

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

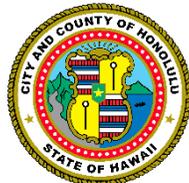
ADMINISTRATION

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February 23, 2026

The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Finance
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

SUBJECT: H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2 - Relating To Feral Animals
HEARING: Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD), appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support** of H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2, which would add a new chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes regarding feral chickens.

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

H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2 provides important statutory clarity by designating feral chickens on public lands as a controllable pest for purposes of public health and nuisance prevention. The measure strengthens existing local rules by prohibiting the feeding, abandonment, or intentional support of feral chickens on public lands or private property, including feeding or placing chickens in such areas, and establishing clear enforcement authority and civil penalties. The bill complements existing county practices and does not expand enforcement beyond current roles.

Testimony for H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2
February 23, 2026
Page 2

While the measure does not include an appropriation, the clear standards and enforcement tools established by H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2 support more consistent, coordinated, and humane management of feral chickens on public lands and private property.

For these reasons, CSD **supports** H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2 and appreciates the Legislature's consideration of this practical and targeted approach to addressing an ongoing public nuisance issue.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. No. 2561, H.D. 2.

Sincerely,

for Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:10:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

We would like to see our elected officials prosecute persons who raise and fight chickens; absent that request being considered, we suggest the use of Ornitrol, a chemico-sterilant which has proven successful in several communities on the mainland and in Europe. Mahalo.

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



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

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and House Committee on Finance,

The Animal Law Section respectfully **opposes** HB2561 HD2. This bill creates more danger to our community than it solves. It increases the risk of violence against animals and humans, takes crucial police resources, and presents new sanitation concerns. Further, promoting animal cruelty goes against our state's cherished cultural value of respect for all beings.

The bill's designation of chickens as "controllable pests" provides ambiguous language that may be used to authorize the killing of feral chickens by private citizens. On its face, this seems to imply that citizens may take actions they deem reasonable to control chickens, including lethal measures. If true, this would impact not just chickens, but our children and the community as a whole. Children who witness violence towards animals are shown to have adverse social impacts and a heightened risk for future violent behavior.¹ While wild chickens may cause issues, allowing people to freely kill them opens the door for increased violence and harm to the overall community.

Further, creating a prohibition on the feeding of wild chickens will likely result in increased calls to law enforcement with reports of citizens feeding chickens. This will consume police time and resources that could have been spent attending to more pressing matters.

Finally, this bill presents a risk to sanitation and public health. If citizens take the controlling of feral chickens into their own hands, we will have the new issue of the disposal of chicken carcasses. People will also likely be handling chickens and carcasses more frequently than before, which is especially concerning in areas of dense human population. When chickens die naturally, they tend to isolate themselves from others beforehand.² Allowing the killing of chickens will likely result in more carcasses out in the open around areas of human activity.

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

Respectfully,

Savannah Sherman, Esq.
Animal Law Section Chair

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

² See Ashlyn Snyder, et al., *Sickness Behavior in Chickens*, University of Maryland Extension FS-1178 at 4 (Sept. 2021), [https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/89.%20Sickness Behavior in Chickens Extension FS1178.pdf](https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/89.%20Sickness%20Behavior%20in%20Chickens%20Extension%20FS1178.pdf).



Aloha Animal Sanctuary
P.O. Box 4030
Kaneohe, HI 96744
info@alohasanctuary.org

To: House Finance Committee & Legislatures

February 24, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of our diverse community of more than 100 volunteers, leaders, and directors who are deeply committed to animal welfare and to promoting a sustainable and compassionate approach in Hawai‘i. We respectfully oppose HB2561 and HB1852, which would classify wild chickens as a “pest,” thereby decriminalizing violence toward them and removing longstanding protections.

Our Sanctuary is dedicated to fostering compassion for all animals through a sustainable, love-based approach. In our seven years of operation, we have witnessed firsthand the power of compassion in strengthening community, serving the ‘āina, and nourishing the hearts and minds of Hawai‘i’s keiki. We firmly believe in compassion-centered education grounded in respect for the land and the animals who inhabit it.

We recognize the challenges of managing the wild chicken population within our unique ecosystem. However, we urge lawmakers to consider that violence is not the solution. Legalizing the entrapment and killing of wild chickens, designating them as pests, and stripping them of legal protections is not a sustainable path forward. We ask you to consider the type of culture we wish to cultivate in our communities. Nonviolence, respect, compassion, and sustainability should remain the foundation upon which public policy decisions are made.

These bills collectively remove protections for wild birds from Hawai‘i’s feral chickens, legalize their killing in any manner permitted for “pests,” and impose fines on those who provide food to them. Additionally, the measures would require state or county approval to rescue wild chickens. We respectfully ask whether the State has the infrastructure to respond to potentially hundreds of daily calls regarding chickens in need of rescue or humane euthanasia. Wildlife rehabilitators care for the sickest and most vulnerable birds—those who have been abused, neglected, or are disabled and unable to survive on their own. Animal rescuers are not the source of this problem.

With respect, these bills are shortsighted and risk promoting a culture that disregards our natural environment and the animals within it. It is estimated that tens of thousands of chickens are bred annually in Hawai‘i for cockfighting. Focusing legislative efforts on penalizing rescuers and compassionate community members, rather than addressing the root causes of overpopulation and illegal breeding, raises serious concerns about policy priorities.

The proposed fines—up to \$250 for a first violation of feeding a wild chicken, \$500 for a second violation within one year, and \$1,000 for a third or subsequent violation—are comparable to penalties under Honolulu’s ordinance addressing cockfighting and related equipment, which carries fines of \$250 to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to 30 days. Penalizing acts such as feeding a chicken at a similar level to cockfighting is deeply troubling.



Aloha Animal Sanctuary
P.O. Box 4030
Kaneohe, HI 96744
info@alohasanctuary.org

We acknowledge that sanitation, noise, and overpopulation present legitimate concerns. However, rather than addressing the symptoms, we urge the Legislature to focus on the root causes, including the uncontrolled breeding and importation of thousands of chickens associated with cockfighting activities.

Criminalizing acts of compassion—such as humane rescue, rehabilitation, or feeding hungry animals—does not advance the well-being of our society. We ask lawmakers to consider the broader and long-term impacts this legislation may have on our community, ethical standards, and cultural values. Complex challenges require thoughtful, comprehensive solutions. Simplistic approaches risk creating unintended and more serious consequences.

We are here to be part of a constructive solution— one that protects our ecosystem while also upholding the moral and social health of our communities.

Mahalo nui loa,

Aloha Animal Sanctuary Board of Directors

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Kaipo Kekona
State President



Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

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Chapter Presidents

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Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lana'i

India Clark
North Shore, Oahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, Oahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimanalo, Oahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, Oahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

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

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

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

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union

**Written Testimony of Trooper's Chicken Rescue
In Strong Opposition to H.B. 2561 H.D.2 — Request to
Halt and Rework**



Brian Burns

Trooper's Chicken Rescue | www.trooperschickenrescue.org

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

Trooper's Chicken Rescue respectfully submits this testimony in strong opposition to H.B. 2561 H.D.2 and urges this committee to halt advancement of this measure until a comprehensive and fiscally responsible strategy can be developed in partnership with organizations actively working on the ground.

As the committee responsible for evaluating fiscal impact and responsible allocation of public resources, we ask you to consider whether this bill represents an effective investment or whether it risks directing resources toward enforcement mechanisms that do not address the root causes driving Hawai'i's feral chicken population.

A Bill That Focuses on Post Capture Without Addressing Root Causes

H.B. 2561 H.D.2 appropriates funding to support the receipt, handling, and compassionate disposition of chickens that have already been captured. While this acknowledges the need for care after capture, the measure does not establish a framework for intake expansion, rehabilitation capacity, prevention, or long-term population reduction.

Without infrastructure to absorb displaced animals and reduce inflow, these efforts risk becoming a cycle that consumes resources without delivering measurable outcomes.

Lack of Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

Trooper's Chicken Rescue has made repeated good faith efforts to engage with lawmakers. Our organization has reached out to multiple legislators, testified in prior hearings, and offered our expertise and partnership.

To date, we have received no responses.

This is deeply concerning given that nonprofit rescue organizations are among the primary entities responding to the real-world impacts of feral chicken populations. While the bill allows agencies to coordinate with animal welfare partners, it does not establish structured collaboration or incorporate operational expertise into policy design.

Trooper's Chicken Rescue Is Prepared to Lead

Trooper's Chicken Rescue has developed a comprehensive vision for addressing Hawai'i's feral chicken population through prevention, coordinated intake, education, and compassionate population management strategies.

Our organization has established governance, operational planning, partnerships, and a leadership team committed to measurable outcomes and responsible stewardship.

We do not lack vision.
We do not lack leadership.
We do not lack commitment.

The only structural constraint to scaling effective solutions is access to appropriately zoned land necessary to operate a full capacity sanctuary capable of supporting long term population management.

Finance Committee Responsibility

Measures that rely primarily on enforcement and post capture response without investing in prevention, infrastructure, or measurable outcomes risk creating ongoing costs without resolving the underlying issue.

This committee has the opportunity to pause this bill and ensure that future legislation is grounded in evidence, collaboration, and long term fiscal responsibility.

Request to Halt and Rework

Trooper's Chicken Rescue respectfully urges the Finance Committee to halt advancement of H.B. 2561 H.D.2 and encourage the Legislature to return to the drawing board in collaboration with nonprofit rescue organizations, animal welfare experts, and community stakeholders.

A comprehensive strategy should include:

- Coordinated intake and rehabilitation infrastructure
- Prevention strategies addressing abandonment and cruelty pipelines
- Support for sanctuary capacity and veterinary response systems
- Data driven evaluation of outcomes
- Formal collaboration with nonprofit partners
- Recognition of land access as foundational to long term solutions

Without these elements, enforcement centered approaches will continue to fall short while consuming public resources.

A Call for Partnership

Trooper's Chicken Rescue stands ready to work with the Legislature to build a thoughtful, strategic framework that addresses both immediate community concerns and long term population dynamics.

Hawai'i deserves a solution that is not only responsive, but effective.

Closing

We respectfully ask this committee to pause, engage, and lead by ensuring that policy development includes those working daily to manage this issue.

“The measure of responsible policy is not how quickly it advances, but whether it solves the problem it was created to address.”

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to thoughtful fiscal stewardship.

Respectfully,

Trooper’s Chicken Rescue

O’ahu, Hawai‘i

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:53:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Opposition to HB2561, HD1

TO: Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance

FROM: Valéry Atkinson, Founder of Rubber Boots Rescue

MEASURE: HB2561, HD1

POSITION: STRONGLY OPPOSE

HEARING: Wednesday, 02-25-26, 2:00 PM (Room 308)

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

My name is Valéry Atkinson, and I am the founder of **Rubber Boots Rescue**. I am writing to urge this committee to **HOLD** HB2561, HD1. While this bill is presented as a solution to a public nuisance, from a fiscal, practical, and humane standpoint, it is an inefficient allocation of state resources that ignores the root of the problem and encourages abuse that is already a daily part of the lives of chickens on O‘ahu.

1. A Waste of Law Enforcement and Taxpayer Dollars This bill asks the Police Department and state agencies to spend taxpayer funded hours citing individual residents for feeding chickens. We should not be utilizing high-cost law enforcement resources for chicken feeding when our communities are facing serious crime. **Section 3** of this bill appropriates funds for the collection of chickens, but **without addressing the source**, this is an endless expenditure that will require constant future appropriations without ever solving the problem.

2. Organized Crime and the Source of the Population If the State wants to address the feral chicken population, it must focus on the fighting industry that treats these birds as disposable. Just last Sunday in Wai‘anae, my father and I witnessed a massive, professional chicken fighting operation; complete with a lookout tower and hundreds of up-coops. These operations fuel the overpopulation by dumping birds the moment they are no longer profitable.

I founded my rescue in memory of two birds, **Walter and Frankie**, who were victims of this exact cycle of abuse that I witness almost daily. They arrived in my care in pain and fear after

being discarded by the fighting industry. Instead of cracking down on these organized criminal rings, HB2561, HD1 focuses on fining independent rescuers and compassionate residents while the operations I saw on Sunday continue to flourish.

3. The Rescue Trap and Unfunded Mandates Section -4(d) requires rescuers to get prior approval from the state to save an animal. Currently, there is no infrastructure, no department, and no budget allocated to manage this approval process. This creates an unfunded administrative burden on the state and effectively bans the **free labor** provided by independent rescuers who currently clean up this crisis at zero cost to the taxpayer.

4. The Defective Date (July 1, 3000) The previous committees assigned this bill a date of the year 3000 because they recognized the fiscal and legal flaws remain unresolved. I ask this committee to finish that work by holding this bill. We need a budget that supports the enforcement of existing animal cruelty laws against organized rings, not a new layer of bureaucracy that penalizes compassion.

I respectfully urge you to **HOLD** HB2561, HD1.

Mahalo,

Valéry Atkinson

Founder, Rubber Boots Rescue

Waianae, HI (District 45)

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 3:56:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting my testimony again to oppose this bill and it's treatment of feral chickens. Feral chickens have been around for a long time, introduced by the early Polynesian settlers over 1,000 years ago and have an important cultural significance. While some view them as a nuisance, they help control insect populations, such as spiders, centipedes and bugs. The chickens are a part of the everyday culture of our islands. Maybe instead of using the cops to give citations to those that feed the chickens, you can have them go to the areas where they use the chickens and roosters for illegal cockfighting and gambling. The chickens are just trying to exist in a world of mean humans. Instead, allow the many organizations that want to help with the chicken population do that and help these organizations financially to assist with this so called problem.

Again, I oppose bill HB2561 and ask that you all work together to come up with a better, more humane solution.

Sincerely,

Natalie Kakimoto

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 3:45:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diann Karin Lynn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Feral chickens are a scourge and their propagation on public property sustains a public nuisance.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 4:28:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Xavier Burns	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I respectfully urge you to conduct a deeper fiscal and community impact review of HB 2561 (HSCR735-26).

This measure shifts what is currently a volunteer driven, privately funded community effort into a taxpayer supported enforcement and disposal system layered with additional bureaucracy. In doing so, it risks creating unintended legal gaps and consequences that could transform what is labeled a nuisance issue into expanded criminalization and enforcement strain. All you have to look at to know that is possible is the many crimes being committed against our agricultural community with crimes against their animals and land.

Nonprofit rescues and animal advocacy organizations across O‘ahu already shoulder substantial financial and operational responsibility that would otherwise fall to the city. Volunteers contribute thousands of unpaid hours to humane trapping, veterinary treatment, rehabilitation, relocation, population control (egg collection) and lifelong animal care. These efforts significantly reduce the need/cost for municipal pest control contracts, enforcement deployment, and disposal services, all without drawing from taxpayer dollars.

Our nonprofit community also fuels local economic activity. Rescues partner with feed stores, fencing suppliers, farm supply retailers, veterinarians, transport providers, small hardware stores, and rural agricultural businesses. The rescue communities reinvest directly into Hawai‘i’s agricultural economy. When egg prices surged last year, our community stepped up. Rescued hens provided fresh eggs to neighbors and underserved families, easing food costs while naturally stabilizing flock sizes through responsible relocation and care. We served the community without harming these beloved feathered residents of Hawai‘i.

Illegal cockfighting, by contrast, creates fiscal and public safety strain. It drives theft of farm animals, illegal gambling, violence, and enforcement costs. We are already seeing troubling rhetoric online from individuals who appear eager to interpret this bill as justification for cruelty under the label of “pest control.” Legislation must be careful not to unintentionally embolden those who profit from violence.

Rather than expanding taxpayer funded control measures, we ask you to partner with nonprofits to revise this bill to help the state morally and fiscally. Allow us to use this moment as a teaching opportunity. As we continue humane relocation efforts, we educate our keiki about stewardship, compassion, agriculture, and civic partnership. This legislature has the opportunity to be remembered as a body that stood up for the voiceless and worked collaboratively toward solutions, not as another obstacle associated with cruelty and unnecessary violence.

HB 2561 presents a choice. We can expand enforcement costs and deepen division, or this body can collaborate with ready and willing nonprofits already investing private dollars, volunteer labor, and educational outreach into humane, fiscally responsible solutions.

We respectfully ask you to choose partnership.

Sincerely,

Patricia Xavier-Burns

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:29:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberley Medeiros	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Senators and Representatives,

I am very saddened and angered that once again Hawaii is playing God with innocent creatures lives and choosing which species lives or dies. Once again we are going to be known as the “kill state”.”

There are many animal lovers around the world that vacation here and bottom line is it CAN affect tourist dollars if we are known as the “cull” state.

Also, I have raised feral and egg laying chickens for over 45 years both free range and in large cages. Wild chickens that we raised and tamed provided eggs for our family not only during the pandemic but through the egg shortage and make wonderful pets and natural bug control.

And Yes, below is from a template, but I do feel exactly as they describe below.

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:24:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:40:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristie LaRose	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,
Kristie LaRose

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:33:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Chaline	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No! I extremely oppose this Bill! The only way forward is coexisting with the extremely few land animals on the islands! Stop playing with nature! The natural sounds of natures are important and unlike the noise population of human beings. Easiest most cost efficient way to solve problem of rooster calls in early morning hours are ear plugs for a few bucks and the package has enough for the entire family. Stop catering to rich white mainlanders just looking for attention from police and lawmakers it's just more white privilege showing up on the islands. Stop wasting everyone's money because privileged white people do all this complaining instead use tax dollars for free ear plugs given at local police stations. Coexisting with Hawai'i's few land animals is the only way forward. Represent the people who have voted you in not wealthy donators!

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:40:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josephine Ah Nee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Out of all of the problems that Hawaii needs to solve, feeding feral animals is one of the absolute last. Although feral chickens can be considered a nuisance by some, there are many things that can be considered a nuisance when they are actually just in need of help. The idea of fining people who feed a wild animal that is not endangered the same amount or more as somebody who commits a driving violation is unethical. Passing this law would also be a gateway to making feeding or helping any animal a fineable offense. Since when is feeding or helping take care of an animal something that should be discouraged? If Hawai'i legislatures put this same sort of effort into feeding the homeless population, spaying feral cats, or helping to clean up the beaches littered with trash instead of making fines for something innocent, then Hawai'i would actually be a better place.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:45:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Heithaus	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e members of the commitee,

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

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

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

Choosing the easy way out through killing and pest control contracts is not the leadership we need. Please do no support this bill and instead work to build a more comprehensive and compassionate plan.

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

We vote. We organize. And we expect better.

With aloha and determination,

Brian Heithaus

Constituent of:

State House: H20

State Senate: S09

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:47:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representative Cordero,

I am writing in STRONG OPPOSITION to HB 1852 and HB 2561.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,
Jessica Fiorillo
District 7

I am testifying in opposition to HB 2561 HD2.

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

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

As the HD2 iteration of the bill notes prohibited acts performed for research or rescue purposes must be approved by the State or city before performance, the House must establish what the proper procedure is to receive approval. State and city agencies are already slow to implement new programs and processes, and this bill does not include language about who would be the approving department, how long it would take to issue approvals, how long approvals may last (one day, one week, one month, etc.), and what happens if the agency does not issue approvals in time for rescue or removal to occur. Additionally, if HPD is truly understaffed and underfunded as they claim, reconsider having HPD and/or other law enforcement agencies as enforcing responders.

I urge this House to consider and invest in empathetic, humane long-term solutions such as providing funding and contracts to organizations that should actually help with the booming populations that the Hawaiian Humane Society chooses to ignore and say they don‘t have the space, capacity, or funding to help; researching and distributing contraceptives for our invasive species; funding State-run spaying/neutering/sterilization/or even humane and compassionate euthanasia treatments to cull growing populations if necessary; working with grassroots rescue organizations like Trooper‘s Chicken Rescue to establish a sanctuary for these animals where they‘ll be safe and removed from residential areas that may see the most noise pollution; and/or actually pursuing the ruthless and unbounded amount of people fighting chickens for money, which calls for barbaric violence toward chickens, clandestine gambling, dumping of chickens that are of no use to them, and larger populations of feral birds in specific areas. Short-term

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

reactions to community noise complaints such as the prevention of feeding chickens does nothing to actually solve this complex issue. Chickens will always be here, whether human beings feed them or not, just as they've been here long before most of the most vocal minority complainants. Work with individuals who prioritize rescue, rehabilitation, and rehoming efforts to establish a solution like a sanctuary that benefits and achieves everyone's goals. Do not allow the loudest voices of residents who participate in illicit activities and/or support abhorrent policies to determine which beings get to live and who is forced to die.

Once again, I am in opposition to HB 2561 HD2.

Noelle Kakimoto

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:24:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffery Teruya	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Representative Takeyama,

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

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

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

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

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

We vote. We organize. And we expect better.

With aloha and determination,

Jeff Teruya

District 34

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:46:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vishakha corbett	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

My pet boar was killed by children because they thought its funny and were upset with my family for not allowing them to catch roosters for cockfighting it was sad and painful time for us I have chickens, pigs cows dog animals are so intelligent innocent creatures chickens eat crb larvae and help in eradicating their population meanwhile humans our state laws pushing for capturing killing feral chickens only enables the crb population to grown and they have devastated our coconut trees in Haleiwa

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

Respectfully,
Vishakha Haleiwa

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:07:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I love chickens for their curiosity, and I love how each one has a different personality.

I already see chickens being abused regularly nearly everyday, Legislating this cruelty into official policy makes no sense, and is cruel in itself.

The justification for this law is that they are a nuisance? I have heard stadium-grade sound systems blasting through neighborhoods at all hours of the day and night, I regularly encounter solicitors on public streets and in front of my home, and these are a much bigger nuisance than a population of animals that might even offer us some food security in the current world climate.

This bill is dangerous for the animals (including pets that may accidentally escape or be stolen), and it will have tragic effects on our community.

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

Respectfully,

Sara Ricer

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:16:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please Oppose HB2561 and HB1852

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I oppose HB2561 and HB1852. Labeling chickens as pests, restricting humane care, and removing protections against killing them conflicts with our values of compassion and mālama ‘āina. These measures would make Hawai‘i appear hypocritical about aloha and animal welfare, and they risk promoting cruelty rather than responsible, humane solutions.

Please vote no on both bills.
Mahalo for your consideration.

Dr. Melissa McKinney

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:14:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Staci Kashiwabara	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony templates.docx

Aloha Senator or Representative [Last Name],

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,
[Your Name]
[Your District]

Aloha Senator or Representative [Last Name],

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

Chickens are social, intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They are already among the most abused animals in Hawai‘i due to widespread

cockfighting and neglect. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing killing only deepens the harm.

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,
[Your Name]
[Your District]

Aloha Senator or Representative [Last Name],

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

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

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

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

Support and work directly with the organizations that care for the lives of these chickens and for our 'āina. Reject policies that normalize cruelty, contaminate our environment, and divide our

communities into us versus them. If these bills move forward, many of us will remember this choice at the ballot box.

We vote. We organize. And we expect better.

With aloha and determination,
Staci Kashiwabara
District 9

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:15:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Gollero	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to suggest the following amendments to this bill:

Amendment One:

Thank you for exempting rescues from the prohibitions in this bill. In order to apply this exemption in a real life rescue however, the condition that a rescue must be approved first by the State or City is unrealistic and impossible, as a rescuer can not predict ahead of time when he or she might happen across a chicken needing to be rescued.

As an example of a real life scenario, one weekend a mother hen and two chicks were struck and killed by a car, but four chicks remained circling in the middle of the street, where vehicles attempting to avoid hitting them impeded traffic, almost causing a collision. Myself, and two others exited our cars to direct traffic and collect the chicks. It is also impossible to report a rescue ahead of time because government offices are closed after normal work hours, in the evenings and early mornings, on weekends, and holidays. The above scenario occurred on a Saturday.

If the State or City will be burdened by this task of record keeping of approved rescues, then perhaps the bill can be deferred for their input as to its feasibility, the program cost in dollars and manpower, if any; and the amount of time required to set up the infrastructure and computer programming, etc., if any; to accommodate this task.

Rescues would be most effective if this condition were deleted entirely from Section (4)(d), or at least edited to read instead:

(4)(d) Any act described in subsection (a) that is performed for research or rescue purposes shall be exempt from the prohibitions in subsection (a). After a rescue is performed, it is mandatory to report it within 2 business days to the State or City via any method of contact posted on their website.

Amendment Two:

Oral birth control, rather than eradication, has already been effectively implemented in some neighborhoods to control hatching. To avoid confusion, it is helpful to differentiate the application of oral birth control as a method of control that is not considered "feeding" chickens.

Mahalo,
Bonnie Gollero

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:21:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisabeth Edgreen	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB2561 HD2

Relating to Feral Chickens

Submitted by: Elisabeth Edgreen

Date: 2/13/2026

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong opposition to HB2561HD2, which would allow individuals to kill feral chickens under expanded exemptions.

While I understand that feral chickens can create nuisance concerns, noise complaints, and sanitation issues, this bill moves Hawai'i in the wrong direction by normalizing lethal force as a primary solution rather than investing in coordinated, humane, and evidence-based management strategies.

Cultural and Historical Significance

Chickens (moa) were brought to Hawai'i by early Polynesian voyagers and hold cultural and historical significance. Reducing them solely to "pests" ignores their deep connection to Hawaiian heritage and the broader ecological story of these islands.

Policy should reflect balance and respect for culture, not simply expediency.

Humane Alternatives Exist

There are proven non-lethal management approaches, including:

- Organized trapping and relocation programs
- Enforcement against illegal feeding
- Public education campaigns
- Fertility control methods used successfully in other bird populations

Some county programs have demonstrated that coordinated trapping can significantly reduce populations when properly funded and managed. Rather than expanding exemptions for killing, the Legislature should strengthen humane infrastructure and community coordination.

Risk of Cruelty and Lack of Oversight

Expanding permission for private individuals to kill animals creates serious enforcement concerns. Without structured oversight, training, or clear humane standards, this bill risks increasing incidents of:

- Improper killing methods
- Prolonged animal suffering
- Public displays of violence in neighborhoods
- Escalation of cruelty under the guise of nuisance control

When laws broadly permit lethal action without tight regulation, they can unintentionally create opportunities for abuse.

Public Safety and Mental Health Concerns

Research in psychology and criminology has long established a documented connection between repeated acts of animal cruelty and broader antisocial or violent behaviors in some individuals. While not all who harm animals escalate to other violence, early and normalized cruelty can be a warning sign in certain populations.

By expanding legal permission to kill animals in residential settings, this bill may:

- Lower community standards around humane treatment
- Provide opportunities for individuals with aggressive or antisocial tendencies to act without scrutiny
- Create traumatic exposure for children who witness violence toward animals

Communities thrive when laws reinforce compassion, accountability, and structured management — not unregulated lethal force.

Community Impact

This bill also risks:

- Increasing neighborhood conflict
- Creating public safety hazards from weapons or improper methods
- Causing distress among residents who value humane treatment of animals

Many residents may not want lethal activity occurring near homes, schools, or public spaces.

A Better Path Forward

Instead of expanding killing exemptions, I urge the Legislature to:

- Increase funding for humane trapping and coordinated county programs
- Strengthen enforcement against feeding and illegal releases
- Support education campaigns
- Develop a science-based statewide management plan
- Require professional or licensed humane control where lethal action is truly necessary

Hawai'i can address nuisance concerns without sacrificing humane standards or community safety.

I respectfully urge you to vote **NO** on HB2561 HD2 and pursue balanced, culturally informed, and humane solutions instead.

I would also like to add that as a licensed clinical mental health therapist, I would be willing to testify regarding the impact this bill would have when it comes to animal cruelty and allowing people with mental issues to abuse it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Elisabeth Edgreen

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:28:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Oppose

2561 HB RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS INCREASE CONTRACT WITH ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS

I'VE SEEN DOGS/WILD PIGS CAUCUS ALONG PA'AKEA ROAD IN NANAKULI DUMPED BY HUNTERS/OWNERS. LACK OF ENFORCEMENT.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:40:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lance kakimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I adamantly oppose this bill! I believe there are many existing organizations that exist to provide care for feral animals in our state. I also disagree that the suggested measures fall in line with the aloha way of life! These are created creatures that need to be cared for and not destroyed because of inconveniences. It behoves the leisure to develop more caring and creative ways to care for all of our animals. We would not take this type of actions with dogs or horses or other cared for animals!

please accept this as my testimony against this house bill.

sincerely

lance kakimoto

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:59:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James and Doreen Tabe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

In light of the compelling arguments presented in the written testimonies of Mr. Jon Ikenaga (in his individual capacity), the Animal Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association, Animal Rights Hawai'i, and Trooper's Chicken Rescue, we strongly oppose House Bill No. 2561 H.D. 2.

Sincerely,

James and Doreen Tabe

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:12:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative Case,

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,
Susan Dowling
Waikiki district

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:29:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Sharon Cloud

Honolulu

Subject: Testimony in Opposition to HB 2561

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

I respectfully submit testimony in **opposition** to HB 2561.

These measures would criminalize the feeding of feral chickens and other birds, yet available research and municipal case studies from across the United States show that feeding bans alone do not reduce animal populations. Population size is driven primarily by available habitat, reproduction rates, and predator presence — not solely by intermittent feeding from residents. Without a comprehensive management plan, enforcement-based bans have repeatedly proven ineffective at long-term population control.

Studies in urban wildlife management demonstrate that punitive feeding bans often lead to unintended consequences, including:

- Increased dispersal of animals into new areas
- Reduced ability to monitor and humanely manage populations
- Escalation of inhumane or unregulated killing efforts
- Increased community conflict and selective enforcement concerns

Additionally, feral chicken populations in Hawai'i are largely the result of historic agricultural abandonment, hurricane-related releases, and decades of unmanaged reproduction. These birds are already integrated into both rural and urban ecosystems. A sudden criminalization approach does not address root causes such as breeding cycles, unsecured food waste, or lack of coordinated relocation programs.

From a fiscal standpoint, eradication and pest-control contracts can cost municipalities hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, often requiring repeated intervention without permanent resolution. In contrast, coordinated humane management strategies — including targeted trapping, rehoming partnerships, responsible containment, and community education — have demonstrated more sustainable outcomes when properly supported.

Many residents currently absorb the cost of feed, veterinary care, containment infrastructure, and relocation efforts. Criminalizing these individuals shifts responsibility away from collaborative problem-solving and onto punitive enforcement, which requires additional public resources for monitoring, citation processing, and court proceedings.

Hawai'i's unique ecological and cultural context requires careful, science-based solutions. Rather than criminalizing compassionate residents, the Legislature should:

- Commission a formal population study to quantify scale and growth trends
- Engage local animal welfare groups and small farmers in solution development
- Develop humane population management guidelines rooted in best practices
- Address waste management and habitat attractants contributing to reproduction

Public policy should be evidence-driven, fiscally responsible, and aligned with community engagement. HB 2561, as written, prioritizes enforcement over effectiveness.

I respectfully urge you to oppose these bills and instead pursue comprehensive, humane, and data-supported management strategies.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melanie Hansford

Wahiawā District 2

February 22, 2026

Aloha Representatives,

My name is Caroline Segalla and I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB2561.

Why is the first solution to kill, Hawai'i is supposed to be the land of aloha. Let's perhaps practice compassion to all beings....

While I understand the intent of this bill is to address nuisance issues related to feral chickens on public lands, HB2561 takes an overly broad and punitive approach that does not reflect Hawaii's unique communities, ecosystems, or cultural values.

First, feral chicken populations and impacts vary significantly by location. A statewide designation of feral chickens as a "pest," particularly in large urban areas, ignores local conditions and removes flexibility from counties and communities that may not experience the same level of concern. Issues related to feral chickens are highly localized and should be addressed at the county or community level rather than through a blanket state policy.

Second, this bill raises animal welfare concerns. HB2561 allows for the "humane control" of feral chickens but does not clearly define acceptable methods or establish oversight. Without clear standards, this could lead to inconsistent practices and unintended cruelty, which conflicts with Hawaii's values of mālama 'āina and humane treatment of animals.

Third, the enforcement provisions are concerning. Penalizing individuals for feeding feral chickens, with fines that may reach up to \$1,000 per violation and accrue daily, risks disproportionately impacting residents, elders, and visitors who may be unaware of the law or motivated by cultural or compassionate

reasons. This also diverts law enforcement and government resources away from higher public safety priorities.

Additionally, HB2561 does not address the underlying causes of feral chicken overpopulation, such as unsecured food waste, human-created attractants, and lack of public education. Simply prohibiting feeding and labeling animals as pests will not resolve these root issues and may worsen community tensions.

Alternatives: Rather than advancing HB2561 as written, I urge the Legislature to consider:

- Community-based and county-led management strategies
- Public education campaigns on proper waste disposal and wildlife interaction
- Humane population control methods, such as sterilization or managed relocation programs
- Further research and data collection to understand the true scope of the issue before imposing penalties
- Please bring together organizations to strategize and be part of the solution in a humane and just way.

Hawaii's approach to wildlife management should prioritize education, compassion, and locally tailored solutions rather than broad criminalization. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to hold HB2561 or amend it substantially to reflect humane, community-driven, and evidence-based solutions. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thanks for doing the right thing and not advancing this bill. It is cruel, too easy to go completely wrong, not humane, definitely not enforceable, nor appropriate for a community that prioritizes ALOHA. Do the hard thing which is reconsider alternatives bringing appropriate parties together for a sustainable, fair, and much kinder solutions.

Respectfully,
Caroline Segalla -Pahoa Hawaii / Big Island

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:09:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sydney Branch	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in opposition.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:13:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,
Amy Cady
Kapolei

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:14:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Love Cavour	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill, as it is not only cruel and inhumane, it is unwise, a waste of our taxpayer dollars, and an example of government overreach. These animals have been here long before those complaining about the inconvenience of them simply doing what God put them here to do. They are a part of the island now. They are intelligent, sensitive animals, who can serve many positive functions, such as keeping populations of roaches, centipedes, and even the dreaded coconut rhinoceros beetle under control! They also can provide food in an emergency situation, or if we ever were temporarily cut off from the mainland! With all the talk of us being more self sufficient, this is a step toward that. In closing, these animals are not a nuisance, they are a charming asset to our beautiful island and cruelly slaughtering them with no regard for life, will not enhance our quality of life here! We need to learn to respect not only God's creatures but each other as well, as the spirit of ALOHA should instruct us to do! Mahalo for your time.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:20:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Michelle Tan

Honolulu district

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Michelle Tan

Honolulu district

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:29:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:29:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles Cryan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2561 HD2. Any solution to the feral chicken population issue should be reached after discussion and collaboration between Native Hawaiian groups, chicken rescue groups, animal welfare agencies, community representatives, veterinarians, and state and city agencies. The solution must be culturally-sensitive, take into account the unique place that feral chickens and moa have in ancient and modern Hawaiian culture, collaborative and have community support. HB2561 HD2 will not provide a long-term solution to the issue. I suggest that the Legislature promote a bill that calls for a working group of the aforementioned representatives that will reach a humane and effective solution, not just a hastily pieced together bill that is reactive to a vocal minority. Please defer action on HB2561 HD2 and take a careful, measured, intelligent approach to this issue.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:40:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zoltan corbett	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

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

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

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

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

chickens were removed before too that's when the crb multiplied spreading rapidly these innocent animals do a wonderful job of eating their larvae which contained crb population

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,
Zoltan

haleiwa

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:50:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mackenna Cady	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully oppose any bill that encourages & justifies unnecessary cruelty to any wildlife in our Hawai'i communities. I ask that we find more intentional, careful, and compassionate alternatives to address any concerns regarding feral populations; one that doesn't ramp up the senseless harm already inflicted against these animals in the name of cockfighting or pest control. Mahalo.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:57:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully but strongly oppose HB2561.

This bill designates feral chickens on certain public lands as a “public nuisance” and “controllable pest,” prohibits feeding or supporting them, and authorizes enforcement and fines. While I understand that unmanaged populations can create challenges, formally labeling these animals as pests raises serious concerns about how this classification will influence behavior and enforcement in our communities.

Today, I personally witnessed middle school students throwing rocks at chickens, tearing baby chicks away from their mother, and throwing them onto the ground. It was deeply disturbing. When legislation publicly classifies animals as pests to be controlled, it can unintentionally contribute to the normalization of cruelty, especially among youth who are still forming their understanding of right and wrong.

Even if the bill references humane control consistent with existing animal protection laws, enforcement in real-world situations is often inconsistent. Expanding nuisance classifications without clear, funded, humane management infrastructure risks encouraging vigilante behavior rather than structured, accountable solutions.

Additionally, prohibiting feeding without simultaneously investing in sterilization, coordinated population management, and prevention strategies fails to address root causes. Punitive measures alone do not create sustainable outcomes.

Hawai‘i’s policies should reflect values of mālama, responsibility, and thoughtful stewardship. We can address population concerns without sending the message that these animals are disposable.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject HB2561 in its current form and instead pursue comprehensive, humane, and evidence-based management solutions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Skye K. Rhoden

Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:08:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Most troubling is the normalization of animal abuse among children, which I personally witness far too often. I have repeatedly seen children capture, harm, and torture chickens in public areas. I have called authorities numerous times while these acts were actively occurring and waited on site, yet no law enforcement response ever came. This situation highlights gaps in the existing legal framework and underscores the need for proactive legislative attention.

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

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

It is also deeply concerning that Hawai'i already carries a widely documented reputation for weak animal protection and high rates of animal cruelty, something that can be easily confirmed through public reports and national rankings. This image does not align with the values Hawai'i

publicly promotes of compassion, stewardship, and respect for life, and legislation like HB2561 risks reinforcing that reputation rather than correcting it.

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Alexis

Oahu, HI

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:23:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

My name is Jason B., and I am a Hawai‘i resident submitting testimony in opposition to HB2561, HB980, and HB1852.

These bills raise serious concerns not only from an animal welfare standpoint, but from a cultural and ethical one. Chickens have existed in Hawai‘i since the arrival of Polynesian voyagers and have long been part of the islands’ ecological and cultural identity. Over generations, they became embedded in the rhythms of local life. Their presence today is not accidental—it is historical.

Much of the frustration driving these proposals stems from rooster crowing. However, crowing is an inherent biological instinct. It is not misconduct, and it cannot be trained away. Historically, the sound of roosters marked the beginning of the day across rural Hawai‘i. Reframing that natural behavior as justification for labeling animals as pests represents a significant shift away from coexistence.

We must also examine consistency. Many sources of neighborhood noise originate from human activity—fireworks, late-night gatherings, or barking dogs. Yet we do not respond by declaring those sources inherently disposable. When we apply a harsher standard to animals than to ourselves, it reflects a deeper imbalance in how we assign value.

The proposed classification of chickens as “controllable pests” is especially troubling. Terminology shapes policy outcomes. Once animals are defined as pests, the threshold for humane treatment often erodes. In a state already confronting challenges with cockfighting and animal cruelty, such a shift risks compounding existing problems.

Equally important is the cultural dimension. Hawai‘i consistently promotes values such as mālama, kuleana, and aloha. These concepts are not symbolic—they carry expectations about how we relate to living systems. Policies that prioritize eradication over stewardship risk undermining those foundational principles.

There is also a societal impact to consider. The way laws define acceptable treatment of animals influences public behavior. When compassion is weakened at the legal level, it becomes

weakened socially. That effect is particularly significant for youth, who develop their understanding of empathy through the norms they observe.

Importantly, opposing these bills does not mean ignoring legitimate concerns. Humane alternatives already exist, including egg management, relocation partnerships, and targeted enforcement against dumping and cockfighting. These approaches address real issues without abandoning ethical responsibility.

Ultimately, this discussion is about alignment. If Hawai'i is to uphold its stated values, its policies must reflect them. Choosing humane, culturally grounded solutions affirms the identity we claim. Moving toward harmful classifications risks contradicting it.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Legislature to reject HB2561, HB980, and HB1852 and pursue solutions rooted in responsibility, balance, and respect for life.

I will closely be following how the legislators act towards this hearing and strongly consider my future votes, if it is not opposed and dismissed.

Mahalo.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:36:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trent Bentley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Trent Bentley

Honolulu

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

By passing bills that normalize cruelty, the Legislature opens a Pandora's box. These policies send a message that harming animals is acceptable, even encouraged. That is

a dangerous message with real consequences for public safety and community wellbeing.

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

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

Respectfully,

Trent Bentley

Honolulu

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

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

We vote. We organize. And we expect better.

With aloha and determination,

Trent Bentley

Honolulu

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:49:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

My name is Evelyn I do not live in Hawai‘i full-time, but I have visited and I follow the islands closely, especially regarding the treatment of feral chickens. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to HB2561, HB980, and HB1852.

What is deeply shocking, and frankly unacceptable is that **Representative Jackson Sayama** is the one who introduced this bill. The thought that any legislator would propose a law that allows or encourages cruelty toward animals is morally reprehensible. This bill undermines everything Hawai‘i claims to stand for: aloha, mālama, and kuleana. It sends a message that harming sentient beings for convenience is acceptable, and that is unconscionable.

My concern is also deeply personal: my daughter is strongly involved in the chicken rescue community in Hawai‘i, dedicating her time and energy to rescuing, rehabilitating, and providing lifelong care for these birds. I have seen firsthand how much compassion, commitment, and responsibility goes into this work. The idea that a bill could criminalize care or make it easier to harm chickens is not only heartbreaking it is an attack on the very people in the community who embody aloha and mālama in action.

Many people, both locally and on the mainland, are horrified that this bill exists at all. A widely circulated petition opposing it has been signed by concerned citizens from across Hawai‘i and beyond, showing that the public will not stand by while legislation normalizes cruelty. The introduction of this bill has left a bitter taste in the mouths of residents and visitors alike. Representative Sayama may want to reconsider his approach, because pursuing legislation that condones inhumane treatment could seriously impact his reputation and political future. Many believe that continuing to advance this bill risks losing public trust and voter support entirely.

The bill’s framing of chickens as “pests” is misleading and unfair. Chickens play an important ecological role: they forage continuously, eating roaches, beetles, larvae, and other insects, naturally controlling pest populations. They scratch and aerate the soil, contributing to a balanced ecosystem. They are part of Hawai‘i’s living landscape, not a nuisance. Rooster crowing is instinctual behavior, just as dogs bark, birds call, and people host noisy gatherings. Labeling a natural animal behavior as justification for harm is both irrational and cruel.

This issue has already attracted national attention. People on the mainland are watching and expressing outrage at the thought that Hawai'i legislators would propose such a law. The message is clear: cruelty disguised as "pest control" is unacceptable and reflects poorly on the state.

Humane alternatives exist. Egg management, partnerships with rescues and sanctuaries, humane trapping and relocation, and enforcement against dumping and cockfighting are all effective ways to address concerns **without** promoting harm. These solutions reflect the values Hawai'i claims to uphold and maintain public trust.

Chickens are living, sentient beings who contribute ecologically, culturally, and symbolically to the islands. They deserve protection and respect, not legislation that justifies cruelty.

I urge you, as lawmakers, to oppose HB2561, HB980, and HB1852. Representative Sayama and the Legislature must understand that the public is watching, both in Hawai'i and across the mainland. Advancing inhumane measures will not be forgotten, and accountability will follow.

Mahalo for your time.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:57:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Casey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to whom this may concern,

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

Chickens have a long standing history in Hawaii and are as much a part of the 'aina as other animals. In Hawaii we teach visitors to malama the 'aina, including respecting wildlife and sealife. We need to uphold the same values ourselves when it comes to some of our most vulnerable animal populations. Chickens are a vital part of this land, as they provide pest control of centipedes and other bugs, they provide food and nutrition for residents especially through their eggs. They provide a low cost and better quality food alternative where prices can be high for many local families. They are social, intelligent animals who form emotional attachments to humans and to each other. They are already among the most abused animals in Hawai'i due to widespread cockfighting and neglect. To respond by labeling them as pests and authorizing killing only deepens the harm.

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

Allowing killing of these creatures does nothing to prevent the ongoing cockfighting crisis, but could actually worsen the situation, in condoning harm of innocent creatures. Young boys are continually seen abusing these chickens, as this is an example that has been set for them. Study after study shows that animal abuse is often the first step toward broader violent crime. Violence begets violence. These young boys need good examples placed forth so that they can stop the cycle of abuse from continuing into their next generation.

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

Hawai'i should be reducing violence, not modeling it. Our children are learning from us, and it is our responsibility to train them up in the way they should go. We should be teaching them how to care for all life, including animals, a mandate given by our Creator (Akua), Yahuah. Proverbs 12:10 states, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." We are abundantly blessed to have so many sources of food on these islands, it is time to start thanking our Creator for them instead of trying to limit them.

In summary, I urge you to reject these bills and instead invest in educational solutions that reflect our shared values to malama the a'ina, including chickens and all of Hawaii's diverse animal life. Chickens enrich Hawaii's beautifully diverse rich culture and provide many benefits such as companionship, bug control, nutrition, and great learning experiences for our children to practice responsibility, caring for animals and the benefits of raising farm animals. All life is precious and should not be needlessly waisted.

Please set forth a good example to our next generations and do not make animal cruelty the law of our land.

Respectfully,
Jordan Casey
Ewa District

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:18:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha committee,

My name is Rob I do not live in Hawai‘i, but I visit many times and follow local issues closely. I am submitting this testimony in vehement opposition to HB2561, HB980, and HB1852.

This issue is personal to me. My daughter is, deeply involved in the chicken rescue community, dedicating herself to saving, rehabilitating, and providing lifelong care for these animals. Chickens are not pests. They forage for insects like roaches and beetles, aerate soil, and contribute to Hawai‘i’s ecological balance. These birds help the environment and are a natural part of the islands’ landscape.

Roosters crowing is instinctive behavior. Just as cicadas hum, frogs sing, and waves crash along the shore, crowing is part of the natural rhythm of life in Hawai‘i. Humans tolerate far louder and more disruptive sounds every day traffic, construction, fireworks, but a rooster is being singled out for simply behaving naturally. Targeting them in this way is cruel and unreasonable.

It is shocking and morally unacceptable that Representative Jackson Sayama introduced this bill. The idea that legislation could allow or promote harm to living animals is appalling. People across Hawai‘i and the mainland are outraged. A petition opposing these bills has circulated widely and gathered thousands of signatures. Pursuing this legislation risks public trust, damages the state’s reputation, and could have serious consequences for Representative Sayama’s credibility and political future.

Humane alternatives already exist: egg management, relocation through rescues and sanctuaries, and enforcement against dumping and cockfighting. These approaches address legitimate concerns without causing harm. and reflect the values of aloha, mālama, and kuleana.

Chickens are living, sentient beings, integral to Hawai‘i’s ecology, culture, and identity. I urge the Legislature to oppose HB2561, HB980, and HB1852, and to reject any law that compromises compassion, ethics, or the natural harmony of the islands.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jon N. Ikenaga, Esq.
1564 Magazine Street, Apt. F
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822

February 25, 2026

HB2561 HD2: RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS

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

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

I oppose HB2561 HD2 for the following reasons.

BULLET POINTS:

- 1) **HB2561 is incomplete and flawed.**
- 2) **The majority of the public do not support the killing of feral chickens.**
- 3) **HB2561 HD2 is legally inconsistent with the cruelty to animals provisions in Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 711-1109.**
- 4) **HB2561 HD2 disregards the importance of moa in Native Hawaiian Culture.**
- 5) **HB2561 HD2 would adversely affect public safety by requiring already understaffed and underfunded police departments to issue citations instead of focusing their limited resources on cases that affect public safety.**
- 6) **HB2561 HD2 diverts limited public funds from more significant and important items.**
- 7) **Feral chickens have become a symbol of modern day Hawai'i and efforts to exterminate them have generated negative publicity for Hawai'i.**
- 8) **HB2561 HD2 disregards efforts made by animal rescue operations whose collaboration is essential to address the feral chicken issue.**

DISCUSSION:

1) HB2561 HD2 is incomplete and flawed.

On its face, HB2561 is incomplete and flawed.

§ -1: States that HB2561 HD2 only applies to “cities with a population of three hundred thousand or more” meaning it is not a statewide solution and only applies to the city of Honolulu.

§-2: Defines “chicken” as the species *Gallus gallus domesticus* but fails to recognize that it is almost impossible to distinguish between this species which is generally a hybrid of the native Red Jungle Fowl and domestic species and *Gallus gallus* which is the culturally significant Red Jungle Fowl which was brought to Hawai‘i by Polynesian voyagers.

§ -3: Subsection (b)¹ states that the designation of chickens as “a public nuisance and controllable pest” is to “support coordinated control and nuisance abatement” but fails to provide specific guidelines for how “animal welfare partners”, “public health partners” and “authorized enforcing agencies” are to collaborate and coordinate.

§ -4: Subsection (c) states that it is “in addition to any other applicable state law prohibiting animal desertion or cruelty” but HB2561 HD2, is actually inconsistent with 711-1109 (cruelty to animals in the second degree) and needs to be re-written to achieve the desired consistency.

§-5: Subsections (a)(1) and (2) state that the DLNR and HPD are designated as the enforcing agencies on state and county land, respectively, but both agencies have consistently complained about lack of personnel and funding. There is no indication that either agency agreed or approved of this designation and it’s unlikely that the public would want to divert these resources from important situations that involve public safety to enforcing chicken feeding citations.

PART II, SECTION 3: This section allocates an unspecified amount of money to the City and County of Honolulu. Given the dire financial situation of the State, the Legislature should allocate funding to agencies for important issues such as education, public benefits and housing and public safety, not a bill that will not achieve its stated objective.

¹ There also appears to be a typo, “certain birds may be treated as pets for pest-control purposes” (emphasis added) should probably read “pests for pest-control purposes.”

2) HB2561 HD2 does not have public support.

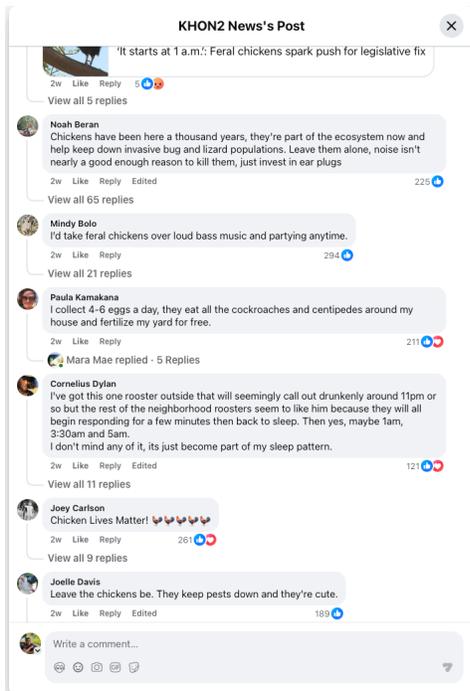
Informal polling based on comments to the various news stories on the Legislature’s current attempts to sanction the “humane control” of feral chickens confirms that HB2561 HD2 and other pending bills do not have public support. In fact, the majority of the comments support leaving feral chickens alone. The people who complain about feral chickens are a vocal minority who are often not from Hawai‘i.

Hawai‘i Public Radio Facebook Post: “Sick of early crowing? Residents could be allowed to kill wild chickens” 22 comments – 10 posters pro-chicken, 4 anti-chicken (one anti-chicken poster is from Oregon)

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18CXpNEcms/>

KHON2 News Facebook Post: “‘It starts at 1 a.m.’ Feral chickens spark push for legislative fix” 1,200 comments – the vast majority of the comments are pro chicken

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=khon2%20news%20chickens>



3) HB2561 HD2 is legally inconsistent with the cruelty to animals provisions in Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 711-1109.

HB2561 § -3 declares feral chickens on public lands as a “public nuisance and controllable pest.” HRS § 711-1109(1)(c), Cruelty to Animals in the Second Degree, prohibits the

mutilation, poisoning or killing without need of “any animal” but specifically excludes “pests.” While that section states that extermination of pests must be in accordance with “standard and acceptable pest control practices and all applicable laws and regulations,” the statute provides no guidance for what the “applicable laws and regulations” are for ordinary people. Essentially HB2561 HD2 could be read to remove feral chickens, as pests, from any of the provisions of HRS § 711-1109, which would then allow acts of cruelty to be perpetrated on them, even outside of extermination, with no recourse.

4) HB2561 HD2 disregards the significance of moa in Native Hawaiian culture.

HB2561 HD2 does not take into account the Native Hawaiian cultural significance of the moa (Red Jungle Fowl) which was brought to the Hawaiian islands by early Polynesian voyagers.

Kealoha Pisciotta, a Hawaiian cultural practitioner and animal advocate, disagrees with killing feral chickens simply because they're a nuisance. Some chickens today descended from those brought to the islands by early Polynesian voyagers, she said.

"The moa is very significant," she said, using the Hawaiian word for chicken. "They were on our voyaging, came with us."²

HB2561 HD1 defines “chicken” as the specific species *Gallus gallus domesticus*. However, it does nothing to clarify how a layperson or even an untrained exterminator or government employee can distinguish between a “feral chicken” which is covered under this bill and other species of fowl that resemble “chickens” but are not subject to be “humanely controlled” under this bill.

² Kelleher, J., “Sick of early crowing? Residents could be allowed to kill wild chickens,” Hawai‘i Public Radio (Feb. 19, 2026). https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2026-02-19/sick-of-early-crowing-residents-could-be-allowed-to-kill-wild-chickens?fbclid=IwY2xjawQKVHJleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEenslnZyMB2LagsNWRRWKfAPyV1VLZKVGSe_Q-CEzYSexbsE4jGVaY68a9Fvo_aem_8plaBP8aZ9HyQTJWPCBeLg

For example:



One of these photos is of *Gallus gallus domesticus* the specific species that is covered under HB2561. The other is *Gallus gallus*, the Red Junglefowl, the moa of Hawaiian cultural significance, that is not covered under this bill. How would anyone other than a trained biologist be expected to make this distinction?³

The failure to distinguish between domestic chicken hybrids and the moa has distinct cultural implications. Feral chickens in Hawai'i are either a type of Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*) or “moa” which were brought to the Hawaiian islands by Polynesians around 1200 AD, or a hybridization of the Junglefowl with modern domestic breeds of chickens brought to Hawai'i by European and Western settlers in the late 18th century.⁴ The generally-accepted explanation for the proliferation of chickens in the community is the release of chickens due to the destruction caused by Hurricane Iwa (1982) and Hurricane Iniki (1992). These chickens, many of which were domestic birds, mixed again with the feral population. Although many of the “feral chickens” that are the subject of this bill are these hybrids, the bill does not distinguish between the hybrid stock and the descendants of the moa that were brought to Hawai'i by Polynesians in 1200 AD.

The moa have a place in Hawaiian history and mythology. The land on which the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center in Waikiki is built was known as Helumoa or “chicken scratch.” Helumoa was “once the seat of Hawaiian nobility, a thriving community famed for its abundance and beauty.”⁵

³ The left photo is of *Gallus gallus domesticus* and the right photo is of *Gallus gallus*.

⁴ “Why Are There So Many Wild Chickens in Hawaii?” Scienceinsights (<https://scienceinsights.org/why-are-there-so-many-wild-chickens-in-hawaii/>)

⁵ Groves, M., “Kamehameha Schools Revitalizes One of Waikiki’s Landmarks” Ka’wakiloumoku Pacific Indigenous Institute, Kamehameha Schools (<https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/article/essays-kamehameha-schools-revitalizes-one-of-waikikiis-landmarks>)

One story of how Helumoa came upon its name involves Kākuhihewa, ruling chief of O‘ahu from 1640 to 1660. It is said that the supernatural chicken, Ka‘auhelemaoa, one day flew down from his home in Ka‘au Crater, in Pālolo, and landed at Helumoa. The rooster scratched the dirt at Kākuhihewa’s feet, then disappeared as suddenly and mysteriously as he had appeared. Kākuhihewa immediately ordered his people to plant a coconut tree at the exact site upon which Ka‘auhelemaoa had kicked up the dirt. This tree, which grew to be the tallest in the area, is said to be the parent of what would become an entire grove of coconut trees, and the land became known as Helumoa, ‘chicken scratch’ [3]. This is the same coconut grove that would later be called the King’s Grove, or the Royal Grove, and would be cited in numerous historical accounts for its pleasantness and lush surroundings.[⁶]

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

5) HB2561 HD2 would adversely affect public safety by requiring already understaffed and underfunded police departments to issue citations instead of focusing their limited resources on cases that affect public safety.

HB2561 HD 1 assigns the DLNR and police departments to enforce its “prohibited acts on public land.” Police departments are already understaffed and officers are overworked handling matters of public safety. Citations require officers to divert to the scene of an offense, conduct an investigation, including interviewing witnesses, write up reports and then appear in court if the citation is contested. It is a waste of limited police resources and a detriment to public safety to divert officers from critical functions that require police assistance such as investigating serious crimes, enforcing traffic laws that protect drivers and pedestrians, or assisting in emergency situations, to issue a \$250 citation to a senior citizen who is feeding feral chickens at the park.

⁶ Id.

6) **HB2561 HD2 diverts limited public funds from more significant and important items.**

HB2561 HD2 allocates an unspecified amount of funds to the City and County of Honolulu for feral chicken receipt, handling and humane disposition. For all the reasons stated in this testimony, HB2561 HD2 does not achieve its stated objective. Limited state funds should be allocated to projects or agencies that serve education, public benefits and housing and public safety rather than a bill that does not achieve its stated objective.

7) **Feral chickens have become a symbol of modern day Hawai'i and efforts to exterminate them have generated negative publicity for Hawai'i.**

Residents and visitors have begun to associate feral chickens and Hawai'i in a positive way.⁷ Feral chickens have been described as a “memorable cultural symbol” and part of Hawai'i's living cultural landscape.⁸ The unchecked and cruel killing of feral chickens could lead to negative publicity for the State and be offensive to residents and visitors. Even a cursory review of the comments on Facebook posts and news articles on the current legislation reveals that local people view feral chickens as a part of ancient and/or modern Hawaiian culture.

8) **HB2561 HD2 disregards efforts made by animal rescue operations whose collaboration is essential to address the feral chicken issue.**

Chicken rescue operations such as Trooper's Chicken Rescue and the Facebook group Hawaiian Chicken Rescue have members who are qualified and willing to work with the State on solutions to the feral chicken population that do not involve the indiscriminate killing of feral chickens. Killing of feral chickens is not the preferred method for population control and can actually increase public health risks. For example, in testimony in opposition to HB980 (2025 session), the Hawaiian Humane Society noted that allowing the killing of feral chickens “contradict[ed] the bill's concern about biosecurity which would be compromised

⁷ <https://www.honolulumagazine.com/afterthoughts-chickens-are-taking-over-hawaii/>

⁸ <https://nszipline.com/blog/hawaii-chickens/>; <https://www.oreateai.com/blog/the-curious-case-of-hawaiis-chickens-a-feathered-legacy/2462bd1f9ca6bb51b875b95615b4b27a>; <https://www.islands.com/1902188/hawaiian-island-stunning-views-chicken-population-outnumbers-residents-kaui/>

by close contact with chickens ... [and could] increase potential H[5]N1 threats.”⁹ Another testifier noted that “[t]he CDC and World Health Organizations recommend biosecurity measures and monitoring, not mass culling, as the primary approach to preventing avian influenza spread in wild bird populations.” There are alternatives other than euthanasia which are available to control chicken populations such as containment, relocation, or birth control.¹⁰

Under HB2561 HD2, “prohibited acts on public land” include feeding or placing food or other attractants on public land. The measure contains an exemption for “research or rescue purpose” but does not specify which state or city agency would give such exemption or the process by which this exemption could be secured. Rescues often occur at the spur of the moment, after working hours or on weekends or holidays. It would significantly hamper rescue efforts if rescuers were required to obtain government approval prior to taking action. In addition, there is no process outlined by which such approval can be obtained. I would suggest the following further amendment:

(d) Any act described in subsection (a) that is performed for research or rescue purposes shall be exempt from the prohibitions in subsection (a)[.]; ~~provided that the act was approved by the State or city before it was performed.~~

If the approval provision is not deleted from HB2561 HD2, then there should be a specific procedure by which rescue or research organizations or persons engaged in rescue or research can receive pre-approval for acts performed in for rescue or research, rather than requiring approval for each individual act. To reiterate, this approval process is not preferable as it would hamper or limit individuals or organizations from performing rescues or research pending approval.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the overwhelming testimony in opposition to HB2561 on February 6, the complaints about feral chickens come from a vocal minority. If the goal of the Legislature is to involve the public in addressing this issue and to come up with a community-supported,

⁹ While the H5N1 concern is consistently brought up in testimony, no agency or individual has cited any study which confirms that feral chickens have been infected with the disease.

¹⁰ OvoControl was developed to control pigeon populations but is being used by some homeowners or condominium owner associations on feral chickens with good results. <https://www.ovocontrol.com/?srsltid=AfmBOorvtE-zbQUN4kGluLCIBJMMhAieEr2E4lu2fvloGDm7SWd1or1M>

effective solution it must take into account the number of people who do not believe that feral chickens are an issue. This is not to say that the State should not take action to assist in addressing this issue. However, due to the complexity of this issue, the more prudent, careful, measured and informed path is to see an **effective long-term solution** to this issue rather than an **ineffective quick fix** to appease the vocal minority. The Legislature should encourage and support community members and groups, such as Hawaii Bird Rescue, Hawaii Chicken Rescue, Hina's Legacy and Trooper's Chicken Rescue that are willing to assist and collaborate with the State in effective solutions that do not involve cruelty, indiscriminate killing or dismissing feral chickens as pests.

The Legislature should form a working group consisting of members of the community, members of chicken rescue/rehabilitation organizations, representatives from the humane societies of each island, animal welfare groups, veterinarians, and DLNR and law enforcement members to discuss this issue and come up with a well-thought-out effective approach to this issue in a report to the Legislature. In recent years this Legislature has made efforts to stop cruelty to animals, even the federal government has joined in this endeavor.¹¹ I am urging the Legislature to support a collaborative, well-reasoned, culturally-appropriate and humane and effective solution to the feral chicken population.

I oppose HB2561 HD2. Thank you for your consideration.

Jon N. Ikenaga, Esq.

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

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:54:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Courtney Southwick	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings,

I have a Master's Degree in Architecture and urban studies and planning was part of my degree. While I do agree with keeping an eye on things for the sake of public health, I will say that what I'm opposed to is not the bill in its entirety but the way this bill is composed. I do agree that people shouldn't just dump chickens into public or private land without consent. However, driving today, I looked at the many different chickens on my drive. Some of which certainly are mixed breed from various breeds that have been hatched on the island. I saw a creamy light Carmel- colored hen and her 14 babies crossing the street. My neighbor and I graciously stopped for the little family to cross the street, including the last little fluffy slow one. I admired the beauty of the different chickens, and even the roosters that gathered in a small pod, happily eating the food they found on the ground- I'm sure of which includes unsightly centipedes and spiders. They are quite social creatures, and holding one offers a loving hug of soft silky feathers.

While yes, we must be mindful of public health, I think Hawai'i has something really special with the chickens. People could literally have access to fresh eggs. The wild chickens eggs taste effects like the other breeds. I personally, have Cochins- Fat fluffy brown hens with feather bell bottoms for feet. My point is, the chickens are sprinkled throughout the land, and they are out and about doing their thing. I think it's nice. I oppose overt killing of these creatures for the sake of "pest control" Now, if there were a small public educational center for kids to learn about chickens- or a chicken adoption program was set up for families to have access to farm fresh eggs or a nice rooster pet named Harold to cozy up with the fam and watch TV were proposed instead --in the care they become too abundant and we're covering the sidewalks with too much poop, well that prior idea is more humane, and constructive, and it speaks better of our community and island. It sets and example that we care for our community, including our chicken community.

Please oppose this bill with the intent of a future effort to creatively rework it in a more preservationist manner, rather than the suggestion that they be "disposed of".

Aloha and Kind Regards,

Courtney

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:58:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jocelyn C	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

What is going on here? I was born and raised in Hawaii, there has always been chickens. They've never been a problem until now. They are a part of our Hawaiian culture, they pose no harm to our environment or people. So taking such measures to pass a bill to harm, kill, and fine the kindhearted people for being willing to care for them is nauseating. Hawaii is already becoming something we never thought it would be with all the crimes, killing, and priced out of paradise events. Now, taking the measures to rid the chickens is taking away another peace of Hawaii and turning it into the mainland. Let's keep Hawaii, Hawaii and let's leave the innocent animals alone. Whatever happened to protecting the animals? It's as if you're supporting chicken fights, to encourage the killing of chickens. Leave the chickens alone, they are not bothering anyone that's been born and raised in Hawaii. Let's focus on the real issues that we have on this island such as the crimes, drug addictions, and homelessness. As a local resident, I am OPPOSED this bill.

With much aloha,

Jocelyn C

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:39:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Hill	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB2561, which seeks to declare feral chickens a public nuisance and criminalize interactions with them. This legislation is deeply flawed on the grounds of cultural significance, scientific validity, constitutional overreach, and individual freedom.

The chicken is not merely a "controllable pest." It is deeply embedded in Hawaii's heritage. Early Polynesian voyagers brought the moa to the islands centuries ago. They are a living connection to Hawaiian history and an established part of our local landscape. Eradicating them disregards the historical and cultural fabric of our islands in favor of sterile urbanization.

Ecologically and scientifically, lethal control and eradication programs for feral animals historically fail due to the "vacuum effect." When animals are removed, others quickly breed or migrate to fill the void, making this an endless sink for taxpayer dollars. Furthermore, feral chickens actively contribute to local pest control by consuming harmful insects, including centipedes, scorpions, and roaches. Removing them disrupts this local ecological balance.

This bill infringes upon fundamental personal freedoms by heavily regulating how residents interact with the natural environment. Criminalizing the act of feeding an animal — a basic act of human compassion — is an overreach. The vague language regarding "supporting" feral chickens or placing "attractants" opens the door to constitutional violations of due process. Citizens could easily face arbitrary enforcement and disproportionate civil fines simply for having food on their private property or maintaining gardens that inadvertently attract wildlife.

Rather than criminalizing compassion and wasting state resources on endless eradication cycles, the State should focus on non-lethal, scientifically sound, and culturally respectful wildlife management.

I strongly urge you to defer or vote NO on HB2561.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:17:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawailehua Atkinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Opposition to HB2561, HD1

TO: Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance

FROM: Kawailehua Atkinson

MEASURE: HB2561, HD1

POSITION: STRONGLY OPPOSE

HEARING: Wednesday, 02-25-26, 2:00 PM (Room 308)

Aloha Chair Todd and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kawailehua Atkinson. I work in Special Education at an elementary school in Wai‘anae. I am writing to ask you to please HOLD HB2561, HD1.

In our community, chickens are a wonderful part of our everyday life. They are not a problem at my school, and I am very concerned about the message this bill sends to our keiki, and about funds being misappropriated when lack of funding, especially for our keiki, is already an issue.

Teaching Kindness and Hawaiian values to our Keiki: In Hawai‘i, we are taught the importance of mālama ‘āina; to ‘honor and nurture the land as a respected relative’. This bill does the opposite. As a teacher, I work hard to teach my students how to be kind and how to care for others.

Because of the epidemic of chicken fighting in Hawaii, many keiki are taught very early that hurting animals is normal. They see roosters being trained for fighting or being dumped on the side of the road when they are no longer useful.

When we label these birds as pests in a state law, we are telling our students that some lives do not matter and that abuse is okay if the animal is a nuisance. Studies show that keiki who are taught to abuse animals can grow up to have more trouble with violence and empathy later in life. We should be spending our time and money teaching our keiki to be pono and to care for all living things, not giving them a legal reason to be cruel.

A Waste of Money I also do not think it is a good use of our state money to pay police officers to give out tickets for feeding chickens. We have much bigger problems in our neighborhoods that the police should be focusing on. If the State is going to spend money, it should go toward stopping the illegal fighting rings that cause the overpopulation in the first place.

Please do not pass this bill. It is not the right lesson for our keiki and it is not the right use of our resources.

Mahalo,

Kawailehua Atkinson

Special Education EA

Wai‘anae, HI

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:17:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Smith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair and Members of the Committee

Re: Opposition to HB2561

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong opposition to HB2561.

This bill takes an overly broad and punitive approach to addressing the issue of feral chickens on public lands. By designating these animals as controllable pests and tying enforcement mechanisms to their presence, the measure creates the risk of vague interpretation and inconsistent application. Laws that lack precise definitions and clear enforcement boundaries can lead to unintended consequences, confusion among residents, and uneven enforcement practices.

Additionally, the bill does not provide sufficient safeguards to ensure humane treatment. Classifying animals in this manner without clear standards or oversight may inadvertently encourage harmful actions and create ethical concerns regarding how enforcement is carried out. Public policy should reflect both community well-being and responsible stewardship.

The approach outlined in HB2561 also prioritizes penalties and enforcement without adequately demonstrating that such measures are the most effective or balanced solution. Enforcement-heavy strategies can strain agency resources and divert attention from other pressing public health, environmental, and safety concerns facing the State of Hawai‘i.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject HB2561.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Smith

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:00:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Salmaso	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators and Representatives,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,
Monica Salmaso
Waikiki

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:16:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yolande branch	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Im in opposition

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

I am writing to express my **strong opposition to HB2561, HD2**. While the state seeks to manage feral populations, this draft relies on a "pest" designation and "disposal" funding that ignores the actual source of the issue: human negligence and criminal activity.

The Danger of the “Pest” Designation

Labeling feral chickens as "controllable pests" in HD2—specifically targeting Honolulu—removes the ethical floor for their treatment. It is impossible to effectively protect or rehabilitate an animal that the State has branded as a public nuisance. As a resident of Ewa, I frequently witness keiki chasing and fighting these chickens. Despite my attempts to talk to them, they do not care—a sentiment I see echoed by many other residents posting online about similar incidents in their own neighborhoods. When the State formally brands an animal as a “nuisance” or “pest” it validates this indifference and signals to our youth that these lives are worthless. We should not be passing laws that normalize the abuse of living creatures, as animal cruelty is a recognized indicator of future interpersonal violence.

Fiscal Responsibility & Targeted Enforcement

As this is now before the Finance Committee, I must highlight that the appropriation for "collecting and disposing" of these birds is a reactionary use of taxpayer money. These resources would be far more effective if redirected toward rigorous enforcement against illegal abandonment and dumping. We must penalize the people who treat animals as disposable by dumping them in our communities, rather than penalizing compassionate residents who step in to care for the animals left behind. Funding "disposal" while failing to stop the influx of new birds through abandonment creates an expensive, endless cycle for the State.

Humane Alternatives

Rather than funding a cycle of trapping and culling, I urge the Committee to redirect these funds toward:

- **Fertility control measures** (like OvoControl) to reduce populations without violence.
- **Enforcement of abandonment laws** to stop the problem at the source.
- **Grants for sanctuaries** to provide humane relocation for birds in high-traffic areas.

We must hold those who abandon animals accountable rather than punishing the animals or the community members who advocate for their welfare. For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Committee to **HOLD HB2561, HD2**.

With aloha,
Megan V.
Resident of Ewa

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:58:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madelief Schelvis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Jarrett Keohokalole,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Madelief Schelvis

District 24

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:17:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chas Albino	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I hear by opposed this bill.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:36:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Jaren Ikenaga DVM	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2561 HD2.

I am a practicing veterinarian on O‘ahu. The issue of feral chickens is a community-wide issue and any solution should be based on collaboration between veterinarians (to ensure that animals are treated humanely, ethically and within accepted veterinary practices), animal welfare groups, animal rescue groups, Native Hawaiian representatives (to ensure that any solution is consistent with and not offensive to Native Hawaiian culture), community members and government agencies. HB2561 HD2 fails to require any collaboration between these important stakeholders in this issue and will not solve the problem. I believe that a collaborative solution can be reached which properly balances competing interests and, most importantly, accounts for the humane and ethical treatment of the chickens. I am urging the committee members to vote “no” on HB2561 HD2 and to work on a more comprehensive, well-thought-out solution to this issue.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:46:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danilla Monk	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Danilla Francisca Monk

Waikiki

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:49:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina Pilco	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative,

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561, including any measure that seeks to label chickens on public land as “pests.”

These bills promote violence and cruelty as public policy, and that is not who we are as Hawai‘i. Our ‘āina is not an enemy to be controlled through killing. It is a living, interconnected system that requires care, responsibility, and respect. All beings who share this land deserve humane treatment.

Killing is not leadership. Normalizing harm through government action sends the wrong message to our communities and, most importantly, to our keiki. Violence, even when sanctioned by policy, remains violence. It erodes compassion and undermines the values of aloha and mālama ‘āina that define our islands.

Hawai‘i should be setting an example rooted in innovation, stewardship, and humane solutions—not bloodshed. These bills move us in the opposite direction and risk damaging the trust between residents and those elected to serve them.

While I understand these measures may be directed toward urban Honolulu, they set a dangerous precedent for other districts to follow. Once cruelty is codified in one place, it becomes easier to expand elsewhere. This issue matters statewide, and we can do better.

I write on behalf of the thousands of island residents who rescue, rehabilitate, and provide lifelong care to chickens, wild birds, and both native and non-native species throughout Hawai‘i. This is not a fringe group. It is a deeply rooted community of caregivers who have built strong support networks, small businesses, and local economic activity centered on humane animal care.

In rural and urban areas alike, people spend thousands of their own dollars on feed, veterinary services, habitat upkeep, transportation, education, and supplies. This work supports local farmers, feed stores, veterinarians, and service providers, while teaching compassion and responsibility to our keiki.

HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 disregard this reality and threaten to dismantle years of community-driven, responsible solutions. There are organizations ready and willing to assist with humane population management—without poisoning our land, harming non-target species, executing healthy animals, or empowering vigilante actions.

Choosing killing and pest-control contracts as the “easy solution” is not leadership. It is a failure to engage with the people already doing the work, already investing in our communities, and already caring for our ‘āina.

I urge you to reject policies that normalize cruelty, contaminate our environment, and divide our communities. Instead, work directly with the organizations and residents who are committed to

humane, nonviolent, and sustainable solutions.

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Kristina Pilco

Kaneohe District Resident

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:51:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representative Lisa Kitagawa,

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Alexis Jones

District 48

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:12:44 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern,

I am an avid wild bird watcher. This includes the feral chickens of Hawaii. Every one that has come to visit my family here, asks about the chickens and we love driving around seeing them. We had so many in my neighborhood when I moved here 2 years ago and we have noticed a significant decline in their presence. Many neighbors, like me are truly saddened by this. They are not pests but beautiful birds that are synonymous with Hawaii, much like the rainbows here in the state, when people think of Hawaii, that is what they think of. Eradicating chickens will diminish the beautiful Hawaiian ambiance. Instead of removing feral chickens, I think that government officials time would be better spent in creating policies that protect the wildlife of Hawaii, including and especially laws against animal cruelty. Thank you for your time in this matter.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:17:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kalena woodhall	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Ed Case,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Kalena Woodhall

District 9

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:19:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Jessica Spencer

District 1

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:31:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Myers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

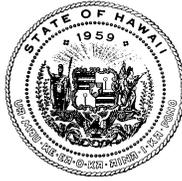
Hawai‘i should be reducing violence, not modeling it. I urge you to reject these bills and instead invest in humane, preventative, and educational solutions that reflect our shared values.

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,
Martha Elizabeth Myers
Honolulu



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2561 HD2
RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date, Time: 2/25/2026, 2:00 P.M., CR308

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests that this measure be
2 considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not supplant the
3 priorities and requests outlined in the Governor’s executive budget request.

4 **Department Position:** The Department offers support for HB2561 HD2.

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

7 The Department of Health (Department) supports HB2561 HD2, which declares feral
8 chickens on public lands, in a city with a population of three hundred thousand or more, as a
9 controllable pest. The Department also supports the prohibition of intentional keeping,
10 maintaining, or supporting of feral chickens on state or certain city lands, including by feeding
11 or placing chickens in such areas and abandonment of chickens on public lands or on private
12 property without consent.

13 Feral animals threaten local ecosystems and can transmit diseases affecting both public
14 and environmental health. A reduction in feral animal keeping, maintaining, or supporting,
15 including feeding, should lead to a decrease in feral animal populations. Reducing feral chicken
16 populations in specific circumstances has multiple positive effects; it will reduce the risk of

1 horizontal transmission of avian diseases such as avian influenza, it will reduce the risk of
2 zoonotic transmission to humans, and it will reduce nuisance complaints received by multiple
3 jurisdictions.

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

9

10 **Offered Amendments:** None.

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

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:34:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Otto	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition

My name is Malia Otto. I am a mother, a partner, a homeowner with animals, a teacher, a travel agent, and the outgoing president of the Kaimukī High School PTA. I am not representing the PTA today — these comments are solely my own. I share these roles simply to underscore that I am deeply committed to volunteerism, community wellbeing, and especially to policies that benefit children — including protecting and democratizing access to nature on public lands.

For those reasons, I stand in opposition to this bill.

1. Hawai‘i’s Ecological Legacy

We already hold the painful distinction of being the extinction capital of the world. To now legalize widespread killing of a long-established canoe animal — the jungle fowl — without comprehensive research or restraint would further entrench that legacy.

Is that truly the reputation we wish to cement? Do we want to be remembered as the generation that fast-tracked eradication rather than stewardship?

This bill is framed as “management,” but in effect it green-lights large-scale eradication. That is not thoughtful conservation. It is reactionary policy. And once damage is done, it cannot be undone.

2. The Bill Contradicts Itself

Section B, paragraph 3 states that “certain birds may be treated as pets for pest management purposes.” Yet elsewhere, the bill legitimizes full-scale culling.

Which is it? Are these animals pests to be eradicated, or are they recognized as functional contributors in pest management? The language is internally inconsistent and requires substantial clarification. Legislation should not contradict itself.

3. Where Is the Science?

If public health is the concern, we must be honest and precise. There is no evidence that chickens are causing mass illness. Categorically, they are not a greater health threat than other urban birds. Fear-based framing without supporting data weakens the integrity of the bill.

If noise is the true issue — and for many residents it is — then say that plainly. Noise is measurable. Science can define impermissible decibel thresholds. If we are serious about solutions, then write them with scientific specificity. Vague language invites misuse and overreach.

4. Redundancy and Intent

Killing chickens is already legal in the context of agriculture and food systems. So what new authority is this bill actually granting? If enforcement is the issue, then strengthen enforcement. If nuisance mitigation is the issue, then target nuisance mitigation. But do not disguise broad eradication under unclear language.

We must ask: what is truly behind this bill?

5. Lean In, Don't Eradicate

Chickens are one of the most sustainable and resilient food sources recognized globally. They are adaptive, resource-efficient, and culturally embedded. The jungle fowl has existed here long before many of us.

Instead of importing the negative connotation of “chicken” as cowardly, perhaps we should observe reality. Anyone who has watched a mother hen defend her chicks or a rooster protect his flock knows these animals are bold, strategic, and protective.

We do not need less connection to nature. We need more.

More thoughtful integration.

More respect for life.

More education.

6. If Culling Proceeds, Then Safeguards Are Essential

If the state insists on moving forward, then at minimum there must be:

- Clear humane standards for dispatch.
- Education to prevent abuse and cruelty.
- Transparent reporting and oversight.
- Time for further ecological and public health research.

Rushing to eliminate a long-standing population without robust data is not good governance.

7. Slow Down

Policy made in haste often becomes regret in hindsight. These birds have lived here as part of our landscape for generations. We should not rush toward eradication simply because coexistence is inconvenient.

Our children are watching how we treat living things.

Let our legacy be stewardship, not extermination.

I urge you to vote no on this bill — or at the very least, slow it down, refine it, and ground it firmly in science, transparency, and humane standards.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:45:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory McDonald	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Brenton Awa,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,
Gregory McDonald
District 23

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:50:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Garland Lym	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

Garland Lym

District 1

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:52:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kasey Gosuico	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Kasey Gosuico

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:55:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunshine Eckstrom	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please strongly oppose HB2561. This bill is promoting animal cruelty and is an embarrassment. No civilized society should treat animals in this manner.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:57:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha chair and members of the house and finance committee

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:02:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Pluskat, DVM	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony Opposing HB2561 and HB1852

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I respectfully submit this testimony **in strong opposition to HB2561 and HB1852**. These bills would weaken Hawaii’s already inadequate animal cruelty protections and send a dangerous signal that harming animals is acceptable — scientifically and socially — which it is not.

1. Weakening animal cruelty laws harms our communities.

Scientific research shows a clear correlation between cruelty to animals and broader patterns of violence in society. Studies from law enforcement and public safety research demonstrate that individuals who inflict intentional harm on animals are more likely to commit other violent acts against people — including domestic violence, assault, and other offenses. Leading national law enforcement and criminology sources identify animal cruelty as a *predictor of violence toward humans* and a behavior associated with violent antisocial conduct.

Additionally, peer-reviewed research has documented that children and adults exposed to animal cruelty — whether as witnesses or perpetrators — are at increased risk of future violent behavior. Witnessing or committing harm to animals may desensitize individuals to suffering and decrease empathy, a critical human social skill.

For these reasons, animal cruelty legislation is not just about protecting animals — it is a **violence prevention tool** that supports safer families and communities across the state.

2. Birds are *not* currently driving an avian flu public health crisis.

Some proponents of weakening protections claim that birds — including feral birds like chickens — are a major public health threat due to avian influenza. However, *scientific evidence and public health agencies currently assess the risk of bird-to-human transmission of avian flu as low*.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has tracked exposures to highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5) in the United States and found **very few human infections**

despite thousands of exposures to infected birds, suggesting that transmission to people is uncommon.

Further historical data shows similar findings: during past avian influenza outbreaks in the U.S., even when wild and domestic birds were infected, **no human cases were detected among exposed individuals in several studies**.

The public health risk profile may change in the future, but at present there is **no evidence that feral birds in Hawaii are a unique or significant driver of avian influenza risk to humans** separate from the broader ecological context already monitored by public health and agriculture officials.

3. Laws matter — weakening protections undermines public safety and ethics.

Strong animal cruelty laws reflect ethical values of compassion, respect for life, and community safety. They support humane treatment of animals, deter gratuitous violence, and provide law enforcement with tools to intervene early when harmful behaviors emerge. Weakening these laws — such as by exempting the killing of animals from cruelty provisions — sends the opposite message: that cruelty is acceptable.

By contrast, maintaining or strengthening animal cruelty laws aligns with scientific evidence on violence prevention and fosters a society that values empathy and respect. It also ensures we have clear legal standards to protect all animals — domestic, feral, or wildlife — under humane and ethical governance.

Conclusion

For the safety of our communities, the integrity of our legal system, and the welfare of all sentient beings in our state, I urge you to **oppose HB2561 and HB1852** and instead protect and strengthen Hawaii's animal cruelty laws.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:05:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andy Berky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

These feral animals are a pest and need to have their population reduced and controlled.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:08:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Anderson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better. Our families deserve better. Our children deserve better.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:09:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am opposed to this Bill that would classify feral chickens as pests. This will lead to unnecessary animal cruelty. In other cases it will unlikely lead to unnecessary suffering as rescues will then be required to take time consuming steps to gain approval by Officials before Being allowed to help any bird in need of medical assistance or care.

TO: Committee on Finance
RE: HB2561 HD2
State Capitol Conference Room 308
February, 25, 2026; 2:00pm

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

I respectfully *oppose* HB 2561 HD2, which would designate feral chickens on public lands as a “controllable pest” and strengthen prohibitions against feeding or maintaining them. While I understand the intent to address nuisance behavior, this bill has serious cultural, social, and safety implications that have not been adequately considered.

Chickens on our islands are part of our shared history. Many feral chickens today are descendants of *moa* brought by early Polynesian voyagers who traveled across the Pacific and carried these birds as companions, food resources, and living parts of voyaging culture. In Hawaiian culture, *moa* are tied to tradition, sustenance, and ancestral ways of life, reflecting a living connection to our ancestors’ seafaring practices.

By classifying these birds as a “controllable pest” without clear humane safeguards, this bill risks encouraging unregulated killing. Testimony already submitted by residents highlights concern that such language could embolden people with cruel intent, legitimizing personal violence against animals rather than coordinated, humane control. Allowing or encouraging residents to kill chickens in public spaces carries a real risk of children and families witnessing animal harm. Studies in child psychology show that exposure to unnecessary animal cruelty can normalize violence in young minds and contribute to desensitization. Whether intentional or incidental, children witnessing birds being broken, killed, or mistreated in parks or near schools can be traumatizing and create lasting harm.

HB 2561 HD2 well-intended goal of reducing nuisance behavior should not come at the expense of cultural heritage or community safety. We urge this Committee to amend it to prioritize humane, culturally sensitive, and child-safe approaches to feral chicken management. Mahalo for your consideration.

Me ka ha’aha’a,

Mai Hall

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:22:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lydia Lam	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony **in strong opposition to HB2561 and HB1852**. From a scientific, public-health, and criminological perspective, these bills would weaken the legal framework that protects animals and, by extension, public safety in **Hawaii**.

1. Scientific Evidence: Animal cruelty is a predictor of interpersonal violence

Extensive research in behavioral science, psychology, and criminology demonstrates that **animal cruelty is a validated risk factor for future violence toward humans**.

Key empirical findings:

- Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies show that individuals who engage in intentional animal harm have **higher rates of domestic violence, child abuse, and violent criminal behavior**.
- The **FBI and major criminology research bodies** classify animal cruelty as a behavioral marker correlated with conduct disorder, antisocial behavior, and elevated future risk of interpersonal aggression.
- Meta-analyses in clinical psychology demonstrate that exposure to or participation in animal cruelty **reduces affective empathy**, a central neuropsychological trait associated with prosocial behavior and inhibition of violence.

Weakening legal protections against animal cruelty removes an important societal mechanism for **early identification and intervention** in behavioral patterns that escalate into human-directed violence.

2. Public-health science: Feral birds in Hawaii pose low risk for causing avian influenza outbreaks

Claims that these bills are needed to reduce avian influenza risk are **not supported by epidemiological evidence**.

What the data show:

According to the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, the current risk of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) to humans in the **United States** remains **low**.

- Despite tens of thousands of exposures to infected domestic poultry nationwide, **human infections remain extremely rare**.
- Documented U.S. cases have occurred almost exclusively in **commercial poultry or dairy production workers**, not from casual contact with wild or feral birds.
- Multiple epidemiological investigations of past HPAI events show that **exposed wild-bird populations were not significant sources of human infection**.

Hawaii-specific ecological context

- Hawaii's feral chickens and other common birds are **not known high-risk reservoirs** for HPAI circulation.
- No data indicate that Hawaii's feral bird populations are uniquely contributing to HPAI evolution or transmission.
- Outbreak risk is primarily tied to **industrial poultry operations**, not free-living wild birds.

Thus, using avian influenza as a justification for weakening cruelty laws is **not scientifically defensible**.

3. Legal and scientific implications of weakening animal-protection statutes

Animal-protection statutes serve not only ethical functions but also measurable **public-health and public-safety functions**:

- They act as a **deterrent** against cruelty-driven violence.
- They provide law enforcement and mental-health professionals with **early indicators of escalating violent behavior**.
- They uphold standards that reinforce empathy and reduce normalization of violence within a community.

HB2561 and HB1852 would erode these evidence-based protections.

Conclusion

From a scientific standpoint—encompassing behavioral psychology, criminology, and epidemiology—there is **no evidence-based justification** for weakening animal-cruelty laws in **Hawaii**.

There is, however, strong evidence that doing so would have **negative consequences for community safety, public health, and ethical governance**.

For these reasons, I urge you to **vote NO on HB2561 and HB1852**.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:28:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Wyckoff	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Scientific Testimony Opposing HB2561 and HB1852
Aloha Chair and Committee Members,**

I strongly oppose **HB2561** and **HB1852**. Scientific, criminological, and public-health evidence shows that weakening animal-cruelty laws would harm both animals **and** community safety in **Hawaii**.

1. SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE: Animal cruelty predicts future violence toward humans

- **Well-established criminological research** identifies animal cruelty as a *risk factor and predictor* of later aggression, including domestic violence and assault.
- The **FBI and behavioral-science researchers** classify intentional cruelty as a warning sign for antisocial and violent tendencies.
- Studies show that harming animals reduces **affective empathy**, a neuropsychological trait essential for inhibiting violent behavior.
- Weakening the law removes an early-intervention pathway used by law enforcement and mental-health professionals to identify dangerous behavioral patterns.

Conclusion: Diluting cruelty laws increases long-term risk to public safety.

2. PUBLIC-HEALTH DATA: Feral birds in Hawaii are *not* driving HPAI transmission risk

- The **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** states the current human risk of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the **United States** is *low*.
- **Most human cases** nationwide have occurred in workers from **commercial poultry or dairy operations**, not from wild or feral birds.
- Past epidemiological investigations show **minimal human infections** despite extensive exposure to infected wild birds.
- Hawaii's feral chickens and other common species are **not documented high-risk reservoirs** for human HPAI spillover.
- No evidence indicates that free-living birds in Hawaii contribute meaningfully to viral spread, mutation, or human exposure risk.

Conclusion: Invoking avian flu as justification for killing or weakening protections is **not supported by scientific data**.

3. WEAKENING ANIMAL-CRUELTY LAWS HAS MEASURABLE NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- Reduces deterrence for violent behaviors linked to broader social harm.
- Removes an evidence-based tool used to identify individuals at elevated risk for committing interpersonal violence.
- Normalizes unnecessary harm and decreases empathy in the community.
- Creates enforcement ambiguity, making it harder for agencies to respond to genuine cruelty cases.
- Undermines Hawaii's ethical and legal standards for humane treatment.

Conclusion: Strong cruelty laws protect both animals and human communities.

4. OVERALL SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT

- There is **no epidemiological reason** to weaken protections for Hawaii's birds.
 - There is **strong scientific evidence** that weakening animal-cruelty laws leads to increased risk of social violence.
 - HB2561 and HB1852 contradict established behavioral-science, violence-prevention, and public-health principles.
-

FINAL POSITION

For reasons grounded in **science, public-health data, and community safety**, I urge you to **vote NO on HB2561 and HB1852.**

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:47:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Chickens help with pest and weed control. They help with soil, produce our eggs and serve as meat. This applies to both domesticated and wild chickens. Some consider them pests, but I believe this bill is pointing the the finger at the wrong invasive species. Wild hogs are a consistent problem for Hawai'i and her people. While chicken keep our crops safe from harmful insects, a hog will cone and demolish the same field within two days or more. If a child approaches a chicken, the most they'll get is a simple peck. If a child approaches a wild hog, they could get gravely injured from the tusks. Can a wild hog restore deforested areas over time? No. But a chicken can through silvoasture and argoforestry. Besides their high value for the environment, they've also become part of Hawai'i when you visit or return home. A tv show set in O'ahu? Its not authentic if there isn't a chicken in the background. A random chicken comes into your backyard? All those bugs that were bothering you won't be there now. My main and final point is that chickens are not pests, they do more for the environment then people realize and instead of cracking down more on the real invasive species, wild hogs, the attention is turned to harming birds that have helped Hawai'i stay lush and beautiful since before our grandparents' time.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:51:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April Matsuura	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

April Matsuura

District 24

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:53:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Coral Shaw	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi there I oppose HB2561 I believe in small government not big and this is just another bill controlling people's lives. Chickens are not a problem on island, the problem is government looking for every single way possible to control the population and fine them for stupid things like feeding wild chickens. This bill is a waste of time, focus on better things, we didn't vote you people in to spend time on creating bills about chickens. Pathetic, focus on things that the people of Hawaii ACTUALLY care about.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:04:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jada Carter	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I respectfully oppose HB2561.

This bill relies primarily on lethal control as the response to Hawai‘i’s free-roaming chicken population. That approach does not address the root issue of unmanaged reproduction and risks creating an ongoing cycle of killing without long-term population stability.

Hawai‘i has an opportunity to pursue a management strategy grounded in mālama ‘āina — responsible stewardship of living systems. A durable solution should reduce populations through prevention and coordinated management rather than repeated removal alone.

I urge the Legislature to prioritize humane and practical alternatives, including:

- partnerships with rescue and sanctuary farms
- organized and relocation programs
- coordinated county-level management plans

Investment in prevention and structured management will produce more lasting results than reliance on lethal measures. A statewide program focused on stewardship can reduce conflicts while maintaining public trust and responsibility toward the land and its living beings.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to vote NO on HB2561.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:10:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Mesiona-Mozick	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Senators and Representatives of our entire State of Hawaii!

I am writing to formally submit a strong opposition to HB 1852 and HB 2561, which includes the proposal to classify chickens on public lands as pests. Our feral populations are sentient beings who are social, intelligent and form emotional attachments to their flock and humans. Scientific studies show chickens experience happiness, grief, pain and joy. Over the last decade, feral chickens have been exterminated in various ways that is not humane by both citizens and programs that are sponsored and authorized by the various City and County Departments of Hawaii. This bill will grant favor to individuals and groups who kill savagely and inhumanely with clear intent to harm and decimate feral populations with no checks and balances in place. Chicken fighting is a relentless issue as it adds to this animalistic form of population control where thousands of feral roosters and hens are baited, tortured, tied and murdered in the open on a daily basis. Minors and adults drive and walk through communities stealing beloved pet roosters and hens to sell on the black market to chicken fighters. This bill only aggravates our broken justice system as these violent and non conforming individuals (minors and adults) will now longer respect property boundaries - private property regulations. Social media captures thousands upon thousands of law breaking individuals ranging in age from elementary to adulthood trespassing and stealing beloved chickens. Insurmountable evidence showing the heinous and sadistic methods of murder, mostly for entertainment purposes, against feral populations is plastered on various social media sites, and group forums, i.e. Aloha Bird Rescue, Hawaii Chicken Rescue, Backyard Chickens Hawaii, etc. Our chicken population controls our insect populations, centepede and roaches; naturally. They consume the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle that is responsible for decimating our palm trees throughout our islands. Feral roosters and chickens serve a huge purpose of creating sustainable environments within our communities and at our parks, public places by feasting on the critters, centepeded and roaches, that will quickly make conditions for citizens very uncomfortable and sometimes unlivable. There is no reason for chemical insect treatments to be necessary as we've already experienced water source contamination via fuel leak poisoning. The complaints of chickens being a noise nuisance or as advocates of this bill have argued that chickens are dirty animals who leave droppings all over their yards. Let's look at the bigger socio-economic problem that Hawaii is facing. Houselessness and homeless encampments that I believe must be tackled by our legislation BECAUSE HUMAN fecal and urine is dirty and unsanitary and cause Hepatitis A. Why is the bill targeting feral chickens, because feral chickens do not have a voice. Houseless and homeless populations have a voice and is much more of a complicated problem that NO ONE wants to tackle because our social systems are broken and there is no easy fix. This bill will lead to the decimation

of thousands upon thousands of ferals using inhumane methods and with no restrictions or laws is the easier route to take. It is already happening here at home. Lastly, this bill promotes killing, period. Aren't you tired of seeing the escalating violence and senseless killings here on the island against citizens? Mental illness and solutions to address it needs this type of attention and legislation. If this bill passes, you, as our representatives and senators of Hawaii will need to sleep at night knowing that the current level of animal cruelty and animal abuse will exponentially increase. Children who are exposed to animal cruelty and showing no empathy toward others, grow up and become serial killers. As tenants of this Earth, we need to do a better job of living with mother nature. We need to do a better job coexisting with sentient beings which includes our feral populations. There are other viable and humane options to control feral populations but this bill is opening a door that will only promote and increase violence and killings against animals, both domesticated and feral. Noise nuisance complaints against ferals, purchase some ear plugs. Sanitary concerns with feral chickens, well, we got homeless encampments everywhere, public sidewalks, bus shelters, beaches, parks, etc, on all of our islands and Hepatitis A should be on the radar along with the building of mental illness facilities. By passing this bill, you are sending out a message that you normalize and accept animal cruelty. By passing this bill, you message that you normalize and accept violence. By passing this bill, you are sending our a message that you normalize animal abuse. Today, I submit my written testimony which REJECTS and OPPOSES HB 1852 and HB 2561.

Melissa Mesiona-Mozick

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:13:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
veronica penalba	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

**With respect and aloha,
Veronica Penalba**

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:26:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator or Representative [Endo],

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

**With respect and aloha,
[Maki Endo]
[Central]**

Aloha Senator or Representative [Endo],

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Respectfully,
[Maki Endo]
[Central]**

Aloha Senator or Representative [Endo],

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

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

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

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

Support and work directly with the organizations that care for the lives of these chickens and for our 'āina. Reject policies that normalize cruelty, contaminate our environment,

and divide our communities into us versus them. If these bills move forward, many of us will remember this choice at the ballot box.

We vote. We organize. And we expect better.

With aloha and determination,

[Maki Endo]

[Central]

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:28:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aldine Hire-Burdett	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Cruel and inhumane. They should focus efforts on fixing and farming rather than killing. This is considered animal cruelty.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:33:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenifer DeLemont	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I realize it is convenient to classify animals as pests when you want to justify doing them harm. However, I do not think there is any justification for classifying Red Jungle Fowl in this way. These canoe animals came with the first people to Hawai‘I, and they have as much right to be here as any Hawai‘ian does.

For people who grew up here with single-wall homes and jalousie windows, the sounds of Red Jungle Fowl are just part of the islands. Roosters crowing, hens squawking, and chicks peeping is part of our childhood memories.

More importantly, there *are* pests here in Hawai‘i.

For example, there are 25 species of centipedes in Hawai‘i. We also have scorpions. The only animal that eats these pests is the Red Jungle Fowl. And -while I have never seen a cat eat a rat in my 50 years of life- I have seen plenty of chickens eat rats. Red Jungle Fowl also eat cockroaches and other bugs, but that is less important since other birds will eat those things.

Just remember: The only thing keeping the centipedes out of your shoes are the chickens.

I understand that people who move here from the mainland prefer to listen to the sounds of car stereos and airplanes flying overhead. They enjoy the noise of traffic and kids crying. Yet, as much as they tune out these noises of modern civilization, they despise the sounds of innocent animals just trying to eat some bugs.

My question is: Why should we make our laws to accommodate mainland people who move here?

Red Jungle Fowl are mostly clean and healthy. They are very hearty birds. And in Hawai‘I, they do far more good than harm. There is no evidence to support the claims that the Red Jungle Fowl population has “exploded” nor that it is “unsustainable.” These wild accusations have no science to back them up and only illuminate the desperate tactics of people who have no good arguments behind their ideas. The truth is: They don’t like the noise. And since that is the case, I suggest they move back home to the mainland where they can enjoy the police sirens and car horns honking instead.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:33:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee S. Hayakawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposing HB2561 and concur with and reiterate the testimony submitted by Mr. Jon N. Ikenaga:

The Legislature should encourage and support community members and groups, such as Hawaii Bird Rescue, Hawaii Chicken Rescue, Hina’s Legacy and Trooper’s Chicken Rescue that are willing to assist and collaborate with the State in effective solutions that do not involve cruelty, indiscriminate killing or dismissing feral chickens as pests. The Legislature should form a working group consisting of members of the community, members of chicken rescue/rehabilitation organizations, representatives from the humane societies of each island, animal welfare groups, veterinarians, and DLNR and law enforcement members to discuss this issue and come up with a well-thought-out approach to this issue in a report to the Legislature. In recent years this Legislature has made efforts to stop cruelty to animals, even the federal government has joined in this endeavor. I am urging the Legislature to support a collaborative, well-reasoned, culturally-appropriate and humane and effective solution to the feral chicken population.

Again, I am respectfully opposing HB2561.

Thank you.

Lee S. Hayakawa

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:35:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Schippert	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB2561 and HB1852. I respectfully oppose the proposed increase in fines related to feeding wild chickens, as currently written. While I understand and respect the State’s interest in managing nuisance concerns, the proposed penalties appear disproportionate and potentially harmful to community members, particularly kūpuna, low-income residents, and compassionate animal caregivers who may be acting with humane intent rather than malicious disregard for the law.

Specifically:

Increasing fines to \$250, \$500, and \$1,000 may create undue financial hardship for residents.

Punitive approaches alone may not effectively address the root causes of wild chicken population concerns.

The proposal may unintentionally discourage humane and community-based solutions that have historically helped manage animal welfare concerns in Hawai‘i.

As someone who works in the community and values balanced, humane approaches to public issues, I respectfully urge the Legislature to consider:

- Education-first strategies
- Community-based population management
- Proportionate and graduated enforcement
- Collaboration with animal welfare organizations

I respectfully ask the Committee to defer or amend these measures to ensure that enforcement remains fair, humane, and effective.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:37:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Donaldson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone who works late into the night I understand the frustrations of people who are woken up by chickens. However, it should not need to be dealt with through such extreme means killing is a cruel act in itself despite what the law claims. That being said I believe those who abandon chickens on public land or refuse to keep them out of other people's land should be penalized.

Respectfully,

Christopher Donaldson

Central Oahu

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:38:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
victor hemmy III	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i oppose this bill as it would classify wild chickens as pests which they are not. they play an important part in keeping down insect populations and are great pets also. It will be impossible to distiguish between those that are beloved pets as alot of time they get loose from households or there chicken coops. Wild chickens have always been apart of Oahu ever since i was a young kid what has changed now i actually love seeing wild chickens around and have also raised many over the years.Please take this testomony into consideration and oppose this bill. Aloha

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:40:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Rhyan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please be humane and remember these are sentient creatures with a right to exist, eat and live without harm. They do not hurt anyone or anything and are the island's version of squirrels! Please remember they are part of the animal kingdom and our aina. Mahalo!

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:42:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Cheadle	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators and Representatives,

I am writing to express my deep outrage and strong opposition to HB 1852 and HB 2561, including the proposal to classify chickens on public land as "pests." Chickens are not "pests." They are a uniquely celebrated creature in Hawaii. Just walk through any gift shop in the Kauai airport for proof. You'll see rows and rows of t-shirts and souvenirs proudly boasting images of the state "mascot"-- the wild rooster. It is one of the aspects of Hawaii that makes it so unique, that makes you feel connected to its ancient roots and that "country" Waialua vibe.

As further evidence, walk through any Foodland or Safeway and take a look at the egg section. Which eggs are considered the most valuable-- the premium eggs that they're selling for the highest price? Cage-free, organic eggs from "happy hens." Hawaii is blessed to have access to an entire population of local hens who are more than happy to lay eggs for the locals in exchange for a safe place to call home. Fresh local eggs are in high demand, as they save money on the cost of transport and importing. To authorize the mass murder of hundreds of local hens is not just cruel and inhumane--it's stupid and short-sighted, from an agricultural and economic standpoint.

Killing is not the approach we want from our leadership. It does not reflect our culture, our values, or the meaning of Aloha. Violence carried out in the name of the government is still violence, and it teaches the wrong lesson to our keiki and our communities. All living beings who share our land are worthy of compassion, love, and humane treatment.

Hawai'i should be leading with compassion, innovation, and mālama 'āina, not bloodshed. These bills would move us in the opposite direction and would destroy trust between the people and those elected to serve them. I strongly urge you to oppose HB 980, HB 1852, and HB 2561 and to support humane, nonviolent, community-based solutions instead.

There are local animal rescue organizations ready and willing to help manage the chicken population humanely, without poisoning our land with pesticides; unintentionally harming other animals, such as native birds; or empowering reckless vigilantes who will use this as an excuse to commit acts of violence. There is a deeply rooted network of thousands of island residents who rescue, rehabilitate, and provide lifelong care for chickens, wild birds, and native species throughout Hawai'i, as well as many local farmers and animal sanctuaries who would be happy to assist in managing and controlling the chicken population. The answer is not to punish and *criminalize* those of us who are willing to care for and relocate chickens-- it is for the State to work in cooperation with the local community to develop a compassionate solution. Please give us that chance. If you don't, and these bills move forward, many of us will remember this decision at the ballot box.

With respect and aloha,

Amanda L. Cheadle
District 50

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:44:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan D.	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:44:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carrie O	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for protecting our wild chicken and rooster population. How can we justify killing an animal just because it's trying to survive in our community, the same as we are?

There's already so much that the wild hens and roosters have to endure, and it is disheartening to witness the cruelty inflicted upon these birds. Kids and teenagers already steal the wild roosters and take them to use in illegal, brutal, backyard cockfighting rings, where they are severely abused, mutilated, and left to suffer. These children, our future generation, witness and partake in this violence, which promotes a dangerous insensitivity to animal suffering and fosters an environment of bloodshed. What are we teaching our keiki? Should we continue doing it just because we've always done it? We need to change, we need to be better, we need to do better. We need to set better examples and lead with purpose for our next generation. Furthermore, these defenseless animals are frequently subjected to general abuse, abandonment, and neglect.

The wild chickens in our area already face a difficult existence, surviving predators, vehicles, and the elements. They should not have to endure intentional human cruelty on top of that. Can you even imagine what they will have to go through if HB2561 passes? It'll be even worse than what some of them are already facing.

Instead of allowing people to kill them, I urge the community to:

- Enforce Cruelty Laws: Take action against illegal cockfighting, which is a felony in 42 states, and stop the abuse of these animals.
- Respect the "Wild" Nature: These birds are part of our ecosystem, contributing to natural pest control (CRB, roaches, centipedes, and other insects) and add to our island home.
- Educate Children: Teach the next generation about empathy for all creatures rather than turning a blind eye to animal cruelty.

I hope you will consider the well-being of these animals and implement policies that protect them from harm, rather than allowing their continued, quiet suffering.

Thank you,

Carrie O

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:45:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shiu Mei Bassette	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote in support of HB2561 and HB1852.

The fines for murdering chickens being raised could help prevent further actions.
Please vote in support of HB2561 and HB1852

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:49:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose bill HB2561 Which would classify wild chickens as pest and allow homeowners to kill wild chickens. What should be enforced is cruelty to roosters. We often find roosters with half cut combs, bloodied with broken legs suffering in our community. Its cruelty to animals.

We should also look into importing chickens. I have seen it so many times on Facebook of someone who thought they were buying hens but ended up with a few roosters looking to find a home for them. Of course not too many people can keep roosters so they end up dumping the roosters in our community and adding to the issue.

As is chickens experience horrible cruelty. If this Bill is passed im afraid of the horrible torture these poor chickens will endure. Have we become so desensitized to this cruelty? Oppose this Bill

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:53:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maddie Rhyan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a 17 year old Junior that goes to Parker school. Everyday, I see chickens on the side of the road taking dirt bathes, preening, and enjoying the day. I have a lot of wild chickens and they are all so sweet. Allowing the public to ruthlessly kill chickens would be devastating. They are Native to the island and deserve the same protection as any other animal.

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:57:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlene Alvarez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

BODY: Aloha Senator or Representative Case

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

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

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

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

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

Our islands deserve better.

With respect and aloha,
Marlene Alvarez
1st Congressional District

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB2561 HD2

Committee on Finance (FIN)

DATE: Wednesday, February 25, 2026
TIME: 2:00 PM
PLACE: Conference Room 308
& VIDEOCONFERENCE
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

From: Gregory Misakian (as an individual)

Submitted: 2/24/26

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

I am in strong opposition to HB2561 HD2, as are the chickens of Hawaii.

My Background

I currently serve as:

- ❖ President, Kokua Council
- ❖ Vice President, Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans (HARA)
- ❖ Director, Keoni Ana AOA
- ❖ Member, Good Government Caucus
- ❖ Member, Kupuna Caucus

I previously served on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board from Jan. 2023 to June 2025 and was also a volunteer with the Hawaiian Humane Society.

Today I am speaking as an advocate for the chickens, and I hope that this committee will please read on and hopefully do the right thing.

My Previous Testimony on HB2561 HD1

While I understand the intent of HB2561 HD1, as I personally have been impacted by roosters waking me up since I moved to Hawaii, this bill is very concerning to me (and clearly to the many opposing it).

First and foremost, I and many others have a great love of animals, as I'm sure those on this committee do and many legislators do. With this in mind, please know that HB2561 HD1 will result in the deaths of many chickens and roosters, often by euthanization in a gas chamber.

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

The most amazing part of turning one act of cruelty into a good story where many came together to help, is the look the rooster gave me when he was injured and knew I was there to help him. His aloha was clear and strong. I ask all on this committee to please show aloha to the chickens, and if you need to enact a bill to mitigate the population, please do so with aloha and ensure that the chickens are placed into a sanctuary or private farms, where they will not be killed.

My Additional Testimony For HB2561 HD2

As I mentioned, the rooster in my previous testimony above was reported to have been shot by someone in my condominium building from their lanai, which faced the parking lot where the rooster was seen injured. I am also aware from reports by two individuals, that the Board President at my condominium association had said to the Resident Manager, "can't you just pour gasoline on the roosters and light them on fire."

While this rooster lay on the ground suffering and I couldn't get to him (as it was private property with a locked fence), I knew that I had to do something and spent time calling the property manager and the contractor building the new Denny's. The contractor arrived and allowed me to take the injured rooster. The Hawaiian Humane Society, where I was a volunteer at the time, said they would be able to X-ray him if I brought him in. When I arrived at the Hawaiian Humane Society veterinary office I waited a very long time. The veterinarian on duty decided to not assist and refused to take an X-ray. I was told I could surrender the rooster or take him to a private veterinarian. I asked what would happen if I surrendered him, and I was told he would be euthanized.

What I also did not report in my earlier testimony is that the veterinary clinic where he was operated on was managed by the wife of the legislator that introduced HB2561 (who I highly respect), and the veterinarian that performed the operation was previously my veterinarian for a rescue cat that I rescued from the street. As we know it's a small island, and the chickens know this too.

I ask all on the this committee to please remember:

- 1) The cultural significance of chickens in Hawaii.
- 2) The ancestral and spiritual ties, from the time the early Polynesians settled in Hawaii and brought chickens to the islands.
- 3) That some in Hawaii regard chickens as "aumakua" (family guardians).
- 4) Moana - do you not recall the chicken in Moana, and now you are telling the keiki of Hawaii it's OK to kill them when you see them.

I am requesting that all members of the FIN Committee vote with Aloha, vote with compassion, and vote with the understanding of the cultural importance of chickens in Hawaii. Unless this bill is amended to protect the chickens from harm, and the residents from steep fines for feeding them, I would ask that you vote no on HB2561 HD2.

Mahalo i nā hana a ke akua
(Respect God's creations.)

Respectfully,

Gregory Misakian

HB-2561-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 2:00:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/25/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ADRIENNE KAHALEPUNA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full opposition of this bill. It is cruel and hateful to allow this massacre to be done, violence is not okay. Please partner with TROOPERS CHICKEN RESCUE.ORG for resolution.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 308 and Via Videoconference

State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2561, HD2 - RELATING TO FERAL ANIMALS.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, my Rep. Miyake for Wailuku, Rep. Yamashita of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews, and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui, and an attorney licensed in the state of Hawai'i for over 25 years. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2561, HD2**, with comments, which declares feral chickens on public lands as a public nuisance and controllable pest in a city with a population of three hundred thousand or more; prohibits supporting feral chickens on public lands, including by feeding chickens; prohibits the abandonment of chickens on public lands or on private property without consent; establishes fines and authorized enforcing agencies; and appropriates funds for the receipt, handling, and humane disposition of feral chickens that have already been caught.

I beg you to help me. When I first moved to Wailuku, Maui from Honolulu in 1997, the disruption caused by the presence of feral chickens near where I was staying in Wailuku Town was so severe that I changed accommodation, which was life-altering, because I met my ex-husband who owned the new accommodations, and I remain on Maui to this day. In 2002, I moved to Wailuku Heights, a neighborhood on Maui about one mile uphill from Wailuku Town, on the hillside of the West Maui Mountains. The Community Covenants and Restrictions in Wailuku Heights forbid livestock, including poultry.

In 2013, we purchased a home back in Wailuku Town, and my ex-husband was so upset by the noise of feral chickens that he refused to live there. I was walking my daughter to dance class and a chicken roosting in our neighbor's tree POOPED ON HER HEAD while she walked under the tree. It was revolting. I became the "mad chicken lady." I put out three traps and spent weeks trapping chickens and taking them to the Maui Humane Society. I trapped over twenty before giving up. We moved out of the house.

A couple of years ago, I noticed that feral chickens were now in my neighborhood in Wailuku Heights. In January of last year, feral chickens were in my yard! I cannot tolerate the noise of the chickens, and the idea of them digging up my yard and spreading their filth and possibly disease such as avian flu not only disgusted me, but frightened me. I spent a full day in January, 2025 calling around trying to figure out solutions. Maui Humane Society no longer accepts feral chickens. The Maui Police Department and Hawaii State Department of Health had no solutions to offer me. I felt trapped and hopeless.

I was alert to my neighborhood and was investigating the feral chicken problem. I talked to neighbors and they, too, were upset by the feral chickens, and told me that one neighbor had brought some feral

chickens and released them into a gulch one house away from me, and another neighbor was feeding them. I complained to the Wailuku Height Community Association Board, and they wrote the offending neighbors Letters of Violation, but the women keep feeding the chickens unabated, to this day. I wish there was a criminal offense to make them stop doing what they are doing, creating a flock of feral chickens that invades their neighbor's property.

I called around pest control agencies in January, 2025, and no one could help me. Finally, in June, 2025, a friend Upcountry posted about hiring a new company to remove feral chickens on her property. I hired this company, at my own expense, to lay traps on Association property in the gulch to try to catch the chickens. In the first week, at a cost of \$500, over 20 chickens were trapped. But not all of them, because the neighbor feeding them gave the feral chickens little incentive to go into the gulch. Overall, **I spent \$1,500 to pay a professional to trap and dispose lawfully of feral chickens.** Over 30 chickens were trapped. It has helped the problem, but that was a very expensive undertaking for me to remedy the situation of a neighbor violating our Association rules and creating a nuisance by feeding chickens.

I strongly support any legislation that helps people like me not have to live with the filth and nuisance of feral chickens. I paid a premium over twenty years ago to buy a house in an Association that did not have and that forbade feral chickens. **I request (beg?) that the bill be amended to include the neighbor islands, not just cities over 300,000. On Maui, the State Office Building, the Wailuku Community Health Center, `Iao Valley State Park, and other County Parks are full of feral chickens. The State and County should make efforts to remove the feral chickens on their properties on neighbor islands. I also request that the bill be amended to provide alternatives for people like me to be able to humanely dispose of feral chickens trapped on our properties.** If I want to remove feral chickens on my property, I have nowhere to take them and no legal means of disposing of them. The trapper I hired to trap chickens offered to take any I trapped for \$100 per bird! I am grateful for this new business on Maui where the trapper comes and removes chickens, but I have spent an unreasonable amount of my own funds to try to remedy a problem caused by the careless and disrespectful behavior of my neighbors. The pest removal company has been hired by local businesses and it has really helped to mitigate the feral chicken problem in Wailuku Town and Kahului.

I strongly support the intent of HB 2561, HD2, with the urgent request that it be extended to encompass the neighbor islands and not just the City and County of Honolulu, and that it make provision for the lawful disposal of feral chickens I trap on my own property.

Thank you SO MUCH for hearing this bill and working towards a solution for our feral chicken problem.

Mahalo,

Christine Andrews
Wailuku, Maui