

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau

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GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**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:

House Committee on Finance

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2026
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

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 moneys 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.

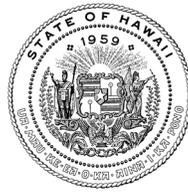
DOTAX notes that if this bill takes effect as proposed for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2026, the estimated revenue gain is as follows:

Special Fund Impact (\$millions)

FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	FY 2032
\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1

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

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



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

SETH S. COLBY, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY SETH S. COLBY, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1736, H.D. 2

March 4, 2026
10:00 a.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1736, H.D. 2 does the following: 1) makes it unlawful for any person to own a cat over the age of three months unless the cat is surgically sterilized or the conditions for certain exceptions are met; 2) establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund (SNSF) within B&F to finance spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free roaming cats; 3) establishes an advisory committee to assist B&F in establishing SNSF disbursement eligibility criteria and procedures; 4) allows taxpayers to contribute \$5 of their income tax refund to be deposited into the SNSF; 5) requires the Directors of Finance for the City and County of Honolulu and Counties of Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui to design and issue a special number plate for registered motor vehicle owners supporting the SNSF; 6) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 27 for deposit into the SNSF; and 7) appropriates an unspecified amount of special funds out of the SNSF in FY 27 for the purposes of the SNSF.

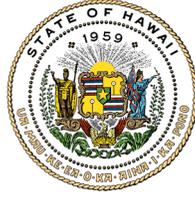
B&F strongly believes that it is not the appropriate agency to administer the SNSF and its related program functions. B&F does not possess the required subject-matter expertise on spaying and neutering animals or any other related veterinary services as these subject areas are outside of the purview of the department. Further, with the ongoing statewide financial management replacement project, B&F staff are fully engaged and committed to working on the project and doing its regular work; therefore, additional staff and funding would be necessary to administer the SNSF.

B&F recommends that funds be appropriated directly to the counties instead because they have historically been responsible for animal control functions. The counties can then allocate these funds to entities best able to perform the desired services.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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 House Committee on
FINANCE

Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

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.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 2, 2026

To: Chair Rep. Chris Todd
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi
and Members of the Committee on Finance

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 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m., Room 308 & 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.

Imposing a spay/neuter requirement for cats already in the state and those being brought into Hawai'i would also help reduce the population of Free-Roaming cats.

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 committee to lend its strong support. Mahalo for your consideration.

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



Attn: House Committee on Finance
RE: HB1736

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

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



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Cotati, California 94931

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aldf.org

March 4th, 2026

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

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance,

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

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:06:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Collins	Bird and Bee Hawaii Animal Sanctuary	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- It 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 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.

**Testimony of American Bird Conservancy
In Support of HB 1736_HD2 Relating to Animal Control
House Committee on Finance | March 4, 2026 | 10:00 AM**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **strong support for HB 1736_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**. Many of Hawai'i's cat owners have already chosen to spay or neuter their cat voluntarily, but further encouragement and support is needed to spay or neuter the rest. Spaying or neutering pet cats not only benefits the cat and owner but also eliminates undesirable breeding, which contributes to the cat overpopulation and resulting environmental and public health risks. 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'ō (Newell's Shearwater) and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), two species which have experienced [94% and 78% population declines](#), respectively.

Cats can also carry a large number of infectious parasites and diseases that put people and wildlife at risk. For example, *Toxoplasma gondii*, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis in birds and mammals, is excreted in cat feces. A single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T.*

Contact

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



gondii eggs (called “oocysts”) into the environment via its feces, and these oocysts remain infectious for months to years. This parasite is a serious risk for Hawai‘i’s wildlife, [including Hawaiian Monk Seals](#), and has long been recognized as a public health risk in the state.

HB 1736_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

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

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

We would support a spay and neuter funding bill IF the age restriction and declaration stipulation were removed. The main issue is not people having intact cats, it’s their (in)ability to access and pay for the sterilization process. Funding veterinarians and spay/neuter programs directly, holding more events, and holding events closer to low income / rural areas would help bring the solution to the people who need it most. These people who don’t have transportation and/or access to the programs are usually in the low income category who don’t have the funds to pay for the surgery and therefore will also not have the funds to pay for the extremely high fines that are consequential to having an intact cat. Tracking every single unfixed cat is not important nor feasible. Getting the funding to the veterinarians and programs is the key. Amend this bill to strictly spay/ neuter funding without the age restriction and intact cat declaration and get the already in place spay/ neuter programs the support they’ve been needing. This will also give private veterinarian practices the motivation/ incentive for them to help out more.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:30:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawaii	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

HB1736 has morphed significantly during its journey through committee hearings. What would have been a plus for the community cats and their caregivers would offer a poison pill - monetary support (which is not a given) in return for building cat "sanctuaries" -to house thousands of felines - which I believe you know is quite impossible. If you approve this measure as written, how do you plan for enforcement? I realize that philosophical queries are not proper fodder for the Finance Committee. I simply ask that you defer HB1736. It is irreparably flawed.



The Wildlife Society
Hawai'i Chapter

PO Box 22192
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96823-2192

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the House Committee on Finance,

The Wildlife Society (TWS), Hawai'i Chapter is composed of wildlife professionals within the State of Hawai'i. TWS Hawai'i Chapter is dedicated to the conservation and preservation of flora and fauna endemic to the Hawaiian Islands.

TWS Hawai'i Chapter submits this testimony in support of HB 1736. TWS supports reducing the reproduction of cats through increased funding and access to sterilization. We support the funding of cat sterilization efforts if the funding does not go towards efforts that release cats outdoors. We encourage cats to be kept indoors because it protects the cats themselves, their human families, and wildlife as well. Indoor cats generally live longer healthier lives. They are less likely to be harmed by physical threats including other cats, dogs, and cars. They are also less likely to contract diseases and bring them home to their families both animal and human. Notable diseases that can pass between cats, other animals, and humans include COVID-19 and Avian Influenza. Outdoor cats also pose a dual threat to wildlife in the form of predation and transmittal of diseases including Toxoplasmosis.

TWS supports the limited exceptions to required sterilization in HB 1736 and the creation of a declaration system that will allow the Counties to keep track of intact cats coming into the State.

TWS supports the reduction of cats on the landscape. TWS also supports the funding of reduced-cost sterilization of all non-native animals including cats and dogs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 364. Should you have any further questions please contact the TWS Hawaii Conservation Affairs Committee at tws.hi.cac@gmail.com .

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:53:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Johnson	Friends of Kauai Wildlife Refuge	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am in support of bill 1736. As an employee of the Friends of Kauai Wildlife Refuge I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of the feral cat proliferation on our birds and sea life we work so hard to protect.

This bill will provide a means to encourage folks to spay and neuter their pets which helps reduce the ever increasing numbers of cats that are abandoned and become wild.

This is a reasonable and responsible solution and though not directly affecting the existing feral population, it will have some effect on reducing future numbers.

Seems like a no-brainer to me!

Mahalo Barbara Johnson

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:11:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Howard Webster	The Cat Fancirs Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1736 HD2, the spay/neuter fund bill, has been amended twice, yet the mandatory spay/neuter mandate for cats remains. All cats over the age of five months, whether already on the island or when imported, must be sterilized unless the owner obtains a \$100 intact cat declaration. This would be in addition to any local licensing or registration requirements. This is in addition to any intact cat and breeder licensing fees imposed by local governments.

Preservation cat breeding is a very expensive hobby, and adding to that expense will do little to reduce community cat numbers, as only 3-5% of cats are pedigreed. It does not benefit pedigreed cat breeders to allow their cats to roam outside and risk their cats getting impregnated by random-bred males or exposed to disease, potentially putting their entire breeding program at risk. Show breeders sell their cats and kittens already sterilized or with a sterilization requirement. They are not contributing to the community cat problem Hawaii is experiencing, and few people will allow a cat costing thousands of dollars to roam at large.

Pet owners are unlikely to keep cats intact if they can afford to sterilize them - 80% of owned cats are sterilized without punitive fines. In urban areas, that rate can go over 90%. Intact cats are just not fun to live with, with all the calling and marking of territory by both sexes. The spay/neuter fund will help low-income pet owners access sterilization services. Unfortunately, it won't help negate the shortage of veterinary professionals necessary to provide those services

The amendments also eliminated the exception for cats temporarily in the state. Depending on how broadly "import" is interpreted, it could be difficult for out-of-state attendees to attend cat shows in the state.

The success of a spay/neuter fund is not dependent on mandating sterilization for cats. Making low- or no- cost sterilization available in low-income and rural areas will do more to reduce the number of intact random-bred cats than punitive legislation that penalizes both low-income

families and preservation cat breeders. HB 1736 should be opposed in favor of legislation that is more narrowly tailored to the stated goal of reducing the feral and unowned cat population in the state.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:44:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Paul	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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:14:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Medeline Harkins	CFH and Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair and Members of the Committee

From: Cat Fanciers of Hawaii Cat Club (CFH) – breeders and pedigreed cat owners

Subject: Opposition to bill as written; request for amendments focused on spay/neuter funding

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

The breeders and pet owners of the Cat Fanciers of Hawaii Cat Club (CFH) respectfully submit this testimony in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to this bill **as it is currently written**.

CFH is a local non-profit cat club affiliated with the international Cat Fanciers’ Association. Our members are dedicated **breed preservationists** who work to maintain healthy, stable bloodlines and genetic diversity in pedigreed cats—many of which are rare, with very limited breeding programs worldwide. Responsible breeders are not “in it for the money.” In reality, ethical breeding is costly and involves significant ongoing expenses including genetic and health testing, veterinary care, high-quality nutrition and supplements, proper husbandry, and the importation of breeding stock to ensure genetic diversity and reduce inherited disease risk.

As responsible breeders and owners, our cats are **not permitted to free roam**. This is standard in breeder contracts and repeated throughout the adoption process: pedigreed kittens and cats must be **indoor-only** with no unrestricted outdoor access. For both welfare and biosecurity, responsible breeders do not allow animals to roam where they can be injured, killed, or exposed to disease. Many breeders already place kittens as altered (spayed/neutered), or require altering by contract—often by around six months—because some kittens are physically too small for sterilization at the time they go home.

CFH members are part of an established national and international registry and community with strict standards and bylaws, paid dues, regular local meetings, and annual association participation. Importantly: **responsible pedigreed cat breeders are not the drivers of Hawaii’s feral cat overpopulation problem**. We support addressing pet overpopulation, but we strongly

object to policies that penalize compliant, regulated, indoor-only breeders and owners for issues they did not create.

Our concern is that the bill's enforcement structure will largely impact **only the small number of responsible people already following rules**, while individuals contributing most to the feral cat population will remain noncompliant. If the bill's intent is to reduce feral overpopulation, targeting registered, contract-bound, indoor-only breeding programs is **misdirected** and will not meaningfully address the root cause.

We would support spay/neuter legislation if amended to remove the age restriction and intact cat declaration requirements. The central barrier is not simply the existence of intact cats—it is the lack of affordable access to sterilization services. The most effective approach is to increase spay/neuter capacity by **funding veterinarians and spay/neuter programs directly**, expanding clinic availability, increasing events, and placing services closer to rural and low-income communities where transportation and cost are major obstacles. High fines will not solve the problem when people cannot afford the underlying procedure or access services in the first place.

Tracking every intact cat is not realistic or feasible at a statewide scale. The best path forward is to **direct resources to the solution**: fund and expand existing spay/neuter programs and incentivize private veterinary participation. Please amend this bill to focus strictly on **spay/neuter funding and access**, without the age restriction and intact cat declaration provisions.

For these reasons, CFH respectfully asks you to **HOLD this measure** as written, or **AMEND** it to a funding-and-access bill that targets the real barrier to sterilization and meaningfully reduces feral overpopulation.

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

Respectfully,

Medeline Harkins

Cat Fanciers of Hawaii Cat Club (CFH) – breeder/pedigreed cat owner

myztikittyz@gmail.com, (415) 850-8702



Hawai'i Audubon Society

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

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

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Committee Members,

I 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: 3/2/2026 5:23:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT! Among other reasons, Toxoplasmosis from cats can kill threatened monk seals.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:13:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB1736 Relating to Animal Control is very important. It 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.

As we understand that the size of cat populations can be problematic to society and the cats can suffer as a result of this, we consider it a very desirable move.

This version of HB1736 Relating to Animal Control resolves the concerns of Hawaiian Humane Society they had about enforcement and as it has their strong support now we beg to endorse the Bill.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:31:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Kaua'i Albatross Network stands in FULL SUPPORT of HB1736. The feral cat population in Hawai'i has spun way out of control, with hundreds of thousands of abandoned cats living in every conceivable area. They have driven several species of our precious and irreplaceable native birds to the edge of extinction. PLEASE PASS THIS MEASURE.

With great respect,

Hob Osterlund, Founder

Kaua'i Albatross Network

Re: HB1736

Testimony in opposition with suggested amendments.

Rep. Todd and Members of the House Committee on Finance::

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

The Pacific Pet Alliance (PPA) opposes HB1736 as written. PPA supports the creation of a spay/neuter fund. Our compassion for animals goes beyond just domestic pets. We empathize with the conservation efforts to protect and save our native Hawaiian wildlife from a domestic animal now deemed an "invasive species/predator". We agree that the spay/neuter portion of this bill will definitely help to address this problem.

PPA objects to the portion of the bill that unfairly targets pet owners who choose to bring in intact cats to Hawaii. As stated in previous testimony for both this bill and for SB3012 which addresses both cats and dogs, the State Department of Agriculture is unable to provide a break down of the 23,000 animals that were imported in to Hawaii in 2024. While this figure of 23,000 imported animals sounds alarming, there is no data on how many are dogs vs cats, how many are already surgically sterilized, how many were brought over as working dogs (stock dogs for ranchers, military dogs, TSA dogs, dogs who do detection work, etc.), how many are service dogs, and how many intact animals are brought in for competitions like cat shows. There's also no data on how many times the same animals are counted multiple times instead of just once. My own personal pet left Hawaii 4 times in 2024 to compete on the mainland. Is he considered 1 of the 23,000 or 4? Will this bill if passed mean that I will have to pay \$100 once or an additional \$100 each time he re-enters Hawaii. Animals who temporarily leave Hawaii automatically pay a minimum of \$135 quarantine reentry fee every time they reenter the state.

According to the local Cat Fanciers Association clubs, there are about 50 members of both clubs and out of those 50, about 10 actively breed pedigreed cats. Cats, unlike dogs, can not utilize reproductive techniques such as artificial insemination. Cats need a live breeding to reproduce and sometimes involves transporting one of the breeding pair in or out of the state. The local CFA clubs have reported that their cat shows have entries of less than 100 cats and that over 50% of their entries are entered in classes where the cats are already surgically sterilized. Cats that have been surgically sterilized are easier to live with and make better pets. Cats sold as pets have spay/neuter agreements as part of the sales contracts. The CFA also offers a household division at their cat shows. Cherished family cats acquired from humane societies and rescue organizations are shown in the same venue as the pedigreed cats.

The Pacific Pet Alliance strongly recommends this committee to delete the requirement of an intact cat declaration as it unfairly targets such a small number of dedicated cat fanciers. Cat shows teach examples of responsible cat ownership and inclusiveness by combining both the pedigreed cat and the household pet at their shows.

We hope that this committee will help foster the current situation of inclusiveness within the cat community by amending this bill to delete the intact cat declaration. By doing so, PPA feels this committee will find you will have 100% support for the funds badly needed to help address the problem of free roaming cats across Hawaii.

The Pacific Pet Alliance thanks this committee for the opportunity to testify.

Lynn Muramaru

Pacific Pet Alliance

Board Member



March 3, 2025

The Kauai Community Cat Project (KCCP) opposes, unless amended, HP 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 kittens 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 spayed/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 | kauaicomcommunitycats.org

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 4:44:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kat Miller	Hawaii SPCA	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2 March 2026

Thank you for allowing me to comment on H.B. No. 1736 H.D. 2, Relating to Animal Control. I respectfully oppose H.B. 1736 H.D. 2, as drafted. While I strongly support funding for sterilization programs, the enforcement structure and prohibitions in this measure will undermine existing effective programs and may increase euthanasia and shelter intake.

I. Spay and Neuter Fund – Lack of Definition and Scope

The bill establishes a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce “pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population,” yet it does not define “pet.”

Under HRS §711-1100, “pet animal” includes dogs, cats, domesticated rabbits, guinea pigs, domesticated pigs, and certain birds. Absent

clarification, counties could expend funds on species unrelated to free-roaming cat population control, diluting the bill’s stated purpose.

If the legislative intent is to address free-roaming cats, the fund should:

- Be limited specifically to cats; and
- Require annual reporting identifying:
 - Number sterilized
 - Sex of animals
 - Final disposition (adoption, sanctuary, return, euthanasia)
 - Associated veterinary services provided

The bill also fails to define “associated veterinary care.” Without clarification, funds could potentially be used for euthanasia of intact cats, which would contradict the stated purpose of reducing overpopulation through sterilization.

II. Prohibition on Re-Release Conflicts with Evidence-Based Practice

Section 36(b) prohibits re-release of sterilized animals into the environment, except placement into a “fully enclosed cat sanctuary.”

This provision effectively eliminates Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Trap-Neuter-Return-Management (TNRM) programs, which are currently utilized

by:

- Hawaiian Humane Society
- 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

The Hawaiian Humane Society’s Feline Fix Program for the City and County of Honolulu (CCH) would no longer be viable if re-release is prohibited. The CCH will not be able to subsidize no-fee spay/neuter surgeries using proposed Spay and Neuter Special Fund for free-roaming/ community cats at participating spay/neuter clinics on O‘ahu. The purpose of the program is to sterilize these cats and return them to the colonies where they make their home.

A. Scientific Considerations.

Peer-reviewed studies demonstrate:

1. TNR stabilizes and gradually reduces colony populations when sustained.¹
2. Removal-only strategies frequently produce a “vacuum effect,” whereby new intact cats move into cleared territory.²
3. Targeted sterilization is more cost-effective than impoundment and euthanasia.³

By prohibiting return, this measure removes the most cost-effective and widely adopted municipal tool for free-roaming cat population control. It appears that the State is following Hawaii Invasive Species Council’s (HISC) Resolution 19-2, Supporting the Keeping of Pet Cats Indoors and the Use of Peer-Reviewed Science in Pursuing Humane Mitigation of the Impacts of Feral Cat on Wildlife and People, signed on 29 Jan 2019. The purpose of HISC is to coordinate the State’s position relating to invasive species and to provide advice to the Governor and State Legislature.

The resolution stated that HISC:

- Supports keeping of pet cats indoors or otherwise contained to a pet owner’s property through the use of cat patios, fencing, or other tools to minimize impacts such cats may have on the surrounding environment;
- Recommends that proposed methods for mitigating the impacts of feral cats on native wildlife and/or humans should be both humane and

supported by peer-reviewed, scientific evidence demonstrating the efficacy of such methods.

- Does not recommend the use of "Trap-Neuter-Return" or other efforts that support the feeding or re-release of feral cats into the wild or into public spaces.

The resolution provides following rationale for non-use of TNR:

"Numerous scientific studies, summarized in a meta-analysis titled "Critical

Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return" by Longcore et al (2009) in the journal Conservation

Biology, have shown that "Trap-Neuter-Return" is not an effective strategy to reduce the number of feral cats in a given area or the predation and disease impacts of feral cats..."

This study remains an important peer-reviewed critique of early TNR literature, particularly its claim that many positive assertions about TNR were not yet well supported by evidence at that time. However, in the years since its publication, a more substantial and nuanced body of scientific evidence has emerged. Controlled long-term field studies indicate that high-intensity, sustained TNR programs — especially when implemented with high sterilization coverage, adoption of socialized cats, and contiguous geographic effort — can lead to measurable declines in free-roaming cat populations over extended periods. For example, studies document significant population reductions in managed colonies, including multi-decade decreases of 66 % and more in some university and community settings, as well as 47–99 % reductions in intensive management programs.

B. Sanctuary Availability and Capacity Concerns

The bill allows placement into a "fully enclosed cat sanctuary," but does not define that term. Does "fully enclosed" mean enclosures like a with a roof, catio, cat proof fencing, etc.?

Cat sanctuaries include, but not limited to:

- 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)

Lanai Cat Sanctuary and other facilities, being developed, do not have or

will have statewide capacity to absorb all sterilized but unadoptable free-roaming cats.

Since the State will not support TNR/TNRM by allowing the use Spay and Neuter Special Fund, it will result in increased shelter intake and euthanasia. The State is indirectly mandating a Trap-Remove (TR) policy. Therefore, abandoned, feral, special-needs, or unadoptable cats will be trapped, removed from the environment, and euthanized.

In addition, if it's appropriate to allow sterilized cats to be put into "fully enclosed cat sanctuary", why not allow them to be put them indoors or in catios? These cats will not be "at large" or "free-roaming"

III. Mandatory Sterilization of Owned Cats – Overbreadth Concerns

Proposed §143-(a)(1) makes it unlawful to own a cat over five months of age unless sterilized or covered by an intact declaration.

This provision criminalizes mere ownership of an intact cat — even when confined indoors and posing no risk of contributing to free-roaming populations.

Courts routinely uphold "at large" statutes because they regulate conduct (allowing an animal to roam). This measure regulates status (ownership of an intact animal), raising potential:

- Due process concerns
- Overbreadth issues
- Proportionality concerns

An indoor intact cat does not increase free-roaming populations absent negligent release.

IV. Intact Cat Declaration – Structural Weaknesses

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
- No inspection authority
- No litter reporting
- No limit on number of intact animals
- No enforcement clarity

Since there is no requirement to show proof of registration or responsible breeding standards, anyone can submit a declaration to avoid sterilization of their animal.

It is not clear what Animal Control Agencies, and contractor do with these "declarations" to reduce pet overpopulation and free-roaming cats.

V. Importation Duplication

The importation declaration provision duplicates language proposed in SB 3012 and belongs in Chapter 142 (Agriculture and Biosecurity), not Chapter 143 (Licenses and Regulations).

Requiring:

1. Declaration upon arrival to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; and
2. A second declaration within 14 days to the county

This creates administrative duplication and inconsistent reporting standards.

VI. Declaration of Unsterilized Cats Already in the State

Para (3) states in part:

“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.”

How will the Animal Control Authority identify intact cats already in the state? Does the State expect each owner of intact cat to come forth to submit a declaration at a cost of \$100? Does the State expect veterinarians to identify intact cats and report them to the Animal Control Authority? It’s not clear if the \$100 declaration can be made after a person is fined \$500 to \$1,000 for having an unsterilized cat.

VII. Enforcement Feasibility

The bill does not explain:

- How intact indoor cats will be identified
- Whether veterinarians must report
- Whether inspections are authorized
- How compliance will be monitored absent a complaint

Absent probable cause of roaming, enforcement mechanisms are unclear.

It is interesting to note that this subparagraph states following:

“A declaration filed with the department of agriculture and biosecurity pursuant to this paragraph shall not authorize a cat to be at large and shall not substitute for any declaration required by the applicable county animal control authority.”

Accordingly, this measure recognizes that declaration shall not authorize a “cat to be at large”. Allowing a cat to be large should be penalized not mere ownership of unsterilized cat, as proposed.

VIII. Excessive and Disproportionate Penalties

Section (c) imposes fines of \$500–\$1,000 per cat per violation.

This is a strict liability offense with no requirement of:

- Harm
- Intent
- Prior violation

An owner of three indoor intact cats could face \$3,000 in fines absent any allegation of killing wildlife, roaming or nuisance.

By comparison, Honolulu “dog at large” first offenses are typically \$50, with

escalating penalties for repeat violations.

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

The proposed fine structure may be viewed as disproportionate relative to comparable offenses and may invite judicial scrutiny. The Legislature should consider whether these penalties are proportional, defensible, and likely to withstand judicial scrutiny.

IX. Unintended Consequences

Excessive fines and prohibition on return may incentivize:

- Surrender of intact cats
- Abandonment
- Increased shelter intake
- Increased euthanasia

This may paradoxically increase free-roaming populations in the short term.

The proposed bill for Spay and Neuter Special Funds, which cannot be used for cats to be released into the environment, essentially becomes a bill to “cull” feral cats using euthanasia, since these cats cannot be adopted out or re-homed because of their “feral” behavior.

I doubt that the public will support such bill, if they find out that many cats will be euthanized because they cannot be adopted out or put into “fully enclosed cat sanctuaries”. This bill will be similar to HB 1987 (2022 Regular Session) which would have authorized the State to euthanize thousands of feral cats. HB 1987 proposed earmarking money for

Department of Land and Natural Resources (DNLR) to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats across the state on June 30, 2023. The HISC

(discussed above) would then be tasked identifying “humane” methods to cull the felines. The bill described the use of poison baits to kill cats like in Australia. The bill had a goal of eliminating the feral cat populations on Kaua‘i, Maui and the Big Island by the end of 2025 — and reducing O‘ahu’s population by 50%. The House Committee on Agriculture heard the bill and received more than 1,000 written testimonies overwhelmingly in opposition.

X. Recommendations.

I respectfully request the Legislature consider releasing the funding portion of the bill and defer the sterilization mandate until a better bill can be developed after coordination with all stake holders.

If that is not possible, I recommend the following:

1. Remove the prohibition on re-release of sterilized cats into the environment.
2. Amend sterilization requirements to apply only to cats “at large” for cats over 5 months old
3. Harmonize importation declarations with SB 3012.

4. Reduce penalties and implement graduated enforcement.
5. Define “fully enclosed cat sanctuary.”
6. Require annual reporting and fiscal accountability for fund expenditures.

7. Require DNLR to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats across the state. This is vital to determine if the sterilization program is working to reduce feral cats.
8. Request HISC to review Resolution 19-2, Supporting the Keeping of Pet Cats Indoors and the Use of Peer-Reviewed Science in Pursuing Humane Mitigation of the Impacts of Feral Cat on Wildlife and People, and make necessary revision on more recent peer-reviewed science.
9. Request State Auditor to conduct Sunrise Audit on the measure in accordance with Hawai‘i Regulatory Licensing Reform Act, Chapter 26H, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes
10. Convene a multidisciplinary working group (counties, veterinarians, wildlife experts, humane societies, animal control authorities, and, cat/dog fancies, pet owners, and other stakeholders) to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy that is based on most facts and peer-reviewed, scientific evidence.

v/r

Kathleen Miller

References:

1. Levy, J.K., et al. (2003). Evaluation of the effect of a long-term trap-neuter-return program on a free-roaming cat population. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*.
2. Longcore, T., et al. (2009). Critical assessment of claims regarding management of feral cats by TNR. *Conservation Biology*.

3. Spehar, D., & Wolf, P. (2018). An examination of an iconic trap-neuter-return program. *Animals (MDPI)*.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:52:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha chair, vice chair and members,

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** the sterilization of all pet cats in Hawaii unless registered as certified breeding animals.

OUR RESOURCES, CULTURE AND RESILIENCE DEPEND ON THIS.

Me ka pono,

Makaala Kaaumoana

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:36:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Kishimori	Cat Friends	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Cat Friends opposes HB 1736 H.D. 2 as drafted. While we strongly support funding for sterilization programs, this bill does not support Trap Neuter Return Manage programs that are proven to be effective.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kishimori

Cat Friends, President

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:50:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Anderson	Kohala Animal Relocation and Education Service (KARES)	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

KARES Hawaii states that we OPPOSE HB1736 HD2

Elaine Anderson.

Kamuela, HI 96743

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:00:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

On behalf of Maui Humane Society, I am authorized to urge your support of [HB1736](#), **HD2,Relating to Animal Control.**

This version of the measure resolves the concerns we had about enforcement and it has our strong support.

Sincerely,

Kathy Carroll, Ph.D.

Maui Humane Society Board of Directors

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:32:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christin Greenland	Jungle Cat Ladies Sanctuary Volcano, HI	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We oppose HB 1736 as it is written. We would support the bill if it is amended so that sterilized cats can be returned to their colonies. Where do you suppose these cats are going to go after they are sterilized? Sanctuaries are overworked and full, and there are not enough of them. Please support TNRM in Hawai'i. It is the most humane way of controlling the cat population. Mahalo.



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

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March 3, 2026

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

Testimony RE: HB1736

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

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

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

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

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

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

With warm aloha,


Thomas Daubert
Executive Director

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:20:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph A. Ernst	Kaiju Kitties Cattery	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a both a breeder and pedigreed cat owner, none of our cats are allowed to free roam per breeder contract. A pedigreed cat is not a cheap “investment.” Indeed, most pedigreed cats cost more than \$1,500. It would not be wise to allow it to free roam where it could potentially get hurt, killed, or pick up various diseases. The "indoor only" requirement is stated multiple times throughout the “adoption process” and is a clear stipulation in contracts. Kittens/cats are to be indoor only, absolutely no free roaming cats. It is my regular practice that when any potential owner states they want an outdoor cat or may hint that a cat has free access to outdoors, I refuse to adopt a cat to them. Many of the breeders we work with within the CFH already send their kittens home fixed or have contract stipulations requiring the owner to fix their kitten by 6 months old due to being physically too small to fix before being sent home. We, breeders and pet owners within the CFH, are already registered with our overall national registration in which we follow strict standards, bylaws, pay our dues, hold at least quarterly local club meetings, and attend an annual international association meeting. Realistically, responsible breeders of pedigreed cats are NOT contributors to the state’s feral over-population. While we support a spay/neuter fund and assistance to the public to be able to fix their pets, responsible breeders should not be penalized for problems that they did not contribute to. Our concern is that these statues are created and only the handful of responsible breeders/ pet owners will follow it, and the irresponsible people will continue to do as they do, in turn there will be no change to the target issue of the FERAL CAT population. We believe that the wrong groups are being targeted and blamed for the overpopulation issues. It is the backyard breeders and Craigslist breeders that should be regulated. Not legitimate preservation breeders.

We would support a spay and neuter funding bill if the age restriction and declaration stipulation were removed. The main issue is not people having intact cats, it's their (in)ability to access and pay for the sterilization process. Funding veterinarians and spay/neuter programs directly, holding more events, and holding events closer to low income / rural areas would help bring the solution to the people who need it most. These people who don't have transportation and/or access to the programs are usually in the low income category who don't have the funds to pay for the surgery and therefore will also not have the funds to pay for the extremely high fines that are consequential to having an intact cat. Tracking every single unfixed cat is neither important nor feasible. Getting the funding to the veterinarians and programs is the key. Amend this bill to strictly spay/ neuter funding without the age restriction and intact cat declaration and get the already in place spay/ neuter programs the support they've been needing. This will also give private veterinarian practices the motivation/ incentive for them to help out more.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:28:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:29:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol England	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 17236 but I urge the committee to remove the TNR (Trap and Release) prohibition from the bill. Although I understand the intent to protect the wild bird populations, prohibiting trap and release programs will create a new set of challenges. I ultimately share the goal of responsibly managing Hawaii's cat population.

I support with comments/amendment request

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:36:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Free-roaming cats and dogs present a threat to the health and lives of both human residents and wildlife of Hawaii and rank among the leading factors driving some of our precious endemic species (including palila) toward extinction, while threatening the recovery of others (such as nene & Hawaiian monk seals). Controlling the reproduction and proliferation of cats and dogs should be a high priority of the state, so I welcome the introduction of HB1736. However, section 143 (b) 3, which offers an exemption for cats declared as "intact" largely negates the impact of the bill and would greatly complicate enforcement, and seems inexplicable to me. I urge the committee to pass HB1736 with this provision removed. Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:42:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support the establishment of spay neuter funds, that will help low cost - no cost, 501c3 non profits to provide public sterilization events.

But enforcement of 5 month rules, etc are a distraction from that goal, and very hard to enforce. Will the spay neuter funds be used for enforcement....!!! I certainly hope NOT !!!

Stop penalizing Trap Neuter Return -TNR programs. Common sense tells you these are the exact cats that need to be fixed to save the Hawai'i native birds.

By not feeding and fixing those TNR cats you cause them to become hunters and keep them breeding !! why is this so hard to understand ?

Colonized TNR cats can be caught, fixed and fed...thereby greatly reducing their numbers, their spreading, their hunting.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND TNR IS A GOOD THING !!!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:45:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dustin K Palos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

- You 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 vectors for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), a disease spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, as 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.

Mahalo for your Support,

Dustin Palos

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:57:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Bruch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, Please accept my tetimony for HB1736. This resolutionwill 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. Toxoplamosis 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.

Mahalo

James Bruch

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:00:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I respectfully support **HB 1736**, which establishes a *Spay and Neuter Special Fund* to address pet overpopulation in our islands, including the free-roaming cat population. This bill provides a compassionate, proactive approach by encouraging responsible pet ownership, reducing the number of unwanted animals, and helping lessen the burden on animal shelters and communities statewide. Allowing taxpayers to voluntarily contribute through an income tax designation will generate ongoing resources to support these important services without placing undue strain on general revenues.

By promoting spay and neuter services and decreasing the number of unplanned litters, this bill helps improve animal welfare, protects public health, and has long-term benefits for our neighborhoods and environment. I urge you to pass HB 1736.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:22:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in STRONG SUPPORT of this bill.

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. Please pass this bill!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:31:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I wholeheartedly endorse this bill on behalf of Hawaii's native wildlife, as well as, human health. Outdoor feral cats are a vector for toxoplasmosis which is a factor in the deaths of numerous different native wildlife from Hawaiian monk seals to spinner dolphins to nēnē. Toxoplasmosis is also dangerous to human health, especially pregnant women, causing miscarriages, birth defects, and, sometimes, fatality. Cats also kill native wildlife outright, as in the killing of native (and sometimes endangered) seabirds, including mōlī (Laysan albatross) and Hawaiian petrels. We must control cat populations in order to protect Hawaii's native wildlife. Requiring the sterilization of all pet cats only makes sense. Mahalo for your support.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:48:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill strongly because it is another step at reducing the harm that free-roaming cats on the landscape pose towards the dwindling native wildlife species, as well as the people of Hawai'i. By requiring sterilization of all pet cats it will greatly reduce the population increase of cats which in turn will reduce cat/pet abandonment. Having fewer cats on the landscape will greatly help native birds who are consistently and ruthlessly preyed upon by both stray and owned cats, as well as reduce the spread of toxoplasmosis. Nene have died directly from a result of toxoplasmosis and it also has killed monk seals repeatedly. 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.

Establishing a fund for owners to sterilize their pets is also a crucial piece into not putting the financial burden of the actions on the occasionally cat colony feeders onto the whole Hawaiian cat owner population. Providing that financial incentive will allow all those who want prosperous ecosystems in Hawaii and to provide the best quality of life for cats a viable option.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:50:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Abbi Wyskoski	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

These proposals would eliminate humane population management and leave many animals without protections.

Hawaii does not have enough shelter space, sanctuary capacity, or statewide support for TNR.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:08:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mele Khalsa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because while cats make nice pets, they are a problem when left to live free on the landscape where they imperil native birds, marine animals, and can impact human health. It's important to protect the unique species and ecosystems, which are only found here in Hawai'i, by controlling free-roaming cat populations. Cost is a barrier for some pet owners so I support establishing a funding mechanism to help cat owners fix their pets thereby removing that barrier on effective cat population control. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:11:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
afsheen siddiqi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support efforts to reduce the overpopulation of cats on our landscape.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:31:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please 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.

Bill 1736 is an important step toward protecting our wildlife and improving the lives of cats!

Aloha e Chair Todd and Members of the Committee, I am Jay Penniman, resident of the north shore of Maui, Ulumalu, Hamakualoa. I strongly support this bill and would ask that the implementation date be moved to 7/1/2027.

Our native wildlife evolved in the absence of mammalian predators. Since small mammals were introduced to the islands, our native species diversity has been dramatically decimated. Our native forest birds, waterbirds and seabirds have no defense against these introduced predators. If we are to have any chance of saving those species that remain, we must address the out-of-control cat population on the landscape. Even well-fed cats kill wildlife; they are obligate carnivores – they require animal flesh in their diet and they evolved to hunt. Not only are cats predators of our wildlife, they are also the obligate host of the *Toxoplasma gondii* organism that causes the disease toxoplasmosis. This disease is killing our monk seals, spinner dolphins and our state bird the nēnē! Toxoplasmosis can cause serious health issues in unborn children if the mother is infected during pregnancy. It may lead to complications such as premature birth, low birth weight, and long-term problems like vision issues, hearing loss, and developmental delays. There are many steps that need to be taken to get cats off the landscape, and this bill is a reasonable place to begin. It is far healthier for cats to be treated as we require dogs be kept: register every cat to its owner with microchips, keep cats indoors or in fenced yards or catios, walk cats on a leash if going out beyond the home. Cats deserve a better life than being free roaming, subject to being hit by cars and exposed to diseases. Please pass this bill and work to save our wildlife and improve the lives of cats as loved pets!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:55:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ramsey Wellbeloved	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ramsey Wellbeloved, and I am a community cat caretaker who has invested significant personal time and resources into TNR efforts in my area. While I strongly support the goal of reducing cat overpopulation through spay and neuter, I have serious concerns about key provisions of HB 1736 as written, and I urge the committee to amend this bill before any further advancement.

The spay/neuter fund is a good idea -- in fact, it is something cat welfare advocates have been requesting for years. Funding low-cost and free sterilization programs would make TNR more accessible to community members and organizations.

However, the mandatory sterilization requirement and steep fines are deeply problematic. Enforcement of a mandate to neuter private cats is nearly impossible without violating people's rights, and fining community cat caregivers \$500-\$1000 per cat would effectively end TNR programs overnight. These are volunteers doing essential work. Penalizing them is counterproductive.

I urge the committee to: (1) Preserve and strengthen the spay/neuter fund; (2) Remove or substantially revise the mandatory sterilization language to focus on positive incentive rather than punitive fines; and (3) Explicitly protect TNR programs and caretakers from penalty. Please amend this bill to support the communities doing the hard work, not punish them.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ramsey Wellbeloved

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 4:23:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1736.

Mandatory sterilization of pet cats, with funding assistance for owners, is a necessary and humane measure to reduce Hawai‘i’s free-roaming feral cat population. Cats are a significant contributor to the decline of endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, seabirds, and other native species protected under state and federal law.

There are also serious public health implications. Feral cats are the primary vector of toxoplasmosis, a parasite spread through cat feces that can cause miscarriage, birth defects, and severe illness in humans. Toxoplasmosis has also been shown to kill marine mammals, including Hawaiian monk seals and other protected species.

Reducing feral cat populations is essential to protecting Hawai‘i’s unique ecosystems and the wildlife found nowhere else on Earth. HB 1736 is a responsible, science-based step forward.

I respectfully urge you to pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Yvonne Chan

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:12:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB 1736 because I care about our native bird population. It's unfortunate that feral cats don't have homes to go to but our native birds should not have to pay the price.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:29:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Huntemer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

We must stop the destruction of our native seabirds and marine mammals by cats. This bill provides a humane solution to the problem of cats killing native birds and other animals.

Please pass this bill on. Thank you.

Angela Huntemer

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:42:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB1736 HD2. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live Sunset Beach, Oahu.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:43:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

**To the Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**I am testifying in strong support of HB1736 HD2
RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL**

There appears to be widespread consensus on the need to reduce at liberty cat populations in the community, and a brilliant proposal in this bill could truly take us closer to that goal.

Implementing the Spay and Neuter Special Fund along with an income tax designation that helps provides revenues for the special fund. I would certainly like to have that as an option. Wouldn't you?

Thank you.

Alice Saul

Hawai'i Kai, Honolulu

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:43:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Price	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I support Bill 1736 because reducing Hawai‘i’s free roaming feral cat population is essential to protecting our native wildlife and our communities.

In my work in wildlife conservation, I have seen how vulnerable our native species are. Cats are a significant factor in the decline of endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds, and other native wildlife found nowhere else in the world. These species are already under pressure from habitat loss, disease, and other threats. Continued predation from unmanaged cat populations pushes them closer to extinction.

This is also a public health issue. Outdoor feral cats can carry and spread toxoplasmosis through their feces. This parasite poses serious risks to people, including miscarriage, birth defects, and severe illness. When large numbers of cats live unmanaged in our communities and near our watersheds, that risk extends beyond wildlife and into our neighborhoods.

The impacts do not stop on land. The parasites shed by cats can wash into the ocean, where it has been linked to illness and death in Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins, and humpback whales. What begins on land does not stay there in an island ecosystem like ours.

Reducing the feral cat population is about restoring balance in Hawai‘i. Our threatened and endangered birds are protected under state and federal law, but those protections must be backed by meaningful action. Populations are declining now. We cannot afford to delay.

Supporting Bill 1736 is a necessary step toward protecting our wildlife, safeguarding public health, and moving Hawai‘i closer to becoming a place known for recovery and thriving native species alongside communities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha piha,

Dr. Melissa Price

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:44:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Remy Hirai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello- my name is Remy Hirai. I am a Native Hawaiian, living in Hauula, O'ahu, and I **SUPPORT** HB1736. Spay/neuter for cats over 5 months old should absolutely be mandatory along with importation of fertile cats. Something must be done to protect our native species as well as our families and communities from the infestation of feral cats on island and I believe this is a tiny step in the right direction and honestly a bare minimum requirement at this point.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:51:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Juria Ito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. Spay and neuter is such a crucial humane program for community cats and for those who do not have the resources to spay/neuter their pets. Cat sterilization requirement for age over 5 months is also a great requirement for pet owners to keep them accountable and responsible as pet owners; making sure their pet does not contribute to the overpopulation, effects on wildlife and the community.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:38:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kirtland C. Peteron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1736, HD2: Relating to Animal Control

TO: House Committee on Finance

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

MEASURE: HB1736, HD2

Position: Strong Support

I am writing to express my **strong support** for HB1736, HD2. This bill offers a necessary and balanced approach to addressing the animal overpopulation crisis that has reached a breaking point across our islands.

Reducing Pet Overpopulation

The primary reason for my support is the critical need to **reduce pet overpopulation**.

Hawaii currently faces a staggering crisis, with estimates suggesting there are over **300,000 feral cats** on O'ahu alone.

This overpopulation places an immense burden on our local shelters; for example, the Hawaiian Humane Society took in **12,778 animals** in the 2025 fiscal year, with many facilities consistently operating at or over capacity.

On a personal level, it is heartbreaking to see the daily reality of this issue. Walking through our communities on O'ahu, it is far too common to encounter **starving and sick cats** struggling to survive outdoors.

These animals suffer from disease and malnutrition, a cycle that can only be broken through proactive, state-supported sterilization efforts.

HB1736, HD2 provides the practical tools we need to address this humanely:

- **Funded Solutions:** It establishes a **Spay and Neuter Special Fund** that utilizes a voluntary tax check-off, ensuring sustainable funding without solely relying on taxpayer mandates.
- **Broad Impact:** It allows funds to be used by counties for pet dogs and cats, as well as **free-roaming cats** being placed in sanctuaries or adopted.
- **Reasonable Compromise:** While some may oppose the sterilization mandate, the bill includes a simple exemption for those who file a declaration and pay a one-time fee to keep an intact cat. This minor administrative step is far outweighed by the goal of reducing the number of animals suffering on our streets.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB1736, HD2 to help curb the overpopulation crisis and protect the welfare of Hawaii's animals.

In summary, this bill is a vital win for our community, our shelters, and the animals themselves. By supporting sterilization through the new Special Fund, we can finally begin to reduce the tragic number of sick and homeless animals in our state.

I strongly support HB1736, HD2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:53:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Robertson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cats are a terrible problem in Hawaii. Hundreds of thousands of them spreading toxoplasmosis (with impacts to humans, monk seals and other marine mammals) and impacting native birds. TNR is an abject failure and there is not enough money in all Hawaii to neuter all feral cats. We all love our pet cats: they should be fixed and kept indoors for their safety and protection of the environment.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:01:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krista Vessell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of O'ahu, an island where native birds have been all but replaced by THROGS OF INVASIVE BIRDS such as pigeons, finches and myna, I STRONGLY OPPOSE this nonsense bill. This is a wastw of time, and will do NOTHING to protect native birds from the REAL threats to their existence, which are mosquitoes, mongoose. never-ending development destroying what little habitats they have left, and INVASIVE BIRDS. If cats were such a threat to birds, WHY HAVE MYNA, PIGEONS, BULBUL, EGREGTS, JUNGLEFOWL, FINCHES, WARBLERS, and the myriad other INVASIVE BIRDS ALL BEEN THRIVING? Do you really believe cats, especially PET CATS, are that selective that they only hunt native Hawaiian birds? Use your brains. This bill will only punish pet owners who are NOT EVEN CONTRIBUTING to the decimation of Hawaiian birds! Why don't you put time and resources towards gathering native birds and protecting them in captivity before they completely disappear from mosquito-borne diseases and habitat loss that NOBODY in politics dares to put a hamper on. God forbid anyone interrupt real estate developers making money to save native birds from extinction, right? Stop listening to people like Jordan Lerma who have this unscientific obsession with cats and take real action if you want to protect Hawaii's few remaining birds.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:12:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tuyet Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the spay and neuter special fund.

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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:16:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

There are not enough resources here to provide a humane alternative. TNR is the best chance we have to combat over a population of feral cats.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:57:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strong support for this compromise. It is a vital goal to reduce pet overpopulation

Hawaii Kai voter

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:04:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB1736 HD2. We need an effective way for animal control and that is to spay or neuter all pets and community cats and stray dogs.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:30:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ohelo Kekua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think it's already known how irresponsible it is to have cats and not have them neutered, not to mention how detrimental to our native manu. I support this bill to have cats over 5 months neutered. There are too many cat communities due to irresponsible pet owners.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:44:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L 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 a critically endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal has passed due to toxoplasmosis or finding our indigenous 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 this bill will have a positive consequence for all of our critters.

Mahalo again for all you do.

Tweetcerely,

Laura Zoller

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:55:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Weslee Lawrence	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE this bill as it is written. I have pedigreed cats and would never let them free roam for many reasons. I have also recieved my cats already fixed, which I have apprectated this gesture as it was one less thing for me to think about. I also think this was very responsible of the breeder to do as I have realized that none of their cats being sent out can contribute to the feral population should one accidentally escape.

I am part of the local cat club and have seen the dedication that the breeders and members have to their cats. They/ we should not be penalized for an issue they/ we have not contributed to.

We would support a spay and neuter funding bill IF the age restriction and intact declaration stipulation were removed. The main issue is not people having intact cats, it's their (in)ability to access and pay for the sterilization process. Funding veterinarians and spay/neuter programs directly, holding more events, and holding events closer to low income / rural areas would help bring the solution to the people who need it most. These people who don't have transportation and/or access to the programs are usually in the low income category who don't have the funds to pay for the surgery and therefore will also not have the funds to pay for the extremely high fines that are consequential to having an intact cat. Tracking every single unfixed cat is not important nor feasible. Getting the funding to the veterinarians and programs is the key. Amend this bill to strictly spay/ neuter funding without the age restriction and intact cat declaration and get the already in place spay/ neuter programs the support they've been needing. This will also give private veterinarian practices the motivation/ incentive for them to help out.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:09:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peggy Regentine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I testified in person for support of this bill. I have TNRM many cats and it is a lot of work to set traps at midnight and wait for the cats to get trapped. Then you must keep the trapped kitten in a safe place before transporting to the Location of the Neuter cliinie. Trappers must have money to buy food for traps; rent or buy traps (at least\$100); buy gas to transport cats. It is an expense that some volunteers cannot support. Please consider some way to compensate these hard working volunteers.

Peggy Regentine

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:12:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Tarski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sterilizing all pet cats by the age of five months is not simply a matter of responsible pet ownership in Hawai‘i — it is an urgent environmental, public health, and animal welfare necessity. With more than one million feral cats estimated on O‘ahu alone, the islands are facing a crisis that affects our native wildlife, our communities, and even our most endangered marine species. Requiring early sterilization is a practical, humane, and essential step toward protecting Hawai‘i’s fragile ecosystem and preventing further irreversible damage.

Cats reproduce at astonishing rates. A single unsterilized female and male pair can produce up to 200 additional cats over time. In a place as geographically isolated and ecologically delicate as Hawai‘i, even small numbers of unsterilized pets can quickly contribute to explosive population growth. Pet cats escape from homes. Cats allowed outdoors can become pregnant by feral males or impregnate feral females. Each unplanned litter feeds directly into the already overwhelming feral population.

Unlike continental ecosystems, Hawai‘i’s wildlife evolved without mammalian predators. Ground-nesting and low-flying endemic birds are particularly vulnerable. Feral cats must hunt to survive, and their impact has been devastating. Many of Hawai‘i’s unique bird species have already been driven to extinction or pushed to the brink. Every additional feral cat represents countless native birds lost — birds that exist nowhere else on Earth. Once they are gone, they are gone forever.

The crisis is compounded by the realities of island life. Hawai‘i has a significant military population, and while many service members are responsible pet owners, deployments and relocations sometimes make it impossible for families to take their pets with them. Animal shelters across the islands are already overwhelmed. Many facilities routinely operate at capacity and must refuse additional animals due to lack of space and resources. When families cannot surrender a cat and have no alternative placement options, some animals are released outdoors, unintentionally adding to feral colonies.

Beyond ecological damage, the expansion of feral cat populations poses serious public health risks. Toxoplasmosis, a parasite commonly shed in cat feces, is present in many otherwise healthy cats. Pregnant women are advised not to change litter boxes because infection during pregnancy has been proven to cause severe birth defects. The parasite can survive in soil for up to seven years. In Hawai‘i, where many residents and visitors walk barefoot and where heavy rains are frequent, contaminated soil can wash into streams and eventually into the ocean.

This runoff creates a devastating chain reaction. Toxoplasmosis enters marine ecosystems, infecting fish and other sea life, moving up the food chain to apex predators. Hawai'i's beloved and critically endangered monk seals are especially vulnerable. For monk seals, toxoplasmosis is 100% fatal. There is no successful treatment and no vaccine. Every preventable infection represents the loss of an irreplaceable member of a species already fighting for survival.

Mandatory sterilization of cats by five months of age directly addresses the root of the problem: uncontrolled reproduction. Early sterilization is safe, widely practiced by veterinarians, and effective in preventing accidental litters. It reduces shelter intake, lowers euthanasia rates, protects wildlife, and diminishes environmental contamination. It is far more humane to prevent suffering before it begins than to struggle with the consequences after the fact.

Adopting legislation such as HS1736 to require sterilization of all cats over five months old is a reasonable and necessary measure. It does not punish responsible pet owners; rather, it sets a clear standard that protects the broader community and environment. At the same time, we must encourage adoption from shelters instead of purchasing or breeding more cats. Thousands of kittens and adult cats are already waiting for homes. Choosing adoption saves lives and reduces demand for additional breeding.

Hawai'i is unlike anywhere else in the world. Our isolation makes our ecosystems both extraordinary and extraordinarily fragile. We have a responsibility to safeguard our endemic species, protect public health, and prevent unnecessary animal suffering. Mandatory sterilization of pet cats by five months of age is a compassionate, practical, and urgent solution. For our birds, our monk seals, our keiki, and our future generations, it is a step we can no longer afford to delay.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:01:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
CRISTINE NATIVIDAD	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB1736 because TNR will not be allowed unless cats are released to a sanctuary. These sanctuaries do not exist at this time. Please fund TNR programs which allow cats to be released to their existing original habitat until planning and developing sanctuaries happen.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:03:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elli Pace	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in opposition to the current bill, as written. While the intentions of earmarking funding for spay and neutering services is wonderful, the bill’s language creates a practical barrier that makes it impossible to use the allocated dollars for free-roaming cat sterilization because it prohibits returning sterilized cats to their colonies. In effect, the bill removes the only viable, humane avenue—TNR—for managing the stray-cat population. Because of this language, the bill is counterproductive to one of the key goals of spay and neuter - to reduce the overpopulation of free-roaming cats.

TNR is a cornerstone of humane management of freeroaming cats, backed by numerous studies that demonstrate its effectiveness in reducing overpopulation long term (List of studies: <https://www.alleycat.org/resources/trap-neuter-return-research-compendium/>). Neutered cats are far less likely to roam, fight, or spread zoonotic diseases such as toxoplasmosis. In turn, reducing free-roaming cat populations through breaking the breeding cycle directly lowers predation pressure on endangered native birds and other endemic species, aligning with state conservation goals.

Without the ability to return sterilized cats, to thier colonies, colony caregivers will just become more secreative, rather than stop caring for thier cats. They will not reach out for help to get these cats fixed for fear of euthanasia. Consequently, the colonies will continue to grow unchecked exasperating the issues related to cat overpopulation. More free-roaming cats mean increased predation on endangered birds and insects, jeopardizing ongoing recovery programs.

By prohibiting the return of sterilized cats to their colonies, HB 1736 would effectively eliminate the only proven, cost-effective, and humane method we have to control the free-romaing cat population.

I would reconsider my opposition of this bill if the language was ammended to allow for sterilized cats to be returned to their original colonies, preserving the core of TNR methodology. I believe the majority of colony caregivers, and cat welfare NGOs working to reduce the overpopulation issue share this sentiment. Please work with us, rather than against us. We are the ones on the frontline doing the advocacy and action to reduce and remedy this issue. We come to you not just with a problem, but with a humane and effective solution that is working and will continue to work, if legislation is not put in place that hinders and undermines our efforts.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:42:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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: 3/2/2026 10:21:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill to ensure protection of wildlife

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:52:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sebastian Church	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Finance committee,

Feral cats are detrimental to native ecosystems and urban areas, for their predatory domination of native fauna, and their transmission of zoonotic diseases. Please fund HB 1736 and help to enact practical policy for handling this ecological threat.

Thank you,

Sebastian

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:08:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg "Pu'uwai Aloha" Baker	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB 1736, HD2 — Relating to Animal Control
Position: Support with Amendments (Fiscal Concerns)**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Pu‘uwai Aloha Baker. I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB 1736’s funding mechanism, with *amendments addressing fiscal and operational concerns*.

The creation of a Spay and Neuter Special Fund and voluntary tax check-off is a constructive approach to reducing long-term pet overpopulation costs.

However, the provision conditioning county use of funds on sterilized animals not being re-released into the environment may unintentionally increase county expenditures.

In Hawai‘i County, estimated intake, medical care, housing, staffing, and disposition costs for a single cat can range from approximately **\$400 to \$1,200 per animal**, depending on length of stay and medical needs.

If 1,000 community cats were diverted from managed return programs into shelter intake due to the bill’s “no re-release” restriction, the resulting fiscal impact could range from:

\$400,000 to \$1.2 million

for that cohort alone.

By contrast, from February 27 to March 1 of this year, PetFix Hawai‘i Island sterilized **989 cats in four days**, including vaccination, microchipping, and ear-tipping, with paid veterinarians and volunteer support. This demonstrates both capacity and community commitment to population stabilization.

Requiring removal rather than allowing managed return shifts cats from lower-cost stabilization models into higher-cost shelter systems.

I also respectfully note that in 2022, legislation enabling broad lethal control of free-roaming cats generated substantial public opposition and did not advance. HB 1736 is not framed as

eradication legislation, but the “no re-release” clause risks narrowing county flexibility in a way that could reopen that policy divide.

I respectfully request an amendment that:

- **Preserves the Spay and Neuter Special Fund;**
- **Allows counties to utilize sterilization programs, including managed return consistent with county policy and best management practices;**
- **Maintains flexibility for clearly designated wildlife-sensitive areas where alternative approaches may apply.**

Such an amendment aligns fiscal responsibility with the bill’s stated goal of reducing overpopulation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Pu‘uwai Aloha Baker

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED TABLE



HB 1736 Fiscal Impact Comparison Table

Intake Model vs. Managed Return Model

(Illustrative Scenario: 1,000 Community Cats)

Key Assumptions (Hawai‘i County context)

- Estimated shelter intake & disposition cost per cat: **\$400 – \$1,200**
 - Includes: intake processing, exams, medical care, vaccinations, housing, staffing, cleaning, utilities, administrative overhead
 - Costs increase with length of stay
- High-volume sterilization event (example):
 - **989 cats sterilized in 4 days** (PetFix Hawai‘i Island, Feb 27–Mar 1)
 - Included FVRCP vaccine, microchip, ear-tip
 - Paid veterinarians + volunteers

Scenario Comparison (1,000 Cats)

Category	Removal / Intake Model	Managed Return Model (TNR/RTF)
Intake Required	Yes	No (diverted from intake)
Estimated Cost per Cat	\$400 – \$1,200	Significantly lower (event-based sterilization model)
Total Estimated Cost (1,000 cats)	\$400,000 – \$1,200,000	Fraction of intake cost (event-based)
Shelter Space Required	High	Minimal
Length of Stay	Variable (days to weeks)	None (returned post-recovery)
Staffing Burden	High	Limited to surgical event staffing
Risk of Overcrowding	Elevated	Reduced
Euthanasia Pressure	Increased if capacity exceeded	Reduced (diversion model)
Long-Term Population Impact	Depends on removal volume; vacuum risk	Gradual decline through sterilization + attrition

Five-Year Fiscal Consideration

If intake of 1,000 cats occurs annually due to removal-only requirements:

Annual Intake Cost 5-Year Projection

\$400,000	\$2,000,000
\$1,200,000	\$6,000,000

Even at the low-end estimate, cumulative impact becomes significant.

By contrast, high-volume sterilization programs:

- Reduce future kitten intake
- Reduce repeat breeding cycles
- Lower long-term shelter burden
- Distribute workload across volunteer + nonprofit infrastructure

Operational Reality

From Feb 27–Mar 1, 989 cats were sterilized in four days in East Hawai'i (Puna and Hilo districts), demonstrating:

- Community commitment
- High-volume capacity
- Existing infrastructure for population stabilization

Requiring removal rather than allowing managed return would shift similar numbers directly into the shelter system, increasing costs immediately.

Fiscal Conclusion for FIN Committee

A blanket “no re-release” requirement may unintentionally:

- Increase county intake costs
- Strain shelter capacity
- Elevate euthanasia pressure
- Shift financial burden to animal control budgets

Amending HB 1736 to allow managed return where consistent with county policy preserves:

- ✓ The Spay & Neuter Special Fund
- ✓ The tax check-off revenue stream
- ✓ County fiscal flexibility
- ✓ Long-term cost containment

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:03:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caren Loebel-Fried	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.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:17:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a resident and environmental volunteer, I strongly support this bill. It will reduce the number of feral cats, thus supporting conservation of our native birds, Hawaiian monk seals and all marine mammals that die due to toxoplasmosis transmitted through feral cat feces.

Humans are also endangered by toxo, which can lead to miscarriages and more.

Feral dogs are also a public safety issue with their feces and can attack pedestrians and cyclists.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:19:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

- It 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 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.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:20:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

i support HB1736

2 March 2026

Thank you for allowing me to comment on H.B. No. 1736 H.D. 2, Relating to Animal Control. I'm Duane Inoue, a cat preservation breeder.

I respectfully oppose H.B. 1736 H.D. 2, as drafted. While I strongly support funding for sterilization programs, the enforcement structure and prohibitions in this measure will undermine existing effective programs and may increase euthanasia and shelter intake.

I. Spay and Neuter Fund – Lack of Definition and Scope

The bill establishes a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce “pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population,” yet it does not define “pet.”

Under HRS §711-1100, “pet animal” includes dogs, cats, domesticated rabbits, guinea pigs, domesticated pigs, and certain birds. Absent clarification, counties could expend funds on species unrelated to free-roaming cat population control, diluting the bill’s stated purpose.

If the legislative intent is to address free-roaming cats, the fund should:

- Be limited specifically to cats; and
- Require annual reporting identifying:
 - Number sterilized
 - Sex of animals
 - Final disposition (adoption, sanctuary, return, euthanasia)
 - Associated veterinary services provided

The bill also fails to define “associated veterinary care.” Without clarification, funds could potentially be used for euthanasia of intact cats, which would contradict the stated purpose of reducing overpopulation through sterilization.

II. Prohibition on Re-Release Conflicts with Evidence-Based Practice

Section 36(b) prohibits re-release of sterilized animals into the environment, except placement into a “fully enclosed cat sanctuary.”

This provision effectively eliminates Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Trap-Neuter-Return-Management (TNRM) programs, which are currently utilized by:

- Hawaiian Humane Society
- 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

The Hawaiian Humane Society's Feline Fix Program for the City and County of Honolulu (CCH) would no longer be viable if re-release is prohibited. The CCH will not be able to subsidize no-fee spay/neuter surgeries using proposed Spay and Neuter Special Fund for free-roaming/ community cats at participating spay/neuter clinics on O'ahu. The purpose of the program is to sterilize these cats and return them to the colonies where they make their home.

A. Scientific Considerations.

Peer-reviewed studies demonstrate:

1. TNR stabilizes and gradually reduces colony populations when sustained.¹
2. Removal-only strategies frequently produce a “vacuum effect,” whereby new intact cats move into cleared territory.²
3. Targeted sterilization is more cost-effective than impoundment and euthanasia.³

By prohibiting return, this measure removes the most cost-effective and widely adopted municipal tool for free-roaming cat population control.

It appears that the State is following Hawaii Invasive Species Council’s (HISC) Resolution 19-2, Supporting the Keeping of Pet Cats Indoors and the Use of Peer-Reviewed Science in Pursuing Humane Mitigation of the Impacts of Feral Cat on Wildlife and People, signed on 29 Jan 2019. The purpose of HISC is to coordinate the State’s position relating to invasive species and to provide advice to the Governor and State Legislature.

The resolution stated that HISC:

- Supports keeping of pet cats indoors or otherwise contained to a pet owner’s property through the use of cat patios, fencing, or other tools to minimize impacts such cats may have on the surrounding environment;
- Recommends that proposed methods for mitigating the impacts of feral cats on native wildlife and/or humans should be both humane and supported by peer-reviewed, scientific evidence demonstrating the efficacy of such methods.
- Does not recommend the use of "Trap-Neuter-Return" or other efforts that support the feeding or re-release of feral cats into the wild or into public spaces.

The resolution provides following rationale for non-use of TNR:

"Numerous scientific studies, summarized in a meta-analysis titled "Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return" by Longcore et al (2009) in the journal Conservation Biology, have shown that "Trap-Neuter-Return" is not an effective strategy to reduce the number of feral cats in a given area or the predation and disease impacts of feral cats..."

This study remains an important peer-reviewed critique of early TNR literature, particularly its claim that many positive assertions about TNR were not yet well supported by evidence at that time. **However, in the years since its publication, a more substantial and nuanced body of scientific evidence has emerged. Controlled long-term field studies indicate that high-intensity, sustained TNR programs — especially when implemented with high sterilization coverage, adoption of socialized cats, and contiguous geographic effort — can lead to measurable declines in free-roaming cat populations over extended periods. For example, studies document significant population reductions in managed colonies, including multi-decade decreases of 66 % and more in some university and community settings, as well as 47–99 % reductions in intensive management programs.**

B. Sanctuary Availability and Capacity Concerns

The bill allows placement into a "fully enclosed cat sanctuary," but does not define that term. Does "fully enclosed" mean enclosures like a with a roof, catio, cat proof fencing, etc.?

Cat sanctuaries include, but not limited to:

- 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)

Lanai Cat Sanctuary and other facilities, being developed, do not have or will have statewide capacity to absorb all sterilized but unadoptable free-roaming cats.

Since the State will not support TNR/TNRM by allowing the use Spay and Neuter Special Fund, it will result in increased shelter intake and euthanasia. The State is indirectly mandating a Trap-Remove (TR) policy. Therefore, abandoned, feral, special-needs, or unadoptable cats will be trapped, removed from the environment, and euthanized.

In addition, if it's appropriate to allow sterilized cats to be put into "fully enclosed cat sanctuary", why not allow them to be put them indoors or in catios? These cats will not be "at large" or "free-roaming"

III. Mandatory Sterilization of Owned Cats – Overbreadth Concerns

Proposed §143-(a)(1) makes it unlawful to own a cat over five months of age unless sterilized or covered by an intact declaration.

This provision criminalizes mere ownership of an intact cat — even when confined indoors and posing no risk of contributing to free-roaming populations.

Courts routinely uphold "at large" statutes because they regulate conduct (allowing an animal to roam). This measure regulates status (ownership of an intact animal), raising potential:

- Due process concerns
- Overbreadth issues
- Proportionality concerns

An indoor intact cat does not increase free-roaming populations absent negligent release.

IV. Intact Cat Declaration – Structural Weaknesses

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
- No inspection authority
- No litter reporting
- No limit on number of intact animals
- No enforcement clarity

Since there is no requirement to show proof of registration or responsible breeding standards, anyone can submit a declaration to avoid sterilization of their animal.

It is not clear what Animal Control Agencies, and contractor do with these “declarations” to reduce pet overpopulation and free-roaming cats.

V. Importation Duplication

The importation declaration provision duplicates language proposed in SB 3012 and belongs in Chapter 142 (Agriculture and Biosecurity), not Chapter 143 (Licenses and Regulations).

Requiring:

1. Declaration upon arrival to the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; and
2. A second declaration within 14 days to the county

This creates administrative duplication and inconsistent reporting standards.

VI. Declaration of Unsterilized Cats Already in the State

Para (3) states in part:

“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.”

How will the Animal Control Authority identify intact cats already in the state? Does the State expect each owner of intact cat to come forth to submit a declaration at a cost of \$100? Does the State expect veterinarians to identify intact cats and report them to the Animal Control Authority? It's not clear if the \$100 declaration can be made after a person is fined \$500 to \$1,000 for having an unsterilized cat.

VII. Enforcement Feasibility

The bill does not explain:

- How intact indoor cats will be identified
- Whether veterinarians must report
- Whether inspections are authorized
- How compliance will be monitored absent a complaint

Absent probable cause of roaming, enforcement mechanisms are unclear.

It is interesting to note that this subparagraph states following:

“A declaration filed with the department of agriculture and biosecurity pursuant to this paragraph shall not authorize a cat to be at large and shall not substitute for any declaration required by the applicable county animal control authority.”

Accordingly, this measure recognizes that declaration shall not authorize a “cat to be at large”. **Allowing a cat to be large should be penalized not mere ownership of unsterilized cat, as proposed.**

VIII. Excessive and Disproportionate Penalties

Section (c) imposes fines of \$500–\$1,000 per cat per violation.

This is a strict liability offense with no requirement of:

- Harm
- Intent
- Prior violation

An owner of three indoor intact cats could face \$3,000 in fines absent any allegation of killing wildlife, roaming or nuisance.

By comparison, Honolulu “dog at large” first offenses are typically \$50, with escalating penalties for repeat violations.

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

The proposed fine structure may be viewed as disproportionate relative to comparable offenses and may invite judicial scrutiny. The Legislature should consider whether these penalties are proportional, defensible, and likely to withstand judicial scrutiny.

IX. Unintended Consequences

Excessive fines and prohibition on return may incentivize:

- Surrender of intact cats
- Abandonment
- Increased shelter intake
- Increased euthanasia

This may paradoxically increase free-roaming populations in the short term.

The proposed bill for Spay and Neuter Special Funds, which cannot be used for cats to be released into the environment, essentially becomes a bill to “cull” feral cats using euthanasia, since these cats cannot be adopted out or re-homed because of their “feral” behavior.

I doubt that the public will support such bill, if they find out that many cats will be euthanized because they cannot be adopted out or put into “fully enclosed cat sanctuaries”. This bill will be similar to HB 1987 (2022 Regular Session) which would have authorized the State to euthanize thousands of feral cats. HB 1987 proposed earmarking money for Department of Land and Natural Resources (DNLR) to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats across the state on June 30, 2023. The HISC (discussed above) would then be tasked identifying “humane” methods to cull the felines. The bill described the use of poison baits to kill cats like in Australia. The bill had a goal of eliminating the feral cat populations on Kaua‘i, Maui and the Big Island by the end of 2025 — and reducing O‘ahu’s population by 50%. The House Committee on Agriculture heard the bill and received more than 1,000 written testimonies overwhelmingly in opposition.

X. Recommendations.

I respectfully request the Legislature consider releasing the funding portion of the bill and defer the sterilization mandate until a better bill can be developed after coordination with all stake holders.

If that is not possible, I recommend the following:

1. Remove the prohibition on re-release of sterilized cats into the environment.
2. Amend sterilization requirements to apply only to cats “at large” for cats over 5 months old
3. Harmonize importation declarations with SB 3012.
4. Reduce penalties and implement graduated enforcement.
5. Define “fully enclosed cat sanctuary.”
6. Require annual reporting and fiscal accountability for fund expenditures.

7. Require DNLR to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats across the state. This is vital to determine if the sterilization program is working to reduce feral cats.

8. Request HISC to review Resolution 19-2, Supporting the Keeping of Pet Cats Indoors and the Use of Peer-Reviewed Science in Pursuing Humane Mitigation of the Impacts of Feral Cat on Wildlife and People, and make necessary revision on more recent peer-reviewed science.

9. Request State Auditor to conduct Sunrise Audit on the measure in accordance with Hawai'i Regulatory Licensing Reform Act, Chapter 26H, Hawai'i Revised Statutes

10. Convene a multidisciplinary working group (counties, veterinarians, wildlife experts, humane societies, animal control authorities, and, cat/dog fancies, pet owners, and other stakeholders) to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy that is based on most facts and peer-reviewed, scientific evidence.

v/r

Duane Inoue

References:

1. Levy, J.K., et al. (2003). Evaluation of the effect of a long-term trap-neuter-return program on a free-roaming cat population. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*.

2. Longcore, T., et al. (2009). Critical assessment of claims regarding management of feral cats by TNR. *Conservation Biology*.

3. Spehar, D., & Wolf, P. (2018). An examination of an iconic trap-neuter-return program. *Animals (MDPI)*.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:56:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Idle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a previous student of the University of Hawai'i for both a B.S. and M.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Management, I was trained and educated to be a wildlife biologist. Throughout this time and during the time spent working on my thesis focused on the survival and reproduction of the endangered ae'o or Hawaiian Stilt, it became very clear the severely negative impact that non-native mammals can have on our native birds. It only takes one cat or dog to kill an entire colony of seabirds, an entire brood/family of endangered Hawaiian coots or gallinules or stilts. Though my background is in native species conservation with an emphasis on our native birds, I'm not naive to the fact that managing non-native mammals isn't just a scientific decision (because the science there is clear) - it's also an emotional one. And often, unfortunately, a financial one.

This bill has the potential to help dramatically reduce feral cat numbers across the landscape in Hawai'i in a slow, measured, and humane way. It's a step towards curbing the high reproductive output of feral and free roaming cats. It gives us conservation folks a chance to reroute capacity and resources to focus on other tasks that need accomplishing rather than continuing to pour resources and time into efforts for a problem that just keeps coming back. The primary beneficiaries of this bill are the birds and native wildlife that will have safer habitats to live in, the citizens who are tired of seeing unhealthy uncared for cats, the cats who need care and a home, and selfishly, us conservationists who simply need help to tackle this issue.

I support bill 1736 because cats are one of the most prominent threats to our native waterbirds and seabirds, because cats spread toxoplasmosis, a disease that affects humans as well our native whales, monk seals, and dolphins, and because my goal as a wildlife biologist is to support balance in an ecosystem. The massive number of feral and free-roaming cats in Hawai'i is a major imbalance, and this bill and appropriated funding will help us regain balance over time. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:36:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Anderson	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opinion | Fund Solutions, Not Intake: Why HB 1736 Needs a Fiscal Amendment

HB 1736 MUST BE AMENDED - CATS MUST BE ALLOWED TO BE RETURNED TO THEIR COLONY AFTER GETTING FIXED, TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) works!

Hawai‘i lawmakers are correct to focus on pet overpopulation. Shelter crowding, limited veterinary access, and rising animal control costs affect every county. Expanding spay and neuter services is widely recognized as the most cost-effective long-term solution.

House Bill 1736 (2026) contains an important step forward: a statewide Spay and Neuter Special Fund, supported in part by a voluntary income tax check-off. Dedicated funding for sterilization services is smart policy.

But one **clause in the bill risks shifting costs in the wrong direction.**

The Fiscal Problem Hidden in the Language

HB 1736 conditions county use of funds on sterilized animals **not being re-released into the environment.**

That restriction effectively blocks the use of state funds for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and Return-to-Field programs for community cats.

If sterilized cats cannot be returned, counties are left with three practical options:

- Adoption placement
- Long-term shelter housing
- Euthanasia

Each carries **significant cost**.

On Hawai‘i Island, estimated intake, holding, medical care, staffing, and disposition costs for a single cat can range roughly from **\$400 to \$1,200 per animal**, depending on length of stay and required care.

If 1,000 cats are diverted from community management into the shelter system instead, that represents a potential fiscal burden of:

- **\$400,000 to \$1.2 million**

For a single wave of intake.

That level of cost transfer would land directly on county animal control budgets.

A Real-World Example of Scale

From February 27 to March 1, 2026, PetFix Hawai‘i Island conducted a four-day spay/neuter event covering the Puna and Hilo districts.

In that period, **989 cats were sterilized**, vaccinated (FVRCP), microchipped, and ear-tipped — with paid veterinarians and substantial volunteer support.

That scale demonstrates two critical realities:

1. There is strong community commitment to responsible population management.
2. Sterilization capacity exists and can operate efficiently at high volume.

If even a fraction of those nearly 1,000 cats were required to enter the shelter system instead of returning to managed colonies, the fiscal impact would be substantial.

The economics are straightforward:

- **Sterilization and managed return = lower per-cat cost, long-term decline through attrition.**
- **Intake and confinement = high per-cat cost, immediate budget impact.**

HB 1736 was designed to reduce overpopulation costs — not amplify intake expenses.

Legislative Memory Matters

Hawai‘i has navigated similar debates before.

In 2022, a proposal that would have enabled broad **lethal control of free-roaming cats** **generated intense public opposition** and did not advance in that form.

HB 1736 is not framed as eradication legislation. But by conditioning funding on “no re-release,” it narrows the policy landscape in ways that risk reopening that divide — while also transferring financial burdens to county systems.

The Amendment That Solves the Problem

The Legislature can preserve the good in HB 1736 while avoiding unintended consequences.

A surgical amendment should:

- **Maintain the Spay and Neuter Special Fund.**
- **Allow counties to use funds for sterilization programs, including managed return consistent with county policy and best management practices.**
- **Provide flexibility to designate clearly defined wildlife-sensitive areas where alternative approaches may apply.**

That keeps the focus where it belongs: **reducing overpopulation efficiently and sustainably.**

The Bottom Line

Public policy must align with fiscal reality.

At \$400 to \$1,200 per intake, shifting just 1,000 cats into shelter systems could cost up to \$1.2 million. Meanwhile, nearly 1,000 cats were sterilized in four days by a community-supported program committed to long-term population stabilization.

HB 1736 contains the right funding idea. It should not unintentionally convert a cost-reduction strategy into a cost-expansion mandate.

With one thoughtful amendment, lawmakers can fund solutions — not inflate intake.

And that is a balance worth striking. Drafted by the HAA Editorial Board, forwarded by me as a feral animal caretaker who has invested thousands into spay/neutering my neighborhood colonies.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:46:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Lambrecht	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please oppose this bill. It is poorly written and fraught with problems, including being ineffective and inhumane.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:56:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB1736 HD2 Testimony

My name is Colleen Soares and I strongly support HB1736 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 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. It causes miscarriage (Kheirandish, et al., 2019), birth defects, and can be fatal.

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

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

I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Colleen Soares, PhD

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:58:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brissa Christophersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB1736 because it is critical to require spaying and neutering cats over 5 months old, ban the importation of fertile cats without declaration form, and create a spray and neuter fund for cats with the stipulation that funds cannot be used on cats that will be re-abandoned. As someone who works in the field of native bird conservation in Hawai'i, I know all too well that having cats on the landscape are detrimental to our native wildlife--spreading disease and predation events. The better that Hawai'i can control cats on the landscape the better chance we will have at saving these species from extinction. Mahalo.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:30:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Todd, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Please support HB 1736 HD 2 which would help reduce pet overpopulation. The Spay and Neuter Special Fund being proposed in this bill would benefit all residents as this fund includes spaying and neutering of free-roaming cats who can easily overpopulate communities and other areas.

Again, please support HB 1736 HD 2.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

Committee: House Committee On Finance
Bill Number: HB 1736, RELATING TO ANIMAL CONTROL
Hearing Date & Time: March 04, 2026 at 9:00am
Re: Testimony of Malia Wisch **in Support of HB 1736**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance.

My name is Malia Wisch, I am a partner and creative director of the local branding and design agency Wall to Wall Studios. I am a third-generation Kailua resident and graduate of Hawaii's public schools.

I am testifying in support of HB 1736, 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. Appropriates funds. Effective (hopefully well before) 7/1/3000.

I am deeply involved with various efforts to humanely control the free-roaming cat population. I am well aware not only of the detrimental effects these cats have on native wildlife, but also the suffering these cats are subjected to.

I strongly support this bill's intent to provide desperately needed funding for spay/neuter.

A root cause of cat overpopulation is failure to spay/neuter due to lack of resources.

A growing group of us are championing a multi-pronged strategy, including

1. Spay/neuter of owned pets,
2. Trap-Neuter-Manage of unsocialized stray cats in urban and residential areas,
3. Ample shelter space for friendly homeless cats, and
4. A large-scale cat sanctuary for cats that cannot stay where they are due to immediate threats they either face or pose to existing wildlife.

Access to low-cost spay/neuter is not a nice-to-have. It is a *necessity* for our entire community.

This issue affects everyone in our community.

Mahalo nui loa for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sara Malia Wisch
629 Hanale Place, Kailua HI 96734
malia@wisch-design.com

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:07:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Nakamoto-Inouye	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of increased funding for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs in Hawai‘i. TNR is a proven, humane, and community-supported method for stabilizing and reducing free-roaming cat populations over time. Providing resources for spay/neuter, vaccination, and caregiver support is a responsible investment in public health and animal welfare.

However, I respectfully oppose any requirement that cats not be re-released into the environment after sterilization.

Hawai‘i currently does not have sufficient sanctuaries, shelter space, foster homes, or funding to house the thousands of free-roaming cats across our islands. Requiring that all trapped cats be permanently removed from their outdoor locations would create an impossible mandate. Shelters are already over capacity, and without adequate placement options, this policy could unintentionally lead to increased euthanasia or discourage participation in TNR efforts altogether.

TNR works because sterilized cats are returned to their established territories, where they no longer reproduce and gradually reduce colony size over time. Eliminating the return component undermines the effectiveness of the program and does not reflect the realities of our current infrastructure and resources.

I urge the Legislature to:

- Fully fund and expand access to TNR statewide
- Support community caregivers with veterinary access and education
- Invest in long-term solutions such as affordable spay/neuter and public awareness
- Reconsider the prohibition on re-release unless and until adequate housing capacity exists

We all share the goal of reducing suffering, protecting wildlife, and responsibly managing free-roaming cat populations. Sustainable policy must match available resources.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:11:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ashley lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support funding efforts that expand access to spay and neuter services for free-roaming cats in Hawai‘i. Increasing TNR resources is a practical step toward stabilizing populations and reducing future intake into shelters.

What concerns me is the requirement that sterilized cats not be returned to their original outdoor locations.

In theory, permanent removal may sound ideal. In reality, Hawai‘i does not currently have the infrastructure to absorb the number of free-roaming cats that exist across our islands. Sanctuaries are limited. Shelters are already strained. Foster homes are not available at the scale this mandate would require.

Without adequate placement options, prohibiting re-release creates consequences:

- Cats may remain unsterilized because caregivers will hesitate to trap if return is not allowed
- Shelters could face overcrowding beyond safe capacity
- Community-based population control efforts may collapse
- Euthanasia rates may increase due to lack of space

The return component is not a loophole — it is the mechanism that allows TNR to function. Sterilized cats no longer reproduce, nuisance behaviors decline, and colonies gradually shrink over time.

If the long-term goal is meaningful population reduction, policy must reflect current capacity and practical implementation. Funding TNR while removing the ability to return sterilized cats creates a contradiction that will undermine the bill’s intent.

I respectfully ask that funding for TNR move forward, but that the non-release requirement be reconsidered unless and until sufficient housing infrastructure exists statewide.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Ashley Lee

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:33:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill HB1736.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:43:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm asking you to please support HB1736 to keep cats spay/neutered, with an exception process in place, and help to fund the spay/neuter costs.

This bill will greatly help to keep the overall population of cats on the islands from growing.

Feral cats are a great problem in the islands, and add to diseases. The more we can humanely manage the population of cats, the easier it is on the community for health and safety.

Pet cats often escape, are lost for periods of time, and sadly are sometimes left behind to cope on their own when their people move. The unintended effect is an increase in feral cats. Your help supporting this bill will help minimize cats from breeding and ensure that we can care for all the animals and keep the community healthy and clean.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Wood

808-221-7229

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:56:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I am a breeder. I am the Secretary/Tresurer of the CFA sponsored club, the Cat Fanciers' of Hawai'i. I have been a part of the Hawai'i Cat Fancy for over 15 years.

Our associations promote preservation breeding and responsible pet ownership.

We do not contribute to the feral free roaming cat population and should not be burdered with fees and high fines that are proposed in this bill.

For the breeders in our association - our kittens are spayed or neutered prior to leaving for their forever homes or a contract is in place that ensures this will be done at the appropriate age approved by a veterinarian.

As an organization - we reach out to pet owners who need assistance in placing their pets in other homes (due to death or illness or hardship reasons, etc). We have helped numerous individuals (not members of our association) responsibly place these cats in loving family homes so that the cats are not put out to roam or surrendered to a shelter.

We understand that the free roaming cat population must be addressed but not at the expense of responsible breeders and pet owners.

Pedigree cats are a very small population in our community. Oh Oahu - there are approximately a dozen responsible cat breeders. Why should this small group be burdened with the costs and high fines for a problem in which they did not contribute? The backyard, unregulated breeders will still continue to operate and will not follow any of the rules set forth in this bill.

My other concern is 'what governing body will be enforcing this and will they be focused on the groups/individuals that contribute to the problem?' Where will the funds for this governing body come from?

I strongly oppose this bill as it is currently written.

Respectfully

Donna Fujie

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:04:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As an avian conservationist based in Kaua'i, I urge you to support this bill. Feral cats are seriously undermining conservation efforts to support Endangered waterbirds in Hawai'i, and threatening the very survival of some of our rarest species. We cannot stand by while the cat population continues to grow unchecked, to prey on native species. This is an excellent bill with broad support that will take an important step towards dealing with this challenging issue.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:18:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei-Anne Jones	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Can we please find another way to humanely help the cat population?

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:19:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lizzy Baxter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Cats belong in doors as they can decimate wild populations of native animals. Trap, nueter, and reabandon is an ineffective population control technique and leads to painful lives for outside, fearful cats. By implementing more control over cat reproduction, we can make a positive impact on our future wildlife.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:22:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ute K Finch	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With funding, the feral cat population can be reduced through an organized TNR program. Millions of tax dollars are appropriated toward the birds. No problem with that. But it is overdue to address the critical need of free to low cost spay/neuter services for ferals AND pets. I work with the homeless and low income families who just cannot afford to get their animals fixed. Let's make some significant changes so we can rectify this problem. mahalo!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:53:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The bill currently restricts counties from using funds if sterilized community cats are re-released, effectively blocking managed return programs and potentially shifting hundreds of thousands — even millions — of dollars in additional intake costs onto county animal control systems. I am urging legislators to **support HB 1736 with amendments** that preserve the funding mechanism while allowing counties flexibility to use managed return where appropriate. Thoughtful policy now prevents costly consequences later. Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:54:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
fran freitas	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill as it is written. This bill will eliminate responsible pedigree breeders, and they are NOT the problem. Breeders spend a lot of time and money perfecting their line. They seek specialized health testing to ensure a healthy line and work to preserve breed standards. Most importantly, breeders are against their cats going outdoors. People do not fly cats into the state only to dump them outdoors. I am in support of solving the increasing feral cat population. I believe that no cat should be outdoors! Please do not penalize the responsible pedigree breeders by allowing this bill that will not stop the people who are the problem.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:02:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melody Borboa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1736. and I do not understand why HHS is in support of this bill as it is written. Specifically with regards to the restrictions put upon the release of free roaming cats back into the communities. This bill, as it is currently written, specifically targets and hurts the many caring and hard working trappers and colony caretakers who give of their own time and money to provide care for the animals and people in their communities. It seems to me as it is written, you are basically turning your back on funding for the TNRM program by boxing them out with the language of the bill not allowing for re-release of free roaming cats back into the communities they were born into through no fault of their own. There are no enclosed sanctuaries available on the island. Furthermore, cats are territorial animals and cannot just be captured and displaced to some central location. Also, even if there were these so-called enclosed sanctuaries, how logistically would the caregivers continue to provide the care and "management" they are committed to providing. Clearly HHS knows this would not work. Has the Hawaiian Humane Society changed their stance on TNRM? By supporting this bill you would be essentially denying the many trappers and colony caretakers what little funds/assistance they receive now.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:57:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Legislature.

Our wildlife is so incredibly important, we must do all we can to protect it. To that end, I support HB1736 wholeheartedly. Cats are wonderful pets and this bill will help reduce the feral cat population. No cat should be without a home, so if there is anything we can do to prevent that, we should take those steps.

Please vote for HB1736.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:57:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Genevieve Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honored Members,

- Cats are a major and fixable factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds and other native wildlife.
- Let's stop knowingly exposing our own young women to feral feces. Outdoor feral cats poop everywhere and that can cause toxoplasmosis. This 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 kills 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.
- Those helping to reduce the free-roaming pets and feral cat population in Hawai'i need your support.
- Cats make great pets, but we need to work together to help reduce the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape.

Please be the more responsible humans and pass this. Cats don't belong on these islands. This would be a start at undoing the generational damage of the first cats brought here by us. We can fix this.

Thank you for your consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:07:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ward Poulos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- You 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: 3/3/2026 12:16:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

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.

Please support HB 1736.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

Marion McHenry,

Princeville, Kauai

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:22:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This measure is absolutely necessary. We have visited Kauai, Maui and the Big Island regularly for 15 years sometime twice a year. One of the major attractions of the islands to us is the bird life, especially the native birds. Your heroic efforts to conserve the birds are amazing. The release of sterile mosquitos on Kauai and Maui is we hope about to protect the native forest birds from avian malaria. Fencing of high altitude habitat to protect nesting seabirds from feral pigs, goats, dogs and cats is producing results on Kauai, the only island without mongoose. These are expensive initiatives which are working.

As visitors we come in contact with rental car companies, resorts and golf courses. At all of these places we have been at times overwhelmed with the number of feral cats that are treated as pets by outside maintenance staff. We have brought this to the attention of management and th typical response is that it's hard to get and keep staff and having feral cats "adopted" as pets is a reward. The numbers can be staggering. At the entrance to one Kauai resort we counted 17 feral cats. When we returned after dark to retrieve lost belongings at a government golf course in Kauai the parking lot was full of feral cats. There were at least 30 of them. At another golf course in Maui we encountered a woman feeding feral cats which she assured us she did every day in the late afternoon. The cats were assembled to greet her. Similarly at a car rental outfit off airport in Maui the feral cats were pictured on the office wall. We were assured they were neutered. We hope that's the truth.

This culture of "looking after" feral cats has to change. It undermines all the other great work the governments of the islands are doing. It's been shown that all cats when outside hunt and are lethal killers of birds. This is true world wide. You are not alone but Hawaii, as the extinction capital of the World, has to do more than most to conserve native birds. This initiative is extraordinarily important to the welfare and survival of your native birds. Please support it and make it the law.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:22:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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This culture of "looking after" feral cats has to change. It undermines all the other great work the governments of the islands are doing. It's been shown that all cats when outside hunt and are lethal killers of birds. This is true world wide. You are not alone but Hawaii, as the extinction capital of the World, has to do more than most to conserve native birds. This initiative is extraordinarily important to the welfare and survival of your native birds. Please support it and make it the law.

Thank you

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:25:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Serota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

My name is Angela Serota and I am writing to STRONGLY SUPPORT passage of HB1736 HD2.

I have witnessed first hand the dangers that free-roaming cats pose on the health and survival of native and seasonal birds on Kauai. The instinct to kill for food or sport is strong for cats. Once prey is identified, any targeted species, including ground nesting birds such as shearwaters, petrels, albatross, etc, are defenseless against these skilled predators.

Please PASS HB1736 to help spay and neuter cats over five months old. Hopefully, over time, this will help reduce the overpopulation of cats statewide and protect them and their defenseless prey.

Mahalo for your time and support.

Angela Serota

Kilauea, HI

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:25:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Serota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

My name is Angela Serota and I am writing to STRONGLY SUPPORT passage of HB1736 HD2.

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Please PASS HB1736 to help spay and neuter cats over five months old. Hopefully, over time, this will help reduce the overpopulation of cats statewide and protect them and their defenseless prey.

Mahalo for your time and support.

Angela Serota

Kilauea, HI

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:25:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Mizuno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee on Finance,

I am writing in strong support of HB1736, relating to the spaying and neutering of cats in Hawai‘i. This measure addresses a root cause of our feral cat population—unsterilized owned cats that are abandoned, allowed to roam, or escape, contributing to the growing demand for resources to manage overpopulation. It is estimated that female cats can have up to three to four litters per year, meaning a single unsterilized free-roaming cat can potentially lead to hundreds of kittens within just a few years.

It is our responsibility to address this issue in alignment with our ethical values by making spaying and neutering the standard requirement, with reasonable exceptions, and by providing the community with accessible resources to make this feasible for all. This measure targets the source of the problem, for which the state spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, and aims to reduce populations over time while preventing recurrence due to the continued influx of unsterilized cats brought into the state.

My support comes from deep concern for the welfare of feral cats, as well as from a commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s unique ecological environment. I sincerely appreciate the legislators and leaders supporting this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:25:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Mizuno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee on Finance,

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My support comes from deep concern for the welfare of feral cats, as well as from a commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s unique ecological environment. I sincerely appreciate the legislators and leaders supporting this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:26:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amanda little	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amanda Little and I am a resident of Honolulu. I respectfully submit testimony in strong opposition to HB1735.

For the past year I have personally spent approximately three hours every day caring for community cat colonies on O‘ahu. These cats did not appear naturally in the environment—they were abandoned or allowed to reproduce by humans. Addressing the issue requires responsible human solutions rather than inhumane lethal measures.

HB1735 would expand the use of kill traps, poison, and shooting under the label of “predator control.” These methods raise serious ethical concerns and also risk harming non-target species, pets, and other wildlife.

While outdoor cats are often blamed for wildlife decline, Hawai‘i’s ecosystems are affected by multiple invasive predators. One of the most significant is the small Indian mongoose, which was introduced to the islands in the 1800s and is widely documented to prey on bird eggs, chicks, and other native wildlife. Any comprehensive conservation strategy must address all invasive predators rather than focusing narrowly on cats.

In my daily work caring for these colonies, I have observed that many of these cats rely heavily on food provided by caretakers and are part of managed feeding programs. Volunteers across Hawai‘i are already working to stabilize populations through humane approaches such as Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), which prevents reproduction and gradually reduces colony size over time.

Instead of expanding lethal control policies, Hawai'i should invest in:

- Expanded Trap-Neuter-Return programs
- Public education about responsible pet ownership
- Enforcement against animal abandonment
- Collaboration with rescue groups and wildlife experts
- Comprehensive invasive predator management

Hawai'i's residents care deeply about both animal welfare and native wildlife. Humane, science-based management strategies can protect both without resorting to broad lethal measures that risk cruelty and unintended consequences.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reject HB1735 and pursue humane and comprehensive solutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Amanda Little

Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:55:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Deane	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as a concerned resident to strongly oppose **HB1736**. While we all want to see pet overpopulation managed, this bill as written creates more problems than it solves for our local families and our community cats.

Here is why this bill misses the mark for Hawai'i:

- **It's a "No-Return" Policy in Disguise:** The clause stating that spayed/neutered animals cannot be re-released essentially kills local **TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return)** programs. Without the "Return" part, community cats will just end up being euthanized in already overcrowded shelters. That's not the "Aloha Spirit" way to handle our loyal friends.
- **The Fines are Way Too High:** Fining residents **\$500 to \$1,000** for an unsterilized cat is a massive financial blow for most people. With the cost of living already through the straining families, we should be helping people access low-cost care, not punishing them with fines that could cost more than their monthly groceries.
- **Enforcement is a Nightmare:** How are we going to track every cat over five months old? This bill puts an impossible burden on our county animal control officers who are already stretched thin.
- **It Discourages Ownership:** Strict mandates and high fees might actually lead to more "dumping" of pets as owners fear legal trouble they can't afford to fix.

Let's focus on **reducing regulation so low-cost clinics can thrive**. We are better off supporting the volunteers who are already doing the hard work on the ground, rather than passing a law that leads to more euthanasia and heavy fines.

Mahalo for your time and for considering the voices of the community!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:52:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Danielle Rae Daniel, and I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to the proposed bill mandating the spay, neuter, and registration of all cats without exception.

While I strongly support responsible pet ownership and the spay and neuter of non-pedigree companion cats as a means of reducing shelter overpopulation, a blanket mandate that applies to all cats fails to recognize the important distinction between responsible, ethical breeding programs and the issue of feral cat overpopulation.

Ethical breeding of pedigree cats is not about profit or indiscriminate reproduction. It is about the preservation of historic and carefully developed breeds such as the [Maine Coon](#), [Persian](#), and [Siamese](#). These breeds represent decades — and in some cases centuries — of selective stewardship to preserve temperament, structure, working traits, and genetic diversity.

Preservation breeding is also deeply rooted in feline health and genetics. Reputable breeders conduct extensive health testing, maintain detailed pedigrees, track inherited conditions, and make breeding decisions specifically to reduce genetic disease and strengthen long-term breed viability. Eliminating responsible breeding programs would not solve the feral cat crisis — it would instead drive preservation efforts underground and diminish genetic oversight.

Pedigree breeding cats:

- Do not roam freely
- Are not contributing to feral populations
- Are kept indoors or in controlled environments
- Are permanently identified and registered
- Are overseen by ethical codes and breed standards

Organizations such as [The International Cat Association](#) and [Cat Fanciers' Association](#) maintain strict breeder guidelines, registration systems, and codes of ethics to ensure responsible practices.

The feral cat issue is primarily driven by unaltered, unregistered, free-roaming cats — not by health-tested pedigree cats raised in controlled breeding programs.

I fully support:

- Spay and neuter initiatives for non-pedigree and free-roaming cats
- Accessible low-cost sterilization programs
- Responsible registration measures that target overpopulation sources

However, a universal mandate that fails to distinguish between responsible preservation breeding and uncontrolled reproduction is overly broad and not a targeted solution.

I respectfully urge the committee to amend this bill to exempt registered, health-tested, ethically overseen pedigree breeding programs. Policy should be precise, evidence-based, and directed toward the actual source of overpopulation.

Mahalo for your consideration and your commitment to animal welfare.

Respectfully,

Dr. Danielle Rae Daniel

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:32:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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, which 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: 3/3/2026 12:29:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Burns	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the funding of humane cat population control through spay/neuter programs. Spaying and neutering your pets is the most effective way to stop the growth of feral cat populations on the island.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:32:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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 Hawaii 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 Hawaii. 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 Hawaii'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: 3/3/2026 1:22:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hazel Cashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Hazel Cashman and I am part of a team of scientists working to monitor and protect the seabirds of Kaua'i. I am in support of House Bill 1736.

Cats are the main predator of the endangered seabird species that nest here on Kaua'i. We are seeing increases in the number of feral cats living in the most remote areas of the island, including in the Hono O Na Pali Natural Area Reserve. One feral cat can do insurmountable damage to a seabird colony, and there are MANY feral cats roaming the mountains. These feral cats came from the lowlands-- therefore, reducing the number of feral cats down at the shore protects even the most remote mountain ecosystems.

This is essential for our threatened and endangered seabirds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai'i's Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now - we need to act.

Cats make great pets, but we need to work together to help reduce the population of feral and free-roaming cats across our island landscape, for the good of the native seabirds and for the good of us all.

I urge you to support House Bill 1736. Thank you.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:30:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorothy Patent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in Sun Village on Kaua'i, and almost every time I'm on the road by the medical center or Walmart I see feral cats. I know some people feel sorry for them and feed them. There is no reason that feral cats should be allowed to be here; they aren't native and they serve no positive role in nature. I don't believe in killing them, as they aren't "to blame" for anything, but neutering them allows them to continue to live but not reproduce. That seems to me to be the best way to solve this problem. I have also seen several dead cats on the streets here which have been hit by cars. The cats don't belong here; neutering them is the best answer to the problem.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:15:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ZOILA ARRIAZA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose HB1736.

This bill expands lethal predator control measures such as kill traps, poison, and shooting, which raises serious ethical concerns and risks harming pets and non-target animals. Humane solutions must be prioritized over policies that promote widespread killing.

The community cat population exists primarily because of **human abandonment and lack of responsible pet ownership**. Punishing animals for a human-created problem is not an effective or humane solution.

Additionally, Hawai‘i’s native wildlife faces threats from multiple invasive species. The **small Indian mongoose**, introduced in the 1800s, is widely documented as a significant predator of bird eggs and chicks. Effective conservation policy must address all invasive predators rather than focusing narrowly on cats alone.

Many residents and volunteers already work to reduce cat populations through **Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)** programs, responsible colony management, and rescue efforts. These humane strategies prevent reproduction and stabilize populations over time.

Hawai‘i can protect wildlife while maintaining humane treatment of animals. Policies should prioritize science-based solutions such as:

- Expansion of Trap-Neuter-Return programs
- Responsible pet ownership and anti-abandonment enforcement
- Support for rescues and sanctuaries
- Comprehensive invasive predator management

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **reject HB1736** and pursue humane, effective solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:39:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dilek Sahin	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. Free-roaming feral cats are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, endangered seabirds, and other native wildlife. They also have the potential to negatively impact human health, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis (Aguirre et al., 2019), which is spread through cat feces. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, as 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 native species, threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai‘i’s Endangered Species Act and play a big role in healthy ecosystems in Hawaii. 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: 3/3/2026 1:05:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong and unequivocal opposition to HB1735.

This bill promotes lethal predator control methods including kill traps, poisoning, and shooting, which are widely recognized as inhumane and pose serious risks to pets, non-target wildlife, and the public. Authorizing these practices is not only cruel but also reckless.

The outdoor cat population in Hawai‘i is a human-created problem caused by abandonment and irresponsible pet ownership. Punishing animals for a situation humans created is neither ethical nor effective public policy.

Furthermore, focusing narrowly on cats ignores the broader ecological reality. Hawai‘i’s native birds face significant threats from multiple invasive predators, including the Small Indian mongoose, which is well documented to prey on bird eggs, chicks, and other wildlife. Any legitimate conservation strategy must address all invasive predators, not target one species while ignoring others.

Expanding lethal control against cats will not solve the root problem and risks causing widespread suffering while failing to produce meaningful conservation results. The Bill introduced currently only addresses a special fund for sterilizing owned cats - This does not target the issue that is free-roaming cats who also need appropriations to be sterilized. This bill does not adequately target the problem that is created by humans who refuse to fix their cats, along with diligent work by communities to fix free-roaming cats.

Instead, Hawai‘i should invest in humane, science-based solutions, including:

- Expanded Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs
- Enforcement against animal abandonment
- Responsible pet ownership education
- Support for rescue groups and sanctuaries
- Comprehensive invasive predator management

Hawai‘i should be a leader in compassionate and responsible stewardship, not policies that normalize cruelty toward animals.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to REJECT HB1735 and pursue humane, effective solutions that protect both wildlife and animals.

Sincerely,

Ivonne Lee

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:51:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Date: March 3, 2026

Name: Carlyn L Tani

Position: In support

Dear Committee Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carlyn Tani, and I am submitting testimony on my own behalf. I stongly support HB 1736 to help reduce the population of feral cats in Hawai'i, which poses a significant risk to native bird species, monk seals, water fowl and to our fragile natural environment. As a cat owner, I also believe this is a humane way to curb the unbridled proliferation of unwanted pets, which is a health hazard to our local communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha, Carlyn Tani

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 1:01:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose HB1735.

This bill expands lethal predator control measures such as kill traps, poison, and shooting, which raises serious ethical concerns and risks harming pets and non-target animals. Humane solutions must be prioritized over policies that promote widespread killing.

The community cat population exists primarily because of human abandonment and lack of responsible pet ownership. Punishing animals for a human-created problem is not an effective or humane solution.

Additionally, Hawai‘i’s native wildlife faces threats from multiple invasive species. The small Indian mongoose, introduced in the 1800s, is widely documented as a significant predator of bird eggs and chicks. Effective conservation policy must address all invasive predators rather than focusing narrowly on cats alone.

Many residents and volunteers already work to reduce cat populations through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs, responsible colony management, and rescue efforts. These humane strategies prevent reproduction and stabilize populations over time.

Hawai‘i can protect wildlife while maintaining humane treatment of animals. Policies should prioritize science-based solutions such as:

- Expansion of Trap-Neuter-Return programs
- Responsible pet ownership and anti-abandonment enforcement
- Support for rescues and sanctuaries
- Comprehensive invasive predator management

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reject HB1735 and pursue humane, effective solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:51:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully support this law. Hawaii's endangered species are incredibly vulnerable to cats, especially our ground nesting seabirds. This is not the solution to this issues but it is a start. There are other issues with cats, ie toxoplasmosis which is affecting our monk seals and other marine mammals. Please pass this law. It is a minimum of what we need to do. Thank you, Anne Earhart

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:34:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elissa Abella	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY – COMMENTS ON HB1736

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

Thank you for the chance to share my thoughts on HB1736.

I am a cat colony care-giver & TNR volunteer for the past 5 years on Oahu.

I appreciate the State appropriating funds to Spay & Neuter programs however, I'd like to point out something important in the bill. It says counties can only use spay/neuter funds if sterilized animals are **not** re-released, except if they're placed in a **“fully enclosed cat sanctuary.”**

My issue is that the State never defines what a “fully enclosed cat sanctuary” is. With no definition or standards in HB1736, no one—counties, nonprofits, or animal control—can tell what counts as an official or acceptable sanctuary.

Because of that, the sanctuary option becomes almost impossible to use. And since the bill also blocks returning sterilized cats to where they came from, it basically makes **Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)** unusable. This isn't just my interpretation—animal welfare groups have warned that this language would shut down managed return programs altogether.

TNR is one of the only effective tools we have for stabilizing free-roaming cat populations. Taking it off the table while offering an undefined “sanctuary” option puts counties and caregivers in a position where they simply don't have workable alternatives.

My request is simple:

Please define what a “fully enclosed cat sanctuary” actually means and make sure the law doesn't unintentionally block **humane**, proven population-management programs like TNR.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Elissa A. Abella

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:05:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

- 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.

Testimony in **Opposition** to HB1736

I respectfully request that you defer this bill. Requiring the sterilization of imported cats **does not** reduce the number of feral or free roaming cats. These imported cats are not loose and contributing to the feral cat population. The current colonies of intact cats are the problem.

There should be an attempt to reduce the number of feral intact cats before assuming that newly arrived animals are causing the feral cat population.

Keeping track of imported intact cats intended for cat shows or accompanying their owners on vacation is not practical. The problems with keeping track of incoming visitors during the COVID shutdown should illustrate why this idea is not feasible.

Reducing pet overpopulation requires education and access to affordable veterinary care, not punitive mandates and prohibitions that ignore on-the-ground realities here in Hawaii.

Christine Watanabe

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:39:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Critical to pass this bill in support of bird population

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:40:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

I strongly support HB 1736 HD 2.

Mahalo

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:49:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dianne DeLorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A GOOD START! I am writing in support of HB1736. It is a good start toward protecting Hawai'i's endemic and special birds. From the nests and burrows along our coasts, to our wetlands areas, to the elevated forest preserves, HI birds need protection. Ideally, all cats would be indoors and all dogs would be on leashes, disabling their ability to kill HI's precious birds. Although not the most comprehensive solution, the measures to sterliize cats is at least a good start.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 4:26:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

As a native Hawaiian and champion of native species, I support HB 1736 because it will contribute to efforts to reduce the free roaming feral cat population in Hawai‘i. Cats are not native to Hawaii and are a key factor in the decline of our endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, seabirds and other native wildlife. Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

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.

Reducing the feral cat population will protect 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. Our native bird populations have severely declined and continue to decline--we need to act now!.

Mahalo for support,

Jennifer Waipa

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 4:32:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dyan Mitsuyama	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am saddened that this Legislature is singly out cats to what seems to be an attempt to irradiate them from our population. What about the dogs that roam freely? Or the domesticated birds that are roaming free? It may be a good thing to establish a fund but to do away with TNR seems contradictory to what seems to be the goal of reducing the cat population. Our efforts should be focused on houselessness and the economy. I don't think the elimination of cats will help to reduce houselessness; violent crime; or poverty. The protection of the aina is not resolved by this one measure. There are other elements causing pollution, waste, and elimination of our resources.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:00:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I do not support this bill! Prohibiting TNR will make the cat population grown even more. I just TNR'd seven cats. One mom and 6 of her kittens. If I didn't do that they all would have had kittens of their own by now!!! I am an animal lover so it was either TNR. Or not do anything! Even if we could put them in sanctuary's they would still need to be fixed! This bill makes no sense!

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:08:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Calig	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. Hawaiian Monk Seals, Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins (NOAA, 2020) and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can, and does, kill marine mammals.

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

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

Please help our Hawaii bird population bu moving forward with this Bill.

Thank you,

Erika Calig

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:12:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1736/ Special spay and neuter fund.

Submitted by: Karen Machida

Date: 03/03/2026

Dear Members of the House of Representatives,

My name is Karen Machida and I am a registered veterinary technician, community cat caretaker and a concerned voting constituent of Honolulu, Hawaii. I strongly support this bill because it provides funding to spay, neuter, and provide veterinary care for outdoor cats; helping reduce overpopulation, prevent disease, and improve public health.

Although I do not agree with any provision that prevents cats from being returned to their outdoor homes after being fixed. TNR programs are effective because they stabilize colonies and prevent overpopulation of community cats. Permanent removal can be stressful for cats and undermines the purpose of TNR programs.

I also urge the inclusion of a community education program in schools or through shelters like Hawaiian Humane Society or local pet shelters to educate people on responsible pet ownership, spaying/neutering your pets, and proper care of animals. Education is the key to preventing future overpopulation of feral cats and promoting humane treatment of animals.

Finally, I support creating a state-funded cat sanctuary, similar to Lanai Cat Sanctuary, where outdoor cats can live safely and be adopted when possible, providing a humane alternative for cats that cannot safely remain outdoors.

This bill has the potential to improve the lives of cats and communities alike. I urge the committee to consider making some ammendments to this bill, while upholding TNR principles, community education, and the creation of a state funded cat sanctuary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Machida

contact: karenymachida@gmail.com

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:36:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Sakurai	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill as it has huge negative impact on residents who take extreme measures to responsible breeding of felines. Ensure they are healthy and certified to reproduce breed in Hawaii and USA. The bill should target residents who don't practice humane breeding and ship cats to labs for testing.

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:55:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gale Carisa Gillespie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB 1736 HD2

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Gale Carisa Gillespie, and I am a resident of Kapa‘a on the east side of Kaua‘i near Baby Beach/Fugi Beach. I support HB 1736 because the number of free-roaming cats in my neighborhood has noticeably increased, and they frequently roam through residential properties, including my own. Responsible measures such as early sterilization and support for spay and neuter programs are important steps toward reducing the feral cat population. I believe this bill will help protect our communities, native wildlife, and the delicate ecosystems of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Gale Carisa Gillespie
Kapa‘a, Kaua‘i

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:01:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Greetings council members,

My name is Robbin Ramage-Kinoshita. I am a Veterinary professional with over 10 years of experience working in both clinical and shelter settings. I am writing in full support of HB1736 because it will

- Help stop the feral cat population at the source
- Curb the number of unwanted pets being placed into overfilled shelters
- Reduce the number of healthy animals being unnecessarily euthanized
- Promote a more balanced ecosystem for native wildlife
- Lessen cases of neglect and abandonment
- Provide a cruelty free solution
- Help people help themselves by making sterilization services easily accessible
- Benefit the entire community

I whole heartily believe passing this bill is the first step in addressing the overpopulation crisis. Prevention is the most logical way to mitigate numbers in the long run and removing barriers from the public is how we can accomplish compliance.

Your time and attention is greatly appreciated,

Robbin Ramage-Kinoshita

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:17:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please, please support this bill.

We all know what a problem our feral cat issue is. One way to help would be to make sure that most of our incoming animals are sterilized.

Mahalo

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:33:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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: 3/3/2026 8:38:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I oppose HB1736

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:53:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Chun	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an owner of 4 pedigree cats (3-spays, 1-neuter), I **strongly OPPOSE** HB1736 as it is currently written. Like other owners of pedigree cats, I **Do Not** allow my pet cats to roam free to mingle with feral cats for fear of feline diseases, harm or injury. They are strictly housed indoors at all times.

I am for funding to combat the feral or wild cat population for TNR programs, shelter for unhoued cats and public education programs to teach responsible pet ownership and breeding. **I DO NOT** support the requirement to spay/neuter cats in households or cats entering the state nor the \$100 Declaration fee per cat. This will not solve the problem!

Why should responsible pet owners and preservation breeders be penalized for the carelessness of others?

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:18:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

aloha,

i'm finding this bill a bit difficult to parse. I'm an animal lover, a half-century long advocate of the protection of native species, and a cat owner. humane treatment of animals is my top priority as we deal with the issues of overpopulation of cats, their abandonment by owners (who may or may not love and care for them), and the mriad of reasons why we're experiencing an explosion in cat populations in some areas of the state, including Hawai`i Island where i've resided for 45 years.

Hawai`i Island passed an ignorant, uncounscionable bill last year that would limit feeding of starving, abandoned and feral cats -- torture, in a nut shell. worse, it does little or nothing to address the core issues of our animal challenges.

what the state must do is 1) provide sancturies for abandoned cats, 2) provide affordable spay and neuter programs that humanely help limit the cat population, 3) create laws that help people in need of housing to keep their pets rather than abandon them (or lose a roof over their own heads), and provide humane euthanasia for hopelessly ill or injured homeless cats.

it seems this bill does some but not all of what we need to protect our furry friends humanely so that we lift our entire society by being kind rather than indifferent or cruel.

as a wise, involved born-and-raised local veterinarain wrote, "No veterinarian with a conscience would condone the poisoning of any animal for any reason. Amazes me how veterinarians, the AVMA and HVMA stand silent on every issue that involves controversy."

Please hear the wise, experienced, balanced voices of our island to help insure you do the humane thing as you go through the animal control bills before you this session.

mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

March 3, 2026

Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

RE: HB 1736 HD2, Relating to Animal Control

Dear Committee on Finance,

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: 3/3/2026 9:45:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gordon L. Bethel	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee,

My name is Gordon. I'm an ex-military, 100th Battalion / 442nd Infantry, and I've been doing TNR in our communities for over ten years. I served because I love this country, and I still try to serve my community the same way—by doing what's right and what actually works.

I'm concerned because HB1736 says counties can't return fixed cats to where they came from unless they go into a "fully enclosed cat sanctuary." The problem is the State never defines what that means—no rules, no standards, nothing about who can run one or what it's supposed to look like. Without that clarity, there's no real guideline on how counties are expected to use this option.

Because of that, the "sanctuary" option doesn't really exist. And if we also can't return the cats, then TNR basically becomes useless. Local animal groups have already warned this bill would block managed return programs and cause more cats to end up in shelters or euthanized. On top of that, our current shelters are already full right now and cannot take on the number of cats that would be coming in after surgeries.

I'm asking you to please define what a cat sanctuary is and make sure TNR can still be used. It's the only method I've seen that truly works in our communities and keeps the cat population under control.

Mahalo,
Gordon Bethel

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:56:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liberty Peralta	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Liberty Peralta

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Comments re: HB1736

Aloha,

I am submitting my written testimony regarding HB1736. Born and raised on Oahu, and a longtime Kaimuki resident, I previously owned and operated a local cat cafe that partnered with several nonprofit animal rescues.

At surface level, HB1736 is well-intentioned and on the right path. Spay/neuter is crucial to preventing suffering and mitigating animal overpopulation on our islands.

However, I do want to share concerns I have with this measure:

- Kittens as young as 3 months old are capable of reproducing - as it stands, the current house bill draft mandates sterilization at 5 months.
- While Oahu has a couple of small, privately run cat sanctuaries, it has yet to establish a publicly supported cat sanctuary large enough to properly accommodate the provisions in this bill. The folks behind Popoki Place have been trying for years to establish one.
- If sterilized cats cannot be re-released back to the territory they were found, and if there are no viable cat sanctuaries to surrender them to, is it realistic to rehome all of these cats? It has already been a challenge to find homes for adoptable cats, so much so that smaller nonprofits such as Lucky Paws Animal Foundation are transporting cats to the continent. Will the state financially support a program that could scale up this kind of operation?

I have hope that more humane and realistic alternatives can be implemented. Until a viable cat sanctuary can be established on Oahu, the "Return" part of "Trap Neuter Return" is the most realistic and humane solution.

I understand that our native wildlife is of great concern. That said, we humans created this problem that took years to manifest and establish itself. It'll take time for us to undo this mess we created.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Liberty Peralta

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 7:13:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Good morning Hawaii State Legislators,

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

I'm writing in support of HB 1736 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 care about all animals, and I used to run my own pet sitting company. I like this bill because not only would it help seabird populations to thrive, but it doesn't involve killing cats - it's just about not producing more.

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

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

1 year: 12 cats

2 years: 67 cats

3 years: 376 cats

4 years: 2107 cats

5 years: 11801 cats

6 years: 66,088 cats

7 years: 370,092 cats

8 years: 2,072,514 cats

9 years, 11,606,077 cats"

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

Please consider voting in support of HB 1736 HD2, and thank you for all of your hard work. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Amy Fonarow

HB-1736-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 8:31:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cat populations are high and posing great health risk to the community and are devastating endangered seabirds, waterbirds, and the health of marine mammals. There are already plenty of cats that need care on island without increasing their numbers even more.