

SB-3010-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:25:38 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/4/2026 9:40:00 AM

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

Comments:

We are in strong support. Mahalo.

SB-3010-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:31:21 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/4/2026 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Moran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this measure to make oi safe & easier to rescue a pet from a tragic suffering death Mahalo

Mike Moran Kihei, Maui

SB-3010-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:50:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/4/2026 9:40:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing in **strong support of SB3010**, which authorizes law enforcement officers, animal control officers, firefighters, and under certain circumstances private citizens to enter an unattended vehicle to rescue a pet animal in danger. This bill provides clear legal protection for those who act to save an animal's life—and closes a gap in our current law that has left good Samaritans at risk of liability.

Hawai'i's heat is deadly for animals left in vehicles. Even on a mild day, the temperature inside a parked car can rise rapidly—reaching life-threatening levels within minutes. Dogs and other pets cannot cool themselves the way humans can. They suffer heatstroke, organ failure, and death, often while their owners are unaware or indifferent. SB3010 gives first responders and private citizens the tools to intervene before it is too late.

The bill protects those who act in an emergency. Under current law, a person who breaks into a vehicle to save an animal could face criminal charges or civil liability—even if they acted with the purest motives. SB3010 establishes clear conditions under which a private citizen may rescue a pet: they must have a good-faith belief the animal is in imminent danger, contact law enforcement first if possible, use no more force than necessary, and remain with the animal until authorities arrive. These guardrails ensure that the law is used responsibly while removing the threat of punishment for doing the right thing.

It also empowers our first responders. Law enforcement, animal control, and firefighters are on the front lines of these situations. This bill gives them explicit authority to enter vehicles when an animal's health or safety is at risk—cutting through ambiguity and allowing them to act decisively.

SB3010 reflects our values as a community. In Hawai'i, we care for one another—and for the creatures who depend on us. This bill affirms that protecting vulnerable animals from needless suffering is not just a moral obligation, but a priority our laws should support.

I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Letter in Support of SB3010

February 27, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Hawaii State Legislature
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Strong Support for SB3010 – Animal Endangerment Protection and Vehicle Rescue Authorization

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Ryan K. Gomes, and I am a resident of Honolulu. I write to you today as a concerned private citizen in strong support of SB3010, which authorizes certain public officials and private citizens to rescue pet animals from unattended vehicles under dangerous conditions and provides immunity from liability when they act reasonably to save an animal's life.

The Crisis: Animals Dying in Hot Cars

Every year across the nation, hundreds of dogs and other pets die in hot vehicles—often within minutes. Even on a mild day, the temperature inside a parked car can rise to dangerous levels in a matter of minutes, causing heatstroke, brain damage, and death. Animals left in cars during Hawai'i's warm climate are at extreme risk, and the consequences of inaction can be fatal.

Concerned bystanders who witness an animal in distress in a locked vehicle face an impossible choice: break the window and risk criminal charges or civil liability, or walk away and allow the animal to suffer and potentially die. SB3010 resolves this dilemma by providing a clear legal pathway for rescue and protection from liability for those who act reasonably to save an animal's life.

Why SB3010 is Critical

This bill protects animals and empowers rescuers by:

- **Authorizing law enforcement officers, animal control officers, and firefighters** to enter unattended vehicles to rescue pet animals in danger, giving public officials clear legal authority to act quickly without fear of liability.
- **Allowing private citizens to rescue animals under specific conditions**, including checking if the vehicle is locked, calling 911, using no more force than necessary to enter the vehicle, and staying with the animal until authorities arrive.
- **Providing immunity from civil and criminal liability** for public officials and qualifying private citizens who follow the statutory requirements, ensuring that Good Samaritans are protected when they act reasonably to save an animal's life.
- **Establishing clear procedures and safeguards** to prevent misuse while ensuring that animals in genuine danger can be rescued quickly and legally.

Who This Bill Benefits

SB3010 is designed to benefit animals, responsible citizens, and public safety officials.

- **Pet animals** who are left in dangerous conditions gain a legal mechanism for rescue, potentially saving hundreds of lives and preventing immense suffering.
- **Concerned citizens** who want to help animals in distress are protected from lawsuits and criminal charges when they follow proper procedures to rescue an animal from a life-threatening situation.
- **Public officials** (police, animal control, firefighters) receive clear legal authority and protection when entering vehicles to rescue animals, eliminating ambiguity and potential liability.
- **Responsible pet owners** benefit from a system that prioritizes animal welfare and holds negligent owners accountable while providing clear standards and procedures.

This is not a bill that benefits corporations or special interests. It is a straightforward animal welfare and public safety measure that protects vulnerable animals and empowers people to act when they witness cruelty or neglect.

Addressing the Reality of Hot Car Deaths

The science is clear: animals can die in hot cars in a shockingly short amount of time. On a 70-degree day, the temperature inside a parked car can reach 90 degrees in 10 minutes and 110 degrees in 30 minutes. Dogs and cats cannot regulate their body temperature as effectively as humans, and heatstroke can cause organ failure, brain damage, and death within minutes.

Cracking the windows does not prevent this. Parking in the shade does not prevent this. The only way to prevent hot car deaths is to not leave animals unattended in vehicles—or to allow immediate rescue when someone does.

SB3010 recognizes this reality and ensures that when an animal is in danger, people can act quickly and legally to save that animal's life. Every minute counts in these situations, and this bill removes the legal barriers that currently prevent bystanders from intervening.

Safeguards Against Misuse

Some may worry that this bill could be misused by people who break into vehicles without good cause. But SB3010 includes strong safeguards to prevent abuse:

- Private citizens must have a **reasonable belief** that the animal is in imminent danger.
- They must check if the vehicle is locked and attempt to contact the owner or authorities first.
- They must call 911 before or immediately after entering the vehicle.
- They must use **no more force than necessary** to enter the vehicle and rescue the animal.

- They must remain with the animal until law enforcement or emergency responders arrive.

These requirements ensure that only people acting in good faith, with genuine concern for the animal's safety, are protected from liability. Those who act recklessly, maliciously, or without reasonable cause will not be shielded by this law.

A Compassionate and Practical Solution

SB3010 is not radical or extreme—it is a compassionate, practical solution to a real and deadly problem. Many states have already enacted similar laws, recognizing that protecting animals from suffering and death in hot cars is a matter of basic decency and public responsibility.

This bill does not criminalize pet ownership or impose burdensome regulations. It simply provides a legal mechanism for rescue when animals are in genuine danger, and it protects those who act reasonably to save lives.

As a community, we have a responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves—including animals who are trapped, suffering, and at risk of death due to human negligence or mistake. SB3010 ensures that when we see an animal in distress, we can act to help without fear of legal consequences.

Conclusion

SB3010 is a necessary, humane, and well-crafted measure that saves lives, protects Good Samaritans, and establishes clear procedures for animal rescue from dangerous vehicles. It balances animal welfare with reasonable safeguards against misuse, and it empowers both public officials and private citizens to act when animals are in imminent danger.

No animal should die in a hot car because bystanders were afraid to act. No Good Samaritan should face a lawsuit or criminal charges for saving an animal's life. SB3010 ensures that neither of these outcomes occurs in Hawai'i.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB3010.

Mahalo nui for your commitment to animal welfare and for ensuring that Hawai'i has the legal framework to protect animals from preventable suffering and death.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Ryan K. Gomes
Honolulu, Hawai'i

SB-3010-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 1:51:14 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/4/2026 9:40:00 AM

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

Comments:

This is a very important bill. All too often we learn about pet animals who died because they were locked in a vehicle with no means of escape. Please move this bill forward.

Lynne Matusow