at its source, sterilizing all pet cats and dogs and encouraging that these domestic pets remain where they belong, in a household. Establishing the Spay and Neuter Special Fund as outlined in HB1736 will play a vital role in humanely addressing this issue and reducing the number of free-roaming cats, thereby protecting both our native wildlife and our communities.

We urge you to support HB1736 in order to protect native wildlife in Hawai‘i and help address the urgent issue of pet overpopulation.

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

Franny Kinslow Brewer
Program Manager
fbrewer@hawaii.edu
(808) 933-3340



March 16, 2026

Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

Aloha, my name is Jonnetta Peters, Executive Director of Conservation Council for Hawai'i (CCH), a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to protect and save native species and their habitat, with members locally and on the mainland. CCH is the Hawai'i affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, with 51 other US state and territorial affiliates. **CCH STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1736 HD2**, to require the **sterilization of all pet cats** by the age of 5 months (with certain exceptions) and to **establish a funding mechanism to help cat owners spay or neuter their cats**.

This measure will 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. Cats depredate during the lifecycle of the bird, meaning it will eat the eggs, hatchling, as well as adult birds. Our endemic and native forest birds and seabirds are at great risk.

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.

This measure will reduce the feral cat population and 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.

Therefore, **I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB1736 HD2**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Jonnetta Peters
Executive Director

Telephone/Fax: 224.338-6511 | email: info@conservehi.org

web: www.conservehawaii.org | P.O. Box 2923, Honolulu, HI 96802

President: Bret Nainoa Mossman | Vice President: Les Welsh | Secretary: Colleen Heyer

Treasurer: Mashuri Waite, PhD |

Directors: Erica Amundson, Puanani Anderson-Fung, Maka'ala Ka'auomoana, Steven Lee Montgomery, PhD, Emily Sarasa |

Executive Director: Jonnetta "Jonee" Peters | Operations and Events Manager: Leah Kocher

National Wildlife Federation Region 12 Director: Rachel Sprague

National Wildlife Federation Pacific Region Associate Director: Emily Martin

Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu – Hawai'i's voice for wildlife | State Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:01:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Paul	Testifying for Humane World for Animals	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Humane World for Animals encourages policymakers to advance programs that expand resources, strengthen community support, and build a more inclusive and equitable animal-welfare system by investing in the infrastructure that makes spay/neuter services reliably accessible across the state. Increasing sterilization rates depends on removing the barriers that prevent many residents from obtaining timely veterinary care. Hawai‘i residents consistently demonstrate strong support for protecting companion animals, and this legislation offers taxpayers a voluntary, constructive way to contribute to a fund that delivers essential sterilization and veterinary services for cats and dogs in need. When services are within reach and costs are reduced, more animals are sterilized, shelter intake declines, and communities benefit from healthier, safer, and more humane conditions.

Cost is only one barrier to accessing spay/neuter services; those services must also be **available**, **attainable**, and **affordable** for the communities they are intended to serve. Two provisions in HB 1736 raise significant concern because they work against the bill’s stated goals. The first is the mandate that all adult cats be sterilized, and the second is the exclusion of free-roaming cats from eligibility for spay/neuter funding. Both measures risk limiting access rather than expanding it, particularly for the populations most in need of support.

Punitive measures such as legally mandated spay and neuter have not proven to be effective in managing animal populations. Too often these measures place fines on pet owners already struggling financially, remove pets from loving families and increase the burden on local animal shelters. Making spay and neuter services more affordable is the better option and should be implemented without the mandate in order to enable residents to voluntarily sterilize their cats.

The truth is that most people want to do the right thing and are not ideologically opposed to sterilization but simply lack the resources to do so. This is particularly true for those who find themselves caring for a large number of free-roaming cats. Unable to get enough of the cats

sterilized in a timely manner, the cats continue to reproduce, making the goal of reducing the population even more of a challenge. When funding is made available to cover the cost of sterilization, organizations which deliver these services to communities can be more effective in their outreach efforts. Unfortunately, HB 1736 prohibits applying the spay/neuter fund to animals that will be returned to their outdoor homes. This is a missed opportunity to target the animals responsible for a large proportion of the kittens born each year. It is a fallacy to assume that limiting spay/neuter subsidies to cats who are not returned outdoors will result in those free-roaming cats disappearing from the environment. In reality, these cats will remain outside, intact, and continue reproducing. They will not simply cease to exist, despite claims from opponents of trap-neuter-return programs who suggest otherwise.

Veterinary clinics in Hawai'i are already operating beyond their capacity, and the current workforce shortage makes it unrealistic to expect they could absorb the additional demand created by HB 1736. The bill offers no clear path for how residents would comply under these constraints, nor does it outline any practical mechanism for enforcement. At the same time, cat owners are unlikely to benefit from the spay/neuter fund if the law takes effect before the fund is adequately capitalized and grants are distributed. In effect, the legislation asks communities to meet requirements before the necessary infrastructure and resources exist—truly a case of putting the cart before the horse.

Humane World for Animals respectfully requests that committee adopt the spay and neuter funding program without exceptions for free-roaming cats and without the mandate for sterilization of adult cats.



Hawai'i Audubon Society

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

Date: March 16, 2026

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

Dear Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Chang and Richards, and AEN/EIG Committee Members,

Aloha. We urge you to support 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 make wonderful pets, but cat overpopulation has reached a crisis level and poses a serious threat to Hawai'i's native wildlife.

Fewer than about 700 'Alae 'ula remain, yet we're told that in just four years, feral cats killed over 250 native waterbirds at Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge alone. Free-roaming cats contributed to the extinctions of many of our unique birds such as the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail). Now they threaten the existence of Palila, 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater), and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), and nearly all remaining native bird species. Hawai'i Audubon Society directly witnesses these impacts, as feral cats prey on U'au kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwaters) at our Freeman Seabird Preserve at Black Point in Kahala, O'ahu.

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 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

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:12:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie N Playdon	Testifying for Cat Fanciers of Hawaii	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

From: Natalie Playdon

Cat Fanciers of Hawaii

I oppose this bill:

Whereas this bill has been modified to include a provision for breeding of registered cats, albeit with associated record keeping and associated costs for both the breeders and government, it still will not solve the problem of the over population of feral cats that are a danger to our wildlife.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:50:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Carroll	Testifying for Maui Humane Society	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a resident of Lāna`i and founder of the Lāna`i Cat Sanctuary. I currently serve on the board of directors of the Maui Humane Society (MHS), and am authorized to provide testimony on behalf of MHS. MHS urges the Legislature to pass HB1736, HD2. This measure takes a critical step toward addressing pet overpopulation in a humane and effective manner.

1. Spay/neuter is key to addressing the problem of unwanted cat and dog litters, animal abandonment, homelessness and overcrowding in Hawaii’s animal shelters.
2. The high cost of spay/neuter surgeries has put these surgeries out of reach for many pet owners. Affordable and accessible spay/neuter services are desperately needed.
3. Maui Humane Society and all other animal shelters and rescues across the state are facing a huge intake crisis, with the number of animal intakes outpacing available resources. Spaying and neutering pets is a proven method to decrease animal intake at sheltering facilities.
4. Grant funding for spay and neuter surgeries from private foundations has become severely limited. This innovative approach to raising much-needed funds is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kathy Carroll, Ph.D.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:06:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Ben-Dayan	Testifying for Surf Cat Ranch	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

We are firmly in support of this bill but with one change that makes ALL the difference.

Addiing the RETURN of community cats to their colonies!

While it is absolutely important to get pets fixed - the more likely cats to be causing environmental impacts and effecting wildlife are COMMUNITY cats -- and the proven way to humanely reduce those populations is TNR.

Most community cats of reproductive age are NOT cats you could just scoop up into adoption programs. There is no real place to PUT these cats once they are fixed.

I represent Surf Cat Ranch which is a cat sanctuary on Maui. The population at our place is maxed out and sadly we cannot continue to take new resident cats. We help with the ones who are adoptable and need a landing pad while we work on sending them to mainland rescues for adoption, but it is RARE for those to come from colonies ready to become house cats.

We need to take action to help our community cat population for so many reasons that different people are passionate about whether they are cat lovers or cat haters. We ALL should be able to agree that a FIXED community cat is MUCH better than one reproducing at a rate of up to 4 litters a year for females over 4 moths old.

Please consider ammending this bill to include return to mananaged colonies.

I am so thankful to see us taking a step in the right direction and hope that this remains a safety net for our cat population and not a situation that could bring them MORE danger in their already dangerous lives.

Thank you for their time,

Jennie Ben-Dayan

808-465-5206

General Manager - Surf Cat Ranch Maui

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:31:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Testifying for Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1736 HD2 contains language that would make it illegal for cat caretakers to Trap/Neuter/Return/Manage colonies of feral cats, if they take advantage of the proposed funding.

The good component would assist with cat over population, but the language inserted in the Finance Committee, would require any cat fixed to be placed in a sanctuary or an enclosed cattery. That is absolutely unfeasible.

The outcome would be a death sentence for many many cats. TNRM is effective, although its deterrents would say otherwise. Cats are demonized citing toxoplasmosis. Necropsies -CoD of Monk Seals are frequently unverifiable due to advanced decomposition.

Hawai'iCat Friends, one of the oldest catsterilization NGOs in Hawai'i, using an all volunteer crew, neutered over 7,000 feral cats in 2025, at no cost to the caretakers.

What would help with finding homes for both cats and dogs is SB3011, which would allow responsible pet owners in public housing. Mahalo to Senator Chris Lee for introducing the bill which has success-fully passed in the senate and will next be heard in the house.

Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:44:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Willinsky	Testifying for Save Maui Cats Inc	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We at Save Maui Cats, an established good standing Hawaii Nonprofit since 2018, appreciate and are grateful for the additional resources devoted to sterilization of cats, but we strongly encourage the bill to allow community cats to return to their colonies.

We also strongly support keeping the colony, cats, healthy, and fed regularly so that they can work together as a team and prevent other cats from entering their area. By nature, cats are territorial and would rather see birds eat their leftovers than allow new cats to enter their area. By removing cats, you create a vacuum effect, allowing new unfixed cats to move in breed out of control. These scientific facts have been established for decades. This strategy is called TNRM, Trap, neuter, return, manage and has worked successfully in over 500 major cities worldwide as the **ONLY SOLUTION** to solving a cat over population crisis.

We, as an all-volunteer group, have been successfully stabilizing the Lahaina cat over population crisis using TNRM for nearly 20 years now. We have witnessed great outcomes for the community, as far less dead and starving animals are seen in our beautiful tourism Mecca. A small handful of volunteers have sacrificed plenty for Hawaii to help make these solutions happen for West Maui. Tying their hands without providing ample resources (food, TNR, supplies) and not allowing colony cats to return to their areas will prove to be very counterproductive very quickly and will create escalated cat overpopulation problems for decades to come.

Please research strategies from major cities that have solved their cat crisis (Tokyo, Austin, San Francisco...) and you will find proven, long-term and humane solutions exist that will benefit everyone. We all want less cats. TNRM is the **ONLY** way we will get there.

Please reach out anytime for any questions or concerns. SaveMauiCats@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Michael Willinsky President & founder of Save Maui Cats.org



525 East Cotati Avenue
Cotati, California 94931

T 707.795.2533
F 707.795.7280

info@aldf.org
aldf.org

March 18th, 2026

Re: Memorandum of Support for HB 1736 HD2
Relating to Animal Control

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment; and Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs,

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the nation's preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals, and our supporters in Hawai'i, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this memo in strong support of HB1736 HD2, a bill to establish a Spay and Neuter Special Fund 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; prohibits cats that are not surgically sterilized from being brought into the State, with certain exceptions; and appropriates funds. This bill is an important step in curbing Hawai'i's pet overpopulation crisis and reducing the Free-Roaming cat population.

There are estimated to be hundreds of thousands of feral cats across the islands, with over 300,000 on Oahu alone. Unhoused cats live difficult lives, and are subject to injury and disease. Such large populations of Free-Roaming Cats have also caused significant damage to Hawai'i's fragile ecosystems and the animals that normally thrive in them. Sterilization programs are proven effective in mitigating unwanted populations of animals. This bill offers a solution that would help to protect Hawai'i's species that are threatened by the large Free-Roaming Cat populations across the islands by managing and ultimately reducing the number of cats, while also ensuring the humane treatment of cats.

Mahalo for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Vierheilig
Legislative Affairs Manager
Animal Legal Defense Fund



March 17, 2025

To: Hawaii State Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee

The Kauai Community Cat Project (KCCP) opposes, unless amended, 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 Rowe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Rowe

Secretary/Treasurer

Kauai Community Cat Project

TRAP • NEUTER • RETURN • MANAGE P.O. Box 143, Kekaha, HI 96752 | kauaicomunitycats.org

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:01:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hob Osterlund	Testifying for Kauai Albatross Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Kauai Albatross Network wholeheartedly SUPPORTS HB1736 HD2. Free-roaming cats are terribly unhealthy and terribly destructive to our native wildlife. Requiring spaying and neutering will help reduce the number of kittens and cats dumped on our landscape. It does nothing to obstruct the cat breeders. It can make a huge difference in helping populations of native birds, especially those that are highly endangered. The koloa duck, for example, is down to only 700 individuals in the world, most of which are on Kauai. And Kauai has an estimated 25K feral cats. How is our native wildlife to stand a chance unless we act NOW to reduce the cat population? Mahalo plenty for your good work.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:21:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catalino Degala	Testifying for Shetland Sheepdog Club of Hawaii	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. It's important to have health tested Pure bred dogs.



Cat People of Oahu

95-1059 Hoalia Street • Mililani, HI 96789

www.catpeopleofohu.org

catpeopleofohu@gmail.com

EIN: 83-2888194

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1736, PROPOSED SD1

March 17, 2026

Dear Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment & Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs:

My name is Alexis Jamison, and I am the President of Cat People of Oahu, a local nonprofit dedicated to cat rescue and welfare. Every day, my team and I see the devastating firsthand impacts of Hawaii's pet overpopulation crisis. Our shelters are perpetually overcapacity, our volunteers are stretched to their limits, and we witness the heartbreaking reality of thousands of kittens born into a life of struggle on our streets. I am writing to support HB1736, Proposed SD1, because it focuses on the source of these problems through both funding and accountability.

The Spay and Neuter Special Fund and the sterilization requirement are both essential to making this work. The fund is a game changer because it gives residents a simple way to help through a voluntary tax check off. These resources will let our counties finally support sterilization for pets and for free-roaming cats that are being adopted or moved into enclosed sanctuaries. At Cat People of Oahu, we know that the high cost of vet care is the biggest hurdle for most families, and this bill directly breaks down that barrier.

At the same time, the sterilization requirement ensures that we are actually making progress. Requiring cats over five months old to be fixed, including those brought into the state, addresses the root cause instead of just treating the symptoms. This bill sets a standard for responsible pet ownership that helps stop the cycle of accidental litters that flood our neighborhoods and rescue systems. The "intact cat declaration" is a fair way to keep people accountable while still giving owners some flexibility. Together, these two pieces of the bill protect our native birds and island ecosystems while giving our rescues and our animals the support they need.

I urge you to pass this bill and provide the relief that our local rescues and neighborhoods so desperately need.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,

Alexis E. Jamison
Cat People of Oahu
President

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:30:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Ross	Testifying for Timelessaussies.com	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Karen Keller-Ross

I am a third generation breeder, owner and handler of Miniature American Shepherds. My mom and sister are senior breeder Judges. I am a Board member of MASCUSA.org. While I was president of MASCUSA we sought and gained full AKC recognition for the Miniature American Shepherd.

I have shown dogs since I was a child.

I moved to HI with my business this past year.

For years CA has tried to pass bills similar to this and have failed to date due to not taking the larger picture into consideration.

I believe working on a bill that protects all by including input from individuals like myself could create a plan that would create a bill that addresses all concerns. A well thought out bill.

I oppose HB1736 as written.

Respectfully,

Karen Keller-Ross

Timeless Aussies

MASCUSA BOD

Judges Education Coordinator

Hall of Fame Excellent Breeder



March 17, 2026

State of Hawai'i - Senate
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Testimony RE: HB1736

Aloha e Distinguished State of Hawai'i Senators –

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

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:51:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Monden	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I agree that Hawai‘i has a serious feral cat problem, and establishing a spay and neuter fund is a positive step. However, this bill places a mandate on pet owners without addressing the real barrier—cost.

Many people adopt cats for companionship and emotional support. Yet veterinary care in Hawai‘i is expensive, and the cost of spaying or neutering varies widely between clinics. As demand increases, prices continue to rise. Mandating that all cats be spayed or neutered by five months of age, without regulating cost or ensuring access, places an unfair burden on responsible pet owners.

When government requires a service people cannot afford, unintended consequences can follow. Some owners may avoid veterinary care altogether, while others may abandon cats that are not fixed or vaccinated. This could actually increase the feral population and create additional public health concerns.

Hawai‘i has seen how well-intentioned solutions can create new problems. When the state faced a rat problem and introduced the mongoose to control it, the plan failed because the two animals had different sleep cycles. Rats remained plentiful, and mongoose became another problem. The original issue was never solved.

If the state requires spay and neuter, it must also ensure the service is affordable and accessible. Spay and neuter services should be free or price-regulated with transparent fees so the public can realistically comply.

A mandate without affordability will not solve the problem. Access and cost control will.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:43:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am, Vivian Toellner, one of many volunteers with Petfix Hawaii, a high volume no cost dog and cat - spay and neuter clinic on the Island of Hawai'i.

This bill could simply provide much needed funds for free / low cost clinics across the State.

Having items in the bill requiring sterilization, getting them fixed by a certain age, getting them fixed before moving here, etc. **doesn't help get this service to the public.**

The public already wants to do it and shows up in the hundreds to get their dogs and cats fixed. *Already Petfix has done over 1,000 sterilizations in 2026!!*

Why do we ask, where are you going to live after you get fixed? **Just get fixed...it will be better no matter where you end up in life.**

Keep it simple. Please do everything in your power to keep our dedicated hands and loving spirits busy fixing this overpopulation problem.

Aloha & Mahalo, Most Sincerely,

Vivian S. Toellner

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:14:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anela Joseph	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

I stand in strong opposition to HB1736 HD2.

Let's be clear—this bill is being marketed as a cat issue, but it opens the door to regulating all pets, including dogs. That is not transparent. That is a policy shift being pushed under the radar.

This measure forces responsible owners into a government registry, requires them to pay \$100 per intact animal, and threatens fines up to \$1,000 per pet. That is not responsible policy—it is government overreach into private property and lawful ownership.

It also creates a broken system of enforcement. The Hawaiian Humane Society only operates on O'ahu, while other counties use different organizations or manage animal control themselves. This guarantees inconsistent rules, unequal enforcement, and confusion across the state.

There is no credible evidence that mandatory sterilization laws like this reduce overpopulation. What they actually do is drive noncompliance and punish the very people who already act responsibly.

If the goal is to reduce overpopulation, invest in access, education, and enforcement of existing laws—not sweeping mandates and penalties.

This bill is overly broad, misleading in scope, and sets a dangerous precedent for expanding government control over all pet ownership.

This bill starts with cats but clearly sets the stage for dogs—and eventually every pet in Hawai‘i. Don’t let this overreach become law; reject HB1736 HD2 and protect responsible owners and their animals.

Respectfully,

Anela Joseph

Concerned Hawai‘i Animal Fancier & American Kennel Club Sports Participant

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:07:04 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Oda	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha kakou. It is with great disappointment that I write this testimony. This bill has gone from being about sterilizing cats to sneakily adding sterilizing dogs. How can the community trust in the government process if it's law makers, the people we vote to speak on our behalf, do devious things? Be forthcoming and allow us our opportunity to voice our opinions. Be gracious enough to say maybe you're not on the right path and work with the community to find solutions. Sterilizing any animal, even human has major health and behavioral risks. Having it done in an animal's infancy is outrageous. Puppies and kittens need to be allowed time to mature and grow in order to do so properly. It's mindblowing that officials feel the importation of animals are the biggest issue in the overpopulation of animals.

Majority of the problem are the strays living on the street or homeless camps. Dogs and cats being bred to sell their offspring for money. Whether it's for food or drugs. Then there's the issue of the dogs being dumped on the street by military personnel who are PCSing/leaving, community members moving out of the state, or those who no longer have the time or means to care for their animals.

So many community members do their part and adopt animals from the Hawaiian Humane Society with little to no knowledge of how to care or get help for a dog with behavior issues. Issues from puppies these owners have adopted from 6-8 weeks old and are now seeing elevated behavior issues stemming from their body's lack of maturing naturally. When the Hawaiian Humane Society stopped their spay/neuter partnerships with veterinarians, there was an uptick in strays. The ridiculous amount veterinarians are charging to spay/neuter has left a lot of owners with no where to turn to. HHS waitlist is months long. The process of having to look day after day to see if they will open more slots.

Moving on to the animals whose owners want to compete in AKC or other sanctioned events. Punishing the owners who not only have the means to have their specific animal used for their sport or competition. The hurdles and obstacles being put forth by this bill, having to register and get approval to receive my animal. Me, a tax paying and law abiding citizen. We are the ones being punished for the lack of enforcement in the community. Targeting the easiest does not seem fair. We already have to complete the rabies requirement and pay an exuberant amount of money to get our animal here. Losing out on valuable bonding time because we won't receive our cat/dog until it's 6 months old. This bill does nothing but check the easiest box and its not fair.

Start with getting in the community. Stop allowing mentally ill or houseless people to dictate whether their animal can be spayed or neutered. Hold community members accountable for upholding their breeder's contract of requiring their cat/dog to be spayed/neutered 12-18 months. Courts see animals as property. They won't enforce a breeder's contract to spay/neuter after purchase. Something is wrong with that when an owner voluntarily enters a contract. They should be held to it.

There is so much more that needs to be done. Trying to pass a rushed bill is not it. Truly open up discussion with the community. We want to help. We want to stop the overpopulation of all animals. We need and want to be included at the table. Let's practice laulima, many hands working together. Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

I, Nitya Bull, respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to HB1594, which proposes mandatory sterilization of all imported animals to Hawai'i and the establishment of a breeder registry. While I fully support responsible pet ownership, animal welfare, and efforts to address overpopulation, this bill applies an overly broad mandate that fails to account for ethical, health-screened, and preservation-focused breeding programs. Mandatory sterilization of all imports would eliminate the ability to introduce new, carefully selected bloodlines that are vital for maintaining genetic diversity, breed health, and responsible companion animal development within the state. It would also disproportionately impact small, law-abiding breeders, exhibitors, and working animal programs who already operate under strict veterinary, quarantine, and import compliance standards.

Furthermore, this measure risks unintended economic and community consequences, including limiting consumer choice, driving responsible breeding practices underground, and increasing reliance on unregulated sources. Hawai'i's existing animal importation and rabies quarantine protocols are already among the most stringent in the nation and effectively safeguard public health. Rather than imposing blanket sterilization, the State should pursue balanced, evidence-based solutions such as stronger enforcement of animal cruelty laws, expanded access to voluntary spay/neuter programs, and targeted education initiatives that address irresponsible ownership without penalizing ethical breeders and preservation efforts. For these reasons, I urge the committee to oppose HB1594 in its current form.

Nitya Bull

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:33:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Good afternoon,

I'm here today to provide comments on HB 1736, regarding animal control, on behalf of A4A Hawaii. A4A Hawaii is a 501 c3 organization which is comprised of an all-volunteer network of people who use their own resources, energy and efforts to place unwanted and abandoned cats and dogs into loving homes. We are located primarily on the east side of Hawaii island. While we have an active dog placement program, today I want to focus on cats. We take in cats and get them spayed or neutered through local resources like PetFix and Good Karma. We test them for FIV and Feline leukemia. We work with local veterinarians to get injuries treated. We get cats their shots. We get them microchipped. A4A cats are adopted at events all over the east side and we maintain the cubbies at the Hilo Petco. We have a foster-based system, not a shelter facility. At this moment, I have 8 cats that live in my garage in various stages of treatment to prepare them for adoption. We are very successful with what we do.

For years, those of us in the animal rescue community have asked for the state to create a spay/neuter fund. Sadly, this bill as currently written is terribly flawed and will do little to achieve the goals that those concerned about cat overpopulation and its impact on the environment say they wish to accomplish. We need the ability to spay or neuter every cat, regardless of its location or circumstances. We do not need to make this process burdensome for those folks who do the hard work of removing cats from unsafe environments and placing them in homes.

I'm testifying on this bill because I believe that it, if amended, could be a positive resource. The fine section on intact cats is ridiculously high as written. The provision that fees collected under an intact cat declaration should be restricted to use by animal control authorities, not simply used for whatever purpose a county wishes. Further, dog packs are also a problem and imported dogs should be subject to the same sterilization provisions as imported cats. I understand that Hawaii Humane Society will be requesting several amendments. Please support them.

Please amend this bill to address the weaknesses in it. The animal welfare community is a positive compassionate group of caring individuals who love the animals on our planet. Please listen to us. Together we can protect the environment and all the creatures who live in it.

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 5:21:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and members of the two committees. I strongly support HB1736, as the proliferation of uncontrolled cats poses a mortal threat to the survival of several of our precious endemic species. As stewards of this land, it is our kuleana to do what is necessary to ensure the survival of the natural treasures that were present in these islands when we arrived. I urge you, however, to amend this bill to remove section 143(2)b3, which allows any cat owner to submit a declaration that exempts the cat from the provisions of the bill for a nominal fee. May I submit a declaration to exempt myself from other laws of the state, such as the duty to pay taxes, register my vehicle, or obtain a permit for my firearm? As a cat owner, I do not believe that I, or any other resident of Hawaii, should be able to just exempt ourselves from the requirement to protect our natural heritage from one of the most serious threats facing our native wildlife. Mahalo for considering my viewpoint, and please pass HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 12:52:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Pitcaithley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support mandataory requirement of spay/ neuter of cats especially for feral colonies and outdoor cats. Abandonment and dumping of owned unwanted cats , mostly unfixed at cat colonies is rampant in Maui The single most important thing that we can do to save cats from all the suffering and death that their overpopulation causes is to spay and neuter them. Ultimately, spay and neuter reduce human-animal conflict, reduces shelter intake, and relieves the burden on animal shelters to euthanize unwanted pets. I would hope the passage of this bill whould open more high volume spay and neuter programs. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 9:59:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in **support** of HB1736, which establishes a Spay and Neuter Special Fund, requires sterilization of cats over five months of age, and regulates the importation of intact cats. This bill attempts to reach a thoughtful, balanced approach to a complex problem—one that has vexed communities across our islands for decades.

The Problem: A Crisis of Our Own Making

The proliferation of free-roaming cats in Hawai‘i is not the fault of the cats themselves. It is a crisis **humans created**, and we therefore have a moral obligation to solve it humanely. As John Hopf of Aloha Animal Oasis rightly stated, "We don't want to just, you know, kill one species to protect another species, especially because humans caused this problem. We feel like we want to come up with a solution and not just penalize the cats."

That principle—that because we caused the problem, we must solve it humanely—lies at the heart of HB1736.

The Stakes: Three Compelling Interests to Balance

This bill recognizes that we must balance three critical concerns:

1. Protecting Endangered and Endemic Species

Our native birds, including the beloved nēnē, face serious threats from free-roaming cat colonies. Toxoplasmosis, a disease spread through cat feces, has been confirmed in nēne deaths. Two years ago, nēne near Waikoloa Resort, attracted by food left by cat colony caretakers, were exposed to toxoplasmosis infection; at least one goose was found dead with toxoplasmosis as the likely cause. Cats also prey directly on native birds and disrupt their natural behaviors.

2. Protecting Public Health

Free-roaming cats can transmit diseases that affect humans, including toxoplasmosis, which is particularly dangerous for pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals. Cat colonies concentrated in public parks and beaches create unsanitary conditions. As one advocate from The

Friends of Liliuokalani Gardens testified, the feeding of abandoned cats has led to litter, feces, and damage to botanical assets—not to mention a "plague of black flies."

3. Protecting the Cats Themselves

Unmanaged colonies are not kind to cats. Free-roaming cats face starvation, disease, and predation. Feline panleukopenia virus, feline leukemia virus, and other serious illnesses are prevalent in unvaccinated, unmanaged populations. A serologic survey of feral cats found exposure rates of 39% for feline calicivirus and 8% for feline panleukopenia virus. Starvation is not a humane population control method, as Kona veterinarian Dr. Kelly Foster testified: "Starvation is not rapid, ethical or even legal in Hawai'i. It is not an accepted method of depopulation."

The Solution: Humane, Proven, and Funded

HB1736 attempts to address all three interests through a comprehensive approach:

- **Spay and Neuter Special Fund:** The bill establishes a dedicated fund, supported by an income tax check-off and legislative appropriations, to provide spaying and neutering services. This is critical because, as Aloha Animal Oasis noted, the "only humane way" to control feral cat populations is "through spay and neuter, and to try to control the population through cutting off the reproductive cycle." Currently, only 4,000 to 5,000 cats are spayed or neutered annually on Hawai'i Island—a fraction of the 20,000 to 30,000 needed.
- **Sterilization Requirement:** Requiring cats over five months to be sterilized, with reasonable exceptions for health, pending sterilization, and registered breeding animals, is a proven method of preventing population growth at its source.
- **Import Controls:** Regulating the importation of intact cats prevents new breeding animals from entering the state and exacerbating the problem.

A Responsible Path Forward

Previous legislation, including HB547 in 2025, received broad support from animal welfare organizations, conservation groups, and community members who recognized that spaying and neutering are "effective methods for reducing pet overpopulation and humanely managing free-roaming cat populations." The Hawaiian Humane Society supports this approach.

Some have expressed concern that sterilization mandates burden responsible breeders. But HB1736 includes thoughtful exemptions for registered, pedigreed cats and temporary imports for exhibition. As The Cat Fanciers' Association notes, pedigreed cats make up a small fraction of the cat population and do not usually contribute to the community cat issue. The bill's exceptions appropriately accommodate them.

Conclusion

The poet Kahlil Gibran wrote, "Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution." It takes strength and resolution to address a problem as complex as this one—to resist the temptation of cruel shortcuts, to fund real solutions, and to remember always that the cats suffering in our communities are there because of human irresponsibility.

HB1736 demonstrates that strength. It protects our native birds from predation and disease. It protects public health from the vectors associated with unmanaged colonies. And it protects cats themselves from starvation, disease, and suffering.

Objections raised by animal welfare groups in previous drafts should be considered by the committee as well as it works to create the best possible bill to advance.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to pass HB1736 and continue the conversation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 2:37:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:11:04 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill helps confront two issues: pet overpopulation and native species population decline. Animal shelters in Hawai'i are nearly always at high capacity due to lack of spay/neutering and resources to support sterilization of animals. Lessening the number of free-roaming stray animals, cats especially, will help improve quality of life for those animals while also protecting native birds, turtles, and plants. This bill is an all-around win-win, and I sincerely hope for its support and success.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:24:11 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1736 and expanded efforts for cat sterilization.

Feral and abandoned cats are having a **devastating** impact on Hawai‘i’s native wildlife. Ground-nesting and forest birds that evolved without mammalian predators are especially vulnerable. Without meaningful action to control the growing population of unowned cats, we will continue to lose irreplaceable indigenous species.

My family and I live in Pana‘ewa. Until about two years ago, we had no feral cats on our property. We had never owned cats and had never contributed to the problem. When several began appearing, we chose to act responsibly—we adopted and sterilized three cats to prevent them from reproducing.

Unfortunately, more cats continue to arrive. At least three additional feral cats now regularly come onto our property. They steal our cats’ food and engage in loud, aggressive fights at night. It has become a constant disturbance and a real concern for the safety of our pets.

We have tried to find help, but the county and other organizations will not take the feral cats. As a result, **responsible residents like us are left to deal with the consequences of negligent pet ownership.** We are paying a very high price for a problem we did not create.

Stronger policies that support sterilization, responsible ownership, and humane management of feral cat populations are urgently needed. These measures will protect native wildlife, reduce suffering among the cats themselves, and help communities like ours restore balance.

Please support HB1736. Hawai‘i’s wildlife, communities, and responsible pet owners deserve real solutions.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:05:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luanna H Meyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There are an estimated 300,000 feral cats roaming Oahu alone. This is an unacceptable hazard to our previous bird population, as this invasive species is already credited with causing the extinction of dozens of bird species. In addition, toxoplasmosis is the major cause of death by disease for Hawaii's endemic Hawaiian Monk Seal population, as the feces from cats carries the parasite that causes this disease with no vaccination or treatment. Feces that wash into the ocean from various water sources is consumed by bottom-residing creatures, which are then consumed by the monk seal foraging for food. Feral cats are out of control and Hawaii needs to step up and pass this legislation as a MINIMUM approach to controlling the problem. I only regret we are not courageous enough to withstand the inevitable criticism and pass legislation as have Australia and New Zealand to protect native animals and birds threatened by invasive species.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:26:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senate Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB1736 as one of many steps urgently needed to save Hawai'i Nei's native bird population from complete extinction. This bill is the initial step in curbing the feral cat population by eliminating breeding, in both owned pet cats and the feral cats (this population being a larger battle). Not only will this bill be a positive step towards conserving (and eventually thriving!) our unique and integral native bird population, it also benefits our beautiful and fragile ecosystem that depends on these birds. Lastly, our homeless cat population also benefits from a better chance at finding forever homes when our animal shelters aren't over populated (a cyclic problem every kitten season).

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Brianna Blackburn

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:41:09 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ella Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my support for this bill.

Mahalo,

Ella Aki

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:54:58 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jolie Wanger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill as a positive first step to address the significant problem posed by uncontrolled cat populations in Hawaii. Cats threaten native wildlife and ecosystems and we must find solutions to address this problem.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 12:56:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

[COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT](#)

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

[COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS](#)

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

16 March 2026

1736 HB RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL

Aloha e Senators Gabbard & Wakai, and members of the committees,

Please record my support for 1736 HB Relating To Animal Control.

I am Jay Penniman, resident of Maui, ahapua‘a of Ulumalu, moku of Hamakualoa. I am pleased to see that this bill has made it for your consideration, and I encourage you to move it along to enactment with an implementation date at the earliest possible time; 1 July 2026 would be excellent!

Too long, Hawai‘i has been called the extinction capital of the world. We can change that moniker to the restoration capital of the world, and this bill would be a significant movement toward realizing that ideal. Of course, there is much more to do but this legislation will put us on a positive trajectory toward success. Our native wildlife is never going to recover if we cannot get at large cats off the landscape. Cats are obligate predators and carry disease that is deadly to our wildlife and human health. Cats are wonderful pets when kept in safe, clean and loving homes. These are the animals we want to support while getting feral and un-homed cats off the landscape.

Please work to protect and restore our native species, these are our cultural and ecological connection, they are vital resources and constitutionally protected, your recognition and facilitation of this kuleana is appreciated.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 12:45:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Rupert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1736, which establishes a spay and neuter special fund. As a resident, I have witnessed the overpopulation of cats in my neighborhood. Furthermore, feral cats are a massive threat to our endemic bird population, 76% of which has already gone extinct. These birds are essential for the perpetuation of our native ecosystem and deserve our protection. The only effective, long-term, and humane solution is to support comprehensive spay and neuter services, particularly for community cats.

This bill will save taxpayer money in the long run by reducing shelter intake and managing the population through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) techniques, which are proven to work. Please pass this bill to support responsible, compassionate animal management in Hawaii and to save the few remaining endemic birds species!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:57:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Heyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill as one way to help reduce the feral cat crisis.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 12:31:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am Tiana Edwards from the Big Island, a student in college and am writing in support of this to control the feline population in Hawai'i, on bill Hb1736 D2. My phone number is 808-557-5986 and my email is tianasteenie@gmail.com. Felines are and have been decimating the native animal populations and only continue to do so. This will help support the native animal populations by decreasing one of the most common threats especially for the manu. It is important to protect the native species as they are crucial to the fragile ecosystem already being destroyed through global warming, housing, air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, along with a long list of others including invasive species. This bill will push to protect the ecosystem of Hawai'i and the native species that have given so much spiritually, environmentally, and socially.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:01:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanner Tavares	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill for reasons being that cats are a detrimental nuisance to Hawaii's ecosystem. I'm an avid hunter, especially during the upland bird season. I have begun to see cats in various areas that they shouldn't even be. Immediately, I know these birds, especially pheasant chicks, will struggle with an uncontrolled cat population. Not only game species, but every specie of bird here native or non native is affected.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:10:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Bilyk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: All Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and the Environment and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

FROM: Patricia Bilyk

RE:HB1736 HD2 Public Funding to Support Cat Sterilization 3-18-26 3:10pm

I strongly support the Bill to provide Public funding to sterilize feral cats in our Community for their health and that of the Public.

I Also support this funding to protect our birds particularly our native species who are rapidly being eliminated by a variety of environmental caused specifically feral cats.

Though this Project to sterilize the cats will not immediately help the birds it will help over time to decrease the population Numbers and therefore the serious threat to our birds .

please pass this measure out of your Committees . Mahalo for your attention in this serious measure to protect our birds !

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:50:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
helen raine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is vitally important to protect our native Hawaiian wildlife. Birds such as the ‘alae ‘ula and koloa maoli are down to approximately 700 individuals and are regularly killed by free roaming cats. Reducing the population of cats on the landscape is essential for their recovery. The bill will deliver an important step towards that reduction and is supported by a broad range of organizations and individuals on both the conservation and cat welfare spectrum. Millions of dollars are invested annually into conservation for vulnerable and unique species in Hawai‘i. Please pass this bill to ensure that that investment is not undermined by the ongoing impact of the cat population in the islands.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:06:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Soller	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.
- 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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:06:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derek Kamakanaaloha Soong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

I love cats but I love Hawai'i's native birds and species more. As a student of Environmental law, I understand the fragile ecosystem that Hawai'i's birds must overcome. Cats and other invasive species are predators to Hawai'i's endemic species. We must take all efforts to protect Hawai'i's native birds and ecosystem.

For the foregoing reasons, I strongly support this bill.

Mahalo,

Derek Kamakanaaloha Soong

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:06:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kit Muhs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please note that I wholeheartedly support SB1736, requiring sterilization of pet cats. They pose a significant threat to birds species. I wish it included dogs too, but let's start with the cats. Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:14:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I love cats and have 2 of them. I also love Hawaii's unique wildlife. I support responsible cat ownership and assistance with spaying for those who have trouble affording it. Hawaii's birds and other animals are too unique to risk. Thank you for considering this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:16:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I heartily support this bill and urge you to do the same for these reasons:

1. Cats are non-native to Hawaii.
2. Cats carry disease that pose grave risks to humans, as well as, many native animal species in Hawaii, including but not limited to 'alala, nene, Hawaiian monk seals, and Hawaiian spinner dolphins.
3. Cats directly kill birds, including Hawaii's critically endangered forest, water, and seabirds.
4. It only makes sense.

This effort is long overdue. Many of our native wildlife are on the verge of extinction. Not on our watch, please. Please act.

Mahalo,
Kim Rogers
Kauai Resident

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:36:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Troy Levinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will provide much needed support to the conservation of endangered Hawaiian birds, and also result in a much more humane approach to the feral cat populations throughout the islands. The unimpeded reproduction of feral cats has severe impacts to our native fauna. This is a common sense approach that will pay dividends for future generations.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:00:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

There are far too many cats on the landscape, which are a health risk to pregnant women and young children from toxo. Also they are killing native wildlife. Please pass bills that reduce the number of cats on the landscape such as bill 1736

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:03:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nathalie sato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, my name is Nathalie Sato. I have lived on the island of Hawaii since 1996. I am writing to let you know that I am in favor of HB1736. I have been witnessing the ever increasing amount of cats, wether domestic or feral and the negative impact they have on wildlife. I believe cats should not be allowed to roam freely, so that they do not impact the survival of the endemic and native birds so much. As well as contaminate the soil and water with their feces, and impact monk seals and other marine life. It is time for any cat coming to the islands to be sterilized and for existing cats already here to either be sterilized or euthanized if feral or roaming freely. They are a threat to Hawaii's environment, that could be eliminated with the right law and enforcement.

Thank you for your time

Nathalie Sato

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:09:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB1736 because the free-roaming cat population in Hawaii is out of control, and cats have played a major role in the decline of Hawaii's native wildlife.

We have so many endemic, endangered species of birds here which are literally found nowhere else on the planet. These species are important not only to the health of the ecosystem, but they are deeply embedded in Hawaiian culture as well.

Free-roaming cats also threaten human health and that of native mammals through the spreading of toxoplasmosis, which can cause miscarriages in humans and can outright kill Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins, and humpback whales.

We have a legal and moral responsibility to protect Hawai'i's native species. This bill is a vital step in doing so.

Please support HB 1736 requiring all cats to be neutered and enable private donations to support the effort. I think this is a reasonable step to control the free-roaming cat population which poses health and safety risks to people and animals, including marine animals. Birds are especially vulnerable to cat predation, and even a well-fed cat can decimate a colony of ground-nesting seabirds in one night. A cat indoors is a protected cat. Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:28:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please pass this bill, as it will infinitely help with the overpopulation of cats and dogs. There are far too many strays and unwanted animals roaming the streets, I know, as I walk dogs for the Humane Society. I see the poor critters who come in. The most important thing we can do is STOP the overpopulation, so that those who are born are loved and cared for. PLEASE help this spay/neuter bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:02:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyhl Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kyhl Austin and I have a resident of Mo'ili'ili, O'ahu for six years. I am currently a PhD candidate at UH Manoa pursuing a doctoral degree in Entomology with a focus in conservation. I am writing to express my full support for HB1736. Required pet sterilization and not re-releasing feral/non-native/invasive animals back on to the landscape is a good thing for Hawai'i and its vulnerable native species, especially nesting seabirds and shorebirds.

Mahalo,

Kyhl A. Austin

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:49:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill as a former resident of Oahu and now resident of Maui as I have witnessed the dangers feral cats pose to our environment, our pets, our property. On our property in Maui Meadows we've had numerous dead birds, pieces of birds, pieces of chicks, pieces of frogs from these out of control predators. They hunt birds for sport, sometimes leaving the full carcass in the yard. The cats climb resident's roofs, they climb trees, they climb up porches and furniture, they climb cars, all to mark their territory. I have watched them spray their anal glands on my patio furniture, on our cars, our house, our garden plants, and fences. They use our yard as a giant litter box - cat excrement in every garden bed I have. I live next to neighbors who feed these cats and as a result the cats live in their yard. The stench from the excrement buildup is almost unbearable in the hot summer months. The nightly cat fights are out of control and disturb the entire neighborhood. We had cats live under the crawl space of our house when we moved in. We've had to put wire fencing around the perimeter of the foundation to prevent them from living, breeding and fighting under our home. We've found numerous dead fetuses in our yard - its disgusting! Its akin to living in a third world country - absolute filth. Cats carry parasites and fleas that can easily pass to household pets. There have been 2 occasions where our dogs had to be treated for parasites since we moved to Maui. On Oahu, there are parking lots filled with cats in Hawaii Kai in the night hours. In our previous subdivision, Hawaii Loa Ridge, people hoarded cats in their houses and garages. The cats would get loose and attack pet birds. Any other wild animal - like bores or deer - that overrun the environment are controlled. Hawaii has brought in hunters from outside to help bring population control into order. These are not sweet kitties that are tame and domesticated - lets not confuse them with a typical household pet. These are predators that kill other animals, native animals to Hawaii that have lived here peacefully for decades and are now extinct, some on the verge of extinction. 23 species of birds are extinct from cats. They viciously fight each other, they hiss when you approach them, they are a menace and threaten the precious songbirds of these beautiful islands. This bill brings hope to those animals on the verge of extinction, it will help bring back numbers in their natural habitat. This is also a teachable moment for people who want to own a cat to be responsible, microchip them, sterilize them and most importantly **KEEP THEM IN THEIR HOUSE**. No such thing as a community cat. This is a very selfish act of pet owners to let their cats turn feral, and disrupt the environment and neighborhood. Lets bring order and balance back to the ecosystem. People are responsible for the damage, the people need to restore the order.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:33:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keahi Noa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill! Sterilization is one of the most ethical ways to cull the cat population here in Hawai'i, which are so damaging to our native wildlife, especially our bird population! Hawai'i is the extinction capital of the world, with some of the highest numbers of critically endangered birds. Outdoor cats directly prey on our native species and are one of if not the single most dangerous predator against them. I desperately want a Hawai'i where me and my family can still grow old watching them around us. The state had promised a commitment to protect and safeguard our native wildlife, and this is an excellent way to do so. Cats are especially damaging because their prey zones span miles. Cats hunt for sport, not out of hunger. Meaning even wild fed cats will still continue to hunt. This bill is not only necessary but long overdue. Please stop failing our native wildlife and continue to claim you hold aloha for this land. Aloha

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:56:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB 1736 HD2.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:07:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chaya Ilikea Arakaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I love all animals and cats, but we do need more animal control in order to protect our Native species.

Mahalo for your consideration.

'Ilikea

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:57:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

i support HB1736

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 1:06:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sheryl kincaid	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE this bill and encourage you to do the same.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:53:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Staley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, My name is Laurie Staley and I am writing in opposition to HB1736 HD2 as a responsible animal breeder and resident of Hawai‘i. While I understand and support the goal of reducing animal overpopulation and improving animal welfare, I am concerned that this legislation creates overly broad mandates that may unintentionally harm responsible breeders, small hobby breeders, and families who carefully maintain healthy breeding programs. HB1736 HD2 proposes sweeping sterilization requirements and regulatory measures intended to address animal overpopulation. However, responsible breeders already operate with careful planning, veterinary oversight, and a commitment to the health and placement of animals. Legislation that applies blanket sterilization policies risks undermining ethical breeding practices that contribute to healthy, well-socialized animals. Ethical breeders play an important role in maintaining breed health, preserving genetic diversity, and ensuring animals are placed with responsible owners. Many breeders already implement contracts requiring spay/neuter for pets not intended for breeding and carefully screen homes for the animals they produce. Penalizing responsible breeders will not address the root causes of animal overpopulation, which often stem from irresponsible ownership, abandonment, and lack of accessible veterinary services. Additionally, enforcement of such mandates may place an administrative burden on local counties and animal control agencies without guaranteeing meaningful improvements in animal welfare. Efforts would be better focused on education, voluntary spay/neuter programs, and support for low-cost veterinary services that help responsible pet owners comply with best practices. I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider HB1736 HD2 and pursue solutions that target irresponsible breeding and abandonment without placing unnecessary restrictions on responsible breeders who are committed to animal welfare. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. Sincerely, Laurie Staley Captain Cook, HI

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:51:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

i strongly oppose HB 1736. This bill is heavily flawed and would create lots of hardship for the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

Testimony in Strong Opposition to HB1736 – Relating to Animal Control

Senate Committees on AEN/EIG

Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

I submit testimony in strong opposition to HB1736.

While Hawai‘i does have a significant feral cat population, there has been no evidence presented that this population is the result of intact animals being imported into the state.

The process required to bring a cat into Hawai‘i is already extensive and costly. Owners must provide proof of two rabies vaccinations (requiring at least two veterinary visits), complete a blood titer test at one of only four approved laboratories (approximately \$728), obtain a health certificate issued within ten days of travel (requiring another veterinary visit), and pay an import fee of \$185 per animal for release at the airport quarantine station. In total, these requirements cost well over \$1,400 per cat.

After investing that amount of time and money, it is unrealistic to assume that responsible owners would allow their cats to roam freely and risk injury from vehicles, attacks from dogs, or other harm.

If the goal is to reduce the feral cat population, the most effective and humane solution is to expand access to low-cost or no-cost spay and neuter services. Many community members already work to care for and manage feral cat colonies, but the cost of sterilization remains a major barrier.

Unsterilized cats reproduce rapidly, which means that without widespread sterilization efforts, feral populations will continue to grow regardless of additional regulations.

Policies that create new restrictions or penalties without addressing the root cause of the problem may also discourage community members from participating in humane population control efforts such as Trap-Neuter-Return. Public policy should support, not discourage, the volunteers and organizations working to stabilize and reduce feral cat populations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to defer HB1736 and instead prioritize funding and support for accessible spay and neuter programs, which are proven to reduce feral cat populations over time.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Christine Watanabe

My name is Tracey Mullins and I'm a veterinarian who practices in Ewa Beach. Regarding HB1736, I OPPOSE this bill for several reasons.

1. Who is going to enforce it? Is the Hawaiian Humane Society going to patrol neighborhoods looking for intact cats? Veterinarians? We already have too much on our plates.
2. While I agree that 5 months of age is the general guideline from the American Association of Feline Practitioner's to spay/neuter cats, we still see local families keeping some cats intact.
3. What about an exemption for RESPONSIBLE cat breeders? While the number of purebred cat breeders is relatively small on this island, legislation like this would restrict their ability to bring in new breeding stock, thereby reducing the quality of the cat line to a more inbred situation (not recommended in veterinary medicine).
4. Section 2, chapter 143, paragraph (b) (1) makes no definition for "applicable animal control authority or **its contractor**" in regard to Honolulu County. We don't have a "formal" Animal Control department on this island (maybe this is one of the problems). So, will the Hawaiian Humane Society be handling this paperwork? A non-profit organization, who will profit from this.
5. What organization on Honolulu County will be in charge of collecting the "intact cat" fee? The Hawaiian Humane Society??? How is this legal for a non-profit organization to profit from the collection of a state fee? Is this an annual fee for any owner having an intact cat?

I honestly think this bill should be shelved for now and maybe the creation of a round-table panel featuring DVM's from all islands and parts of Oahu, along with cat rescue organizations, the Cat Fanciers of Hawaii and pet owners to discuss how an idea like this can be enforced. Most DVMs are strongly in favor of sterilizing cats (ONLY CATS, NOT ALL DOGS) at 5 months of age, but enforcement will be a problem and fees just penalize good breeders and owners of cats with severe heart disease or other medical conditions.

As always, I am always open to constructive dialogue and would like to HELP the state find viable answers to the pet overpopulation problem on this island. Please feel free to call me, 808-689-1797 or email at mullinstvet@gmail.com.

Mahalo,

Tracey L. Mullins, DVM, MBA

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:22:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelli Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please amend hb1736 to allow the return of fixed community cats to their colony area. Returning the cats to a managed colony is the only way to reduce the numbers. I have personally reduced the number of cats at my colonies by 85 percent by trapping,fixing,returning and managing my colonies. This bill is great but will only work with returning and managing the fixed cats.
aloha, Kelli Medeiros

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:49:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1736. I work in conservation and have firsthand experience of the havoc the feral cats wreak on our native wildlife. Feral cats are destroying our endangered seabird and water bird populations. With feral cats being the number one cause of biodiversity loss worldwide, and the vulnerable species that call Hawaii home, we need to do something to reduce the numbers of feral cats across the Hawaiian islands. This bill will do that, and I wholeheartedly support it.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:17:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Zoller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB1736 supported by The Humane Society which protects and supports our monk seals, and birds. Nothing breaks my heart more than hearing one of our critically endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal has passed due to toxoplasmosis or finding our endemic birds laying next to their ground nests with characteristic cat bites.

Also breaks my heart when I see overpopulated colonies of starving cats.

This Bill will have a positive consequence for all of our critters.

Mahalo for all you do.

Tweetcerely,

Laura Zoller

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:40:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelie Sterling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I fully support this bill that would require pet cat sterilization across the state and establish a fund for sterilizing cats, with no release to the environment. Cats are significant predators of our native birds as well as our honu 'ea. This bill would be a great step in the right direction in getting the cat population under control!

Mahalo,

Amelie

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:46:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madelynne Nehl	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill with an ammendment to include TNR community cats. Spay and neuter services are essential in reducing the feral cat population. We do not have enough sanctuaries on the islands to intake all the wild cats. Without spay/neuter services and funding for community cats we will see an explosion of the cat population. All studies on cat management agree that to make a long term difference 75% of the feral cat population must be spayed/neutered.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:07:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Kawabata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Even if sterilized, cats should not be released to fend for themselves because they will prey on our native birds if they are not fed by humans. They lie around on the tables that humans use at the parks and may pass on diseases. Sterilization alone doesn't solve the number of cats in the wild because people are not taking these sterilized cats home to care for them. I support HB1736 that says sterilize cats but do not release them into the wild.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:11:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
alicia morrier	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill needs more appropriate and specific wording. The way this bill is written is very slippery and needs to be opposed until it has been written correctly.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:28:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JOANNE PARKER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill with the amendments, Proposed SD2.

We need to get the feral animal population down in a humane way and this will be a step in the right direction.

Again, please support this bill with the amendments.

Mahalo

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:41:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Velasco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kindly support this spay/neuter bill that will help to decrease the population of stray animals. Mahalo!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:16:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose HB1736. Leave it up to the owners themselves if they want to fix their cat. It is not the responsibility of the Hawaiian Humane Society to dictate to cat owners what they can and can not do with their cats. That is so wrong!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:25:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I would like to respectfully request the opposition of HB1736 and any subsequent bills seeking to mandate pet sterilization.

- I agree there are challenges associated with pet overpopulation and the adverse impacts of free-roaming animals on animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems.
- However, it is my professional opinion that mandatory sterilization and labeling everyone who imports an intact animal a breeder, will create more issues.
- Intact animals are often brought to Hawai‘i to participate in dog shows. An altered dog can’t be shown in a conformation dog show. Not every intact animal is bred. Similarly cat shows do not allowed altered animals to be shown. To assume that every intact animal will be bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren’t included in the bill is unfair. It’s also unfair to imply that these intact animals that cost thousands of dollars to import are the root cause of animal over population and free roaming animals in Hawai‘i.
- Free roaming animals appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. What has been done to address more public education and to reach out to lower income individuals to assist them with spaying and neutering those animals? Will Oahu follow the lead of the island of Hawai‘i and ban the feeding of all feral animals in.order to protect our fragile native ecosystem?
- This will affect military families coming in to Hawai‘i. Many families "inherit" animals from other military families. Original sterilization documents may be lost. Local vet clinics often are unwilling to issue health certificates in general. Families often have to drive hours to find a vet. There is no way for a veterinarian to determine a female animal has been spayed by physical exam alone. It's highly unlikely that a veterinarian will sign off that a surgical spay has been done if they didn't do it. The absence of testicles does not indicate a male has been neutered - it could be a cryprorchid. The average cost of an ultrasound is about \$100, and even then, most general practitioners (such as myself) are unable to reliably determine if a dog or cat is intact or spayed on an ultrasound unless they are actively in heat or at least 30 days pregnant, meaning a referral to a specialist may be indicated (which will further increase cost), increasing the financial burden to bring the pet or increasing the likelihood the pet will be abandoned on the mainland.

•There is an increasing amount of evidence that delaying the age certain breeds of dogs be surgically altered may provide significant health benefits- such as reduced incidence of degenerative joint disease, urinary incontinence, and/or reduced incidence of cancers. Please see the data posted by the University of California - Davis for more information (<https://www.ucdavis.edu/health/news/when-should-you-neuter-or-spay-your-dog>). It is unrealistic to expect families to wait until some breeds are two years old to alter their pet or alter early and potentially increase their risk of cancer or debilitating joint disease. Additionally, the data indicates that female golden retrievers are likely healthier if they are NEVER spayed, so, as a veterinarian, spaying female golden retrievers that do not have a medical necessity for the procedure (such as a pyometra) is potentially unethical as it can result in harm to the animal. To my knowledge, no such studies currently exist for cats, but it is reasonable to assume that similar health considerations are at play and one day the science may catch up.

Thank you for your consideration, please oppose this bill, and all others mandating sterilization prior to importation, and focus on working with communities on education and low cost sterilization options when it is appropriate for the animals health.

Respectfully,

Keri O'Neal, DVM

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 9:31:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Nakakura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please do not advance this bill! It is a terrible bill, that will only hurt the future of dog ownership. When people can only buy a pet from a backyard breeder, who does no health testing and everything is in bred. By passing this bill you are taking away people rights to have healthy dogs. The gene pool must keep improving. The dogs people bring in are not the dogs over crowding the system. They pay thousands of dollar to bring those dogs here. It is the people that just breed any two dogs together, which if you pass this will only get worse. I am sure quite a few of you must have pets and you love them. How are you going to feel when you no longer get the pet you want. The choice of the pet you want, will come with tons of health problems and temperment issues. You are worried about over crowding now, just wait til all those bad temperments go to the shelters.

I am sorry but this bill is just so bad on so many levels. Please do not pass this

cheryl Nakakura

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:12:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose HB1736.

The language is vague and open to misinterpretation. This also takes away rights as a pet owner.

sincerely,

Stephanie Kawasaki

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:42:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Calla Weddington	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill seems to be ignoring the complexity of the environment. I do not believe this will help the native bird population. An example I see immediately is how cats are a big part of controlling the rat population who feed on birds and bird eggs. In addition it may stress many of citizens of Hawaii.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:56:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition to HB1736**. While I support the goal of reducing pet overpopulation and protecting Hawaii’s native ecosystems, this bill implements a mandatory sterilization requirement that is punitive for responsible pet owners and likely to result in unintended negative consequences for both residents and the animals themselves.

Hawaii should focus on **expanding access to low-cost spay/neuter services** and public education rather than imposing mandates and fines. HB1736 as currently written is a heavy-handed approach that penalizes responsible owners and risks increasing the number of animals in our shelters.

I respectfully ask the committee to **hold HB1736** and instead focus on voluntary, incentive-based programs for animal control.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Royd Gano

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:19:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shawna Fujita	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a veterinarian writing in strong opposition of this bill. I agree that pet overpopulation is a problem and we need to gain better control over it. However, this bill is not the way to do so.

We should focus on helping the homeless population with spay and neuter. I constantly see them around the encampments and as a veterinarian we have many intact strays come through the door.

The cats and dogs being brought in to Hawai'i have already gone through rabies testing, or they require quarantine, both of which are not cheap. This in itself signifies these animals are well cared for and loved. It does not, however, mean that these pets are being brought in for breeding. It also does not mean these animals are the ones ending up in shelters.

Forcing pet owners to have their pets spayed or neutered also poses an issue. It requires them to put their pet through a surgical procedure which requires anesthesia which their pet could die from. Complications such as infection and the need for additional surgery is also possible. If the state is requiring this surgery, will they be responsible for the complication costs? And what if the pet dies? Should an owner who doesn't want to put their pet through surgery then give up their beloved pet before coming to Hawai'i? It feels unethical to force someone to proceed with a medical procedure. As doctors, we recommend diagnostics and procedures, but we never force pet owners to do anything. We guide them and support them regardless of what their decision may be.

Another health aspect of forcing spay and neuter that needs to be discussed is the potential for long term health issues. There are studies surfacing that state there may be optimal times for spay or neuter. Too early and we may increase the risk of things such as cancer, endocrine disease, orthopedic disease, urinary disease, even neurological conditions and more.

Shutting the door on importing well bred animals also severely limits the current Hawai'i gene pool. This would encourage poor breeding practices. This bill is secretly trying to regulate breeders. What exactly would that mean? There is a lack of underwriting and haphazardly allowing this bill to pass seems more about control and less about pet health.

If pet health is at all important to this bill, please, I highly encourage you to see why this bill would not be able to check that box.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:51:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Furtado	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:58:02 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melvin Furtado	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:56:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Furtado	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. The people importing animals and going through all these rules and regulations have nothing to do with the feral cat population. This will do nothing to help the situation this bill claims to want.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:18:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

In most circumstances, getting a cat spayed or neutered is the responsible thing to do, however it would be government overreach to require this of every cat owner in Hawaii. Although feral cats are a problem, requiring pet owners to go through extra paperwork and hassle will not save Hawaii's birds, who face many other challenges other than cats.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:44:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill. Although I support the funding of no or low cost spay/neuter for cats, the addition of the requirement to have owners of cats who are imported to be spayed/ or neutered by the age of 5 months is a blatantly discriminatory condition aimed at responsible cat owners who (just like owners of intact dogs who travel to and from the mainland) have invested a significant amount of money (veterinary care, health screening, vaccination, cost of travel) and time to ready their animals for travel into the State. I find it counterintuitive to assume that these owners let their cats roam and breed freely since they have already made considerable investment in caring for their cats. The HDOA already requires microchipping, information about reproductive status, and rabies vaccination as well as owner contact information on the animal import form. If these cat owners did not care about the welfare of their animals, it is unlikely that they would invest the amount of money it takes to bring their animals with them (only to let them mingle with the feral cat population which serves as a reservoir for incurable infections such as toxoplasmosis.)

The targeting of well cared for cats, whose owners have demonstrated financial commitment to their care, for mandatory spay/neuter will likely have very small impact on the overpopulation of free roving animals.

Trap, neuter and release of feral cats is demonstrably ineffective (just visit any area where feral cats are illegally fed and you will see double or triple digits including kittens of various ages). The negative environmental impact of the “free roaming” cat population is unaffected if they are released back into the environment where they are still able to predate on birds and transmit disease. Free roaming animals unquestionably contribute the most to the “pet” overpopulation problem, however this bill places undue financial and regulatory burden on the most responsible pet owners without any effect on the true majority contributors to the overpopulation of cats. Tying funding for low cost spay/neuter to unfair rules targeting the most responsible pet owners will not achieve the stated goal of this bill.

I oppose HB1736 HD2 IF AMENDED AT LAST MINUTE TO NOW INCLUDE DOGS

I oppose any addition to add a spay/neuter requirement for dogs being imported into the state to HB 1736. Not every intact animal that is imported to Hawaii is bred.

To assume that every intact animal will be bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren't included in the bill is unfair. It's also unfair to imply that these intact ***animals that cost thousands of dollars to import*** are the root cause of animal overpopulation and free roaming animals in Hawaii. **Please take a visit to either location of the Hawaii Humane Society and see what type of dogs that are there in the kennels.** Guaranteed, these are not purebreds that were imported to this state for service work, AKC conformation shows or performance events. The majority are mixed breeds of questionable origin and ownership.

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

Free roaming animals appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. **Re HB 1736 HD2, The Spay and Neuter Special Fund, the income tax check-off provision, and public education efforts are the parts of this bill that will actually work — and they deserve to pass on their own merits. I urge the Committee to separate the fund provisions from the mandatory sterilization and import prohibition requirements,** and to study the latter with adequate time for input from veterinarians, county officials, pet owners, and community caregivers before imposing criminal penalties. For these reasons, I respectfully request that this Committee hold or amend HB 1736 HD2 to remove the mandatory sterilization and import prohibition requirements.

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

PLEASE VOTE NO on HB1736 HD2 if mandatory sterilization of dogs imported to this state is added to this bill.

**Barbara Germann, RN MPH
Kailua, Hawaii**

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:33:11 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kathleen Doi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Totally OPPOSE this bill and the recent revision to include dogs to this bill.
The concept of spaying and neutering kittens is against all medical recommendations.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:38:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Garvey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I actually don't support this. If every single cat on the island gets sterilized, then in 20 years how are we going to adopt a cat if we want one? It also makes it illegal not to sterilize your cat, so what is there going to be cat ICE people coming into her house and fining us for not fixing our cat? This also hurts people in poverty who don't have the money to fix their cat and now they're going to be fined or penalized.

We should make it a positive to spay your cat, like give incentives, make it easy or free, etc, not make it illegal if you don't and penalize people.

The bill that made it illegal to feed cats was also very cruel, is your plan just to starve cats to death.

Let's end cruel laws, starting here.

because I definitely want to adopt cats in the future. So do many cat lovers.

We acknowledge there are problems, but we can do better to fix them.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:27:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gary Chock	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1736 HD2 because the Hawaiian Humane Society seeks to add the mandatory sterilization of dogs to this measure, despite the fact that the two other bills they promoted for that purpose failed to advance after much community opposition.

Furthermore, ostensibly to address the problem of free-roaming feral cats that have no owners, this bill instead attacks responsible animal owners and levies fees just for filing ownership declarations and puts those owners on a database for monitoring by HHS.

If applied to dogs and the importation of dogs, that measure would destroy the viability of American Kennel Club shows and sporting events where only intact purebred dogs are permitted. Neutering and spaying young dogs detrimentally alters their development and leads to obesity, as well as other orthopedic problems which is why they would no longer be representative of their breed characteristics. Most purebred dog exhibitors are not breeders and many import their show animals from reputable established breeders on the mainland. Also, some breeds have no local Hawaii breeders. No reputable breeder on the mainland would be able to furnish show animals to Hawaii, and the resulting precipitous decline in participation would make AKC dog shows financially infeasible to hold in Hawaii. Does the Hawaii Legislature intend for us to become the only state in the country where there are no AKC dog shows or sporting events?

I am a Hawaii dog breeder who has produced champions; I am dedicated to ethical breeding practices to preserve the qualities of the breed in accordance with our national breed club. However, I spent over ten years showing imported dogs before I gained enough knowledge to begin my breeding program. Purebred dog owners provide the highest standard of care and incur high expenditures in doing so; it is so illogical to contend that such owners would then use those purebred animals to go free-roam to breed mutts and mixed breed mongrels.

This bill seeks to decimate the population of responsibly bred and cared for animals in the guise of the problem reducing feral animals without owners. The HHS has a conflict of interest in any role in enforcement of mandatory sterilization or having a database of dog breeders and owners of animals filing declarations; administrative rules developed with this bill are likely to create unwarranted authority/discretion for HHS to impose additional burdens on responsible animal breeders and owners. HHS has no business doing that; however, I am sure they will seek additional funds for that purpose to enhance their financial interests.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:25:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynne Short	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this Bill. There are no valid stats stating that imported purebred animals are the problem to the overpopulated stray communities. Punishing people and their breeding stock is unethical without proper research and documentation of said problem. Why are we not starting with backyard breeders? Their agenda is "For Profit" so clearly they are breeding back to back with their dogs. Purebred dogs are heavily researched for the right mate to ensure the integrity of the breed. Do the right thing and target the root of the problem.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:52:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Renee Rokero and I am a resident of the State of Hawaii. **I strongly oppose HB1736 HD2.**

It is deeply concerning that the latest version for HB1736 HD2 appears to have been expanded to include “dogs” simply to keep a dead bill SB3012 alive.

That is NOT transparent policymaking—it risks misleading lawmakers and the public by broadening scope without justification or evidence. The last-minute inclusion of “dogs” was quietly inserted without evidence, raising concerns about transparency. This is sneaky, unethical and an unacceptable tactic to keep a dead bill (SB3012) alive.

This is not how responsible legislation should be crafted.

Furthermore, this bill is built on assumption—not data. There is no evidence that dogs and cats imported into Hawaii are contributing in any meaningful way to shelter populations, public safety concerns, or environmental risk. Yet this bill proposes sweeping mandates, including forced sterilization, based on claims that have not been proven.

The data to verify these claims already exists. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture’s Animal Quarantine Branch tracks every imported dog and cat through required microchipping. Cross-referencing that public data with shelter records would immediately show whether imported animals are actually ending up in shelters. That analysis has not been done—or has not been shared.

Even more telling: animals entering shelters without microchips could not have been legally imported. Those animals are not part of the population this bill targets.

So where is the data?

It is unacceptable to advance legislation of this magnitude without first doing the basic work to prove there is a problem.

Beyond the lack of evidence, this bill would impose significant costs on taxpayers by requiring new systems, staffing, and enforcement to track every imported animal—without proof that such measures are needed.

No data. No justification. Significant cost.

This bill should not move forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:15:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a dog fancier I oppose this bill. I have shown my dogs and competed with my dogs over the years. You cannot show spayed or neutered dogs. These are loving members of my family. This bill would kill the Fancy in Hawaii, and we are not the problem. The humane society is not filled with responsibly bred purebred dogs. These are our treasures they are not running the streets. The breed clubs offer training to both purebred and mixed breed dogs. This is make them better k9 citizens. Some breeds show increased cancer risk if spayed or neutered. We go to great expense bringing in a dog. Why do you wish to kill the dog Fancy in Hawaii? Hundreds of the dogs adopted through the humane society are trained in breed clubs k9citizen classes so the are not returned and live better lives. Further it has shown that large breed dogs have more health problems if spayed /neutered before maturity. Please do not support this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:40:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Callie Wood	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should not, as a free people, be required to pay a fee to the state or county to own an unsterilized animal.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:58:48 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please oppose this. Funds to support voluntary spay/neuter is fine, but targeting breeders of purebred animals is not. Just look in the shelters. These unwanted animals are not from breeders.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:20:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a resident of the State of Hawai‘i, I strongly oppose HB1736 HD2. The revised version's inclusion of 'dogs' raises concerns about transparency and accountability. It appears to be an attempt to revive a dead bill, SB3012, without a valid reason or evidence. This approach to policymaking lacks transparency and may mislead lawmakers and the public. The addition of 'dogs' was made without evidence, which is a questionable and unethical tactic.

Legislation should be crafted in a responsible and transparent manner. Additionally, this bill relies on assumptions rather than facts. There is no evidence that dogs and cats imported into Hawai‘i contribute to shelter populations, public safety concerns, or environmental risk.

Nevertheless, the bill proposes broad mandates, including forced sterilization, without supporting evidence. The necessary data is available, as the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture's Animal Quarantine Branch tracks every imported dog and cat. However, this data has not been analyzed to verify the claims made in the bill.

Furthermore, animals entering shelters without microchips could not have been legally imported and are not part of the population targeted by this bill. The lack of data and justification for this bill, combined with the significant costs it would impose on taxpayers, make it unacceptable to advance. This bill should not move forward.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:05:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Beatty	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1736 HD2. While free-roaming animals are a real issue in Hawai‘i, this bill targets the wrong population. It creates a statewide sterilization and import-restriction system that can easily be expanded to dogs, threatening the rights of responsible cat and dog owners who already keep their animals contained, identified, and cared for. Many of us rely on our pets for service work, therapy, competition, breeding preservation, and family companionship. We should not be held accountable for a problem we are not causing.

The Hawaiian Humane Society already has major animal-control responsibilities under existing county ordinances and state law, including cruelty investigations, outdoor-cat sterilization enforcement, stray intake, and public education. These duties are funded and assigned. Instead of creating a new statewide system that burdens responsible owners, the Legislature should ensure these agencies are fully enforcing the laws already in place.

Overpopulation stems from unowned and abandoned animals, unmanaged colonies, and gaps in county enforcement—not from responsible owners. HB1736 HD2 misdirects the solution and creates a framework that can be turned on dog owners at any time.

I respectfully urge you to reject HB1736 HD2 and pursue targeted strategies that address the true sources of Hawai‘i’s free-roaming animal problem.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:27:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

i oppose the bill, which requires mandatory spay and neuter of all cats, and may be changed to include dogs. The mandatory sterilization requirements penalize responsible pet owners who are not the source of feral or roaming animals, nor are responsible dog and cat fanciers producing the mixed breed animals which are the vast majority filling the shelters. I understand amendments are proposed by HHS to modify the bill language to include dogs as well as cats which expands the impact of the proposed bill without opportunity for public and affected outer island agency review. I am opposed to manipulating the law making process with last minute changes to bills that substantially modify or expand its impact on the public and our agencies. I support funding of spay and neutering services for underserved communities, this is widely popular and should not be tied to other language and requirements to serve agendas by Oahu's HHS after being unsuccessful with their own bills. Data has shown that trapping, sterilizing and releasing feral animals does not reduce negative environmental impacts. Irresponsible owners will simply not follow this proposed law. Rather than spending our states limited funds and resources adding oversight of responsible pet owners, we need to fund animal control services to perform their core services of addressing roaming, stray and unwanted animals and animal humane treatment laws.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:34:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose HB1736. It authorizes an income tax designation to provide revenues into the special fund. We don't need to be taxed more for these programs. The State of Hawaii taxes the citizens enough already. Enough to give state official ridiculously high pay increases. So, stop increasing or creating more taxes for special funds. Use the tax money you already have to fund sterilizing feral cats. Also, do not impose these laws to mandate sterilization of family pets. This is government overreach and also more ways to increase our already high taxes.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:17:47 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support the spay and neuter fund and the efforts to curb cats breeding in the wild in Hawaii that are decimating our wildlife, but I feel that mandatory spay and neuter for imported cats should not be in this bill. Show cat fanciers and breeders should not be subject regulation. They spend so much time and money on their breeding programs and should not have to pay excessive fees and paperwork in order to better their programs.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:42:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edwin Aiken	Individual	Comments	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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:06:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

March 16, 2026

Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair

Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

RE: HB 1736 HD2, Relating to Animal Control

Dear Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs,

As a practicing veterinarian in Hawaii dedicated to animal health and conservation of native wildlife, I am writing to express my support of HB 1736 HD2 as written. I am grateful for the support of so many legislators in desiring to address our animal overpopulation crisis and reduce the free-roaming cat population. HB 1736 HD2 ensures that public funds would be used toward effective sterilization and animal population control programs that restrict re-release of sterilized animals.

The negative health impacts of free-roaming cats on native wildlife are especially poignant in Hawaii due to our unique native biodiversity that is threatened by increasing environmental pressures. Native birds such as honeycreepers, nene, and alala, and marine mammals such as monk seals and spinner dolphins are increasingly at risk from either direct predation or indirect spread of disease such as toxoplasmosis which is only spread by infected cats.

Additionally, free-roaming cat colonies are often afflicted with infectious diseases such as upper respiratory viruses, leukemia and immunodeficiency viruses, internal and external parasites, and ringworm, which lead to chronic health issues and poor quality of life for affected animals. Re-release programs do not focus on finding permanent homes for cats or improving the quality of life for cats that are re-released, and can inadvertently increase cat abandonment rather than encouraging responsible pet ownership or surrender of unwanted pets to shelter or rescue groups.

HB 1736 HD2 will provide funds to help address the animal overpopulation crisis in Hawaii while also supporting responsible pet ownership and encouraging appropriate housing and care for cats in Hawaii rather than perpetuating the free-roaming population that is so detrimental to native wildlife and public health. Please SUPPORT HB 1736 HD2 as written and retain the specification that these funds will only be used for spaying or neutering animals that are NOT re-released into the environment. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,
Jill Yoshicedo, DVM

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:23:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Starmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Cats are an introduced and invasive species in Hawaii that has amply documented lethal effects on Hawaiian wildlife, from birds to monk seals, through direct predation and indirectly through the spread of the parasite *Toxoplasmosis gondii*. This parasite, which can *only* reproduce in the intestines of cats, is further documented to pose threats to pregnant mothers and the elderly.

This bill will provide county governments in Hawaii with the resources to begin addressing pet overpopulation by providing spay and neuter services, and to further take steps to reduce threats to endangered species and to community members (pregnant mothers and the elderly). Spay & neuter programs reduce the production of unwanted pets, directly reducing the number of abandoned pets, and further ensure responsible pet ownership by prohibiting the release of treated cats into the environment.

The legislation provides a sensible framework to allow current and potential pet owners to keep cats as pets, it provides a service to pet owners that is often beyond the means of residents to pay for, and it provides funding to ensure the program is self-funding and sustainable.

This is a well-thought-out program that balances residents' desire to own pets of their choice with real progress toward reducing the devastating environmental burden that cats impose on Hawaii's endemic species and at-risk residents. I support this bill and ask that you vote to pass it into law.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:35:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miya DeVoogd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please give Hawai'i's manu a chance by limiting the reproduction of cats. Manu are already are fighting avian malaria, climate change and habitat loss. Monk seals are susceptible to toxoplasmosis, which can be transmitted by cats. Sterilization of an invasive cat is in every way better than the death of an endemic endangered species. I love cats, and I have one who is fixed (and indoors), but cats cannot contribute to the extinction of another precious native species found no where else on earth. When they're gone they're gone for eternity.

Mahalo,

Miya DeVoogd

96815

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:35:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelley Dunbar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There could not be a more vital and important bill concerning control of our island's animal population than HB 1736. The impact to the human population, your constituents, would be immense. Please support passage of this bill for these reasons:

1. Spay/neuter is key to addressing the problem of unwanted cat and dog litters, animal abandonment, homelessness and overcrowding in Hawaii's animal shelters.
2. The high cost of spay/neuter surgeries has put these surgeries out of reach for many pet owners. Affordable and accessible spay/neuter services are desperately needed.
3. On Maui, our Humane Society and all other animal shelters and rescues across the state are facing a huge intake crisis, with the number of animal intakes outpacing available resources. Spaying and neutering pets is a proven method to decrease animal intake at sheltering facilities.
4. Grant funding for spay and neuter surgeries from private foundations has become severely limited. This innovative approach to raising much-needed funds is greatly appreciated.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:35:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Kuntz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1736 deserves support because it pairs a clear prevention requirement with a practical solution: by requiring pet cats to be sterilized by five months of age, with exceptions, and creating a Spay and Neuter Special Fund supported by appropriations and a voluntary state income-tax checkoff, the bill addresses cat overpopulation at its source while also helping owners afford the procedure. The measure is specifically aimed at reducing the free-roaming cat population, and the funding is intended to support spay/neuter services through the counties to prevent unwanted litters and the resulting damage to our native wildlife. Our native ecosystems need protection and this bill offers a balanced approach that protects animal welfare, reduces shelter and county burdens, and helps prevent further harm to Hawai'i's native wildlife.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 4:43:48 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

- Mandates the spay/neuter of cats already in Hawai‘i and those being brought into the state with an exemption if a declaration of possessing an intact cat is filed with the county animal control agency or animal services contractor in the county where the cat owner resides.
- Establishes a Spay and Neuter Special Fund that allows for multiple revenue streams including a voluntary tax check off for residents owed a state tax refund.
- Allows the funds collected to be used by the counties for the spay/neuter of pet dogs and cats, as well as Free-Roaming cats being adopted into homes or placed in enclosed cat sanctuaries.

For these reasons I support this bill with the following amendments

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:57:04 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

HB1736, SD1 Proposed, mandates the spay/neuter of cats already in Hawai‘i and those being brought into the state with an exemption if a declaration of possessing an intact cat is filed with the county animal control agency or animal services contractor in the county where the cat owner resides.

We beg to support this important Bill and the establishment of a Spay and Neuter Special Fund will help both companion and free-ranging cats.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:57:08 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Scott	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.
- 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 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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:23:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GWEN YOUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Hawaii I strongly 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.
- 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. Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:51:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Carion	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.
- 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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:14:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

support as well HHS proposed amendments. logical.

Hawaii Kai voter

To: Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Honorable Senator Herbert “Tim” Richards, III, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Agriculture & Environment
Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs

From: Lauryn Toki
Position: Support with Concerns

Re: HB 1736, H2

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2026
03:10 pm Conference room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Richards, III, Vice Chair Chang, and Committee Members:

My name is Lauryn Toki, and I am a resident of Hawaii Island and a graduate student studying social work. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1736 relating to animal control.

I support the goal of reducing pet overpopulation in Hawaii. Expanding access to spay and neuter services is an important step toward improving animal welfare and preventing the suffering that can occur when animals are abandoned or left without care. Programs that provide affordable sterilization services can help communities address this issue in a humane and preventative way.

However, I do have concerns about certain provisions of the bill. One section states that spayed or neutered animals may not be re-released into the environment. This provision may unintentionally undermine Trap-Neuter- Return (TNR) programs that many communities rely on to manage free roaming cat populations. TNR programs work by humanely trapping cats, sterilizing and vaccinating them, returning them to their original colony where they can no longer reproduce. Research has shown that these programs can stabilize and gradually reduce outdoor cat populations over time. A long term study published in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association found sustained TNR efforts reduced a free roaming cat population by approximately 66 percent over an eleven year period (Levy, Gale, & Gale, 2003).

From a social work perspective, community based approaches are often more effective than purely punitive policies. This includes fines between \$500 and \$1000 for violations related to

sterilization requirements. While responsible pet ownership is important, these penalties could place a significant burden on low income residents who may already face barriers to accessing veterinary care. Research on access to veterinary services shows that financial limitations are one of the primary reasons pet owners are unable to sterilize their animals. Policies that focus primarily on punishment may unintentionally discourage cooperation rather than support responsible care.

Social work practice emphasizes prevention, equity, and community engagement. Addressing animal overpopulation through accessible services, education, and collaboration with community programs can be more effective than relying on enforcement alone. Hawaii also faces unique challenges because we must balance animal welfare with the protection of our fragile ecosystems and native wildlife. Thoughtful policy solutions should consider these complex issues while supporting programs that have already demonstrated success.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the legislature to consider amendments that expand access to spay and neuter services while allowing effective community based strategies such as Trap-Neuter-Return programs to continue. Approaches that prioritize prevention, community participation, and equitable access to services are more consistent with both animal welfare goals and the broader principles of social wellbeing.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your work on the issue.

Sincerely,
Lauryn Toki
Master of Social Work Student
University of Hawaii at Manoa

I am writing in support of HB1736, HD2 **Relating to Animal Control.**

This measure mandates the spay/neuter of cats already in Hawai'i and those being brought into the state with an exemption if a declaration of possessing an intact cat is filed with the county animal control agency or animal services contractor in the county where the cat owner resides. It establishes a Spay and Neuter Special Fund that allows for multiple revenue streams including a voluntary tax check off for residents who are owed a state tax refund. It allows the funds collected to be used by the counties for the spay/neuter of pet dogs and cats, as well as Free-Roaming cats being adopted into homes or placed in enclosed cat sanctuaries.

Judith Aikawa, MD
37 Apali Way
Kula, HI 96790

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:52:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Emma Shelly. As someone who has grown up on the islands and now works in avian conservation, the harmful impacts of free-roaming cats on our native species cannot be overstated. Not only do outdoor cats hunt and kill native birds, but they spread toxoplasmosis through their feces which enters our watersheds and near shore habitats, leading to the death of monk seals and nēnē and sickening our communities. The free-roaming lifestyle is terrible for the cats as well, with a poorer and shorter quality of life for the animals, and a much higher risk of disease, parasites, and debilitating injuries caused by fights with other cats and motor vehicles. One of the most responsible thing for a cat owner to do is to keep their cats strictly indoors, but not all individuals feel the same way and cats can escape or go missing even despite their owners' best intentions. HB1736 would ensure that, in either scenario, these free-roaming pet cats are not allowed to contribute to the already severe cat overpopulation crisis we have in Hawaii.

HB1736 supports conservation, public health, and animal welfare, and takes meaningful steps to adress the cat crisis on the islands. As a cat owner and conservationist, I strongly support this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:58:27 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathaniel Watkins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cat populations across the state have aided in the extinction or continued loss for many species on the landscape. Ideally there would be no feral cats on any of the islands, these are animals that were domesticated by people and have no place on any landscape as a predator. The support of trap, neuter, release and just feral cats as a whole directly opposes many mālama ‘āina organizations across the state, as their efforts however grand are then set back by feral cats. It's time to start taking care of this huge issue!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:59:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in support of this bill and the proposed amendments from the Hawaiian Humane Society.

Lynne Matusow

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:03:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maya Goodoni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Maya Goodoni, and I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB1736**.

I support HB1736 because it will contribute to ongoing efforts to reduce the free-roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i. Managing feral cat populations is an important step toward protecting Hawai‘i’s unique ecosystems, native wildlife, and public health.

Cats are a significant factor in the decline of Hawai‘i’s native species, including endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds, and other native wildlife. Hawai‘i’s island ecosystems evolved without mammalian predators, making native birds especially vulnerable to predation. Reducing feral cat populations is therefore critical to protecting species that are already at risk of extinction.

Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans because they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), a parasite spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis can cause serious health impacts in humans, including miscarriage, birth defects, and in severe cases can be fatal (Kheirandish et al., 2019).

The impacts extend beyond land ecosystems. Toxoplasmosis has also been documented in marine environments and poses a threat to marine mammals. Our beloved Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins (NOAA, 2020), and humpback whales are all at risk, as toxoplasmosis can—and does—kill marine mammals.

Reducing the feral cat population will help protect the delicate ecological balance of the isolated Hawaiian Islands. This action is essential for safeguarding threatened and endangered birds that are legally protected under both the federal and State of Hawai‘i Endangered Species Acts. Native bird populations are declining now, and proactive measures are urgently needed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1736.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,
Maya Goodoni

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:10:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Turner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is essential. Please take this seriously. Cats must be controlled. They should be inside pets not destroying the environment.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:36:59 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill because it contributes 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.**

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:58:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caren Loebel-Fried	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.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:04:52 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Walsh	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 and other mammals' health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis. Our beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins 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.

Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:14:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1736 which would require all cats ages 5 months or older to be surgically sterilized and establish a Spay and Neuter fund to help support this effort.

Hawai‘i has a huge feral cat problem which has detrimental affects to human and wildlife health (e.g. toxoplasmosis in humans as well as toxoplasmosis and predation on native birds, sea turtle hatchlings, Hawaiian monk seals, dolphins, whales, etc.) Requiring spaying and neutering of pet and feral cats in Hawai‘i is one step that will help prevent more feral cats being added to the population. Establishing the fund is important for supporting this effort so that surgical sterilization can be more affodable for pet owners.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony,

Lorraine Waianuhea

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:18:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dilek Sahin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 1736, which represents an important step toward reducing the free-roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i.

Feral cats pose a serious and ongoing threat to our native wildlife. They are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, seabirds, and other native species that exist nowhere else on Earth. As one of the most geographically isolated island chains in the world, Hawai‘i's ecosystems are uniquely fragile, and the continued presence of large feral cat populations disrupts the delicate balance that our threatened and endangered species depend upon. These birds are protected under both the Federal and the State of Hawai‘i Endangered Species Act, and they are declining now.

The threat extends beyond wildlife. Outdoor feral cats are a vector for toxoplasmosis, a disease spread through cat feces that poses serious risks to human health, including miscarriage, birth defects, and in some cases death (Aguirre et al., 2019; Kheirandish et al., 2019). Our native marine mammals — Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins, and Humpback Whales — are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can and does kill marine mammals (NOAA, 2020).

Cats make wonderful pets and companions, but the free-roaming feral cat crisis requires a collective response. HB 1736 gives us a meaningful tool to address this challenge and protect the people, wildlife, and ecosystems that make Hawai‘i so special.

I urge your support for HB 1736.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:19:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Gallagher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As Kauai resident with two indoor cats, I believe it's my kuleana to do whatever is required to protect sensitive wildlife and birds in Hawaii. I strongly support this bill and keeping cats indoors!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:19:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senate Committee Members,

I support HB 1736 and strongly call on you to pass this critical legislation.

Hawai‘i is in the midst of a biodiversity crisis, and free-roaming feral cats are a major driver of the ongoing collapse of our native wildlife populations. Endangered Hawaiian wetland birds, seabirds, and other native species are being killed at unsustainable rates. These endemic species exist nowhere else on Earth. If we fail to act now, we will lose them forever.

This is not a distant or hypothetical threat. Our native birds are declining right now. Every day that passes without meaningful intervention results in further irreversible loss. The window to act is closing rapidly.

The danger is not limited to wildlife. Feral cats are a known vector of toxoplasmosis, a serious disease spread through cat feces. This pathogen threatens human health, contributing to miscarriage, birth defects, and potentially fatal illness. Communities across Hawai‘i are being exposed to this risk.

Even more alarming, toxoplasmosis is killing marine mammals. Our iconic Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins, and humpback whales are all at risk from a land-based problem that we have the power to address. The health of our oceans is directly tied to how we manage threats on land.

HB 1736 represents an essential step toward reducing the feral and free-roaming cat population and protecting the fragile balance of our island ecosystems. Our native species are legally protected under state and federal endangered species laws, yet without decisive action, those protections are not enough.

Cats can be cherished pets, but allowing unmanaged populations to grow unchecked is causing devastating harm. Responsible, humane solutions must be implemented.

For the survival of Hawai‘i’s unique wildlife, the protection of public health, and the preservation of our natural heritage, I strongly urge you to support and pass HB 1736.

Ke aloha,

Phillippe R. Fernandez-Brennan, Ph.D.

pfgalici@hawaii.edu

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:24:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patsy Pitts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. Our birds, whether native or introduced, depend on your support vote. Their predators have no predators. And because you passed that "economic no kill bill" in 2018, we are overwhelmed with stray cats. They move onto my property and kill my domestic pets, wild birds that i feed and intimidate my house cat. PLEASE VOTE TO SUPPRT THIS BILL.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:27:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Gabbard, Vice Chair Senator Richards and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment, and Chair Senator Wakai, Vice Chair Senator Chang and Members of the Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Please support HB 1736 HD 2 with the Hawaiian Humane Society's amendments. This bill would lessen pet overpopulation and reduce the number of animals needing homes.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:34:33 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Patel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please protect our wildlife by passing this critical cat population control bill.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:40:25 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Steuermann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Feral cats are out of control, killing birds and spreading disease.

Michelle Steuermann

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:40:45 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rich Downs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to urge your support for HB1736. This legislation would require pet cats to be spayed or neutered, with limited exceptions, and would enable private donations to support pet cat sterilization efforts statewide.

Cats can make wonderful companions, but cat overpopulation has reached a crisis level and poses a serious threat to Hawai'i's native wildlife. 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.

Through my work monitoring the urban population of White Terns (Manu o Kū) in Honolulu, I have repeatedly seen the impacts that free-roaming cats can have on nesting seabirds. White Terns raise only a single chick at a time, placing their young on exposed branches in trees throughout the city. Fallen chicks are particularly vulnerable, and predation by free-roaming cats is a well-documented source of mortality for seabirds and other native birds across Hawai'i. Preventing unchecked cat reproduction is one of the most practical steps we can take to reduce this pressure.

HB1736 represents a responsible and compassionate step forward. By preventing negligent and unintended cat breeding, this measure will help reduce the number of free-roaming cats entering the landscape while supporting humane population management efforts. The bill benefits cats, wildlife, and communities alike, and will help reduce strains on animal control services and rescue organizations statewide.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:07:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I taught school in Hawaii for over 30 years. One of my Math lessons was about how many female kittens one unfixed cat can be responsible for in 10 years time. The answer is enormous and in the tens of thousands as she can have kittens at least every 6 months and her female kittens can begin reproducing at 6 months also (when the original female has yet another litter)..

My husband and I manage a large colony of feral cats (with TNR at least once a week) near the airport and military housing. We have fixed over 400 cats here. One of the reasons this is so high is because of the constant drop off of unfixed & friendly cats by citizens. They see well cared for cats and think their cat too will be cared for here by someone else. Two weeks ago we put 5 very friendly cats we found at our colony THIS YEAR on a plane to be adopted out by a mainland charity because our Humane Society here is already overworked. This is expensive.

All colony caretakers in Hawaii are overworked because of having to spay/neuter other peoples' cats and the kittens those cats produce. Please pass HB 1736 to REQUIRE people to bring in only fixed cats to Hawaii. This will help people who love and care for cats so very much.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:23:16 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Marshall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a frequent visitor to the State and the Island of Kauai, I have noticed a marked increase in the number of feral cats on the island. On my last trip in December, I found the number of feral cats I saw to be both disturbing and alarming. Most tourists that I saw try to feed and play with the cats, not realizing they are making a problematic situation worse. As a cat lover and rescue cat owner, passing this legislation is the right thing to do for both native wildlife and pet owners. No matter where people live or call home there is no shortage of irresponsible pet owners - spay and neutering pets should be required. In this way, the feral population will naturally decline over time. This requirement is already late, but hopefully passing it now will keep the situation from worsening, which it will do if nothing changes.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:29:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
alice rain	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Spay & neuter mandatory for all cats AND rescue them off the streets they are destroying the ecosystem leaving filth and disease everywhere! toxoplasmosis is killing monk seals! they kill birds indiscriminately!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:31:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shellie Woodworth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of the bill to control stray or feral cats on the island of Kauai. Our island has over 20,000 feral or stray cats, It is important to know that our island also is home to endangered species, the albatross.

These cats have been witnessed killing the babies and just leaving them there, not even killing them sustain themselves

but just to kill because it is in their nature.

There are many other species of bird that suffer the same fate.

This reduction of feline species needs to be, of course, done in a humane manner but it needs to be done.

Please support this funding.

Sincerely,

Shellie Woodworth

Kapa'a, HI

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:37:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Craig Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

First step in managing the impact of cats on our fragile native animals

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:13:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am requesting that you support HB 1736, with amendments proposed by the Hawaiian Humane Society. This amended bill would mandate that dogs and cats in Hawaii and being brought into Hawaii be spayed/neutered. It would establish a Special Fund to help pet owners to pay for spaying/neutering their pets. It would include a box for filers to check when they submit their taxes. This bill would help to address the pet overpopulation in Hawai'i.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:20:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Von Kaanaana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly urge the committee to support HB1736.

Cats both feral and domestic are apex predators in the state of Hawai'i and we have an outright obligation to controlling their population. By removing barriers to access their necessary reproductive healthcare the entire ecosystem benefits. I urge the committee to see the bigger picture of this bills impact to the biodiversity of Hawai'i. No one is saying get rid of cats, this bill support cats and their owners.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:26:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Lythgoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have coming to the beautiful island of Kauai to my second home for 30 years. I have visited each island of the state of Hawai'i. My experiene of the variety of landscapes, wildlife, beauty, and the diversity of the people and how caring for the land means so much to citizens of the islands. The caring people and beauty of Kauai is part of my desire for my home away from home be here.

All over the islands, you can close your eyes and open your ears to hear the most beautiful songs of the Hawaiian birds. Just seeing the birds and hearing their songs makes Kauai the best place to be. Over recent years we are being robbed of the longevità of the birds and seeingvtgeir numbers decline due to cats.

My greatest concern and support is for the beautiful variety of birds to be protectied from harm by passing HB 1736 a measure that must be established. Pass this bill for the protection and renewal of our unique and lovely island birds.

Regina Lythgoe

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:29:00 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Elliott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in Strong Support of HB1736 HD2. This bill is an important step in protecting our critically endangered native wildlife and ecosystems, provide for responsible and humane pet care and for protecting human health.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:06:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rae Okawa	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-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:37:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Vynne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone whose property is regularly utilized by free roaming cats, I believe this measure is extremely important to the both the people of Hawai'i and its native willdife. Our neighbor feeds feral cats in Wailua Homesteads, Kauai, so our property has cats defecating on it, fighting near our house in the middle of the night, ruining our outdoor equipment, and kittens are regularly born in our carports. In the stream on our property, we have a breeding pair of endangered Hawaiian gallinules whose chicks are hunted by these free roaming cats. With a population estimate of less than 750, these birds are extremely rare and culturally important to the people of Hawai'i. I worry about the health of my family, farm animals, and native wildlife with these cats spreading toxoplasmosis in our waterways and soil. Something desperately needs to be done about Hawai'i's free roaming cat problem and HB1736 is an important step in that process. Mahalo for your attention to this matter and passing this vital bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:40:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Stensrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a responsible cat owner I strongly support HB1736 HD2 which would help protect native species from feral cats.

The feral cat population in the state is out of control and we need action now as our native birds and mamals are endangered and need of protection before we lose them forever.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:43:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Hasling Bischof	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.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 3:10 pm

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF HB 1736, HD2 - RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL.

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Richards, Vice Chair Chang, Senator DeCoite of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write you today in **strong support of HB 1736, HD2**, Relating to Animal Control, 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 five months of age to be surgically sterilized unless covered by an intact cat declaration, and conditions the importation of intact cats on state and county declaration requirements, with certain exceptions; and appropriates funds.

When I purchased my home in Wailuku Heights, Maui, in 2002, which fronts vacant agricultural land, my elderly neighbor was in the habit of feeding a large colony of feral cats. When my neighbor passed away shortly thereafter, the cats migrated to my yard and would eat the food we left out for our small dogs who came and went from the yard. As someone who cares for our precious native fauna, I registered the feral cats as a colony on Maui, which allowed me to get them spayed or neutered for free, and went through the process of trapping and fixing the cats. I, unfortunately, missed a female, who ended up having kittens. I repeated the process of trapping and fixing this generation of cats, missed a female, and ended up with another generation. My children grew up alongside the colony of cats, naming them and creating a detailed family tree. Finally, in 2015, I spent three weeks meticulously trapping and neutering to make sure that they were all spayed or neutered. Now, eleven years later, all of the cats in the colony have aged out or moved on and I no longer have cats outside on my property, my long-term goal. I have two cats that were adopted as kittens from the Maui Humane Society two years ago, properly spayed/neutered, and they are kept as solely indoor cats.

As an introduced predator, cats pose a serious threat to Hawai'i's vulnerable birds, ranging from the ground-nesting Hawaiian Petrel to the forest-dwelling 'I'iwi. Protection of our native birds is dear to my heart. This stems primarily from mālama 'āina, but also from the human connection with bird protectors in my life. My daughter worked for some time at the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project, I have a friend who worked for the Maui Seabird Recovery Project, and another who worked for the Maui Invasive Species Committee. At the Maui Upcountry Farmers Market, I get my coffee from Bobbie, a local coffee farmer who sells coffee to raise funds for the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project. Worldwide, domestic cats have contributed to the extinction of at least 63 species; in Hawai'i, home to more endangered birds than any other U.S. state, cats are found throughout the main Hawaiian islands and are a leading cause of bird population declines.

While cats can make wonderful pets, irresponsible and unintended cat breeding has contributed to a severe overpopulation crisis, resulting in widespread stray and feral cats. Uncontrolled cat populations also contribute to the spread of dangerous parasites and diseases, causing significant environmental damage and increasing risks to both human and wildlife health.

I **strongly support HB 1736, HD2** because it advances responsible pet cat ownership and directly addresses the state's cat overpopulation crisis — providing vital benefits for native wildlife, domestic animals, and communities. The bill would help prevent unintended breeding by requiring all pet cats to be spayed or neutered, with limited exceptions. The bill would also establish a dedicated funding source to support pet cat sterilization statewide. Importantly, cats sterilized using these funds may not be released into the environment. House Bill 1736, HD2 represents an important momentous step forward for cat management in Hawai'i. By minimizing unintended pet cat breeding, the bill would not only help protect Hawai'i's native wildlife but also ease the burden on animal control providers. I respectfully request you vote in support of protecting our native birds and HB 1736, HD2.

Mahalo nui,

Christine Andrews
Wailuku, Maui

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:55:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Cartee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I greatly support the sterilization of pet cats across the state and I support the non release of cats into the environment. Cats are significant predators of Hawaiian native species, cats also deserve better than to live hard lives out in the wild. Hawaiian wildlife and cats deserve the passing of HB1736. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:05:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Much needed bill!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:11:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Epler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawaii.

Cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds, and other native wildlife.

Thank you for passing HB1736.

Mary Epler

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:43:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Kawabata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill, HB1736, and its efforts to control cat populations and feral colonies that affect the health, well-being, and future of Hawaii's native species, human and mammal health and well-being, and the cleanliness of our land and waters. I urge the committee to support and pass this measure. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:45:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support the idea of requiring cats to be spayed/neutered to help with the population. It is out of control and I believe that this would greatly help with the problem. I also support requiring more strict laws regarding intact dogs. People are irresponsible and are also creating an overpopulation of dogs on the islands. These dogs end up in our shelters and we do not have the resources to support them.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:21:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose HB1736 HD2 and feel it is unfair and unethical towards responsible dog owner as myself and many others!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:40:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Y Taguchi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I opposed this bill!!!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:53:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I respectfully oppose this bill requiring the mandatory spay and neuter of all cats.

While I strongly support spay and neuter efforts for non-pedigree and free-roaming cats to address overpopulation, this blanket mandate fails to distinguish between irresponsible breeding and responsible preservation breeding. Ethical breeders play a vital role in maintaining the health, genetic integrity, and historical preservation of established cat breeds.

Preservation-bred cats are not contributing to the feral cat population. They are purposefully bred, carefully placed, registered, and kept in controlled environments. Responsible breeders follow strict ethical standards, conduct health testing, and ensure their cats do not roam or reproduce indiscriminately.

A one-size-fits-all approach is not an effective solution. Policy should target the true source of overpopulation—uncontrolled and unregistered cats—while allowing responsible breeding practices to continue.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose this bill in its current form.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:49:19 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mladena Yankova Kukin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I respectfully oppose HB1736. While reducing pet overpopulation is important, this bill mandates medical procedures, adds financial and bureaucratic burdens, and penalizes responsible pet owners instead of expanding access to affordable, voluntary spay/neuter programs. I urge you to vote NO or defer this measure. Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:02:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a strong supporter of Bill HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:05:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pam Kutaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose. Please leave ethical breeders alone.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:12:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paula Gushiken	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:11:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerrie Anne Loyd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is a critical need to reduce the number of stray cats in Hawaii, for the benefit of cats and endemic wildlife. Hawaii needs improved domestic cat management and efforts like required sterilization will help.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:54:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dustin K Palos	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.
- Human health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a health risk to humans, as they are vectors for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is transmitted through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, as it causes miscarriage (Kheirandish et al., 2019), congenital disabilities, 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.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dustin K. Palos

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:00:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dianne DeLorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of House Bill 1736. I provided a statement earlier in this process. In brief, this is a great start for protecting Hawaii's precious birds from the growing population of feral cats. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:48:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please do not support this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:47:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose bill HB1736. Thank you!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:48:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katrina Kanemoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. If you would like to prevent the over population of dogs, you need to stop the pet shops from selling puppies and the backyard breeders who are breeding dogs on purpose for a profit. The majority of dogs at the humane society are mixed breeds not pure bred dogs. Some of us bring our purebred dogs in from the mainland to show at our local dog shows and our dogs cannot be sterilized to show. We also do health testing on our dogs before breeding and breed for a purpose.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:31:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Teruya	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Linda Teruya and a resident of the State of Hawaii. I AM STRONGLY OPPOSING HB 1736!! HHS is not being transparent and their deceptive and unethical tactic in attempting to bring back a DEAD Bill SB3012 should not be allowed.

This bill is not based on actual data that dogs and cats imported into Hawaii are contributing to over population, environmental or public safety risks. All imported dogs and cats are tracked through the State of Hawaii's Dept of Agriculture. Yet, no one has seemed to research this data and cross reference to show whether these imported animals are actually in the shelter or roaming the streets. This would be irresponsible and asine legislation if this bill was advanced without actual data and research. Please do not more this bill forward. Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:32:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy Nitta	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Tammy Nitta.

As a concerned Hawaii resident, I strongly oppose HB1736 HD2. It is deeply troubling that the latest version of this bill has been expanded to include "dogs", seemingly as a means to revive the now-defunct SB3012. This type of last-minute, broad expansion is neither transparent nor responsible policymaking. It risks misleading lawmakers and the public by dramatically broadening the bill's scope without any clear jurisdiction or supporting evidence. The inclusion of "dogs" was quietly added without data to support its necessity, raising serious concerns about transparency and legislative integrity. This tactic-sneaky, unethical and unacceptable-should have no place in the crafting of responsible legislation. Moreover, HB1736 HD2 is built on assumptions rather than solid evidence. Beyond the lack of data, the bill would impose substantial costs on taxpayers, requiring new systems, additional staffing, and enforcement measures to track every important animal-without proof that such measures are needed. Responsible legislation should be evidence-based, transparent, and considerate of the burden on taxpayers. HB1736 HD2 fails on all these fronts and I urge lawmakers to kill this bill.

Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:36:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 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 Hawai'i. 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 Hawai'i 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. Owners of purebred cats and dogs are not the problem and they seem to be unfairly targeted to be a source of money.

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 Bill HB1736 as written and amended

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:29:42 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing to strong SUPPORT of HB1736.

This bill is a step in the right direction. Cats should be sterilized, but not released back into the environment afterward. Instead, they should be placed for adoption so they no longer pose a threat to native birds and marine life. Feral cats not only prey on birds, but also spread toxoplasmosis, a disease that can harm monk seals.

Mahalo nui for your consideration—let’s continue supporting legislation that helps restore and protect our native species.

Kimberly

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:27:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandria Sinker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of this measure to establish the Spay and Neuter Special Fund and implement responsible management of free-roaming cat populations in Hawai‘i.

As a conservation professional working in Hawai‘i’s native ecosystems, I have seen firsthand the vulnerability of our endemic wildlife to introduced predators. Free-roaming cats pose a significant and well-documented threat to native bird species, many of which are already at risk of extinction due to habitat loss, disease, and climate change.

This bill represents a practical, humane, and science-based approach to addressing pet overpopulation and reducing the ecological impacts of free-roaming cats. By increasing access to spay and neuter services and establishing clear guidelines for responsible pet ownership, this measure helps prevent the continued growth of unmanaged cat populations while avoiding reactive or less effective control strategies.

Importantly, this legislation balances animal welfare with environmental stewardship. Preventing unwanted litters reduces suffering among cats while also protecting Hawai‘i’s unique and irreplaceable biodiversity.

Given the urgent need to safeguard native species, particularly forest birds that play critical roles in ecosystem function. I strongly urge you to support this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:24:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Conner Birdsall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a 17 year old senior in high school, I strongly support HB 1736. Especially since the bill would help deal with our invasive species which are cats. I urge you to support this bill. The next generation of leaders see the impacts of invasive species and this bill would help deal with the stray populations of cats living on island. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:09:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dyan Mitsuyama	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the establishment of a special fund, but the requirement to sterilize cats and single them out I oppose.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:12:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose BILL# 1736 requiring All animals to be spray/neuter. The responsible animal owner is invested in their animal, keeping updated vaccinations, securing on their property, keeping them on leash and even taking classes. They are not the ones letting their animal free roam in the community, the homeless are.

I agree to have a spray/ neuter program, but don't penalize the responsible owner and their animal. HHS should be doing more researching, along with the lawmakers before blindsiding the public and the responsible cat & dog owners by proposing BILL# 1736. 2 other BILLS directed towards dogs, failed. Has HHS and lawmakers that are in favor of this BILL gone out to the American Kennel Club events that are open to the public to observe, ask questions and get educated on responsible animal owners? They would see that these events held throughout Oahu and the entire State, are not the cause of the overpopulation and free-roaming of animals.

There needs to be more funding, grants, help with the HHS, and the different County rescues and shelters to control the roaming cats & dogs.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 12:06:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steven Lee Montgomery	Testifying for Ahahui Malama I Ka Lokahi /Hawaiians for the Conservation of Native Ecosystems	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ahahui Mālama i Ka Lōkahi / Hawaiians for the Conservation of Native Ecosystems strongly supports the bill [HB 1736](#) because of the many health benefits for humans, cats and wildlife from a new public policy promoting sterilized and confined cats.

The dumping of outdoor cats is making public parks and waysides poopy patches of polluted, unhealthy landscapes. Cat colonies at public parks and beaches, even where used by canoe clubs, expose our visitors and families, especially children and water sports enthusiasts, to the stench of daily droppings, more dung flies, and the many diseases carried by cats. Please count the ways cat diseases cause harm on this POOP SHEET:

1. *Toxoplasma* is a contaminant on the order of [DDT](#), which [lingers in the environment](#) for years where it can threaten human and animal health. The Toxoplasmosis threat makes outdoor cats nothing less than a public health issue.

2. *Giardia* Infection is common in cats & dogs via Cyst shedding in poop as the infective stage which can survive for weeks in the environment. Cats have been reported to carry parasite genotypes found primarily in humans. Transmission occurs by the fecal-oral route, either by direct contact with an infected host or through a contaminated environment. Infections with *Giardia* are due to excretion of very resistant cysts by infected cats, resulting in a gradual increase in environmental infection pressure. Cysts are a source of reinfection for animals, particularly those in crowded conditions.

3. *Cryptosporidium hominis & felis* cysts are a source of reinfection for animals, particularly those in crowded condition. Feces should be removed as soon as possible and disposed of securely. Prompt and frequent removal of feces limits environmental contamination.

4. Hookworms (*Ancylostoma*) are worms that live in animals and can be transmitted to humans. Cats can become infected with several hookworms, then eggs are shed in poop to contaminate the ground. People become infected when hookworm larvae penetrate unprotected skin, especially when walking barefoot or sitting on contaminated soil or sand. This can result in a disease called cutaneous larva migrans (CLM), when the larvae migrate through skin causing inflammation. Wearing shoes and avoiding skin contact with sand or soil helps prevent infection. In subtropical climates, especially on beach exposures wear shoes to prevent skin contact with

sand. Routine veterinary care of cats, including regular deworming, will reduce environmental contamination with hookworms. Prompt disposal of animal feces to prevent eggs from hatching and contaminating soil is vital for control of this parasite (cdc.gov/parasites/zoonotichookworm)

TNR (trap-sterilize-return) is also terrible for cats themselves, so much so that PETA has come out against it. Cats get sick and good cat owners take them to a vet, but feral cats, once they are TNR'd, tend not to be easy to catch again. Plus feral cat colonies encourage more animal abandonment. Cat dumping problems on public lands have worsened. Please Vote for this amended bill. Mahalo

Steven Lee Montgomery, Ph. D. Board Member
Ahahui Mālama i Ka Lōkahi/Hawaiians for the Conservation of Native
Ecosystems manninga001@hawaii.rr.com

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:42:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Elkins	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed bill that would require all dogs to be spayed or neutered. While I fully support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce animal overpopulation, I believe this legislation is overly broad, ineffective, and potentially harmful in both the short and long term.

Responsible breeding plays a critical role in maintaining the health, temperament, and working abilities of many dog breeds. Ethical breeders carefully select based on genetic health testing, behavior, and adherence to breed standards. This process helps prevent inherited diseases, supports stable temperaments, and ensures the continuation of breeds that serve important roles in society—including service, therapy, search-and-rescue, and working animals. A mandatory spay/neuter law would effectively eliminate responsible breeding programs, leaving the future of many breeds in jeopardy.

Additionally, broad spay/neuter mandates fail to account for the nuanced decisions that veterinarians and owners must make regarding the timing—or necessity—of these procedures. Research increasingly suggests that early sterilization can have unintended health consequences for some, including increased risks of certain cancers, orthopedic issues, and hormonal imbalances. A one-size-fits-all legal requirement removes the ability for owners and veterinarians to make informed, individualized decisions based on a dog’s breed, age, and health status.

It is also important to consider the track record of similar laws in other states and municipalities. Mandatory spay/neuter policies have often failed to produce the intended reductions in shelter populations. In some cases, they have led to unintended consequences such as:

- Increased underground or unregulated breeding
- Reduced compliance due to enforcement challenges
- Financial strain on responsible pet owners
- A decline in reputable breeders, resulting in higher demand for poorly bred or imported

More effective alternatives exist. Policies that focus on education, accessible low-cost spay/neuter services, stronger enforcement of animal neglect laws, and targeted programs for

high-risk populations have demonstrated far better outcomes without penalizing responsible owners and breeders.

I urge you to consider these concerns carefully and oppose this bill in its current form. We all share the goal of improving animal welfare, but legislation must be thoughtful, evidence-based, and respectful of responsible dog ownership practices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

It is my understanding that this bill which only includes cats at this time, will likely be amended to include dogs with the same language used in bill HB 1594 and SB3012, which both failed to progress.

I oppose this bill.

There are NO details of enforcement, fees, rules. How can anyone get behind something so vague.

I show dogs in AKC events such as Obedience, Rally, Conformation. I travel to and from the mainland no less than 5 times per year, Inter-island roughly 8 times per year as well. To compete you must not be altered. If I read the suggested wording, this would cost me \$1300 per year to re-enter the state. This would make travel nearly impossible.

I rarely breed but when I do it is fully for my next generation. Any available puppies only go out to carefully screened owners and all are microchipped. I have a waiting list of screened families that have been waiting years for a puppy. I breed so rarely and most times keep for myself to show. This bill requiring spay/neuter would greatly impact the quality of animals available to citizens for pets. Can you imagine if the next pet you'd like to bring home to your family is an offspring of those running around wild? Mixed breed, unknown health, unknown temperament. AR groups would love for no animals to be in our lives but the reality is they are, we love them.

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. Owners of purebred cats and dogs are not the problem and they seem to be unfairly targeted to be a source of money.

The fees for reporting and the fines for violations seem excessive and are aiming regulations at the most responsible pet owners. Passing fees on to those who import for pet or competition does not seem to be the best way to deal with the problem but only charges those who have no choice when arriving, doing nothing about the amount of irresponsibly breeding cats and dogs running wild or being fed by citizens.

I highly support the funding of subsidized or low cost spay/neuter for cats and dogs. 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.

The HHS on my island, the Island of Hawaii, is not in any position to enforce any sort of requirements passed to them. They currently do not do any 'animal control' and if you find

a stray they wont accept them. Our island is currently doing all control and spay/neuter at private and non-profit groups run by donation.

Perhaps a property tax increase to cover animal control would be a better route? I would gladly pay for funding specific plans to *actually impact the problem* rather than charge folks coming in a 'fee' to do so with no real evidence it will help the true issue.

I would prefer to see actual data to show the number of animals in the system, how many S/N were performed, what breeds and ages they are. What district is more likely to have a need. All animals entering Hawaii are microchipped and monitored with documentation as arriving – this is already happening, the data is available. How does a new fee change what is already being collected? How many dogs and cats picked up running loose were these animals?

Please reconsider any support for this bill.

Nothing should pass that does not address the root of the issue and only generates more fees for the public to pay.

Sarah Woodworth

Pahoa HI

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:52:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

No to punishing your citizens who have pets. First it was cats, and now it's dogs too. Their pets are not the ones in need of homes. These pet owners are not responsible for the feral cat and stray dog issue you want to fix. My neighbors think their pets are their business, their kuliana, not yours. And you are also punishing military families who need to bring their family pets when they are sent here. Please vote NO on this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 4:07:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Reau	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:00:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Roemhild	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my opposition to any proposed legislation mandating the sterilization of dogs statewide. While I fully support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce animal overpopulation, a blanket sterilization requirement raises a number of concerns that I hope you will consider.

A mandatory sterilization law can have unintended public health and community consequences. When pet owners face costly or inflexible requirements to spay and neuter under this law, some may avoid licensing, veterinary care, or even relinquish beloved animals to shelters further defeating the purpose of this bill. This can increase shelter intake and strain municipal resources rather than alleviating them.

Such mandates may inadvertently penalize responsible owners and reputable breeders who support healthy breed preservation, genetic diversity, and responsible oversight of canine populations. Thoughtful breeding practices play an important role in maintaining healthy working animals, therapy dogs, service dogs, search and rescue, and well adjusted healthy family pets. Responsibly bred dogs and cats are not animals that are seen in overpopulated shelters. Responsible breeders purposefully match their well-bred puppies with responsible owners to avoid them entering into shelters. In fact, most responsible breeders require their puppy owners to the first right of refusal, meaning the puppy comes back to the breeder before being brought to a shelter.

There are health risks of early spay/neuter that have been proven. Early spay/neuter can lead to joint disorders, cancer and cognitive impairment if done at a young age. If these dogs being required to be sterilized are done early also increase the of owners relinquishing them to shelters due to the financial burdens of their long-term care.

Furthermore, research and animal-welfare organizations often recommend education, accessible low cost spay/neuter programs, community outreach, and enforcement of existing laws as more effective and humane solutions. Collaborative, incentive based approaches tend to yield better long term outcomes without placing undue burdens on responsible owners.

Please consider these concerns and oppose this bill in its current form.

It is my understanding that this bill which only includes cats at this time, will likely be amended to include dogs with the same language used in bill HB 1594 and SB3012, which both failed to progress.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:29:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am strongly opposed to this bill. It should be up to myself if I want to responsibly breed my dog or not get him neutered because I don't let him or her free roam, not the government! This will hurt legitimate dog breeders and create more backyard breeders! Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:30:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Moormann-Wright	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill, while seemingly well intentioned is misguided and will lead to multiple unintended consequences. It will effect the future of being able to add a quality/ health tested purebred dog to your local Hawai'ian families. There are many things that should be address, but this is the cart before the horse. Hawaii still allows dogs to be brokered and sold in pet stores, and rescues are importing dogs, we need better low cost spay and neuter programs, and we need to provide help and education to homeless and low income that are breeding animals trying to supplement their ability to live. This bill is so out of touch with the real issues. I strongly oppose.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 5:32:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1736

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

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

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sue Chipperton. I am a professional animal trainer and animal coordinator for film and television operating in Hawai‘i through my company, **Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV**. I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition** to HB 1736 and respectfully request that the Committee **decline to hear this bill**.

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

However, HB1736 does not realistically address the stated problems, and it creates significant unintended consequences for responsible animal owners and professionals who import animals lawfully, humanely, and with clear purpose.

HB 1736 is not aligned with the problems it claims to solve

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

The animals most frequently associated with free-roaming packs and unmanaged populations are not high-value imported purebreds arriving with owners who pay thousands of dollars to transport them legally and safely. Based on community reports and public news coverage, free-roaming dogs often correlate with unstable housing situations, inadequate access to veterinary

care, and lack of enforcement of existing laws. Feral cat colony issues are also commonly tied to gaps in coordinated TNR support, public education, and ecosystem-focused policy.

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

This bill penalizes responsible importers, not irresponsible owners

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

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

HB 1736 would force owners into either:

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

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

Conformation and responsible exhibition imports are directly impacted

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

Further, HB 1736 implies that imported intact dogs are meaningfully contributing to Hawai‘i’s overpopulation problem. **That implication is NOT supported by clear, transparent statewide data—especially considering how difficult it has historically been to obtain complete shelter and intake data across Hawai‘i.**

Data transparency and accountability should come before sweeping mandates

The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) Shelter Project tracks shelter data from public sources, but only two Hawai‘i shelters are currently listed (Hawaiian Humane Society and Maui Humane Society), and consistent statewide shelter and rescue data remain limited. Without

comprehensive public reporting, it is irresponsible to create broad new restrictions that assume “breeders” (or people importing intact animals) are driving overpopulation.

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

What would help instead

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

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

Conclusion

HB 1736 is a harmful bill that is not relevant to the goals it claims to achieve. It burdens responsible owners, exhibitors and professionals, and while failing to address the underlying drivers of Hawai‘i’s free-roaming animal problems and overpopulation challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems **not hear HB 1736**

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Sue Chipperton

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

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:28:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:51:42 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gwen Rulona	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good morning Representatives.

I am against HB1736. I show my dogs and they need to be intact. I don't want any amendments and add dogs into this and also have to get them neutered or have to pay a fee to keep them intact. I think it should be the responsible owners decision.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Gwen Rulona

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:05:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Davis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristen Davis. I am submitting testimony in OPPOSITION to the recent addition of dogs to HB1736 HD2, specifically the provision that would require proof of sterilization prior to import into Hawai‘i.

To be clear, my testimony is limited to the inclusion of dogs in this bill, which was not part of the original framing and was not clearly reflected in the bill’s primary description. The addition of such a significant policy change—impacting dog ownership, breeding, veterinary decision-making, and entire industries—deserves transparent, standalone consideration.

While well-intentioned, extending a mandatory sterilization requirement to dogs will produce the opposite of what Hawai‘i needs. It will incentivize irresponsible breeding, restrict access to ethical and health-tested dogs, undermine dog sports and working dog programs, and force one-size-fits-all medical decisions that should remain between owners and veterinarians.

1) This incentivizes backyard breeding and blocks ethical breeders

Ethical preservation breeders invest heavily in health testing (OFA/CHIC), genetic screening, temperament selection, and responsible placement practices. Many place dogs intact until physical maturity or under structured agreements requiring delayed sterilization.

Requiring sterilization prior to import effectively cuts Hawai‘i off from these programs.

At the same time, similar proposals have relied on breeder registries that lack meaningful oversight. These systems create a predictable loophole: anyone can register and import intact dogs without demonstrating ethical practices or accountability.

The result is fewer reputable options and increased demand being met by unregulated backyard breeders already on-island.

2) It dismantles dog sports, working dog development, and related economic activity

Dogs must be intact to compete in AKC conformation, and many sport and working dog prospects are intentionally imported intact for training, evaluation, and titling before a final sterilization decision is made.

This policy would effectively prevent Hawai'i residents from participating in conformation and severely limit access to high-quality sport and working dog prospects.

These activities are not niche—they support local clubs, trainers, events, and bring in out-of-state participants who contribute to Hawai'i's economy through travel, lodging, and services.

Eliminating the ability to import intact dogs dismantles this entire ecosystem.

3) Mandatory sterilization timelines are not medically appropriate

This provision forces sterilization decisions based on travel requirements rather than veterinary guidance.

Scientific evidence shows that optimal timing for spay/neuter varies by breed, size, sex, and intended use. Early sterilization has been associated in some dogs with increased risk of orthopedic disease, altered skeletal development, urinary incontinence, and certain cancers.

This is not an argument against spay/neuter—it is an argument against mandating a single medical timeline for all dogs regardless of individual health considerations.

4) It does not address the actual drivers of overpopulation

The dogs contributing to shelter intake in Hawai‘i are overwhelmingly the result of local, uncontrolled breeding, abandonment, and lack of enforcement—not intentional imports from responsible sources.

If the goal is to reduce overpopulation, more effective strategies include:

- Expanding access to low-cost, targeted spay/neuter programs
- Enforcing existing licensing and animal control laws
- Increasing microchipping compliance
- Addressing chronic irresponsible breeders already operating locally

Mandatory sterilization prior to import does not target these root causes.

Request to the Committee

I respectfully urge the Committee to remove dogs from HB1736 HD2 or address this issue through a separate, transparent process that allows for full stakeholder input.

Policies of this scale—impacting veterinary decisions, responsible ownership, and entire industries—should not be introduced without clear notice or folded into unrelated legislation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:18:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing to express my opposition to any proposed legislation mandating the sterilization of dogs statewide. While I fully support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce animal overpopulation, a blanket sterilization requirement raises a number of concerns that I hope you will consider.

A mandatory sterilization law can have unintended public health and community consequences. When pet owners face costly or inflexible requirements to spay and neuter under this law, some may avoid licensing, veterinary care, or even relinquish beloved animals to shelters further defeating the purpose of this bill. This can increase shelter intake and strain municipal resources rather than alleviating them.

Such mandates may inadvertently penalize responsible owners and reputable breeders who support healthy breed preservation, genetic diversity, and responsible oversight of canine populations. Thoughtful breeding practices play an important role in maintaining healthy working animals, therapy dogs, service dogs, search and rescue, and well adjusted healthy family pets. Responsibly bred dogs and cats are not animals that are seen in overpopulated shelters. Responsible breeders purposefully match their well-bred puppies with responsible owners to avoid them entering into shelters. In fact, most responsible breeders require their puppy owners to the first right of refusal, meaning the puppy comes back to the breeder before being brought to a shelter.

There are health risks of early spay/neuter that have been proven. Early spay/neuter can lead to joint disorders, cancer and cognitive impairment if done at a young age. If these dogs being required to be sterilized are done early also increase the of owners relinquishing them to shelters due to the financial burdens of their long-term care.

Furthermore, research and animal-welfare organizations often recommend education, accessible low cost spay/neuter programs, community outreach, and enforcement of existing laws as more effective and humane solutions. Collaborative, incentive based approaches tend to yield better long term outcomes without placing undue burdens on responsible owners.

Please consider these concerns and oppose this bill in its current form.

It is my understanding that this bill which only includes cats at this time, will likely be amended to include dogs with the same language used in bill HB 1594 and SB3012, which both failed to progress.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:33:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma-Lei Gerrish	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose this bill for multiple reasons, mostly related to the changes proposed by the Hawaiian Humane Society that would expand this bill to include dogs.

I am an animal lover who has fostered and adopted many cats, kittens, and stray dogs, all neutered and spayed after I rescued them. I am a big supporter of responsible animal ownership, however I do not think this bill is the way to do it. I am concerned that this bill was written without the expertise of people and organizations that understand responsible dog breeding, and the unique challenges of raising purebred dogs in Hawaii. Did you consult with local dog show clubs, local responsible breeders? Or consult with the American kennel club?

Responsible ethical breeders are likely the ones who will pay the "intact dog fees", while backyard breeders, puppy mills, and hunters will likely evade the fees and continue to over produce unwanted litters. This is unfair to responsible people like me and the many people I know in the dog community who do not contribute to pet overpopulation. Responsible breeders do not overproduce puppies, and place their puppies in carefully selected homes where they will either be spayed and neutered or carefully kept intact. These breeders should not be the ones being punished.

There is also a suggested ban/restriction on importing intact dogs. Imported dogs are often going to responsible breeders who need new genetics to maintain healthy bloodlines of purebred dogs. Hawaii has a small gene pool, and imports are essential to prevent inbreeding and maintain genetic diversity. The main source of unwanted litters of puppies is the dogs who are already in Hawaii, Not imported dogs.

There are also well researched health risks associated with early spaying and neutering of puppies. A neuter/spay law does not take this into consideration. Most puppies should not be spayed or neutered before they are done growing or they will experience skeletal changes and abnormalities that increase their risk of injury. I personally compete in dog agility with my dogs, a sport that requires dogs to be athletic and healthy. I do not spay/neuter my dogs before the age of 18 months because I want them to have long healthy lives. This bill would punish me even

though I have never bred a single litter and take great care to ensure that my dogs will never produce an unwanted litter.

Finally, even the current text of this bill relating to cats is unhelpful because it does not support Trap Neuter release programs. Any spay/neuter fund should support trap neuter release for cats because it is the most humane way to manage the feral cat population.

Please amend this bill to include funding for Trap Neuter Release, and please do not include dogs in the bill.

Sincerely,

Emma Gerrish

Paauiilo, HI, 96776

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:06:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

While providing more accessible spay and neuter services / funding is good, the bill seems extreme in punishing cat owners. This could lead one into believing the measure will eventually apply to all kinds of pets. It seems financially cruel to require more red tape just to own a pet. Additionally, the local government would seemingly be incumbered with further laborious effort whilst being spread thin enough already.

Arguments of invasive species fail to recognize the plain fact that humans do way more damage to the local environment. Oahu, the most urbanized of the islands, is at a point of no return largely due to prolonged human development.

As it is currently written, the bill targets all cat just for existing in this increasingly vacated state. For cat enthusiasts, it offers no amicable alternative, or room for remediation, just punishment for non compliance. The bill should be edited to instead focus on spay and neuter support.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:06:42 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacia Ohira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm opposed to HB1736 for many reasons. This bill will attack the good honest people who are already spaying and neutering animals that won't contribute to betterment of their breeds. The responsibility of the preservation breeder and purposefully bred animals will be hurt by this ridiculous bill. The pounds and the humane society almost never gets these purposefully bred animals in their care. The responsible breeders know where all there dogs are and have full control over them until they are well into their senior years. For those reasons and because I don't live in a communist country I oppose HB1736. Mahalo for allowing me to submit my testimony.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:13:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Ibaraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB1736 HD2. While I do support the funding of subsidized or low cost spay/neuter programs, I adamantly do not support mandatory sterilization program requirements for all cats and possibly dogs if amendments proposed by the Hawaiian Humane Society are accepted to modify this bill.

In order to compete in American Kennel Club events, dogs must be intact. Should this bill be modified to include dogs, you will deny me my right to compete in these events. The Intact Declaration Process mentioned seems very vague other than charging \$100 per declaration. How does this process guarantee exclusion from mandatory sterilization requirements other than charging people fees?

Purebred dog owners are very responsible and conscious of the care of their dogs. They would not release their dogs into the community to roam free and should not be targeted as the cause of overpopulation at the pet shelters.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:29:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kym Watabu	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kym Watabu, a concerned Oahu, Hawaii resident, lifetime animal lover and advocate. I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HB 1736.

HB 1736 implies that the feral/stray cat population in the State of Hawaii are a direct result of the importation of intact animals - without providing corroborating evidence.

This bill in its current form targets cats in its breadth and scope but I've seen that the Hawaiian Humane Society intends to propose amendments to include mandates for dogs in this bill. Any amendment adopted by this committee in this direction would be unfair as the canine community deserve a say in the future of their animals too.

Blanket sterilization mandates and import prohibition of intact animals is not the answer to pet overpopulation. Issuing fines to hardworking Hawaii pet owners with intact - not spayed or neutered - pets is not the answer to pet overpopulation.

The only redeeming parts of this bill are the proposed Spay and Neuter Special Fund, the income tax check-off provision, and public education efforts are the parts of this bill that will actually work and will likely make a difference in pet overpopulation — and they deserve to pass on their own merits. I urge the Committee to separate the fund provisions from the mandatory sterilization and import prohibition requirements, and to study the latter with adequate time for input from veterinarians, county officials, cat owners, and community caregivers before imposing criminal penalties.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kym Watabu

kym.watabu@gmail.com

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:37:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marja Rennholm	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable members,

I write in opposition of HB 1736.

To impose mandatory sterilization puts additional burdens on responsible individuals and yet imposes no penalties to residents who casually breed and offer their kittens/puppies for sale on the side of the highway.

Current medical studies are showing consistently that early sterilization can result in future health issues for the animals. We already have a lack of veterinary care in our State, so imposing mandatory sterilization on animals being imported or already residing in the State, by responsible owners places an undue burden of future veterinary medical costs upon them and the likelihood that they will also not be able to find care for their animals.

The problem of overpopulation already exists and that's what needs to be addressed. Mandatory early sterilization is not likely to fix a feral overpopulation and only penalizes responsible cat/dog owners.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:16:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathren Rosales	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am opposed to this bill because it does not address the real problem with animal over population in our state. This bill will negatively impact ethical breeders of purebred animals that conform to breed standard by making it illegal to keep and import intact animals for pure bred breeding program or even allow show animals into the state for sponsored AKC events. The ethical breeder is not the source of animal overpopulation. The real problem is stemming from common Hawaii animal owner who has mixed breed animals who do not properly over see their animals. These owners, who are already in our state and unethically do not spay/neuter THEIR MIXED breed animals are the problem. They should have mandatory spay/neuter requirements and face a penalty for non compliance. It should also be illegal to breed a purebred animal to a mixed bred animal as this is what many hunters do while trying to find the right qualities for their hunting program. These unethical people then dump their animals because the animal doesn't have the qualities they want. They are the ones who should be fined for continuing to breed mixed breed animals and not the owners of purebred animals importing to Hawaii to continue their purebred program. As a hobby breeder myself of Rhodesian Ridgebacks it is exceptionally difficult to find purebred stock in Hawaii that is unrelated. Importing intact new breeding stock to improve the DNA stock of purebred animals enhances the health of the breed. My animal contracts require spay/neuter and proof thereof because I do not want to contribute to the over population of our strained rescue system. I also have a 100% return to breeder policy should an owner not be able to care for the animal properly during its lifetime. I am not contributing to the overpopulation of animals in our shelters and neither are my puppy owners as they all have kept their animals for the life of the animal and have never surrendered an animal to a shelter or dumped an animal. We are ethical and love our purebred animals and the qualities of these purebred animals which are documented in the breed standard.

This bill may have good intentions, however, it will harm those that are ethical and want to preserve purebred standards. The bill should be amended to make mandatory all owners of mixed breed animals in the state of Hawaii to have their animals spay/neutered within one year. The state should also provide the island humane societies the ability to provide reduced fee spay/neuter to owners of mixed breed animals to incentive them to do so. It is EXCEPTIONALLY expensive on Maui to spay/neuter as Maui Humane society has nearly zero dog spay/neuter appointments at affordable fees and the local Maui veterinarians it appears have all colluded together to make it exorbitant to do so as they all seem to have the same pricing.

Please do not pass this bill as it does not address the root cause of Hawaii's mixed breed animal over population and will harm the purebred stock of Hawaii by not allowing new, diversified dna

to be introduced to our limited DNA pool.

Respectfully,
Kathren Rosales

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 1:06:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chance Kuhlmann	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in opposition to HB1736 relating to animal control in Hawai'i.

While the intent of this bill may be to improve public safety and animal management, I believe it is unnecessary, ineffective, and risks creating more problems than it solves.

First, Hawai'i already has existing animal control laws and enforcement mechanisms in place. Rather than introducing new regulations, the state should focus on properly funding and enforcing current laws. Adding another layer of legislation may create confusion, duplication of efforts, and unnecessary administrative costs without delivering meaningful improvements.

Second, this bill could place an unfair burden on responsible pet owners. Increased regulation often results in higher fees, stricter requirements, or penalties that disproportionately affect people who are already complying with the law. Responsible owners should not be penalized for issues primarily caused by neglectful individuals.

Additionally, there is concern that HB1736 may lead to overreach in enforcement. Broad or vague provisions can result in inconsistent application, potentially leading to unnecessary citations or actions against residents without clear justification. This could erode trust between the community and enforcement agencies.

The bill also does not appear to adequately address the root causes of animal overpopulation, such as lack of access to affordable spay and neuter services, public education, and community-based programs. Without investing in these preventative measures, stricter control policies alone are unlikely to produce long-term results.

Finally, resources spent implementing this bill could be better directed toward proven solutions, including supporting local shelters, expanding veterinary services, and strengthening community outreach programs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB1736. A more effective approach would focus on improving existing systems rather than introducing new and potentially burdensome regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 6:36:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Representatives,

I stand in **STRONG** opposition to HB 1736.

The Hawaiian Humane Society is submitting a number of bills under the pretense "animal welfare" this session. It is a ruse. While it may seem to be to address over population, it really is placing the blame on a State funded entity failing to do their JOB with the resources allocated (millions of dollars each year).

I urge you to vote **AGAINST** this measure. Animal overpopulation is a problem in this state, but it is due to a failure of the trap-neuter-release program which is proven to control feral populations. Force HHS to use its funding to implement county programs to provide no/low cost spay/neutering....because **THAT** is the humane way.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 6:44:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darlene Tsubota	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly recommend the committee do a through investigation on this bill because i truly believe you've been misinformed.

Please do not pass this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 7:54:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Jackson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my opposition to any proposed legislation mandating the sterilization of dogs statewide. While I fully support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce animal overpopulation, a blanket sterilization requirement raises a number of concerns that I hope you will consider.

Pediatric sterilization, particularly in large breed dogs (under 2 years old), is now medically proven to cause a long list of health issues including cancer, incontinence, and joint problems. Forcing responsible dog owners to physically harm their animals in a way that will lead to very expensive veterinary bills and early deaths is morally unethical and unacceptable. Owners who cannot afford these costly long term treatments will either end up surrendering these dogs to shelters or letting them go untreated and suffering. Sterilized dogs are not allowed to compete in AKC conformation shows. The state of Hawai'i has a very healthy population of dog show enthusiasts who travel from island to island for different venues. There will be a wide loss of income from show sites, food vendors, photographers, hotels, car rentals, and dog trainers/handlers. Not to mention, shutting down a multigenerational sport loved by many. Personally, my young son and I used to travel and show together. AKC supports a fantastic youth program and culture. It gives young kids a healthy hobby and goals to work towards. While most people considering this bill might not be familiar with the dog show community here, it's important to recognize and know that it's a serious sport who we have even had community members fly and compete in all the way to Westminster.

When pet owners face costly or inflexible requirements to spay and neuter under this law, some may avoid licensing and veterinary care.

Such mandates may inadvertently penalize responsible owners and reputable breeders who support healthy breed preservation, genetic diversity, and responsible oversight of canine populations. Behind them are decades of health tested and carefully considered pedigrees. Without them, there will be no way to maintain breeding practices that are crucial to provide healthy working animals (such as police canine, bomb sniffing, and nose detection dogs for agriculture work at airports and detecting coconut rhinoceros beetles), therapy dogs, service dogs, search and rescue, and well adjusted healthy family pets who are matched by activity level, grooming requirements, hypoallergenic breeds for people who want a pet but, suffer from allergies, or need a dog with a specific personality if they have children or are hunters etc.

Responsibly bred dogs and cats are not animals that are seen in overpopulated shelters.

Responsible breeders purposefully match their well-bred puppies and kittens with responsible owners to avoid them entering into shelters. In fact, most responsible breeders require their puppy/kitten owners to the first right of refusal, meaning the puppy or kitten comes back to the

breeder before being brought to a shelter.

Furthermore, research and animal-welfare organizations often recommend education, accessible low cost spay/neuter programs, community outreach, and enforcement of existing laws as more effective and humane solutions. Collaborative, incentive based approaches tend to yield better long term outcomes without placing undue burdens on responsible owners.

Please consider these concerns and oppose this bill in its current form.

It is my understanding that this bill which only includes cats at this time, will likely be amended to include dogs with the same language used in bill HB 1594 and SB3012, which both failed to progress.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 8:11:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please oppose this bill because it is misleading and does not include Trap/Spay-Neuter/Released animals. The cats must go to a sanctuary.

Section 4 of this bill will exempt the state or its hired contractors from animal cruelty laws and allow it to kill cats and dogs using kill traps, poison and shooting by calling it “predator control”. State agencies will be authorized to put kill traps and poison literally on the boundary lines next to private land cat colonies. They will be authorized to shoot cats and dogs the moment they step over a boundary line. Indoor/outdoor pets are also at risk of being killed.

We have gone from the Aloha state to the KILL KILL KILL state. How about some education on spay/neutering pets to our population? How about some humane laws and using the insane amount of money Animal Control reaps yearly to actually offer free spay/neuter programs? How about some aloha and education in dealing with these issues rather than arming murderous family members or associates and pals wanting KILL CONTRACTS with a right to torture and kill any animal in their uneducated to know the difference path?

All we get from you people is one bill after another destroying and selling out our aina to developers or making jobs to employ friends and relatives to kill innocent dumped pets by poor and ignorant pet owners. No provisions for finding lost pets in this bill. They'll be killed by subcontractors before being found by owners! It's nauseating. May all who support such filth, rather than Trap/Spay-Neuter and sanctuary programs reap what you sew ten-fold.

It's really getting sickening what you come up with to grift us and/or kill, kill, kill defenseless dumped pets while homelessness and hunger of our PEOPLE continue to plague our islands and the rich get richer as the builders keep building more condos and resorts. SICKENING!!!

17 March 2026

Testimony in Opposition to H.B. 1736 HD2 – Relating to Animal Control
Submitted by Duane Inoue, Cat Preservation Breeder

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Agriculture and Environment
Committee:

I respectfully oppose H.B. 1736 HD2 as drafted.

While the intent of H.B. 1736 HD2 is to reduce pet overpopulation, several provisions may unintentionally increase shelter intake and euthanasia of cats while creating significant enforcement, fiscal, and constitutional concerns for the State and counties.

In particular, the bill may:

- effectively eliminates current Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs,
- creates sterilization mandates that are difficult to enforce,
- imposes penalties disproportionate to comparable animal control violations, and
- may shift substantial costs to county shelters and taxpayers.

1. Elimination of Primary Cat Population Management Tool

Section 36(b) prohibits re-release of sterilized cats into the environment except placement into a “fully enclosed cat sanctuary.”

This effectively eliminates Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Trap-Neuter-Return-Management (TNRM) programs currently used by, and not limited to, following organizations:

- Hawaiian Humane Society (HHS)
- Maui Humane Society
- Moloka'i Humane Society
- O'ahu SPCA
- Hawai'i SPCA

- Aloha Kitty TNR
- CatFriends
- KAT Charities Animal Rescue
- Lucky Paws
- Joey's Feline Friend
- AdvoCATS, Inc.
- Aloha Animal Oasis
- Feline Foundation of Maui
- Hui Pono Holoholona / PAWS
- Rainbow Friends Animal Sanctuary

These programs sterilize free-roaming cats and return them to managed colonies where populations gradually decline over time.

Multiple peer-reviewed studies have demonstrated that high-intensity, sustained sterilization programs combined with adoption of socialized cats can lead to measurable long-term declines in free-roaming cat populations. Long-term studies in the United States and Israel have documented colony reductions of 30–80 percent over time when sterilization coverage is sustained.

Conversely, removal-only strategies often produce the “vacuum effect,” where new intact cats move into territories previously occupied by removed animals.

Effective cat population management is also important for wildlife protection. For this reason, policies should prioritize methods that are demonstrated to reduce populations over time rather than approaches that may unintentionally increase abandonment or shelter intake.

Policies that unintentionally increase abandonment, shelter intake, or unmanaged cat populations may ultimately undermine both animal welfare and wildlife protection goals.

Policies that remove effective sterilization and colony management tools may unintentionally increase free-roaming cat populations rather than reduce them.

Because most feral adult cats are not adoptable, prohibiting re-release may effectively convert many current programs into **Trap-Remove-Euthanize** systems.

2. Sanctuary Capacity Is Extremely Limited

The bill prohibits re-return of sterilized cats into the environment. However, it does allow placement of sterilized cats into “fully enclosed cat sanctuaries.”

However, Hawai‘i has very limited sanctuary capacity, as follows.

- Lanai Cat Sanctuary (Lanai; 700 to 800+ cats on their 3.5 to 4-acre facility, with capacity to manage around 1,000 or more as the facility expands; cats are primarily from Lanai)
 - Popoki Place Oahu Cat Sanctuary (Oahu; development phase)
 - Aloha Animal Oasis (Big Island; planning phase)
 - Puna Cat Sanctuary (Big Island; planning phase)
 - Cat Haven Hawaii (Big Island; under construction)
 - Akaula Cat Garden (Molokai; provides a home for over 70+ abandoned or abused cats)
- Hawaii Cat Foundation (Oahu; sanctuary not accepting cats since 2024)

These facilities cannot absorb the thousands of free-roaming cats currently managed through humane societies and community TNR programs.

If re-release of sterilized cats is prohibited, many cats currently returned to managed colonies may instead enter shelters.

Because most feral adult cats are not adoptable, this may result in:

- increased shelter intake
- increased euthanasia
- increased operating costs for county shelters.

3. Criminalization of Ownership of Indoor Intact Cats

Proposed §143 makes it unlawful to own a cat over five months old unless sterilized or subject to an intact declaration.

This provision criminalizes **mere ownership** of an intact cat — even when the animal is confined indoors and **incapable of contributing to free-roaming populations**.

Courts traditionally uphold animal control laws regulating conduct, such as animals running at large or creating a nuisance, rather than laws that criminalize mere ownership status when no public harm occurs.

This raises potential concerns regarding:

- due process
- overbreadth
- proportionality.

Without clear enforcement mechanisms, compliance may depend largely on complaint-based enforcement, which can lead to inconsistent application and administrative burden.

4. Structural Weaknesses in the “Intact Cat Declaration”

The intact declaration appears to function as a fee-based exemption rather than a targeted breeding oversight mechanism.

Concerns include:

- No requirement for proof of registration or responsible breeding standards
- Need for duplicative declaration to Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and then to county Animal Control Authority within 14 day period
- No inspection authority
- No litter reporting
- No limit on number of intact animals
- No enforcement clarity

The bill states that agencies shall provide a record of declarations “that may be used for enforcement purposes.” However, the bill does not explain how this information would actually be used in enforcement.

As written, the declaration may function largely as a self-certification loophole, allowing individuals to avoid sterilization requirements simply by filing a declaration.

5. Enforcement Is Unclear

The bill does not clearly explain how compliance would be monitored or enforced.

Key questions remain unanswered:

- How will indoor intact cats be identified?
- Will veterinarians be required to report intact animals?
- Are inspections authorized?
- Will enforcement rely primarily on complaints?
- Which agency will enforce the law: county animal control authorities, police, etc.?

Without clear enforcement mechanisms, the law may prove difficult and costly to implement.

6. Disproportionate Penalties

The bill imposes fines of \$500–\$1,000 per cat per violation, even when:

- the cat is indoors,
- no harm occurred,
- and there is no prior violation.

For comparison, many Hawai'i animal control violations begin at approximately \$50 for a first offense.

The proposed penalty structure may be viewed as disproportionate relative to comparable offenses.

7. Potential Fiscal Impact on County Shelters

If sterilized cats cannot be returned to managed colonies, county shelters may be required to intake large numbers of feral cats that are not adoptable.

This could result in:

- increased shelter operating costs
- increased veterinary costs
- increased staffing needs
- increased euthanasia.

Hawai'i shelters already intake thousands of cats annually, and most feral adult cats are not adoptable. Policies that eliminate re-release options may therefore increase euthanasia and shelter operating costs.

As a result, the bill may shift substantial financial burdens to county governments and taxpayers.

Recommendations:

Effective cat population management is also important for wildlife protection, which is why policies should rely on methods proven to reduce populations over time rather than those that may unintentionally increase of abandonment, shelter intake or euthanasia.

Given the concerns described above, I respectfully recommend that H.B. 1736 HD2 be deferred until the following alternatives are considered for future measures.

1. Allow continued use of Trap-Neuter-Return programs under regulated colony management standards.
2. Remove the prohibition on re-release of sterilized cats, which currently supports community-based population management.
3. Prioritize funding of the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to expand access to sterilization services statewide.
4. Conduct a statewide point-in-time estimate of free-roaming cat populations to establish a baseline for evaluating policy effectiveness.

5. Request the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) to review Resolution 19-2 (2019) regarding feral cat management and update recommendations based on more recent peer-reviewed scientific research. This resolution recommended that TNR or other efforts that support the feeding or re-release of feral cats into the wild or into public spaces should not be used.

However, the recommendation was based on scientific report from 2009. HISC should be looking at more current scientific reports

6. Develop a comprehensive statewide cat population management strategy through a multidisciplinary working group including veterinarians, wildlife experts, humane organizations, animal control agencies, cat/dog fancy, pet owners, and other stakeholders.

Conclusion

For the reasons described above, I respectfully urge the Committee to defer H.B. 1736 HD2 and use recommendations above to develop a better measure using a science-based, enforceable, and fiscally responsible statewide strategy for managing Hawai'i's free-roaming cat population.

.

Respectfully,

Duane Inoue

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 8:27:11 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lopaka poaha	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a citizen of Hawaii and a Native Hawaiian I oppose this bill, im Not sure why the government is adding dogs to a bill that was created for feral cats.. as a dog owner and hard working citizen of Hawai'i I lopaka Poaha don't see how dogs are a problem with in our state. Unless you folks are targeting dog breeders banding them to nooder or spade they're dog's! But for wat reason? Is because dogs are going to wild and breeding outrageous numbers of stray dogs? Or does it have to do with money!?! Most times I feel it's a money thing for most of you in the chairs of commanding officers that runs this state.. and if that is a fact. Please have more of a heart, be makaala to our dog community's.

It's states in the bible: God entrusted humans with charge over animals (Genesis 1:26), suggesting a duty to ensure their flourishing

he also mentions in Proverbs 12:10 "The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel."

dog handlers aren't cruel to there animals, the animals can speak for them selfs by they're loving and well trained behavior's..

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 8:38:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Dias	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. Forcing the spaying and neutering of pets to those that are responsible pet owners is inhumane and unwarranted. However, for those that invest their time, money, and life to care for and maintain the integrity of these beloved pets; we should not be forced to spay or neuter our animals. By stopping the natural breeding process, you are also stopping what is naturally supposed to happen in our environment. Next thing you know, we will not have real domestic pets, like cats and dogs, we will have AI pets, electronic animals; just like everything else that this world is now coming to. There must be a better solution than to force the spay/neuter on these valuable animals. It is evident that with this day and age, that domesticated cats and dogs alike, are much more cared for and growing in popularity. More and more people are using them as emotional support animals and service animals. By forcing the spaying and neutering of these animals coming into Hawaii, will eventually limit and all together eliminate all future domesticated, high quality pets from ever being bred here in Hawaii. It will cause irresponsible breeding of low quality animals from those that already have animals not spayed or neutered here in Hawaii, to interbreed, overbreed, and eventually not be able to reproduce. Please stop this bill from happening. I STRONGLY OPPOSE!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:48:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing to express my opposition to any proposed legislation mandating the sterilization of dogs statewide. While I fully support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce animal overpopulation, a blanket sterilization requirement raises a number of concerns that I hope you will consider.

A mandatory sterilization law can have unintended public health and community consequences. When pet owners face costly or inflexible requirements to spay and neuter under this law, some may avoid licensing, veterinary care, or even relinquish beloved animals to shelters further defeating the purpose of this bill. This can increase shelter intake and strain municipal resources rather than alleviating them.

Such mandates may inadvertently penalize responsible owners and reputable breeders who support healthy breed preservation, genetic diversity, and responsible oversight of canine populations. Thoughtful breeding practices play an important role in maintaining healthy working animals, therapy dogs, service dogs, search and rescue, and well adjusted healthy family pets. Responsibly bred dogs and cats are not animals that are seen in overpopulated shelters. Responsible breeders purposefully match their well-bred puppies with responsible owners to avoid them entering into shelters. In fact, most responsible breeders require their puppy owners to the first right of refusal, meaning the puppy comes back to the breeder before being brought to a shelter.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 10:33:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rob Lawrence	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 10:08:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Armitage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

I apologize for the lateness of this testimony.

I strongly support HB 1736 relating to animal control. I also support the Hawaiian Humane Society's proposed SD1. I volunteer for Lucky Paws, a no kill cat rescue on Oahu. I have seen the worst of the worst of the plight of free roaming cats on Oahu. We absolutely need to curb the continued proliferation of free roaming cats on Oahu, for the cats' sake and for environmental reasons. Requiring cats to be fixed at 5 months of age, and all cats and dogs being brought into Hawaii to be spayed or neutered (with exception for show cats/breeders) would go a long way to help us reduce the suffering. The Spoy/Neuter fund will make a huge difference for pet owners wanting to fix their furbabies but not having the resources to do so. This bill is much needed in the State and would be a huge help to our rescue efforts. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Andrea Armitage

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 4:11:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1736 as it's a sensible way of reducing the overpopulation of cats on the island. It also supports a funding component for pet owners which enables this to be done sustainably and support the community without adding financial burden onto pet owners.

March 17, 2026

To: House of Representatives
From: Ku‘ualoha Ho‘omanawanui

Re.: Support for HB 1736

Aloha Legislators,

I support HB 1736 for multiple reasons, including the protection of native birds, many of which are critically endangered. Feral cats also pose a risk to other native and endangered animals, including marine mammals (monk seals, whales, dolphins) because of toxic plasmosis, and to humans as well. I live several miles inland from Kāne‘ohe bay, along a small stream that feeds into the ocean. There is an established feral cat population in the bushes along the stream, and even though people feed them, they still hunt the wild birds and leave carcasses everywhere—another kind of health hazard, especially for young children who frequently play nearby. I am unaware of any studies on this tiny stream, but can only image all the feline fecal matter being carried down into the bay over the years, particularly after such heavy rains as we’ve experienced recently.

Cats are domestic animals who require a level of human care they do not receive in the wild. Feral cats unnecessarily suffer from illness, injury, starvation, and cruelty from human neglect and apathy. Sterilization is humane both both the individual animal, and for the unwanted babies who will not emerge into such a life of suffering. While my primary concern is for native, endangered wildlife, I do have compassion for the cats. I also have compassion for the introduced birds, such as shama thrushes, various doves, and other species who are needlessly killed by the cats. I have witnessed this too many times to count, and even when cat colonies are fed, they still hunt birds for fun. I have been involved in a local bird rescue for 6 years now, in part because if I can help keep the introduced bird populations healthy, it can spill over to keep our native species healthy as well (I regularly see introduced and native species mingle, particularly in locations such as Kawainui Marsh). I am outside daily to monitor the birds and cats, and regularly find dead birds the cats kill and leave behind. On many occasions I have witnessed this directly, much to my horror. The cats will even climb on my roof and have torn through bird netting on my second floor townhouse lanai to get at birds just to kill them.

As part of their ongoing efforts at conservation and protecting native flora and fauna, New Zealand recently enacted a “Predator Free 2050” initial with a goal of eradicating feral cats—which Conservation Minister Tama Potaka has described as “stone-cold killers” because of their devastating impact on native wildlife—by the year 2050. It is my hope that Hawai‘i follows suit, as we are one of the most biorich locations in the Pacific, with the highest number of native species in need of protection.

Humane efforts to reduce the feral cat population are sorely needed, and this bill is an important step. It will help up get to a more balanced ecosystem, and provide more possibilities for protecting our endangered wildlife. As a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi aloha ‘āina practitioner, our manu (birds) are our ‘ohana. They are a kūpuna (ancestor) species born into the Kumulipo (Hawaiian chant of

creation) way before kanaka (people), the second species only to marine life (corals & fish). It means they are ancient and we trace our genealogies through oral and later written histories back through Polynesian and the wider Pacific, where our native birds play major cultural roles, including as ancestors and ‘aumākua (family guardians and protectors).

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this bill. Please pass it.

me ke aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kumalo Iomanawanui". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui
Ha‘ikū, Kāne‘ohe, Ko‘olaupoko, O‘ahu

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. No. 1736, Relating to Animal Control

March 17, 2026

Aloha Honorable Members of the Hawaii Senate:

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-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 3:54:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Dame	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think this is a reasonable bill that will help to reduce pet overpopulation by establishing a "Spay and Neuter Special Fund" and requiring the surgical sterilization of cats over five months old with reasonable exceptions. I frequently go out to a horse stable in Waimanalo and have over the last 8 yrs. Initially, there were a handful of strays that we fed; now, this has grown to close to 15-20 cats and repeated pregnancies. We catch and spay and neuter when we can, but overpopulation of cats is just heartbreaking for those cats who must live outside. We also don't want this issue compounded by bringing unsteralized cats into Hawaii. It is not unreasonable for cats over 5 mos to be spayed and a penalty fee assessed against those in noncompliance might be a good deterrent for ignoring the law.

to

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:53:16 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas J Baranouskas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Cats are a key factor in the decline of endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, 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 spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage, birth defects, and can be fatal.
- The beloved Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins 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 can make great pets, but we must manage their population together to eliminate the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:05:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Holder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support funding for sterilizing feral cats. I live by a county park on Kauai, And there are so many cats, tourist and locals feed them daily, even though there are signs asking them not too. We need to get their numbers under control.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:33:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Feral free-roaming cats are desimating our native bird population. Please support HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:58:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Good evening, Hawaii State Legislators!

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

I'm writing in support of HB 1736 HD2.

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 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.

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 HD2, and mahalo nui for all of your hard work.

We truly appreciate it!

Warm regards,

Amy Fonarow

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:52:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Senate President Kouchi & Members of the Senate,

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 unsterilized 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

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:19:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Pence	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLEASE fund control of feral cats. thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 6:46:52 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

Please vote in favor of HB1739. This bill is a critical step in protecting our native manu. By reducing cat breeding in Hawai'i, this will help control feral cat populations and in turn protect our cherished native birds. Controlling feral cats is also key to protect human health and the health of other native animals; cats carry toxoplasmosis which poses serious health threats when contracted. HB1739 will help protect native species and the people of Hawai'i now and for generations to come.

Mahalo nui for your time,

Emma Stierhoff

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 4:03:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe callero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in favor of HB1736 as this is a responsibility issues. Having a pet, specifically a cat, is a responsibility to care for the wellbeing of the cat and the wellbeing of our neighborhood and all creatures, by taking responsibility to not allow irresponsible breeding and the devastation it can cause to Hawaii's native animals and birds.

By sterilizing all pet cats by the age of 5 months, the State will take respnsibility to protect our land, as pet owners have not been taking responsibility to do this, so the burden falls upon the State.

We ask that the State take seriously their responsibility to protect Hawaii and it's precious heritage.

Thank you.

Joe Callero

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 5:25:07 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julieta Aguilera-Rodriguez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Most times I drive around the island specially early I see cat roadkill. More than mongoose, goats or pig roadkill. The crisis is very obvious. My family and friends have indoor cats and I think they are loving companions. The problem is irresponsible pet owners who let their pets go outside their property as well as saviorists who insist on populating the environment with creatures which do not belong there instead of putting efforts in cat sanctuaries. Many times these irresponsible human behaviors are justified with the old idea that the cats control the rat population: in my personal experience the only time we had rats was during covid when pet adoption got people to have more dogs pooping in their yard and cats to poop everywhere without picking up the waste: rats eat predigested food (poop). Once neighbors were informed the rat infestation went away. More recently I have seen five cat roadkill in the last two days. Please get this bill passed. Irresponsible pet owners / saviorists are in denial and can be aggressive but we need to stand firm so they stop deflecting responsibility and instead pay attention and understand the damage they are forcing into our beautiful environment, home to not only us and our pets but unique endangered creatures.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 2:50:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Traina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to voice support for HB1736 which would establish a requirement that cat owners spay/neuter their cats, as well as set up a fund to help cat owners pay for this if they are not able to afford it. I am an avid birder and the importance of keeping the cat population in check is a key part of keeping our native, local and endangered birds from going extinct. It would be best if cats were kept indoors, but if not, at least let's keep them from reproducing while they're outside. Please pass this measure.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:14:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Nibert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I am writing urging you to help pass HB 1736. I love animals and have made working with them and helping them my life's work. I have a background in animal control and sheltering, and currently work as an emergency veterinary nurse. I also was on the board of a private rescue that primary operated to provide financial assistance for underprivileged families and their pets in need.

The reason I feel the need to tell you this is because I have seen so, so much suffering. I have seen suffering in the form of orphan neonate kittens and puppies that have had to be put down or starve to death because no one is able to take them in for 'round the clock care. I've seen it in the form of a family struggling to provide for their own plus yet another unplanned litter because they don't have funds for spay or neuter. I've seen it in the form of former coworkers and friends killing themselves financially and medically trying to make the world a better place because no one seems to care or help with the plain fact that there isn't one more free kennel or place to put another cat. I've seen facilities that warehouse animals who languish because no one wants to raise their "kill stats" for fear of losing public support and funding. I've seen it in feral colonies, where animals are spayed and neutered and re-abandoned with no medical follow-up or medication and continue to decimate our precious native wildlife, which I have witnessed suffering from cat attacks.

All of this suffering is avoidable. The first step is to pass this bill. By hitting the most basic source of the problem-- rampant breeding and invasive species/pet overpopulation-- we will be able to more efficiently use funds for animal control and dial back the ravaging of our amazing wildlife. I plead for you to be part of the solution to a probelm that is increasingly unwinnable with our current landscape.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 9:42:41 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Bache	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1736 as it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free-roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i. This will help protect endangered native birds already in decline due to predation. Feral cats also spread toxoplasmosis, posing serious risks to human health in addition to native wildlife. Immediate action is needed to prevent further irreversible loss of wildlife and ecosystem balance.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 6:09:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Fahy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill! It is so necessary to both save native birds but also to protect my property from the 10 or more roaming cats that use my property to toilet. They are invasive and creating an unhealthy environment for me and my family. There is no way to combat the rise of these cats (homeless and some having homes but being "outdoor" cats) in our Kahaluu neighborhood. Save the people and save the native species....

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 11:45:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glenie	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha,

i'm an animal advocate and conservationist who's led and been involved in successful land use protection campaigns on Hawai`i Island for over 4 decades. Protecting native species while humanely caring for the rest of our furry, feathered, or otherwise live creatures is top on my daily "to do" list.

the subject of homeless animals is contentious and complicated. however, sticking to the primary concept of doing what's humane for all living creatures can help keep us all on track. HB1736 is a positive attempt to bring conservation and animal advocate groups together. It may have morphed again since i first heard about it, but workable, enforcable, empathetic feral cat legislation must include:

- County and state-supported sanctuaries for safe and humane protection of rescued cats.
- County and state supported affordable and accessible spay and neuter programs. (Insisting that all cat owners pay \$100 to spay or neuter their pet, espeically if they have multiple cats, can be an insurmountable burden that can turn compassionate pet owners into criminals if they can't afford those fees.)
- Widespread community outreach so people know there are alternatives to dumping pets they can't afford or are otherwise unable to keep.
- Support TNR colonies and advocates by allowing money from this program to be used in TNR situations until alternatives exist.

hawai'i island passed a cruel Bill 51 that penalizes people who help homeless animals on county (aka public) lands. hopefully this state legislation will pave the way for alternatives to black and while laws that divide communities while providing no logical, humane recourse other than leaving homeless cats to die on our streets.

mahalo for dealing wisely with this delicate topic.

sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 11:48:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/18/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Iris Pozzi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the honorable committee,

I am writing in support of HB 1736 HD2 to help reduce the number of animals in need of homes. Mahalo