

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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

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

**Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Monday, February 9, 2026
4:00 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 3012
RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION**

Senate Bill 3012 amends Hawai'i Revised Statutes to require proof of sterilization for any dog or cat imported into the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.**

At-large cats are some of the most successful predators on earth and have been linked to the extinction of more than 60 small animal species. Hawai'i's native species are especially vulnerable to predation, and cat predation significantly hampers the recovery of birds like 'ua'u, palila, and nēnē. Free-roaming cats also spread diseases such as rabies, toxoplasmosis, roundworms, hookworms, and ringworm, which can infect other cats, humans, and wildlife. These diseases cause harm both on land, killing native birds including nēnē, and at sea, as seen in the deaths of Hawaiian monk seals, spinner dolphins, and other marine mammals due to toxoplasmosis. Feral or free-roaming cats are also generally less healthy: at-large cats tend to have shorter lifespans and higher rates of disease than indoor pet cats.

Unsupervised dogs also pose a significant threat to Hawai'i's native wildlife, including seabirds, waterbirds, and Hawaiian monk seals.

The Department supports the Legislature's efforts to address pet-related issues and recommends implementing effective, science-based pet management strategies. These include requiring pet owners to license and microchip their pets for identification; establishing requirements, incentives, or educational programs for keeping cats and dogs indoors or within fenced or screened enclosures such as a catio; providing access to free or reduced-cost spay and neuter services; mandating sterilization for both existing and newly imported pets; creating

mandatory open-admission animal shelters; establishing dog and cat sanctuaries; holding pet owners accountable for damages to property and native wildlife; prohibiting the feeding of free-roaming animals; and updating existing animal welfare laws to support the expansion of community-led and private predator control programs.

The Department notes that the importation of dogs and cats to Hawai'i has been increasing, with more than 20,000 animals imported in fiscal year 2024. The Department also observes that shelters are operating at or beyond capacity. Requiring proof of sterilization for imported dogs and cats could help prevent unwanted litters of kittens and puppies, reduce strain on public infrastructure, and lessen negative impacts on our fragile environment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026
4:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 3012
RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 3012. The bill requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions. The regulation, documentation, and verification activities are to be carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB). The measure further required DAB to establish a breeder registry and adopt administrative rules.

The DAB opposes this measure and offers the following comments.

The DAB and its Animal Quarantine (AQ) program are to mitigate the entry of rabies and other diseases and pests associated with dog and cat importation. In contrast, the requirement for surgical sterilization of imported animals, documentation and verification of surgical sterilization, and establishing a breeder registry are not consistent with the program's mission and better characterized under animal control. Animal Control is a county function and should not be that of the state DAB. Furthermore, the significant changes to AQ computer systems, operations, and inspections required will increase cost and add unacceptable time for inspections upon arrival. Amendments to administrative rules further complicate implementation. For these reasons and more, the department does not support SB3012.

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

February 6, 2026

Testimony in opposition of SB3012.

Relating to animal importation.

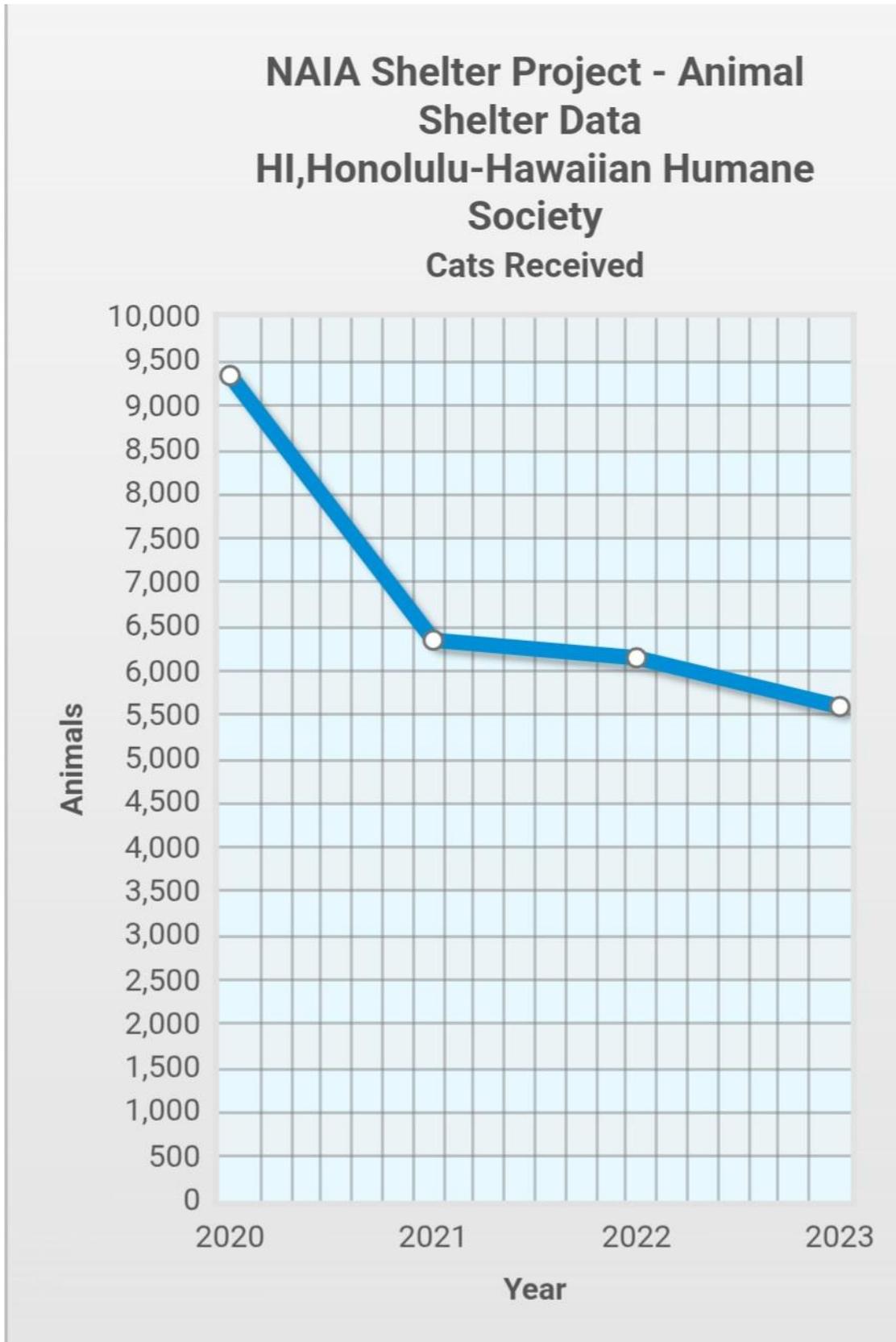
Sen. Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

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

The Pacific Pet Alliance (PPA) opposes SB3012 for the following reasons:

- “The legislature finds that Hawaii’s geographic isolation and rabies-free status necessitate stringent regulation of animal importation to protect public health and safety. At the same time, the State continues to experience significant challenges associated with pet overpopulation and the adverse impacts of free-roaming animals on animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems.” The Pacific Pet Alliance agrees with this statement .
- “The purpose of this Act is to decrease the number of fertile, unaltered dogs and cats imported into the State by requiring proof of sterilization prior to embarkation, subject to reasonable exemptions for medical necessity, temporary stays, and registered breeders.” The Pacific Pet Alliance fails to understand how mandatory sterilization and labeling everyone who imports an intact animal a breeder, will change the problems identified.
- Intact animals are often brought to Hawaii to participate in dog shows or cat shows. An altered dog can’t be shown in a conformation dog show. Not every intact animal brought to Hawaii is bred. To assume that every intact animal will be bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren’t included in the bill is unfair. It’s also unfair to imply that these intact animals that cost thousands of dollars to import are the root cause of animal over population and free roaming animals in Hawaii. Intact purebred dogs are often imported as working dogs for ranching, security, hunting, and detection work.
- Free roaming animals appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. What has been done to address more public education and to reach out to lower income individuals to assist them with spaying and neutering those animals? Will Oahu follow the lead of the island of Hawaii and ban the feeding of all feral animals in order to protect our fragile native ecosystem?
- The National Animal Interest Alliance based in Portland Oregon has the Shelter Project where they track shelter data across the US from public data sources. There are only 2 shelters listed for Hawaii. Hawaiian Humane Society and Maui Humane Society. Their shelter data is listed below and they have graphed the data to show longitudinal trends. The available data also reflects transparency of the shelter to share it’s shelter stats with the public. Obtaining shelter data from Hawaii shelters has always and continues to be challenging for the NAIA. If data were available, it

would be helpful to know how many purebred dogs and pedigreed cats come through the shelter system as it's implied that breeders are the source of the problem.



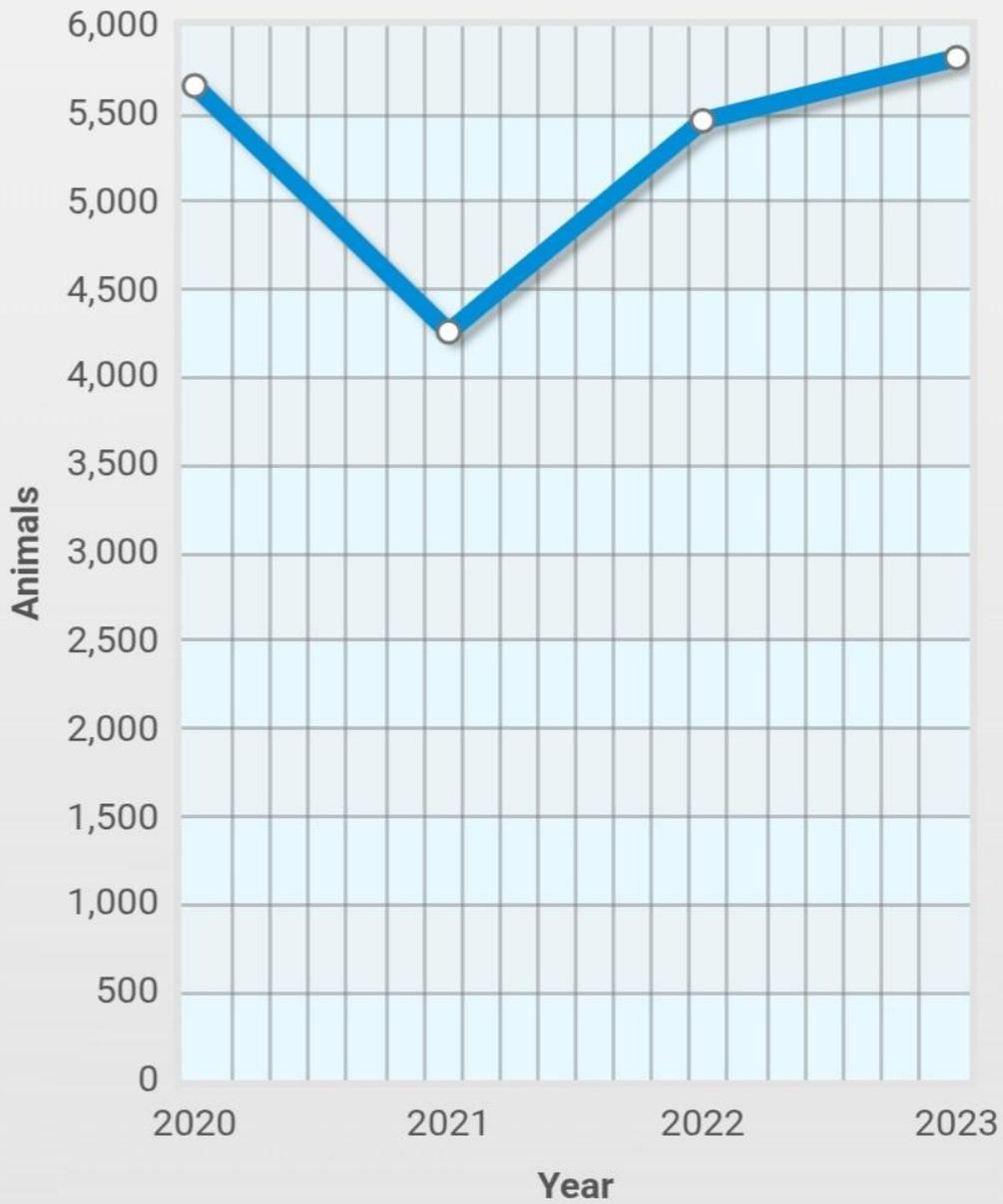
NAIA Shelter Project - Animal Shelter Data

HI, Puunene-Maui Humane Society

Cats Received



**NAIA Shelter Project - Animal
Shelter Data
HI, Honolulu-Hawaiian Humane
Society
Dogs Received**



NAIA Shelter Project - Animal Shelter Data

HI, Puunene-Maui Humane Society

Dogs Received



- In Hawaii, it appears that rescue organizations are also a common way to manage the animal overpopulation problem in Hawaii. There's no registry of rescue groups in Hawaii and no way to evaluate their impact on these problems. On a side note, there are some rescues that appear to be doing excellent work but without coordinated statewide data publicly available, how do we know? Is there a registry of legitimate rescue for the state?

- The requirement of providing documentation of surgical sterilization may place a hardship on particularly military families transferred to Hawaii. Military families are uprooted a lot and sometimes records are lost. It is also common for them to "inherit" pets from other military families who are unable to take their pets to the next duty station. According to veterinarians, there is no way to tell via physical examination whether a female animal has been surgically sterilized. An ultrasound is one way but the average cost of an ultrasound done in the US would add an additional \$100+ to the cost of importation. The veterinarian following the State's quarantine guidelines may not be the veterinarian who surgically sterilized the animal may be unwilling to provide documentation of sterilization. Trying to obtain a health certificate to enter Hawaii is challenging without additional burdens.

The Pacific Pet Alliance respectfully asks the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs to not pass this bill because each island county has their own unique situations and there doesn't appear to be a coordinated effort across the islands on how to address these issues. This bill is more complex than meets the eye. For example, HB1736 specifically targets cats. This bill is from the conservationists and doesn't target dogs. The island of Hawaii has already banned the feeding of all feral animals. The Pacific Pet Alliance would support a working group involving all the stakeholders across the islands to try to achieve a coordinated effort.

Lynn Muramaru

Board Member

Pacific Pet Alliance



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

February 6, 2026

Re: American Kennel Club Comments on S.B. 3012: RELATING TO Animal Importation.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes today on behalf of our 41 Hawaii based kennel clubs and the many responsible dog owners in the state to respectfully ask you to oppose Senate Bill 3012. This proposal would lead to the sterilization of dogs owned by responsible residents of the state. This bill, while well-intentioned, would have a significant negative impact on dog owners and the local community.

The AKC believes education and outreach are key to promoting responsible dog ownership. A dog should not be subject to mandatory spay-neuter simply because it was imported into the state— especially a young puppy who may have just reached the age where it should be altered. There are number of valid reasons why a dog’s owner would not spay/neuter their dog—health, age, participation in AKC dog shows, etc. Further, requiring someone to register as a dog breeder (when they have no intention of breeding dogs) to bring an unaltered dog into the state creates an unnecessary bureaucratic hurdle for Hawaiians to comply with. This breeding registry would not serve as a list of breeders (given the other reasons for bringing in an unaltered dog) and have little benefit to the state.

This bill would also have a negative impact on Hawaii’s economy. In 2024, over 7,500 people participated in AKC dog events across the Hawaiian Islands, and many of these participants are Hawaii residents. These events can inject over \$2 million into the economy of local communities through facility rentals, restaurants, hotels, and basic dog care. By mandating that all dogs be sterilized before being imported, you are preventing many Hawaiians from participating in AKC conformation dog shows, which require dogs to be intact.

Inclusive and public outreach and education are key to promoting and instilling a culture of responsible pet ownership. If the state seeks to increase the prevalence of dog owners spaying or neutering their dogs (which the AKC supports), resources should instead be directed toward making sure low-cost spay/neutering programs are both fully funded, and the service is known to state residents. Nothing will reduce the population of unplanned pets than a culture of responsible pet ownership.

To lessen the strain on those who care for pets without a home, improve the conditions inside Hawaii’s animal shelters, and to promote the welfare of all animals in the system, AKC proposes the following recommendations:

- Make sure low-cost spay and neuter funds are available to all who need it and ensure that program availability is widely known through community outreach.
- Require all animals received in the animal shelter system to be checked for microchips so lost pets don’t languish in shelter system taking up valuable space and resources.
- Consider offering tax credits or other programs to incentivize greater acceptance of pets in residential housing to address issue of pets ending up in shelter system only because of housing issues.

We appreciate the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment’s attention to this issue and for their passion for the welfare of animals. Thank you for reviewing and considering our comments.

Regards,



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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:16:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in opposition of this bill. As the VP of the Hawai‘i Cat Fanciers Cat Club, we are held to a standard by our over seeing association. This bill opens with wanting to "decrease pet overpopulation and the adverse impacts of free-roaming animals on animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems."

First, we responsible breeders who abide by our association's standards practice the utmost responsible practices to help NOT contribute to the over populated FERAL population. However, for us, the PUREBRED cat population is a very small and niche portion of cat ownership. Part of having a purebred cat that people invest in is to NOT allow it outside to free roam. Many breeders who utilize contracts make this a strict part of the contract. With this, many breeders sterilize their pet kittens BEFORE they leave for their new homes so pet owners are not burdended with this and the breeders do not have to worry about the cats contributing to unwanted litters. This bill is not a failsafe. Other bills targeting the FERAL populations are where things need to start. Again, purebred cats/ pets are a very small portion and responsible breeders are already doing neccessary steps to ensure we do not contribute to the island's issues. We responsible breeders will be burdended with these uncessary steps while IRRESPONSIBLE will contiue doing what they want because they do not care and do not follow rules. And what entity will be incharge of this program and HOW will it be enforced? It's just a waste of time and money that we all don't have. Thank you for your consideration.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 6:44:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

We strongly support the passage of SB3012, which would stop the entry of intact companion animals into Hawai'i. This has been suggested several times in the past, but had received push- back

from the breeders, who consider it a threat to their business. You may expect to receive similar letters from national breeders' organizations in op-position. Many local breeders claim that it is not a business, but a hobby; however, the puppies and kittens are sold for very high prices, and a back-yard breeder who will sell to anyone with money is simply a puppy mill. SB3012, if passed, would require breeders to be licensed, inspected and pay excise taxes. SB3012 would benefit Hawai'i, by decreasing the number of companion animals entering the state, and shining a spotlight on a source of tax revenue, hitherto hidden.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 7, 2026

To: Chair Sen. Mike Gabbard
Vice Chair Sen. Tim Richards
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment

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

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 3012: Relating to Animal Importation
Monday, Feb. 9, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Room 224 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for Senate Bill 3012, which requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions; and requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish a breeder registry and adopt rules.

Hawai'i is one of just a handful of states that does not regulate pet animal breeders. While this bill would not change that, it would provide a minimal level of transparency regarding the importation of intact dogs and cats. It imposes a small burden on the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, and a small burden on pet owners, toward an important end.

Our state suffers from pet overpopulation. Shelters like Hawaiian Humane struggle to find homes for the amazing animals that come to us for care. Organizations across the state scramble to get pets off island and into homes while more pets come in every day. We don't want to separate pets from their families or tell people they cannot have the breeds they love in their lives. This bill simply asks for accountability.

In response to the point made by dog and cat fanciers that importing an intact animal does not prove that a pet owner intends to breed that animal, we offer amendments that clarify that this measure does not regulate breeders, it simply tracks the importation of intact dogs and cats.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

We also offer amendments to address the objection of the state Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to maintaining records of intact animal importation by moving that responsibility to the county animal control agency or animal services contractor. With these changes, DAB would simply need to collect the required information as part of its existing pet import system and pass that on to the counties.

This measure sends a message that spay/neuter should be the norm for animals coming into the state. It is the right thing to do for the animals who are already here and in need of homes. I urge you to support SB3012. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB3012 Suggested Amendments:

"§142- Proof of sterilization required for importation of dogs and cats. (a) As a condition of entry into the State under this part, the department of agriculture and biosecurity shall require submission of documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, except as provided in subsection (b).

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

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

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

(3) The owner or importer ~~is registered with~~ declares to the department ~~as a breeder the intent to import an intact animal for breeding or show purposes~~ pursuant to subsection (c).

(c) The department shall ~~forward declarations from establish and maintain a breeder registry for~~ individuals or entities importing intact dogs or cats ~~to the animal control agency or contractor in the county where the animal(s) will be housed.~~ The ~~registry declaration~~ shall include, at a minimum, the ~~breeder~~ intact animal owner's name, residential or business address, the animal(s) microchip information and species or breeds of intact animals maintained.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

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

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

(f) For the purposes of this section, "sterilization" means surgical spaying or neutering performed by a licensed veterinarian."

**Testimony of American Bird Conservancy
In Support of SB 3012 Relating to Animal Control
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment | February 4, 2026 | 4:00 PM**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **support for SB 3012**.

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

The spaying or neutering of pet cats is a best practice [supported by the American Veterinary Medical Association](#) and highly popular among Hawai'i residents, including current cat owners. **Research of Hawai'i residents conducted by Griffith University in 2024 found that two-thirds of respondents supported making pet cat sterilization mandatory.** Spaying or neutering pet cats not only benefits the cat and owner but also eliminates undesirable breeding, which contributes to the cat overpopulation and resulting environmental and public health risks.

SB 3012 is a common-sense strategy to reduce the cat overpopulation. The entry of new cats to Hawai'i via importation presents a natural checkpoint to ensure cat sterilization and prevent future unintended cat reproduction, which contributes to the ongoing cat overpopulation crisis.

Pet animals brought to Hawai'i are already subject to inspection by the Department of Agriculture and providing proof of necessary preventative medical care. Individuals are required to complete a Dog & Cat Import Form (AQS - 279). This form already includes a check-box for spaying and neutering. SB 3012 merely makes such surgical sterilization a requirement prior to importation to the state.

This bill is consistent with animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and public health and safety goals.

Contact

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

Address

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



Cat Overpopulation Risks

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

Cats can also carry a large number of infectious parasites and diseases that put people and wildlife at risk. For example, *Toxoplasma gondii*, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis in birds and mammals, is excreted in cat feces. A single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called "oocysts") into the environment via its feces, and these oocysts remain infectious for months to years. This parasite is a serious risk for Hawai'i's wildlife, [including Hawaiian Monk Seals](#), and has long been recognized as a public health risk in the state. The cat overpopulation crisis contributes to environmental contamination with *T. gondii*.

SB 3012 is an important step to addressing the cat overpopulation in Hawai'i. This bill will encourage responsible cat ownership from the time a cat is first brought to the state, reduce risks for Hawai'i's residents, both people and animals, and is the type of action supported by a broad coalition of organizations, such as:

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

We respectfully ask that you support SB 3012.

Mahalo for your consideration,

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

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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:50:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pearlyn Maru	Testifying for Cat Fanciers of Hawaii	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Pearlyn Maru, and I am in opposition to SB3012, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i.

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

I urge the Legislature to reject SB3012.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Pearlyn Maru

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB3012. My name is Carita Inoue. I am a registered cat breeder affiliated with an internationally recognized registry and a member of Cat Fanciers of Hawai'i. I respectfully strongly oppose bill SB3012. As responsible breeders, we support Hawai'i's commitment to animal welfare, public health, and the preservation of its rabies-free status. However, this bill would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on ethical breeders while failing to address the primary drivers of animal overpopulation within the State.

Hawai'i already maintains one of the most stringent animal importation and quarantine systems in the nation. Compliance requires extensive advance planning, vaccinations, blood testing, microchipping, documentation, and significant expense. The proposed requirement for surgical sterilization prior to embarkation adds an irreversible medical mandate on top of this already complex framework, increasing cost, risk, and logistical barriers without evidence that imported breeder animals meaningfully contribute to overpopulation in Hawai'i.

This bill also undermines responsible breeding and genetic stewardship. Ethical breeders play a vital role in maintaining healthy bloodlines and maintaining breed standards. Mandatory pre-import sterilization severely restricts the ability to introduce new genetics into Hawai'i, increasing the risk of inbreeding and long-term health problems—outcomes that are inconsistent with sound animal husbandry and welfare practices.

Although the bill includes a breeder registry exemption, it lacks clear eligibility criteria, oversight standards, or procedural safeguards. Without statutory clarity, the registry risks inconsistent application and may disproportionately disadvantage small-scale and hobby breeders who operate ethically and transparently, while favoring larger commercial entities.

Additionally, the timing of sterilization is a veterinary decision that varies by breed, size, age, and intended use. Forcing sterilization prior to transport—particularly for young or large-breed animals—conflicts with accepted veterinary guidance and may pose long-term health risks. These decisions should remain between breeders and licensed veterinarians, not be dictated by a blanket statutory requirement tied to importation.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose this measure and urge the Legislature to pursue targeted, evidence-based approaches that address overpopulation within Hawai'i without placing additional, unnecessary burdens on responsible breeders operating within an already rigorous regulatory system.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 7:22:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellyn Honey	Testifying for Cat Fanciers Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

most cats and dogs are sterilized and that people who cannot afford to sterilize their animals most likely cannot afford to live in Hawaii, this law makes no sense. Also, no Hawaiian show breeder can maintain genetic diversity over the long term without introducing new animals. Eventually, those will have to come from outside Hawaii. The rationale for this bill is to address rabies control and pet overpopulation. An animal's breeding status has nothing to do with rabies control. Also, a breeder registry will do little to help with stray or feral cats and dogs. Pedigreed cats make up 3-5% of the cat population. There are also far more random-bred dogs than purebred dogs. It is not to the benefit of any show breeder to allow their animals to roam at large or contribute to the random-bred animal population. Pets placed by show breeders are typically sterilized prior to placement or are required to be sterilized under their contracts. They are not contributing to the problem! Why punish responsible breeders and burden the state with unnecessary regulation? If the "solution" does little to address the issue, why subject breeders to the expense of breeder registration and the risks associated with a publicly available registry?

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:22:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Joseph A. Ernst and I am in opposition to SB3012, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i.

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

This will also significantly harm Hawaii's thriving AKC and CFA's (and other cat and dog show organizations) activities. As participants and members of these clubs, Hawaii breeders have gained international recognition and appreciation. This will significantly harm our ability to responsibly maintain breeding lines.

I urge the Legislature to reject SB3012.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,
Joseph A. Ernst

Kaiju Kitties Cattery

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 4:56:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sutanto Widjaja	Testifying for Hawaiian Hound Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a responsible, small-scale dog breeder, who only breeds once in a blue moon on the mainland. I am opposed HB 1594, because it doesn't address the heart of why there is animal overpopulation in Hawai'i.

Companion animal overpopulation in Hawai'i is primarily driven by unplanned litters from irresponsible owners - not ethical breeders like members of my hound club, as well as free-roaming and stray animals, which is why local humane organizations focus on expanding affordable spay/neuter programs for residents and community cats.

By focusing on incoming, already well-cared-for pets instead of the real sources of surplus animals and the need for better access to sterilization and enforcement against irresponsible breeding, HB 1594 risks targeting the wrong people while failing to fix the root causes of overpopulation. I urge you to reject this bill and instead support measures that expand spay/neuter access and address genuinely irresponsible breeding practices.



Nene Research and Conservation
Nene.org

February 7, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ariel Imoto and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Nēnē Research and Conservation (nene.org) in strong support of SB 3012.

SB 3012 addresses a root driver of Hawai‘i’s ongoing stray and feral animal crisis by requiring dogs and cats brought into the state to be spayed or neutered. Preventing unintended reproduction before animals enter Hawai‘i is one of the most effective and humane ways to reduce long-term impacts to communities, animal welfare systems, native wildlife, and our fragile ecosystems.

Hawai‘i is the bird extinction capital of the world and supports more endangered bird species than any other U.S. state. Free-roaming and feral cats are non-native, highly invasive predators and pose a well-documented threat to native wildlife, including ground-nesting seabirds and forest birds. While cats can make wonderful pets, uncontrolled breeding and abandonment have resulted in widespread overpopulation, placing unsustainable pressure on shelters, rescues, and ecosystems.

Requiring spay and neuter prior to entry into the state is a practical, enforceable measure that helps prevent future harm rather than attempting to manage its consequences decades later. SB 3012 represents responsible policy that supports animal welfare, community health, and the protection of Hawai‘i’s irreplaceable native species.

For these reasons, Nēnē Research and Conservation strongly supports SB 3012 and urges the Committee to pass this measure. Mahalo for your time and thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Ariel Imoto
Executive Director
Nene Research and Conservation

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 10:57:26 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Our members understand that SB3012 would reduce the number of unaltered animals entering the state.

The suffering caused by pet overpopulation in your state is described by Hawaiian Humane as enormous. In addition, abandoned unaltered companion cats contribute to the Free-Roaming cat population. – which we know is not wanted by some residents.

If people choose to opt out of the spay/neuter requirement, they must declare that they are importing intact dogs or cats and provide information to the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity regarding who they are and where those animals will be kept.

This is perfectly reasonable and nobody should find it undesirable or unworkable.

We beg to strongly support SB3012.



Hawai'i Audubon Society

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

Testimony of the Hawai'i Audubon Society In Support of SB 3012 – Relating to Animal Importation

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Committee Members,

I write to urge your support for SB 3012. This legislation would require all cats and dogs imported to Hawai'i to be spayed or neutered, with reasonable exceptions. While cats and dogs can make wonderful pets they can be allowed to roam freely and lead to unwanted free roaming pets that can quickly multiply. Free-roaming cats, in particular, have become overpopulated to a crisis level and pose serious threats to Hawai'i's native wildlife.

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

As introduced predators, roaming cats and dogs too frequently kill Hawai'i's native birds or harass wildlife like monk seals, spread infectious parasites and diseases, and create challenges for local communities. SB 3012 represents a step forward in feral pet population management by preventing unintended dog and cat breeding. This bill would benefit dogs, cats, wildlife, and communities while also reducing strains on animal control services.

Sincerely,

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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 2:43:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Testifying for Hawaiian Humane Society	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill SB3012.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:47:09 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raquel Tugaoen	Testifying for Hawaii Cane Corso Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On behalf of the Hawaii Cane Corso Association, a non-profit org, with members from both California & Hawaii, we strongly oppose this bill. As responsible dog owners and current competitors in the America Kennel club, we often travel back and forth, to and from the Continental US, overseas, and Hawaii with our dogs to part take in these events. These events require dogs to be intact. Some of our dogs participating are not used as breeding stock. As a reminder, such events include the highly televised Westminster and Purina Nationals.

To require us to spay or neuter our dogs infringes on our rights as owners for what we consider property. Having individuals falsy file as breeders to circumvent the ability to compete is ridiculous. Members already pay high tax, importing costs, and now to add additional requirements that will involve money spent creates additional hard ships on our local dog owners and extended families who own dogs in California.

Board of Directors

Alexandra Alton

February 8, 2026

Emma Cobb

Anitra Frazier

Re: SB 3012 (Relating to Animal Importation)

Bryan Kortis, JD
National Programs
Director

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment:

Dr. Lisa Labrecque,
DVM

On behalf of Neighborhood Cats, a nonprofit registered in Hawaii, I would like to express our **strong support** for SB3012.

Nancy Peterson

Hawaii has long dealt with an overpopulation of cats. Requiring cats entering the State to be spayed or neutered is an important common sense step towards resolving the issue. With an exemption for responsible breeders who meet minimal registration requirements, this should be a measure all stakeholders can get behind. We support the measure for other animals as well.

Susan Richmond,
Executive Director

**NYC Community Cat
Program Director**

Jackie Borodan

Neighborhood Cats is a leader nationally on the management of free-roaming cats and has had a presence on Maui since 2016. We have worked closely with local nonprofits to increase accessibility to affordable spay/neuter and were the lead coordinators for the rescue of over 600 cats from the Lahaina burn zone following the fire in 2023.

Thank you for considering our views,



Bryan Kortis
National Programs Director

Date: February 8, 2026

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

IN OPPOSITION TO SB 3012

Submitted by: Renee Rokero

State of Residence: Hawaii

Position: Oppose

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Renee Rokero and I am a resident of the State of Hawaii. I respectfully submit this written testimony in **strong opposition to SB3012**.

There is no data to support the assumptions made in this bill. Public policies, regulations, and laws should be grounded in factual evidence and designed to protect both the well-being of Hawaii's residents and its fragile ecosystem. Bill 3012 implies that dogs imported into Hawaii—whether by military families, families relocating back to the State, pet owners, show breeders or individuals participating in AKC dog sports—are significantly contributing to animal overpopulation and posing risks to public health and the environment. Based on this implication, the bill proposes mandatory sterilization of all dogs entering the State.

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

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

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

Despite the availability of this data, no comprehensive analysis or public reporting has been conducted to substantiate the claims made in this bill. The Hawaiian Humane Society does not publicly release shelter intake data in a manner that allows for this comparison, yet Bill 3012 was introduced without factual evidence to support its underlying assumptions. However, no such data currently exists. Passing legislation without supporting evidence is irresponsible and premature.

Furthermore, implementing this bill would impose a significant financial hardship on Hawaii taxpayers. Establishing new departments, databases, staffing, and enforcement mechanisms to track every imported animal—including those entering the State for more than 90 days—would likely cost thousands, if not millions, of dollars.

While Bill 3012 may be well-intentioned, it is not supported by data. Until transparent, verifiable evidence demonstrates that imported dogs are a measurable contributor to Hawaii's shelter population or ecosystem risk, the passage of this bill is unjustified.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renee Rokero". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Renee Rokero

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 2:14:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Muramaru	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Senator Gabbard and respected members of the Senate committee on Agriculture and the Environment.

I'm writing in strong opposition of SB3012.

I'm a constituent of Sen. Gabbard and Rep. Souza. I'm also the president of Terriers in Paradise-Hawaii, an AKC dog club.

There are no merits to this bill. SB3012 doesn't address the 2 problems it identifies, pet overpopulation and free roaming animals. Instead it creates significant hardship on military families and others who are trying to move to Hawaii and it unfairly targets individuals who choose to own a pet that needs to be intact in order to compete in dog shows.

In my personal opinion, this bill is a poorly veiled attempt at trying to regulate animal breeders by creating a "registry". Hawaiian Humane Society claims that animal breeders shouldn't oppose this bill because it's "just a registry". Fees and rules regarding this registry will be developed separately. They are telling the public to agree to something without telling us what we're agreeing to.

The testimonies opposing HB1594, HB1736, and SB3012 are full of science based, rational information as to why this bill should not be passed.

The Hawaiian Humane Society has not shown that ethical animal breeders are the root cause of the pet overpopulation problem. When looking at the list of services Hawaiian Humane Society provides, public education appears to be missing from that list. What is being done to educate the public? Where do the litters of puppies entering the shelter system coming from? Animals that are wanted and whose owners often spend hundreds and thousands of dollars to import are not the cause of free roaming animals and unwanted litters.

Please do not pass this bill!

Lynn Muramaru

Purebred dog fancier

AKC Judge

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 9:30:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lise Madson	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Lise Madson. My husband Ray Pacheco and I oppose SB3012, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i.

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

Dog and cat shows are a worldwide industry of billions of dollars, similar in many ways to the horse or cattle industry. Hawaii is specially situated for to import and export show cats and dogs especially to Australia and Japan, even with exceptions this bill may destroy unintentionally Hawaii's unique position in this global industry of dedicated and responsible enthusiasts.

I would urge the legislature to address feral animals, rather than imported animals-- I donate to spay and neuter feral cats for this reason. Pet owners that responsibly spend hundreds of not thousands to import are careful with their pets and are advocates and volunteers that often assist with rescue organizations within Hawaii.

This bill could negatively impact Hawaii standing in a billions of dollar global industry, while having little or no impact on the unwanted pet population within Hawaii.

Wanted and valued pets with people that responsibly import them are not the problem. Unwanted and feral cats and dogs within Hawaii are the problem.

I urge the Legislature to reject SB3012.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,
Lise Madson & Ray Pacheco

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 2:12:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I strongly oppose this bill in its entirety. There are definitely things that need to be done to slow down the production of dogs in Hawaii. This bill only penalizes without actual proof that this will stop or even slow things down. It assumes the citizens who bring dogs in from places outside of Hawaii are irresponsible and only want to breed their dog. It's not fair to penalize those who have done the research to find good, quality dogs but it further pushes owners from really enjoying their dogs. There are some dog sports where altered/ neuter or spayed dogs can not compete. The state should be encouraging owners who have a passion to not just own their dog but who commit to the making their dog's life wonderful, fulfilling, and not become a nuisance to our community. This bill does the opposite. Change the laws pertaining to dogs so outreach programs can go in to the houseless communities to spay and neuter dogs and not be turned away. Enforce military personnel who import their dogs to Hawaii to provide proof upon their PCS that the same dog they entered with is leaving with them. More dogs being rehomed, surrendered, and or euthanized come from the feral packs or houseless communities than purebred or imported dogs. Beyond the sadness of these circumstances is the damage and disease these feral dogs are creating for our 'āina. I urge the legislature to scrap this bill and really work with the dog community to come with ideas on how we can fix problems together rather than punish us. Mahalo nui loa for your time.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:07:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Parsons	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Senators,

I stand in **STRONG** opposition to this proposed legislation. While I understand the challenge of overpopulation of pet animals, this legislation will not mitigate the excess number of dogs and cats. It will unduly burden responsiblepet owners.

I raise and show Irish Wolfhounds, a rare dog breed in the State. There are no breeders of Irish Wolfhounds on island any longer and importing them is the only option. Giant breeds should not be sterilized before TWO years of age to preclude long bone and joint disruption. When/if bred, it is a selective one or two litters at most. When I import a Wolfhound puppy, there is no way to know if they will be of breeding quality. Of the 6 IWs, I've imported, none have met those standards. It is already difficult and costly enough with the CDC restrictions on importing dogs outside from the US.

The second objection I have relates to military personnel being assigned to Hawai'i who travel with their family and pets. It is already difficult and costly for them to ship their pets. Adding a requirement for them to be neutered/spayed will force them to make decisions to split up families and pets. Children often have anxiety when moving to a new location and pets provide a calming presence for children.

This proposed legislation places undue burdens on people who choose to live with animals. There are better ways to control the animal population than this type of draconian measure.

I urge you to vote against this proposal. Mahalo for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB3012

TO: Chairman Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Tim Richards III, Lynn DeCoite, Karl Rhoads, and Brenton Awa

FROM: Corinne L. McCreery, Honolulu, HI 96817

DATE: February 9, 2026, at 4:00 PM

RE: *OPPOSE* Senate Bill 3012 — RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB3012, which would condition the entry of any dog or cat into Hawaii on documentation of surgical sterilization, with exemptions only for short visits, medical necessity, or registered breeders.

By way of background, I am an animal welfare advocate and pet owner who has adopted, fostered, donated to, and volunteered with multiple rescue organizations and shelters over the last 18 years. I recently lost my beloved Hawaiian Humane Society alumni of 12 years to renal failure, am the owner of a spayed, never-bred purebred dog imported from Maryland in 2013, and am currently in the process of importing a young preservation-bred purebred show prospect under a non-breeding contract that both explicitly prohibits reproduction and requires a delayed spay until after full physical maturity to support proper growth plate development, in accordance with veterinary guidance.

My background and these experiences place me at the intersection of rescue, responsible pet ownership, veterinary best practices, and lawful animal exhibition, enabling me to speak on SB3012, which I oppose.

First and foremost, there is no legal or regulatory precedent in the United States for requiring universal sterilization of all imported dogs and cats as a condition of entry into a state. SB3012 represents a novel and extreme policy approach without demonstrated effectiveness elsewhere.

While overpopulation of dogs and cats in both shelters and the streets *is* a real challenge in Hawaii, the primary drivers of that issue are:

- Backyard breeding operations involving locally born and bred animals
- Unaltered animals associated with homelessness and encampments, often allowed to free roam
- Economic pressures driven by Hawaii's cost of living, resulting in increased animal surrender and abandonment
- High costs associated with exporting pets off-island when families are forced to relocate

- Lack of pet-friendly housing and absence of regulation on pet deposits, pet rent, and pet restrictions
- Limited access to pet-friendly shelters for unhoused individuals and survivors of domestic violence

Hawaii already has one of the strictest import processes in the world:

- All dogs and cats, regardless of age or purpose, must meet Hawaii's dog & cat import requirements under Chapter 4-29 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules.
- Pets must complete serious pre-travel steps, including microchipping, multiple rabies vaccinations, a rabies antibody (OIE-FAVN) test with ≥ 0.5 IU/ml titer, and waiting periods before qualifying for entry programs.

Importing an animal to Hawaii takes months and often costs upwards of \$1,000 USD per pet for the vaccinations, titer, and health certificate alone, not including transportation. These requirements already screen out irresponsible actors and ensure that perfunctory compliance is insufficient.

Barring intact animals would impose an unnecessary additional restriction on responsible owners who have already navigated this intensive process to comply with state law. SB3012 targets the already most heavily regulated group of pet owners while leaving the main drivers of animal overpopulation largely unaddressed.

Hawaii hosts one of the largest active-duty military populations in the nation. Military families frequently relocate on short notice and already face extraordinary barriers when transporting pets to Hawaii from other states and abroad.

Relocating with a pet is already complicated and costly due to existing quarantine and vaccine rules; the current version and verbiage of this bill would add a mandatory sterilization requirement for pets that may not yet be of age or medically appropriate for spay/neuter before a planned move.

Forcing sterilization as a precondition to entry would:

- Introduce additional veterinary scheduling and recovery time that may conflict with duty assignments
- Penalize military families who already face exceptional stress and logistical hurdles when relocating with dependents, including pets that are an important part of family stability and mental health
- Disincentivize service members from bringing pets with them, negatively affecting morale, well-being, and the supportive role animals play for families coping with frequent moves and deployments.

The passage of this bill could therefore indirectly dampen combat readiness by imposing an additional non-military burden on service members and their families.

Perhaps most worrisome, SB3012 fails to account for the reality that mandatory pre-import sterilization interferes with veterinary best practices and ignores nuanced health evidence about the timing of spay/neuter. While sterilization has benefits, the optimal timing varies by species, breed, sex, age, and individual health status.

For example:

- Puppies and kittens below a certain age or weight are often advised to delay surgery due to anesthesia risks, immune development, growth plate closure, and long-term orthopedic outcomes, particularly in medium and large-breed dogs.
- In some dogs, delaying spay/neuter until after maturity reduces the risk of certain orthopedic problems and allows normal hormonal development, which can be beneficial for growth and joint health.
- In large-breed dogs, especially, early sterilization has been associated with increased risk of joint disorders and some cancers (not simply reduced reproduction).

These veterinary considerations mean that, for some pets, scheduling sterilization at a location and time chosen by the owner (in consultation with their veterinarian) is far better for long-term health and welfare than requiring a one-size-fits-all surgical mandate before entry.

Hawaii's current pet import protocols already create developmental timing challenges:

- Puppies and kittens under certain ages often cannot complete the quarantine program requirements in the typical timeline, because they must receive two rabies shots spaced ≥ 30 days apart and pass a rabies titer, meaning a young animal will often be 6+ months old by the time all steps are complete

Adding a surgical sterilization requirement on top of this process could effectively prohibit all young animals from lawful entry, even when the owner intends to spay/neuter at the appropriate age after relocation. This outcome penalizes responsible owners simply because their animal has not yet reached surgical age.

Under SB3012, these animals would be categorically barred from entry, regardless of whether:

- The owner intends to spay/neuter at an appropriate age
- The animal is traveling with a responsible owner under existing import safeguards
- The animal poses no realistic risk of contributing to overpopulation

This creates an unreasonable outcome where:

- Families with young pets are disproportionately impacted

- Responsible owners are punished for following veterinary guidance and best practices

Sources:

- AKC Canine Health Foundation – New Study Updates Spay-Neuter Timeline Guidance for Popular Dog Breeds
<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/study-updates-spay-neuter-guidelines/>
 - Hart et al., *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* (2020)
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2020.00388/full>
 - Hawai'i Animal Quarantine Program – Import Timeline Guidance
<https://dab.hawaii.gov/ai/aqs/faq-for-animal-quarantine/>
-

SB3012 assumes that intact animals entering Hawaii are at risk of irresponsible breeding. In practice, ethical breeders already regulate this through enforceable contractual mechanisms, making a blanket sterilization mandate unnecessary.

The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA), based in Portland, Oregon, maintains the Shelter Project, which tracks shelter data across the United States using publicly available sources.

In Hawaii, only two shelters currently report data:

- Hawaiian Humane Society
- Maui Humane Society

NAIA has repeatedly noted that obtaining shelter data from Hawaii has historically been difficult and remains inconsistent.

Without transparent, statewide shelter intake and outcome data to answer the following questions, the Legislature lacks sufficient evidence to conclude that imported intact animals are a meaningful contributor to Hawai'i's overpopulation problem:

- How many purebred dogs or pedigreed cats enter shelters vs. mixes?
- Are responsibly bred animals actually contributing to overpopulation?
- The relative impact of rescues versus breeders?

Additionally, Hawaii has no statewide registry of rescue organizations, making it impossible to evaluate their collective impact on overpopulation outcomes — positive or negative — despite their widespread role in animal intake and placement.

It would be unjust for legislation of this scope to proceed without informed data demonstrating that imported intact animals are a measurable contributor to the overpopulation problem.

Reputable, ethical breeders commonly use:

- Non-breeding (pet-only) contracts, often paired with limited registration (e.g., AKC Limited Registration), which prohibit potential offspring from being registered or bred legitimately.
- Mandatory spay/neuter clauses with age requirements, requiring sterilization *after* the animal reaches physical and hormonal maturity, as determined by veterinary guidance.
- Return-to-breeder clauses that prevent resale, abandonment, or uncontrolled breeding if the owner can no longer keep the animal.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) explicitly recognizes and supports these practices:

- AKC Limited Registration is designed specifically to prevent breeding while allowing ownership and participation in non-breeding activities.
Source: American Kennel Club – Limited Registration
<https://www.akc.org/register/information/limited-registration/>
- The AKC's Breeder of Merit Program requires breeders to follow best practices, including responsible placement, contractual obligations, and compliance with breed-specific health recommendations.
Source: American Kennel Club – Breeder of Merit Program
<https://www.akc.org/breeder-programs/akc-breeder-of-merit-program/>

As a result, many intact animals entering Hawaii are already contractually restricted from breeding, whether it be irresponsible (unintentional) or intentional. Additionally, the majority of ethically bred animals are tracked through breeder networks throughout the animal's lifetime.

However, SB3012 implicitly *assumes* that:

- All intact animals are intended for breeding, and
- All importers of intact animals should be subject to breeder regulations, despite those regulations being unspecified in the bill.

If provisions within SB3012 cannot account for distinguishing between ethically bred or the true target, irresponsibly bred, the resulting outcome of a blanket penalty due to bill passage would both be inaccurate and unfair.

Not every intact animal is bred. To imply that animals costing upwards of a thousand dollars to import and maintain are the root cause of overpopulation and free-roaming animals in Hawai'i is unsupported by evidence.

A significant number of intact animals are imported to Hawaii for legitimate, non-breeding purposes, including participation in dog shows and dog sports.

Under organizations such as the American Kennel Club (AKC), many competitive classes are limited exclusively to unaltered animals. Altered dogs may be barred entirely or relegated to different venues that do not carry the same prestige, qualification pathways, or breeder

evaluations. A dog that is altered may be disqualified for failing to meet the breed standard criteria.

Under rules set by the American Kennel Club (AKC):

- Dogs must be intact to compete in conformation shows
 - Altered dogs are ineligible for championship titles
- Source:** American Kennel Club — Rules Applying to Dog Shows
<https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RREGS3.pdf>

SB3012 would:

- Bar Hawai'i-based pet owners from participating in AKC conformation events nationwide without permanently altering their dogs. Many owners travel to different venues in the Continental US. Under SB3012, these animals would need to be altered to enter the state, even if they left for competition and are returning home
 - Deter mainland exhibitors from traveling to Hawaii, who will choose not to travel if pets must be sterilized before entry (and thus cannot compete), resulting in loss of support for local clubs and community engagement surrounding locally-hosted:
 - Conformation shows
 - Performance events
 - Specialty breed shows
 - Result in lost tourism revenue approximating \$2.15 million annually, including airfare, lodging, vehicle rentals, dining, and extended stays. Shows attract handlers, judges, spectators, and vendors from outside the state who plan travel around show calendars, and who often are repeat visitors.
- Source:** American Kennel Club — AKC IMPACT IN HAWAII
<https://www.akc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2021-HI-Economic-Impact-Paper1.pdf>
- Create a genetic and cultural vacuum within Hawaii's show community, because:
 - Not all breeds are readily available within the state
 - Hawaii's geographic isolation already limits access to rare or preservation-focused breeds
 - Preventing intact imports would shrink competitive diversity and breeder education

The long-term effect would be a narrowing of breeds represented in Hawaii, undermining responsible breed stewardship and reducing opportunities for local handlers, judges, and clubs.

Ironically, this restriction may also encourage informal or underground breeding practices locally, as access to quality, ethically bred animals from outside the state becomes increasingly limited.

SB3012 is an unprecedented proposal with no demonstrated analogue anywhere in the world. While the intent of reducing overpopulation is laudable, SB3012 in its current form:

- Misattributes pet overpopulation to lawful, screened importation rather than to irresponsible backyard breeding practices and unaltered stray populations.
- Penalizes responsible pet owners and ethical breeders through a lack of distinction between irresponsible breeding and legitimate, regulated, and culturally significant animal activities.
- Ignores legitimate veterinary science about the timing and health implications of spay/neuter procedures.
- Unintentionally bars young animals that cannot yet be safely spayed or neutered.
- Undermines the competitiveness and cultural value of animal shows, which benefit the state economically and socially.
- Places unnecessary, burdensome, and redundant requirements on those relocating to or visiting Hawaii with pets, with potential consequences for family stability and readiness.
- Does not meaningfully address public education on responsible ownership, access to affordable spay/neuter for low-income residents and/or homeless populations, or provide any enforcement against unregulated, irresponsible, local backyard breeding already occurring with pre-existing animals already in the state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to either entirely oppose SB3012 or substantially amend it with more narrowly tailored language to better target the actual drivers of overpopulation without penalizing responsible owners engaging in lawful activities or jeopardizing family and animal welfare.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Corinne L. McCreery

Honolulu, HI 96817

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 2:47:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I have read SB3012 multiple times, and I am submitting my testimony in strong opposition to this bill.

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

SB3012 proposes mandatory sterilization requirements and a registry of intact imported cats. While increasing access to voluntary spay and neuter programs is a worthwhile goal, mandating sterilization and creating registries is not a humane, science-based, or balanced solution—and it opens the door to dangerous precedent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are better, collaborative solutions:

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

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

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

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE SB3012.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:24:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roseann Michaud	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Our native birds are unique and found no where else in the world. Requiring sterilization for incoming pets, including cats will help prevent an increase in the number of feral cats that are harmful to native species.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 1:58:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sue chipperton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

From: Sue Chipperton, Owner/Operator, Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV (Hawai‘i)

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sue Chipperton. I am a professional animal trainer and animal coordinator for film and television operating in Hawai‘i through my company, **Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV**. I am submitting this testimony in **strong opposition** to SB 3012 and respectfully request that the Committee **decline to hear this bill**.

I understand—and agree with—the Legislature’s concern about Hawai‘i’s unique geographic isolation, our rabies-free status, and the importance of protecting public health, animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems. Those concerns are real, and O‘ahu in particular faces ongoing challenges with free-roaming animals and pet overpopulation.

However, SB 3012 does not realistically address the stated problems, and it creates significant unintended consequences for responsible animal owners and professionals who import animals lawfully, humanely, and with clear purpose.

SB 3012 is not aligned with the problems it claims to solve

The bill states its purpose is to decrease the number of “fertile, unaltered dogs and cats” imported into the State by requiring proof of sterilization prior to embarkation, with exemptions. I fail to understand how mandatory sterilization, and the implied labeling of anyone importing an intact animal as a “breeder,” meaningfully reduces the factors driving Hawai‘i’s overpopulation and free-roaming animal issues.

The animals most frequently associated with free-roaming packs and unmanaged populations are not high-value imported purebreds arriving with owners who pay thousands of dollars to transport them legally and safely. Based on community reports and public news coverage, free-roaming dogs often correlate with unstable housing situations, inadequate access to veterinary care, and lack of enforcement of existing laws. Feral cat colony issues are also commonly tied to gaps in coordinated TNR support, public education, and ecosystem-focused policy.

If the real goal is to reduce free-roaming animals and overpopulation, the most effective approach is not to burden responsible importers—it is to expand access to affordable spay/neuter,

strengthen public education, improve enforcement of existing animal control laws, and increase transparency and coordination across shelters and rescue organizations.

This bill penalizes responsible importers, not irresponsible owners

In my line of work, I import **purpose-bred, carefully selected puppies**, often **large-breeds**, to meet specific temperament, stability, and safety needs for film and television work. These dogs are not imported casually. They are managed professionally, trained extensively, and are under strict control and supervision.

For large-breed puppies in particular, **mandatory sterilization prior to importation can be medically inappropriate and harmful**. Large-breed dogs generally should not be spayed or neutered until they have completed key stages of growth and development and growth plates have fused. Early sterilization can negatively affect orthopedic development and long-term soundness—exactly the opposite of what professionals and responsible owners strive for.

SB 3012 would force owners into either:

- sterilizing too early (risking long-term health and structural problems), or
- being treated as a “breeder” and subjected to undefined or unspecified “breeder regulations” not clearly laid out in the bill.

That is not reasonable regulation—it is overreach and poor policy design.

Conformation and responsible exhibition imports are directly impacted

Many intact dogs are brought to Hawai‘i for **AKC conformation dog shows**, where dogs must remain intact to compete. Not every intact animal is bred. The assumption that intact automatically equals breeding intent is false and unfair.

Further, SB 3012 implies that imported intact dogs are meaningfully contributing to Hawai‘i’s overpopulation problem. That implication is not supported by clear, transparent statewide data—especially considering how difficult it has historically been to obtain complete shelter and intake data across Hawai‘i.

Data transparency and accountability should come before sweeping mandates

The National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) Shelter Project tracks shelter data from public sources, but only two Hawai‘i shelters are currently listed (Hawaiian Humane Society and Maui Humane Society), and consistent statewide shelter and rescue data remain limited. Without comprehensive public reporting, it is irresponsible to create broad new restrictions that assume “breeders” (or people importing intact animals) are driving overpopulation.

In addition, Hawai‘i relies heavily on rescue organizations to manage overpopulation, yet there is no clear statewide registry or consistent public reporting that allows policymakers—or the

public—to evaluate impacts, outcomes, or trends. Policy should be built on measurable reality, not assumptions.

What would help instead

If the Legislature truly wants to reduce overpopulation and protect the public and native ecosystems, the focus should be on policies that directly address the known sources of the issue:

- targeted, subsidized spay/neuter programs for low-income residents
- community outreach and public education
- enforce existing leash/licensing/animal abandonment laws
- coordinated statewide shelter and rescue reporting requirements
- meaningful strategies to address free-roaming animals linked to encampments and unmanaged colonies
- ecosystem protection policies built on science and enforceable outcomes (not broad import mandates)

Conclusion

SB 3012 is a harmful bill that is **not relevant to the goals it claims to achieve**. It burdens responsible owners, exhibitors and professionals, and while failing to address the underlying drivers of Hawai‘i’s free-roaming animal problems and overpopulation challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the House Committee **not hear SB 3012**

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Sue Chipperton

Owner/Operator, **Check The Gate Animals for Film and TV** (Hawai‘i)

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 2:13:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

We have way too many unwanted pets here. It would break your heart to see the ones we put down because we don't have the time, effort, manpower, money or basic capability to rehabilitate. I see them. I walk dogs at a shelter, and they are all loved and cared for there as best they can be, BUT they cannot keep up with the influx of puppies, neglected dogs, strays or owner surrender cases. We people must do better. We need to chip and spay and neuter our pets. I believe dogs and cats coming in to Hawaii should be neutered or spayed unless they are being used to breed at a CERTIFIED, VETTED, HUMANE breeding facility.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 2:18:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Respectfully request that this bill be opposed. Recently medical opinion discourages early spay and neuter of animals with evidence of detrimental effects when animals are older.

Spaying and neutering of animals imported into Hawaii truly infringes on the personal rights of owners.

As a participant in the sport of Dog Conformation, passage of this bill will negatively affect the sport. The long term result will be the end of conformation as a sport in Hawaii. the sport requires that the animals are not spayed nor neutered.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 2:57:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa Delgado	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Theresa Delgado, and I am submitting written testimony in strong opposition to SB3012.

I am an active member of the American Kennel Club (AKC) dog show community, and I am also the parent of an 11-year-old daughter who is an AKC Junior Handler. Dog shows are not a casual hobby for our family they require commitment, responsibility, education, and countless hours of training and care.

This year alone, my daughter has been invited to three prestigious events due to her dedication and hard work: she earned a Top 10 Junior ranking for Siberian Huskies, qualified for AKC Nationals by meeting both win and academic requirements, and received an invitation to the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. These are achievements that take years of effort and discipline.

AKC conformation and Junior Handler competitions require that dogs be intact. Passing SB3012 would effectively invalidate the work my daughter and many other juniors have put into training, handling, and responsibly caring for their dogs. Preventing a junior handler from showing a dog they trained themselves, especially after earning invitations to elite competitions, would be a serious disservice to these young people and the values of responsibility and dedication these programs promote.

In addition, many importers affected by this bill are AKC exhibitors who bring intact dogs into the state solely for exhibition purposes, with no intention of breeding. These dogs are part of a highly regulated, transparent, and accountable community.

I understand the intent of this bill is to address pet overpopulation, which is a goal I support. However, responsible breeders and exhibitors are not the cause of this problem. AKC breeders and exhibitors invest significant time and financial resources to ensure the health, temperament, and placement of dogs they produce. Many require contracts stipulating that a dog must be returned to the breeder if an owner can no longer care for it. Many also spend thousands of dollars on genetic testing to prevent inherited diseases.

A broad, one-size-fits-all approach such as SB3012 unfairly targets responsible breeders, exhibitors, and junior handlers while failing to address the true sources of pet overpopulation. As

written, this bill would harm families, youth programs, and ethical dog communities without achieving its stated goal.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB3012

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Theresa Delgado

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:05:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Howard Webster	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill because it is pooling all the Cats together. Registered cats are not the same as free roaming domestics. They are not outside, they are not killing birds. The Humane Society does not want people to have pets. Their biggest goal is raising money for the people who work at the top. They have to have a reason to be in existence so they choose to go after the Cat Fancy. These cats are, or would be, an endangered species for most of them. Even On the mainland many of these numbers are in 50 -100 cats of their breed. To Neuter and spay all registered animals that are in competition and the limited gene pool that exist would be criminal.

I beseech you to think beyond the present and think of the future. These animals are too important, and to say people do not have the right to have one and exhibit them and have a strict breeding program to preserve each of the breeds and carry on the next generation of showcats is unbelievable.

Howard Webster
The Cat Fanciers Association

Southwest Regional Director
This includes Hawaii

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:08:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity testify. I am submitting strong opposition to SB 3012.

SB 3012 is built on assumptions that are not supported by any publicly presented data. The bill asserts that Hawaii’s pet overpopulation is connected to the importation of animals, yet the measure provides no evidence to demonstrate that legally imported, documented pets are contributing to the free-roaming population. The findings section of the bill offers broad statements, but sites no studies, statistics, or research to justify the proposed restrictions.

Hawaii does face challenges with free-roaming animals – but these challenges stand primarily from unowned or loosely owned animals already on the islands. A significant portion of these animals come from situations involving homelessness, transient living, etc. These are local, systemic issues that cannot be solved by targeting responsible pet owners who follow the law and import their animals through regulated channels.

Requiring sterilization for all imported pets will not reduce the number of free-roaming animals in Hawaii. Instead, it places unnecessary burdens on families, veterinarians, and individuals who comply with existing regulations. It also risks creating barriers for residents returning home with their pets, military families relocating to Hawaii, and individuals who rely on specific breeds or service animals.

This bill also harms communities that rely on responsibly bred and purposely trained animals – including show dogs, service animals, and working dogs.

Even the bill itself states that Hawaii faces ‘significant challenges associated with pet over population’, yet SB 3012 focuses on imported pets – a population that is documented, regulated, and not contributing to free-roaming animals. The focus must be redirected to the actual sources of overpopulation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reject SB 3012. Hawaii deserves legislation grounded in accurate data, realistic solutions, and a clear understanding focused on the true source of animal overpopulation, instead of misplaced blame and burdens on responsible pet owners.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:28:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose SB3012, i have owned purebred Golden Retrievers, a mixed breed Golden adopted from the Humane Society in Kona, and I have brought in a Golden from both the mainland and Australia. My purebred dogs were shown in Conformation and competed in other dog sports. To compete in conformation the dog must be intact. We do have a huge problem on the Big island with mixed breed dogs that are abandoned. I rarely see a purebred dog at the shelter. Bringing in a dog is very expensive and these dogs are not running the streets.

The purebred dog clubs step in to assist when one of their breed needs assistance. The AKC dog clubs offer training classes that help all dogs be more successful K9 citizens.

We are not the problem here and therefore we should not be penalized.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:26:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose SB3012.

I personally adopted 2 pure bred golden retrievers from New Zealand. And we are actively participating in AKC conformation dog sport shows with Sydney (3 years old) and Mozart (7 years old) who is a certified therapy dog with k9 Therapets visiting care homes, libraries, and work environments for wellness programs for humans.

Both of my dogs are intact and that is a choice I take seriously.

People like me who spend a lot of money transporting our pets and dedicate a lot of time & money caring for our pets are not careless backyard puppy mills. Many of my fellow pet owners go above and beyond to ensure our pets are well cared for!

I strongly oppose - do not support this HB!! It doesn't make sense!!

- This mandate could risk the health of dogs. Numerous scientific studies demonstrate that delaying the sterilization of a dog prevents significant health issues later in life.
- This mandate could impact the Hawaiian economy – Dogs must be intact to participate in AKC conformation shows. This would prevent any Hawaiians who obtain a dog from the mainland from participating in these events, which generate millions of dollars for local communities. [Read more](#) about the economic impact of dog shows in Hawai‘i.
- This mandate will not address shelter population concerns. A more effective approach would focus resources on funding low-cost spay/neuter programs and support strong enforcement of current animal control laws.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Kawasaki

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:30:34 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Duane Inoue	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

3 February 2026

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill (S.B.) 3012 (As Written)

Relating to Animal Importation; Proof of Sterilization; Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity; Documentation; Breeder Registry

Chairs and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

My name is Duane Inoue, and I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to S.B. No. 3012, as written.

Executive Summary

While I support evidence-based measures to reduce pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals, S.B. 3012, as drafted, is overbroad, administratively unworkable, and internally inconsistent with other pending legislation. The bill regulates animal importation status rather than reproductive risk, creates impractical exemption frameworks, imposes unnecessary burdens on veterinarians, and conflicts directly with H.B. 1736. Without substantial revision, S.B. 3012 is unlikely to achieve its stated purpose and may create enforcement and legal challenges.

—

1. Fundamental Policy Defect: Import Status ≠ Reproductive Risk

S.B. 3012 is premised on the assumption that reducing the importation of unsterilized dogs and cats will meaningfully reduce pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals. This assumption is flawed.

An unsterilized animal that is not “at large” does not contribute to overpopulation. Overpopulation is driven by animals that are allowed to roam and reproduce, not by the mere presence of intact animals in the State. Regulating animals at the point of importation, without regard to post-entry confinement or control, misidentifies the actual source of the problem.

A more effective approach would focus on mandatory sterilization triggered by “at large” status, with narrowly tailored exemptions for age, health, and registered breeding.

2. See below for my comments on the 3 exemptions. Please note that this bill does not address what happens if an imported dog or cat comes into state without any exemptions. What happens to animals that are imported but do not have any exceptions? Will the animals be quarantined? Will the State send them back to origin? Will importer, exporter or owner be fined?

Exemption (1): Temporary Importation for Less Than 90 Days

S.B. 3012 exempts animals imported for less than ninety days, provided they are not sold, transferred, or retained in the State beyond that period.

This exemption is administratively and legally problematic:

- The bill provides no mechanism to verify the animal’s departure after ninety days.
- No bond, affidavit, return travel documentation, or follow-up enforcement is specified.
- The ninety-day threshold is arbitrary and unrelated to reproductive biology.
- Reproductive risk exists immediately upon entry if the animal is allowed to roam.

Without explicit confinement requirements or enforceable exit verification, this exemption undermines the stated purpose of the bill.

3. Exemption (2): Veterinary Certification for Health or Life Risk

As written, S.B. 3012 effectively requires veterinary certification for nearly all juvenile dogs and cats, since sterilization is not typically performed until certain age milestones:

- Cats are commonly sterilized at 5–6 months (though earlier procedures are safe).
- Dogs are typically sterilized between 6–18 months, depending on breed and size.

Requiring licensed veterinarians—often outside Hawai‘i or outside the United States—to certify that sterilization would jeopardize an animal’s health or life creates:

- unnecessary administrative burden,
- increased costs for owners and veterinarians,

- inconsistent standards across jurisdictions.

Age-based exemptions should be statutory, not dependent on discretionary veterinary certification.

—

4. Exemption (3): Breeder Registry Is Underspecified

S.B. 3012 requires the Department to establish a breeder registry but specifies only minimal information. As drafted, the registry would be insufficient for enforcement or accountability.

At a minimum, the statute should require registry information adequate to ensure traceability and compliance, with details delegated to rulemaking.

Without this, the registry risks becoming a loophole rather than a safeguard.

—

5. Direct Conflict With H.B. 1736

S.B. 3012 conflicts materially with H.B. 1736, which also addresses sterilization and importation of cats but uses different triggers and exemptions.

If both bills are enacted as written:

- An owner could comply with one statute while violating the other.
- Enforcement agencies would face inconsistent mandates.
- The State would be exposed to claims of arbitrary or selective enforcement.

These bills must be harmonized, consolidated, or sequenced prior to enactment to avoid statutory conflict and legal ambiguity.

—

6. Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Legislature:

1. Delay passage of S.B. 3012 pending coordination with H.B. 1736 or similar bills
2. Shift from an import-based mandate to a sterilization requirement triggered by “at large” status (Please note that H.B. 1736

3. Include clear statutory age exemptions;
4. Establish enforceable verification mechanisms for temporary import exemptions;
5. Delegate breeder registry details to administrative rulemaking; and
6. Ensure internal consistency across all animal sterilization legislation.

—

Conclusion

S.B 3012, as written, does not effectively address the causes of pet overpopulation and creates significant enforcement and legal challenges. With careful revision and coordination, the Legislature can adopt a framework that is both effective and legally sound. I urge you to defer passage and substantially revise this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Inoue

Email: gekoboy@gmail.com

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, Members of the Committee:

I strongly oppose SB3012 for the following reasons:

The State continues to experience significant challenges associated with pet overpopulation and the adverse impacts of free-roaming animals on animal welfare, community well-being, and native ecosystems. The animals most frequently associated with free-roaming packs and unmanaged populations are not high-value imported purebreds arriving with owners who pay thousands of dollars to transport them legally and safely. Based on non community reports and public news coverage, free-roaming dogs often correlate with unstable housing situations, inadequate access to veterinary care, and lack of enforcement of existing laws. If the real goal is to reduce free-roaming animals and overpopulation, the most effective approach is not to burden responsible importers — it is to expand access to existing animal control laws, and increase transparency and coordination across shelters and rescue organizations.

This bill penalizes responsible importers, not irresponsible owners. Many intact animals are often brought to Hawaii to participate in AKC conformation dog shows where an altered dog may not be shown. The assumption that intact = breeding intent is false and unfair. It is also unfair to imply that these intact animals that cost thousands of dollars to import are the root cause of animal over population.

Further, SB3012 implies that imported, intact dogs are meaningfully contributing to Hawaii's overpopulation problem. That implication is not supported by clear, transparent statewide data.

If the Legislature truly wants to reduce overpopulation and protect the public and native ecosystems, the focus should be on policies that directly address the known sources of the issue:

- targeted, subsidized spay/neuter programs for low-income residents
- community outreach and public education

- enforcement of existing leash/licensing/animal abandonment laws
- coordinated statewide shelter and rescue reporting requirements
- meaningful strategies to address free-roaming animals linked to encampments and unmanaged colonies
- ecosystem protection policies built on scene and enforceable outcomes (not broad import mandates)

SB3012 is a harmful bill that is **not relevant to the goals it claims to achieve**. It burdens responsible owners, exhibitors, and professionals while failing to address the underlying drivers of Hawaii's free-roaming animal problems and overpopulation challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Environment defer this measure.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:35:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose SB3012. I do not feel it is right telling owners that import dogs or cats that they must sterilized their animals. It should be left up to owners whether they want to do it or not. Like myself I raise and breed dogs for AKC dog shows. What the Hawaiian Humane Society is trying to do is take away the rights of pet owners. No one should be able dictate what we can and can not do with our own animals. Why don't the Hawaiian Humane Society focus on managing the feral animal population so that it doesn't invade our native animals. These bills are so ridiculous. We have so many other important matters that needs our attention then this. Ignorance is bliss.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:37:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paula Gushiken	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill as it is taking away our rights to choose. Our Country should not be taking away our rights to decide this concern. There are much better options out there to solve the problems that the humane society,etc faces. Please use common sense before introducing this insane bill.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:38:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Opposed to SB3012 as it would cat breeders to acquire outcrosses for their breeding program

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:41:04 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Aquino	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in opposition to SB3012, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i.

This should be something the residents of the state vote on.

Suzanne Aquino

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:47:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Cheryl Carreira and I am in opposition to SB3012, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawai'i. Which means no healthy bred cats and dogs.

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

Mandating a registering, licensing, and chipping of all cats and dogs with owner's address and contact information would be a more accurate and efficient way to reduce irresponsible abandonment of intact animals and overpopulation problems. Which in Hawaii are cats.

I urge the Legislature to reject SB3012.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully'

Cheryl Y. Carreira, RN

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 4:43:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello, my name is Sara Barker, and I am the owner and trainer for a small business focused on training pets in basic obedience and task trained service dogs for those with disabilities. I am also a military spouse and advocate for ethical and responsible breeding and ownership.

While I support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce shelter overpopulation, SB3012 is not a balanced or effective solution. Instead, it creates serious unintended consequences for people with disabilities who utilize trained service dogs, military families, ethical breeders, and the long-term health of Hawai'i's dog population.

SB3012 fails to include any exemption for service dogs.

Service dogs are not pets, they are classified as essential medical equipment for people with disabilities as defined by the Americans With Disabilities Act. Requiring mandatory sterilization without exemption creates unnecessary barriers for disabled individuals who rely on carefully bred dogs with the temperament, structure, and health needed for service work. Many ethical service dog programs depend on maintaining intact breeding stock to ensure future generations. SB3012 would make access more difficult, more expensive, and more limited for those who already face daily physical and financial challenges.

SB3012 would disproportionately impact military families.

Hawaii has a large military population. Service members are frequently relocated and often bring their family dogs with them. SB3012 would force these families to sterilize their dogs, creating an additional expense to the already lengthy and expensive quarantine process, or be unable to bring them at all. Both options are unfair and are an emotionally and financially harmful burden on people who already sacrifice so much for our country.

SB3012 would create major barriers for small, ethical breeding programs located on the islands.

Local, responsible breeders play an important role in producing healthy, stable, well tempered dogs for families, working dogs, and conformation/ sport. This bill discourages and undermines those programs by restricting genetic diversity and making it harder to bring in new, unrelated dogs. Without the ability to responsibly outcross, ethical breeders will be forced to work with increasingly limited gene pools, or shut down entirely. Further, ethical breeders actively ensure their dogs never step foot in a shelter or rescue as these breeders deeply care about the wellbeing

of the puppies/ dogs they produce while also wanting to make sure their dogs are not taking away valuable resources in our fragile, overloaded rescue system. SB3012 will not stop irresponsible breeding; it only hurts the people doing it right.

SB3012 dangerously restricts genetic diversity in Hawai'i's dog population.

Shrinking gene pools lead directly to inbreeding, which increases the risk of deformities, hereditary diseases, immune disorders, and shortened lifespans. With the already strict and expensive quarantine requirements, Hawaii's gene pool is already extremely limited. SB3012 would only limit it further. Over time, this results in more suffering, higher veterinary costs, and more dogs with complex medical needs, which would lead to a heavier work load on the amazing veterinarians and staff that are already so over worked. All of which is the exact opposite of what this bill claims to prevent.

Inbreeding related conditions require long term, specialized veterinary care. Instead of reducing the burden on local vets and shelters, SB3012 will increase it by creating a population of dogs more prone to chronic illness and genetic defects.

Finally, the State should focus on more effective, humane measures of animal population control, including increased support for shelters.

Rather than punishing responsible owners, service dog handlers, military families, and ethical breeders, Hawai'i should invest in:

- Expanded low-cost spay/neuter programs
- Community education and outreach
- Stronger enforcement against neglect and backyard breeding
- Increased funding, staffing, and resources for local shelters and rescues

SB3012 is harmful. Shelters need support, not policies that reduce healthy intake options while increasing the long term medical burden on the system.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB3012 and pursue solutions that protect animal welfare without sacrificing access, health, fairness, or science.

Respectfully,

Sara Barker

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 5:07:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keiko Garvin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I do not believe citizens who import unsterilized animals are the source of the overpopulation of dogs and cats in Hawai‘i. We are so isolated, even in/out mainland w/animals are very restricted and challenging. They are more likely to be responsible in the improved breeding of purebred dogs and cats. More funding is needed to assist in sterilization of the feral cat populations and homeless-owned poi dogs.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 5:18:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am a veterinarian practicing at Blue Cross Animal Hospital. I oppose this bill. I do not believe citizens who import unsterilized animals are the source of the overpopulation of dogs and cats in Hawaii. They are more likely to be responsible in the improved breeding of purebred dogs and cats. More funding is needed to assist in sterilization of the feral cat populations and homeless-owned poi dogs.

Alison W. Jayne, DVM

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 5:40:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Opposition Testimony to SB3012

I am a registered voter who lives in Mililani Mauka and I oppose this bill. I am an individual who competes in AKC events with my dogs and travels to the mainland to compete at least 3-4 times per year. My personal contribution of intact dogs “imported” to the State of Hawaii is 2. Neither of my dogs have produced any puppies. As a competitor in conformation and obedience I spend a considerable amount of money (thousands of dollars) and time maintaining the health and wellbeing of my dogs. This includes their reproductive health, even though I do not participate in breeding. My previous dogs who were locally bred (but did travel to the mainland to compete) produced a total of ZERO puppies. In the “dog show” community unplanned breedings are very uncommon and planned breedings result in puppies that are placed in homes under the most stringent conditions (often involving signed contracts requiring sterilization of “pet quality” dogs). A lot of people like me travel to compete and either do not breed their dogs at all or rarely breed a litter. We are not back yard breeders or puppy mills.

I also fail to see how requiring me to “register” as a “breeder” and potentially subjecting me to intrusive and unnecessary “inspection” of my property will help with the overpopulation of animals at the Humane Society since there is little evidence that there is a preponderance of purebred show animals housed there.

I think that this bill discriminates against my right to travel and compete with my dogs (whereas a backyard breeder or “puppy mill” that uses local dogs that are intact would not be subjected to the “requirement” to sterilize their animals). If passed into law I will personally hire an attorney to bring a lawsuit to prevent the implementation these “rules”.

I vehemently oppose this bill and hope that it will not pass.

I oppose SB 3012

“The purpose of this Act is to decrease the number of fertile, unaltered dogs and cats imported into the State by **requiring proof of sterilization prior to embarkation**, subject to reasonable exemptions for medical necessity, temporary stays, and registered breeders.” **Not every intact animal that is imported to Hawaii is bred.** To assume that every intact animal will be bred and to subject the owner to unspecified breeder regulations that aren't included in the bill is unfair. It's also unfair to imply that these intact **animals that cost thousands of dollars to import** are the root cause of animal overpopulation and free roaming animals in Hawaii. **Please take a visit to either location of the Hawaii Humane Society and see what type of dogs that are there in the kennels.** Guaranteed, these are not purebreds that were imported to this state for service work, AKC conformation shows or performance events. The majority are mixed breeds of questionable origin and ownership.

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

Free roaming animals appear to be connected with homeless encampments per news reports of dangerous free roaming packs of dogs or with feral cats colonies often cared by TNR (trap, neuter, release) caregivers. What has been done to address more public education and to reach out to lower income individuals to assist them with spaying and neutering those animals? If local people are unaware of such programs, they are useless.

We need more outreach and low or no cost spay/neuter programs to address this population of pets.

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

PLEASE VOTE NO on SB 3012

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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 6:56:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy Nitta	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Written Testimony Regarding SB3012

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB3012. I appreciate the legislature's goal of promoting animal welfare and reducing irresponsible breeding and pet overpopulation. However, I am concerned that SB3012, as written, would have serious unintended consequences for responsible dog owners, exhibitors, and breeders.

I am an AKC exhibitor who participates in both in-state and out-of-state dog shows, as well as a dog breeder and dog owner. My dogs are actively shown in American Kennel Club(AKC) conformation events, which require that dogs remain intact. These events are essential for evaluating breed standards, sound structure, temperament, and overall health, and they form the foundation of responsible, preservation-focused breeding.

Many responsible bred dogs shown in conformation originate outside the United States. Dogs are frequently imported from countries such as Japan, Korea and other nations to preserve genetic diversity, improve health, and maintain correct breed type. In my own case, my dog's sire was imported from Japan. These international imports are carefully planned, highly regulated, and involve significant investment in health testing, quarantine compliance, and long-term responsibility.

A requirement that all dogs entering the state be sterilized would effectively prevent the importation of intact dogs for responsible breeding and exhibition. This would limit access to diverse blood lines, increase the risk of genetic bottlenecks, and undermine efforts to produce healthy, stable dogs. Such dogs are not the source of pet overpopulations; they are purpose-bred, registered, microchipped, and closely managed throughout their lives.

Additionally, SB3012 would prevent both in-state and out-of-state exhibitors from attending dog shows and events held here, reducing participation in AKC-sanctioned events and harming local kennel clubs. These events generate economic activity for the state through tourism, lodging, dining, and small businesses, while also supporting education on responsible dog ownership and breeding.

SB3012 does not distinguish between high-risk sources of animal overpopulation and low-risk highly regulated activities such as AKC conformation shows and responsible domestic and international breeding programs. A blanket sterilization mandate treats all dog owners equally, regardless of their level of oversight, accountability, or contribution to animal welfare.

I respectfully urge the committee to consider amendments to SB3012 that provide reasonable exemptions for intact dogs entering the state for legitimate purposes, including:

- * participation in AKC sanctioned conformation performance, or companion events.
- * temporary entry for dog shows, trials, or educational exhibitions.
- * responsible breeding by registered, health-tested, and compliant breeders, including international imports,

These exemptions would allow the state to pursue animal welfare goals while avoiding harm to responsible dog owners, breeders, and exhibitors who are committed to producing healthy, well-adjusted dogs.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my testimony regarding SB3012.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Nitta

AKC Exhibitor, Dog Breeder, and Dog owner

Testimony in Opposition to SB3012 (Animal Importation; Proof of Sterilization)

February 6, 2026

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure. I respectfully **oppose** SB3012 as currently written.

While I support the intent of this bill to address pet overpopulation in Hawaii, I believe it fails to address the primary causes of the problem and instead imposes new burdens on responsible pet owners and organizations. For the reasons outlined below, I urge the Committee to reconsider this approach.

1. The State's animal quarantine program exists to prevent rabies—not to regulate sterilization

As someone who grew up in Hawaii, I understand the importance of protecting our islands, ecosystems, and communities from serious threats that may arise through importation. The animal quarantine program serves a critical purpose in preventing rabies from entering the State.

However, an animal being intact is not a communicable disease, nor should it be treated as such. Mandatory sterilization expands the scope of the quarantine program beyond its original and necessary public health purpose.

The importation process is already complex and burdensome for those who must or choose to relocate to Hawaii. This bill would further increase that burden, particularly for military families, returning residents, service animal handlers, pet sports and show participants, and other legitimate importers. Many of these individuals are not contributors to Hawaii's overpopulation problem. This is not an efficient or targeted way to promote responsible pet ownership.

2. This measure targets a small population while ignoring the primary drivers of overpopulation

Mandatory sterilization of imported dogs and cats does not address the substantial population of animals already in Hawaii, which are the primary contributors to overpopulation.

The majority of Hawaii's pet overpopulation stems from:

- In-state backyard breeding and puppy mills
- Accidental litters
- Free-roaming animals
- Lack of enforcement of existing animal welfare and breeding laws

These issues are the result of irresponsible ownership. This bill does nothing to change that behavior.

By contrast, imported animals represent only a small fraction of the overall potential problem. Yet this measure places new burdens on:

- Families relocating to Hawaii, including returning residents
- Military personnel
- Rescue organizations
- Responsible hobby breeders

This approach punishes those who are already acting responsibly while leaving the true sources of overpopulation largely unaddressed.

3. Mandatory sterilization contradicts current veterinary research and may harm animal health

Sterilization is not a medically neutral procedure, and its effects vary significantly by breed, age, and sex. Veterinary research has demonstrated that both early sterilization and sterilization in general are associated with long-term health risks.

Documented risks include increased rates of obesity, urinary incontinence, bladder stones, hypothyroidism, diabetes mellitus, hip dysplasia, cruciate ligament rupture, behavioral changes (including owner-directed aggression and fear), cognitive problems, and several forms of cancer, including leukemia, prostate cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, splenic cancer, and bladder cancer (Kutzler, 2020).

These findings underscore that sterilization carries measurable long-term health risks for some dogs and that optimal timing should be determined by a veterinarian based on individual factors—not mandated by statute. A blanket sterilization requirement forces owners to choose between compliance and their pet's long-term health, which is not aligned with modern veterinary science.

4. Cancer rates in companion animals are rising, and research is still evolving

Veterinary oncologists have documented a steady increase in cancer diagnoses in dogs over recent decades. This trend is particularly evident in breeds such as Golden Retrievers, which are both beloved family companions and among the most studied due to their elevated cancer risk.

Researchers are actively investigating the genetic, environmental, and hormonal factors contributing to these rising cancer rates. Policies that mandate sterilization without regard to breed-specific risks or emerging scientific findings run counter to these efforts. Rather than supporting evidence-based strategies to reduce cancer risk, this measure may inadvertently increase it.

As a devoted Golden Retriever owner, I am deeply concerned about legislation that could place dogs like mine at greater risk. Our pets deserve policies grounded in current science—not outdated assumptions.

5. The bill assumes an enforcement system that does not currently exist

This measure relies heavily on the creation and enforcement of a breeder registry. Yet Hawaii already struggles to enforce existing animal-related laws. For example, pet registration requirements at the county level have historically seen low compliance and limited enforcement. That program is no longer active.

Unlicensed and unethical breeders operate openly on social media, advertising litters with little or no veterinary care, genetic testing, or oversight. Many already ignore current regulations, and there is no evidence they would voluntarily comply with a new registry.

If the State cannot effectively enforce the laws already on the books, adding new administrative responsibilities—such as documentation verification, registry maintenance, and coordination with carriers—will not result in meaningful change. Instead, responsible breeders are likely to comply while irresponsible operators continue unchecked.

6. More effective solutions should focus on in-state issues

If the goal is to reduce overpopulation and improve animal welfare, more effective strategies would include:

- Strengthening oversight of Hawaii-based breeders
- Increasing enforcement of existing animal welfare and breeding laws
- Expanding access to low-cost spay and neuter services
- Supporting community cat management programs
- Creating meaningful penalties for unlicensed or irresponsible breeding

These approaches target the root causes of overpopulation rather than placing new requirements on responsible pet owners entering the State.

Conclusion

While the intent of SB3012 is commendable, its current structure is unlikely to achieve its stated goals. It risks harming animal health, creates enforcement obligations the State has not demonstrated the capacity to manage, and misdirects attention away from the true sources of pet overpopulation in Hawaii.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider this measure or redirect efforts toward solutions that more effectively address in-state challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Review

Possible Relationship between Long-Term Adverse Health Effects of Gonad-Removing Surgical Sterilization and Luteinizing Hormone in Dogs

Michelle A. Kutzler 

Department of Animal and Rangeland Sciences, Oregon State University, 112 Withycombe Hall, Corvallis, OR 97370, USA; michelle.kutzler@oregonstate.edu

Received: 10 March 2020; Accepted: 31 March 2020; Published: 1 April 2020



Simple Summary: Spaying and neutering dogs is commonly used to prevent the birth of unwanted animals. However, spaying and neutering is associated with an increased risk of several long-term health problems including obesity, urinary incontinence, bladder stones, hypothyroidism, diabetes mellitus, hip dysplasia, cruciate ligament rupture, behavioral changes (including owner-directed aggression and fear), cognition problems, as well as several forms of cancer (including leukemia, prostate cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, splenic cancer, and bladder cancer). An explanation of how spaying and neutering increases the risk of these long-term health problems is discussed in this review.

Abstract: Spaying and neutering dogs is commonly used to prevent the birth of unwanted animals and eliminate the risk of reproductive diseases. However, removal of the gonads prevents the feedback of estrogen and testosterone on the pituitary and hypothalamus. As a result, luteinizing hormone (LH) is continuously elevated at supraphysiologic concentrations. Although the main role of LH is for reproductive function (e.g., ovulation), there are LH receptors present in several normal tissues including the thyroid and adrenal glands, gastrointestinal tract, cranial cruciate ligament and round ligament, and lymphocytes. In addition, there are LH receptors present in several neoplastic tissues (e.g., lymphoma, hemangiosarcoma, mastocytoma, transitional cell carcinoma, and osteosarcoma). The role of LH receptors in non-reproductive normal and neoplastic tissues is not known but may stimulate nitric oxide release and induce cell division. The precise etiology of the increased incidence of several non-reproductive long-term health complications following spaying and neutering is not known but may be related to LH receptor activation in these non-reproductive target tissues. How these effects may be mediated is described in this review.

Keywords: behavior; canine; luteinizing hormone; musculoskeletal; neoplasia; neuter; obesity; spay; urinary incontinence

1. Introduction

Throughout most of the developed world, surgical sterilization has become a common tool for combatting the overpopulation of unwanted dogs and eliminating the risk of reproductive diseases in pet dogs (e.g., mammary gland cancer and prostate hyperplasia/infection) [1–6]. In the United States, 64% of dogs have been surgically sterilized, and this is most commonly performed between 6 weeks and 12 months of age [7]. For this review, ovariectomy and ovariohysterectomy (spay) or castration (neuter) will be collectively referred to as gonadectomy, since each of these methods for surgical sterilization includes gonad removal (ovaries or testes).

In the normal adult mammal, the hypothalamus secretes gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH), which stimulates the anterior pituitary gland to release luteinizing hormone [8]. Luteinizing

hormone (LH) stimulates the secretion of gonadal steroid hormones (testosterone in males and estrogen/progesterone in females). These gonadal steroid hormones then negatively feedback to the hypothalamus and anterior pituitary to decrease the secretion of GnRH and LH, respectively. However, in the gonadectomized mammal, there is no negative feedback, which results in supraphysiologic circulating concentrations of LH. In gonadectomized dogs, LH concentrations are more than thirty times the concentrations found in normal adult dogs [9]. Although the main role of LH is for reproductive functions (e.g., ovulation, corpus luteum formation), there are LH receptors present throughout the body, not just limited to the reproductive tract. The purpose of LH receptors in non-reproductive tissues is not known but may induce cell division and stimulate nitric oxide release [10]. With constant activation following gonad removal, these receptors can be upregulated (unpublished observations), further magnifying the effects of the supraphysiologic LH concentrations in non-reproductive tissues. The following review summarizes several non-reproductive long-term health complications resulting from spaying and neutering as well as discusses the possibility of how these effects are mediated by LH receptor activation in these non-reproductive target tissues.

2. Non-Neoplastic Disorders

Obesity is a serious medical problem defined as an excessive accumulation of fat beyond the physical and skeletal limits [11]. Gonad removal is the single largest risk factor for the development of obesity in dogs [12]. Up to 68% of spayed and neutered dogs are obese [13–18]. Gonadectomy induces obesity through two main mechanisms: increased appetite and decreased metabolic rate. Gonad removal stimulates food intake [19] and increases indiscriminate appetite [20]. In unaltered dogs, food intake suppresses the secretion of gastrointestinal hormones (cholecystokinin and glucagon), resulting in satiety (alleviation of hunger) [21]. However, within 1 week following de-sexing, food intake increases by 20% and then persists [22,23]. It is possible that stimulation of LH receptors (present in the gastrointestinal tract following gonadectomy) increases cholecystokinin and/or glucagon release. It is also possible that LH receptors in the hypothalamus are involved in the increase in appetite [24], as lesions within the ventromedial hypothalamus result in hyperphagia [25].

Urinary incontinence is an involuntary leakage of urine resulting from either a weakened or complete loss of urinary sphincter control. The association between urinary incontinence and gonad removal in female dogs was first described by Jo (1965) [26]. Urinary incontinence is a common long-term health complication of spaying female dogs, with a reported incidence ranging from 5% to 30% [27–30]. Early-age spaying (under 5 months of age) may further increase the risk of occurrence of urinary incontinence [30,31] but the association between the age at spaying and the development of incontinence is weak. LH receptors are expressed in all regions of the canine lower urinary tract, from the body and neck of the bladder to the proximal and distal urethra [32,33]. Spayed female dogs with urinary incontinence have a significantly higher number of LH receptors in the lower urinary tract compared with unaltered females [34]. Urinary continence can be restored in spayed females using estrogens [29,35–38], GnRH agonists [39,40], or GnRH immunization [41,42]. These treatments all decrease circulating LH concentrations.

Urinary calculi are solid particles (concretions) in the urinary system, usually composed of mineral salts that can form in any part of the urinary tract [43]. After evaluating records from more than two million dogs, Banfield Pet Hospital found that all urinary calculi (urine crystals, kidney stones, and bladder stones) occurred at a rate three times higher in spayed and neutered dogs compared with unaltered dogs [44]. Under normal circumstances, there is a balance of urinary calculi promoters and inhibitors. However, this balance appears to be disrupted from the influence of an abundant LH environment.

Diabetes mellitus results from the impaired secretion of insulin with variable degrees of peripheral insulin resistance leading to hyperglycemia. In dogs, the incidence of diabetes mellitus is 0.4%–1.2% [45] and has been increasing over the past 30 years [46,47]. Gonad removal doubles the risk for developing diabetes mellitus in dogs [46]. Although gonadectomy increases the risk for obesity, the increased

prevalence for diabetes mellitus in spayed and neutered dogs is unrelated to obesity [48,49] and may be a direct effect of LH on the pancreas (e.g., chronic pancreatitis).

Hypothyroidism is a common endocrine disorder in which the thyroid gland does not produce sufficient quantities of thyroid hormone [50,51]. Gonad removal has a profound effect on thyroid function [52] and is the most significant cause for the development of hypothyroidism in dogs [53]. Thirty percent more spayed and neutered dogs develop hypothyroidism compared with unaltered dogs [54]. The concentrations of thyroxine in spayed and neutered dogs were significantly lower in both genders when compared with intact dogs [55]. Women who have undergone gonadectomy are also at an increased risk for developing hypothyroidism [56]. LH receptors are expressed in normal and adenomatous human thyroid glands [57]. Our laboratory has reported on the presence of LH receptors in the canine thyroid gland co-localized with thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) receptors [58]. It is possible that continuous LH receptor activation is interfering with the mechanism of action of TSH in the thyroid, resulting in hypothyroidism.

Canine hip dysplasia is associated with the abnormal joint structure and laxity of the muscles, connective tissue, and ligaments that would normally support the hip [59–61]. As hip joint laxity increases, the articular surfaces between the acetabulum and the head of the femur lose contact with each other, resulting in subluxation. Over time, subluxation results in a significant change in the size and shape of both articular surfaces and varying severity of osteoarthritis. It is important to note that most dogs with hip dysplasia are born with normal hips but then develop hip dysplasia secondary to intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors. The incidence of hip dysplasia can be as high as 40%–83% in giant and large breed dogs [59,62,63]. However, the incidence of hip dysplasia varies considerably between different giant and large dog breeds. Independent of the occurrence of obesity, gonadectomy significantly increases the incidence of canine hip dysplasia [64]. Compared to unaltered dogs, gonadectomy increases this by 1.5 times [59] to 2 times [65] the occurrence in unaltered dogs. It is important to mention that the positive relationship between gonadectomy and the incidence of hip dysplasia is strongest in neutered male dogs as opposed to spayed female dogs. The mechanism for the increased incidence in certain breeds or sexes is not known but our laboratory has demonstrated the expression of LH receptors within the ligament of the head of the femur, the hyaline cartilage, and subchondral bone of the femur head [66]. It is possible that, in some dogs, an increase in LH receptor activation in the structural support tissues within the hip joint results in increased laxity, which is responsible for the higher occurrence of hip dysplasia in spayed and neutered dogs. However, our preliminary evidence has not shown a significant difference in LHR expression between sexes or reproductive statuses in these structural support tissues.

The cranial cruciate ligament serves to prevent cranial displacement of the tibia relative to the femur, to limit internal rotation of the tibia relative to the femur, and to prevent stifle hyperextension [67,68]. Cranial cruciate ligament rupture is another musculoskeletal disorder that initially involves the degeneration of the cranial cruciate ligament, which leads to a partial rupture and then progresses to a complete rupture following an unspectacular traumatic event [69,70]. Similar to hip dysplasia, most dogs with cranial cruciate ligament ruptures are born with normal stifle joints but then develop the tendency for cranial cruciate ligament rupture secondary to intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors. Gonad removal significantly increases the prevalence of cranial cruciate ligament rupture [71], doubling the occurrence reported for unaltered dogs [72], with an incidence as high as 5.1% and 7.7% in males and females, respectively [65]. Prepubertal spaying and neutering delays tibial growth plate closure, which extends the length of tibia and the steepness of the tibial plateau [73,74]. Increased steepness of the tibial plateau can increase the cranial tibial thrust, which is a risk for cranial cruciate ligament rupture [75,76]. Despite the skeletal deformations that occur with prepubertal gonadectomy (under 6 months), even dogs that are gonadectomized between 6 and 12 months have an increased risk for cranial cruciate ligament rupture [65]. There is some evidence that hormones (estrogen and relaxin) may play a role in altering cranial cruciate ligament laxity and modify risk factors in humans [77,78]. Our laboratory has demonstrated the expression of LH receptors within the cranial cruciate ligament [66]. It is possible

that an increase in LH receptor activation in the cranial cruciate ligament results in increased laxity, which is responsible for the higher occurrence of ligament ruptures in spayed and neutered dogs.

The role of gonad removal on behavior is complex. Evidence for benefits as well as detriments following gonadectomy has been reported. Reproductive-related behaviors (such as urine marking in house, mounting, and roaming) are all reduced or eliminated following gonadectomy [79–81]. However, fear and aggression tend to be exacerbated [82]. Fear of storms, fear of gunfire, fear of noises, fear biting, timidity, separation anxiety, and submissive urination all increase significantly following spaying or neutering. Spayed females are also more reactive to the presence of unfamiliar humans and dogs [83]. Although some dogs may become less aggressive following gonadectomy [80], dominance aggression [84] and owner-directed aggression [20,85] occur with a significantly higher frequency in gonadectomized dogs compared with unaltered dogs. The hippocampus and hypothalamus both play important roles in controlling behaviors, especially those pertaining to fear and aggression. Luteinizing hormone receptors are abundant in the hippocampus and hypothalamus [86–88]. In addition, administration of supraphysiologic concentrations of LH to gonadectomized animals can induce aggression and other behavioral changes [89–91].

Cognitive dysfunction syndrome is a neurodegenerative disorder of senior dogs, which is characterized by both cognitive changes and neurophysiological pathologies [92,93]. Memory impairment, poor problem-solving skills, social disconnect, confusion, and day–night reversal may occur as the condition progresses. Gonad removal significantly increases the development and progression of cognitive dysfunction syndrome in dogs [94]. Increases in luteinizing hormone are associated with declines in cognitive performance [95]. In addition, elevated LH concentrations increase beta amyloid plaque formation and are implicated in the development of Alzheimer’s syndrome in humans [96,97]. Therefore, it is possible that LH and its receptor are important in the development of cognitive dysfunction syndrome in spayed and neutered dogs.

3. Neoplastic Disorders

Unlike the condition in men, the aggressive nature of the canine prostate adenocarcinoma and the lack of a screening test make the identification of early-stage prostate cancer in dogs extremely problematic [98]. In dogs, gonadectomy is the largest risk factor for the development of prostate adenocarcinoma [99,100]. Luteinizing hormone receptors are abundant in the prostate gland and increase in expression following gonadectomy [101–103]. Prostate carcinomas in dogs are associated with a high rate of metastasis at presentation and poor prognosis even with aggressive local therapies [98]. Prostatectomy is associated with significant postoperative morbidity without significantly extending survival times [104,105].

Transitional cell carcinomas can arise from the bladder or urethra, including the prostatic urethra [106–110]. Even with surgical removal, radiation treatment and chemotherapy, the prognosis for dogs with transitional cell carcinomas is poor, with only 16% of treated dogs surviving for over one year [111]. Gonadectomized dogs have a significantly higher risk of developing a transitional cell carcinoma compared with unaltered dogs [111]. Luteinizing hormone receptors are widely distributed throughout the bladder and urethra and increase in expression following gonadectomy [32,33,112,113]. Our laboratory has also demonstrated the abundant expression of LH receptors in transitional cell carcinoma tissue.

Osteosarcoma is a highly metastatic cancer of bone tissue. Despite many advances over the past 20 years, survival times for dogs diagnosed with osteosarcoma have not changed, with the principal cause of mortality being the development of pulmonary metastases [114]. Osteosarcoma occurs with significantly higher frequency in spayed and neutered dogs [115]. The incidence of osteosarcoma in gonadectomized Rottweiler dogs is 1.3–2.0 times higher than in unaltered dogs [116]. However, there were no differences in the incidence of osteosarcoma between gonadectomized and unaltered German Shepherds. It is not known whether LH receptors exist in the bone or whether LH could be using an indirect mechanism to mediate the increased incidence of osteosarcoma.

Hemangiosarcoma is a rapidly growing, highly invasive cancer arising from the lining of blood vessels and occurring almost exclusively in dogs. Primary tumors can arise in any vascular tissue, but the spleen and heart are the most common locations for hemangiosarcoma to develop. Even with surgical removal, the mean life expectancy is 86 days (range, 10–202 days) without adjunctive chemotherapy and 189 days (range, 118–241 days) with adjuvant chemotherapy [117]. Many studies have confirmed the presence of LH receptors in vascular endothelial and smooth muscle cells [118,119]. Spayed female dogs have two times the risk for developing splenic hemangiosarcoma and five times the risk for developing cardiac hemangiosarcoma compared with unaltered females [82,120]. Our laboratory has also demonstrated the expression of LH receptors in hemangiosarcomas, which may explain why this cancer is more common in spayed females [121].

Mastocytoma is the most common skin tumor in dogs [122]. Luteinizing hormone receptors are abundant in the skin [32,123]. Several studies have documented an increased risk for developing mastocytoma following spaying or neutering in dogs [65,82,124]. Our laboratory has shown that not only do mastocytomas express LH receptors, but that these tumors express three distinct patterns of LH receptor immunoexpression [125]. Moreover, mastocytomas from gonadectomized dogs had significantly higher more LHR-positive mast cells ($84.2 \pm 8.7\%$) overall. In addition, LHR-positive mast cells exhibiting the type 2 pattern ($66.6 \pm 15.3\%$) compared with mastocytomas from intact dogs ($64.3 \pm 4.2\%$ and $49.2 \pm 8.4\%$, respectively) [125]. The higher expression of LHR provides a mechanism that could be exploited in intervention strategies (e.g., using GnRH agonists) for mastocytoma recurrence in spayed and neutered dogs, leading to prolonged survival time.

Lymphoma is a cancer of lymphocytes and/or lymphoid tissues. Lymphoma is the most common cancer diagnosed in dogs, accounting for up to 24% of all canine cancers [126]. LH receptors are present in lymphocytes and lymphoid tissue (medulla of thymus) [127,128]. Our laboratory has demonstrated that the mean percentage of circulating LH receptor-positive T lymphocytes is significantly higher in gonadectomized dogs (16.6%) than in sexually intact dogs (10.5%); whereas the percentages of circulating LH receptor-positive B lymphocytes did not significantly differ by reproductive status [128]. Gonadectomy increases the incidence of lymphoma [82]. In Golden Retrievers, neutered males are three times more likely to develop lymphoma than unaltered males and approximately 1 in 10 neutered males will develop lymphoma [65]. Our laboratory has demonstrated that 12.4% of cells in canine neoplastic lymph nodes expressed LH receptors [128]. In addition, we showed that *in vitro* activation of LH receptors on T-lymphoma cells stimulates cell proliferation [129].

4. Conclusions

This review has focused the long-term adverse health effects of gonad-removing surgical sterilization in dogs in general. This review has not included differences in the occurrence of these adverse effects between age at spaying/neutering (early versus late), breed differences, or between sex differences. There is limited research addressing these points and a need for future research in these areas, especially as this research relates to differences in LHR expression. It is also important to note that, at present, there is no direct proof that there is a causative connection between elevated LH concentration/LHR expression and the long-term adverse health effects of spaying/neutering discussed in this review. More research on the causative connection between elevated LH concentration/LHR expression and the long-term adverse health effects of spaying/neutering is needed.

In addition, this review was focused on the long-term adverse health effects of gonad-removing surgical sterilization specifically in dogs. Although cats also suffer from long-term adverse effects of elevated LH concentrations following spaying/neutering (e.g., polyphagia, aggression and anxiety, diabetes), at the current time, the benefits of gonad removal (e.g., elimination of urine marking, recurrent/persistent estrus, mammary adenocarcinoma) outweigh these detriments.

Furthermore, this review has focused on the relationship between the long-term adverse health effects of gonad removal and elevated LH concentration/LHR expression. This review has not mentioned what, if any, effect that elevated follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) concentrations have

on the long-term adverse health effects of gonad removal. Although FSH concentrations are equally high in spayed/neutered dogs, FSH has extragonadal negative and positive feedback via pituitary inhibin and activin, respectively, whereas LH concentration has no extragonadal feedback. Additional research is needed on what role FSH concentrations/FSH receptors may play in the long-term adverse health effects of spaying/neutering.

Unrelated to any particular disease or major cause of death, years of gonad retention prolong longevity in a population of Rottweiler dogs [130]. Based upon the review of the literature, it becomes clear that canine gonads are not merely reproductive organs but are critical to endocrine, musculoskeletal, behavior, and anti-neoplastic health. Among the non-reproductive functions of gonads, suppression of LH secretion and resulting LH receptor overexpression appear necessary in maintaining homeostasis. Therefore, a surgical sterilization method that enables the dog to keep gonads intact while still preventing reproduction (e.g., ovary-sparing hysterectomy, vasectomy) may prolong their health, especially since the risk of fatal disease associated with retaining the gonads (mammary cancer, prostatic enlargement) is relatively low. In addition, research investigating the effect of LH/FSH down-regulation using a long-acting GnRH agonist (e.g., deslorelin) may provide a treatment option to mitigate or prevent the long-term adverse health effects of spaying/neutering.

Author Contributions: M.A.K. wrote the manuscript and approved the submitted version and agrees to be personally accountable to the accuracy or integrity of the work. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: Research performed by the Kutzler Laboratory and presented within this review article was funded by the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation, Collie Health Foundation, and the Oregon State University Small Grants Program.

Acknowledgments: The Parsemus Foundation paid for the publication costs.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

1. Salmeri, K.R.; Olson, P.N.; Bloomberg, M.S. Elective gonadectomy in dogs: A review. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1991**, *198*, 1183–1192.
2. Totton, S.C.; Wandeler, A.I.; Zinsstag, J.; Bauch, C.T.; Ribble, C.S.; Rosatte, R.C.; McEwen, S.A. Stray dog population demographics in Jodhpur, India following a population control/rabies vaccination program. *Prev. Vet. Med.* **2010**, *97*, 51–57. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
3. Voslarova, E.; Passantino, A. Stray dog and cat laws and enforcement in Czech Republic and in Italy. *Annali dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità* **2012**, *48*, 97–104.
4. Domingues, L.R.; Cesar, J.A.; Fassa, A.G.; Domingues, M.R. Responsible pet animal guardianship in the urban area of the municipality of Pelotas in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. *Cien Saude Colet* **2015**, *20*, 185–192. [[CrossRef](#)]
5. Downes, M.; Devitt, C.; Downes, M.T.; More, S.J. Neutering of cats and dogs in Ireland; pet owner self-reported perceptions of enabling and disabling factors in the decision to neuter. *PeerJ* **2015**, *3*, 1196. [[CrossRef](#)]
6. Vanderstichel, R.; Forzán, M.; Perez, G.; Serpell, J.; Garde, E. Changes in blood testosterone concentrations after surgical and chemical sterilization of male free-roaming dogs in southern Chile. *Theriogenology* **2015**, *83*, 1021–1027. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Trevejo, R.T.; Yang, M.; Lund, E.M. Epidemiology of surgical castration of dogs and cats in the United States. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2011**, *238*, 898–904. [[CrossRef](#)]
8. Meethal, V.S.; Atwood, C.S. The role of hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal hormones in the normal structure and functioning of the brain. *Cell Mol. Life Sci.* **2005**, *62*, 257–270.
9. Beijerink, N.; Buijtels, J.; Okkens, A.; Kooistra, H.; Dieleman, S. Basal and GnRH-induced secretion of FSH and LH in anestrus versus ovariectomized bitches. *Theriogenology* **2007**, *67*, 1039–1045. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Greene, J.; Ginther, O. Circulating nitric oxide metabolites during luteolysis and the effect of luteinizing hormone on circulating nitric oxide metabolites in heifers. *Theriogenology* **2015**, *83*, 213–221. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. German, A.J. The Growing Problem of Obesity in Dogs and Cats. *J. Nutr.* **2006**, *136*, 1940S–1946S. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]

12. Martin, L.J.; Siliart, B.; Dumon, H.J.W.; Nguyen, P.G. Hormonal disturbances associated with obesity in dogs. *J. Anim. Physiol. Anim. Nutr.* **2006**, *90*, 355–360. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
13. Anderson, R.S. Obesity in dogs and cats. *Vet. Ann.* **1973**, 183–186.
14. Mason, E. Obesity in pet dogs. *Vet. Rec.* **1970**, *86*, 612–616. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. David, G.; Rajendran, E.I. The after effects of spaying in bitches and cats. *Cheiron* **1980**, *9*, 193–195.
16. Lefebvre, S.L.; Yang, M.; Wang, M.; Elliott, D.A.; Buff, P.R.; Lund, E.M. Effect of age at gonadectomy on the probability of dogs becoming overweight. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2013**, *243*, 236–243. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. Lewis, L.D. Obesity in the dog. *J. Am. Anim. Hosp. Assoc.* **1978**, *14*, 402–409.
18. Norris, M.P.; Beaver, B.V. Application of behavior therapy techniques to the treatment of obesity in companion animals. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1993**, *202*, 728–730.
19. Houpt, K.A. Feeding and Drinking Behavior Problems. *Vet. Clin. North Am. Small Anim. Pr.* **1991**, *21*, 281–298. [[CrossRef](#)]
20. O'Farrell, V.; Peachey, E. Behavioural effects of ovariohysterectomy on hitches. *J. Small Anim. Pr.* **1990**, *31*, 595–598. [[CrossRef](#)]
21. Levine, A.S.; Sievert, C.E.; Morley, J.E.; Gosnell, B.A.; Silvis, S.E. Peptidergic regulation of feeding in the dog (*Canis familiaris*). *Peptides* **1984**, *5*, 675–679. [[CrossRef](#)]
22. A Houpt, K.; Coren, B.; Hintz, H.F.; E Hilderbrant, J. Effect of sex and reproductive status on sucrose preference, food intake, and body weight of dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1979**, *174*, 1083–1085. [[PubMed](#)]
23. Jeusette, I.; Detilleux, J.; Cuvelier, C.; Istasse, L.; Diez, M. Ad libitum feeding following ovariectomy in female Beagle dogs: Effect on maintenance energy requirement and on blood metabolites. *J. Anim. Physiol. Anim. Nutr.* **2004**, *88*, 117–121. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
24. Daniel, J.; Foradori, C.; Whitlock, B.; Sartin, J.; Whitlock, B.K. Hypothalamic Integration of Nutrient Status and Reproduction in the Sheep. *Reprod. Domest. Anim.* **2013**, *48*, 44–52. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
25. Rozkowska, E.; Fonberg, E. Salivary reactions after ventromedial hypothalamic lesions in dogs. *Acta Neurobiol. Exp.* **1973**, *33*, 553–562.
26. Joshua, J. The spaying of bitches. *Vet. Rec.* **1965**, *77*, 642–646.
27. Arnold, S. Urinary incontinence in castrated bitches. Part 1: Significance, clinical aspects and etiopathogenesis. *Schweiz Arch Tierheilkd* **1997**, *139*, 271–276.
28. Stöcklin-Gautschi, N.M.; Hässig, M.; Reichler, I.; Hubler, M.; Arnold, S. The relationship of urinary incontinence to early spaying in bitches. *J. Reprod. Fertil. Suppl.* **2001**, *57*, 233–236.
29. Angioletti, A.; De Francesco, I.; Vergottini, M.; Battocchio, M. Urinary incontinence after spaying in the bitch: Incidence and oestrogen-therapy. *Vet. Res. Commun.* **2004**, *28*, 153–155. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. Spain, C.V.; Scarlett, J.M.; Houpt, K.A. Long-term risks and benefits of early-age gonadectomy in dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2004**, *224*, 380–387. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Thrusfield, M. Association between urinary incontinence and spaying in bitches. *Vet. Rec.* **1985**, *116*, 695. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
32. Welle, M.; Reichler, I.M.; Barth, A.; Forster, U.; Sattler, U.; Arnold, S. Immunohistochemical localization and quantitative assessment of GnRH-, FSH-, and LH-receptor mRNA Expression in canine skin: A powerful tool to study the pathogenesis of side effects after spaying. *Histochem. Cell Boil.* **2006**, *126*, 527–535. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
33. Ponglowhapan, S.; Church, D.; Scaramuzzi, R.J.; Khalid, M. Luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone receptors and their transcribed genes (mRNA) are present in the lower urinary tract of intact male and female dogs. *Theriogenology* **2007**, *67*, 353–366. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
34. Coit, V.; Dowell, F.; Evans, N. Neutering affects mRNA expression levels for the LH- and GnRH-receptors in the canine urinary bladder. *Theriogenology* **2009**, *71*, 239–247. [[CrossRef](#)]
35. Rosin, A.E.; Barsanti, J.A. Diagnosis of urinary incontinence in dogs: Role of the urethral pressure profile. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1981**, *178*, 813–822.
36. Hill, K.; Jordan, D.; Ray, J.; Mays, A.A.; Griffin, K. Medical therapy for acquired urinary incontinence in dogs. *Int. J. Pharm. Compd.* **2012**, *16*, 369–375.
37. Veronesi, M.; Rota, A.; Battocchio, M.; Faustini, M.; Mollo, A. Spaying-related urinary incontinence and oestrogen therapy in the bitch. *Acta Vet. Hung.* **2009**, *57*, 171–182. [[CrossRef](#)]
38. Mandigers, P.J.J.; Nell, T. Treatment of bitches with acquired urinary incontinence with oestriol. *Vet. Rec.* **2001**, *149*, 764–767. [[CrossRef](#)]

39. Reichler, I.; Hubler, M.; Jöchle, W.; Trigg, T.; Piché, C.; Arnold, S. The effect of GnRH analogs on urinary incontinence after ablation of the ovaries in dogs. *Theriogenology* **2003**, *60*, 1207–1216. [[CrossRef](#)]
40. Reichler, I.M.; Barth, A.; Piché, C.A.; Jöchle, W.; Roos, M.; Hubler, M.; Arnold, S. Urodynamic parameters and plasma LH/FSH in spayed Beagle bitches before and 8 weeks after GnRH depot analogue treatment. *Theriogenology* **2006**, *66*, 2127–2136. [[CrossRef](#)]
41. Weston, M.K.A.; Donovan, C. Gonadotropin-Releasing Hormone Immunization to Treat Urethral Sphincter Mechanism Incompetence in a Bitch that Experienced an Adverse Reaction to Phenylpropanolamine. *J. Vet. Sci. Med Diagn.* **2013**, *2*, 3. [[CrossRef](#)]
42. Donovan, C.; Gordon, J.; A Kutzler, M. Gonadotropin-releasing hormone immunization for the treatment of urethral sphincter mechanism incompetence in ovariectomized bitches. *Theriogenology* **2014**, *81*, 196–202. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
43. Bartges, J.W.; Callens, A.J. Urolithiasis. *Vet. Clin. North Am. Small Anim. Pr.* **2015**, *45*, 747–768. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
44. Grauer, F.G. Prevalence of urinary calculi in dogs and cat. *Today's Vet. Pract.* **2015**, *5*, 13.
45. Bosch, M.N.; Pugliese, M.; Andrade, C.; Mahy, N.; Rodriguez, M.J. Amyloid- β Immunotherapy Reduces Amyloid Plaques and Astroglial Reaction in Aged Domestic Dogs. *Neurodegener. Dis.* **2014**, *15*, 24–37. [[CrossRef](#)]
46. Marmor, M.; Willeberg, P.; Glickman, L.T.; A Priester, W.; Cypess, R.H.; I Hurvitz, A. Epizootiologic patterns of diabetes mellitus in dogs. *Am. J. Vet. Res.* **1982**, *43*, 465–470.
47. Guptill, L.; Glickman, L.; Glickman, N. Time trends and risk factors for diabetes mellitus in dogs: Analysis of veterinary medical data base records (1970–1999). *Vet. J.* **2003**, *165*, 240–247. [[CrossRef](#)]
48. Rand, J.; Fleeman, L.M.; Farrow, H.A.; Appleton, D.J.; Lederer, R. Canine and Feline Diabetes Mellitus: Nature or Nurture? *J. Nutr.* **2004**, *134*, 2072S–2080S. [[CrossRef](#)]
49. Krook, L.; Larsson, S.; Rooney, J.R. The interrelationship of diabetes mellitus, obesity, and pyometra in the dog. *Am. J. Vet. Res.* **1960**, *21*, 120–127.
50. Mooney, C.T. Canine hypothyroidism: A review of aetiology and diagnosis. *N. Z. Vet. J.* **2011**, *59*, 105–114. [[CrossRef](#)]
51. Scott-Moncrieff, J.C. Clinical Signs and Concurrent Diseases of Hypothyroidism in Dogs and Cats. *Vet. Clin. N. Am. Small Anim. Pr.* **2007**, *37*, 709–722. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
52. Dixon, R.; Mooney, C. Canine serum thyroglobulin autoantibodies in health, hypothyroidism and non-thyroidal illness. *Res. Vet. Sci.* **1999**, *66*, 243–246. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
53. Panciera, D.L. Hypothyroidism in dogs: 66 cases (1987–1992). *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1994**, *204*, 761–767.
54. Milne, K.L.; Hayes, H.M. Epidemiologic features of canine hypothyroidism. *Cornell Vet.* **1981**, *71*, 3–14.
55. Młodawska, K.A.; Max, A.; Bartyzel, B. Influence of gonadectomy on serum ft4 concentrations in male and female dogs. *J. Pol. Agric. Univ.* **2014**, *17*, 1–6.
56. De Leo, V.; D'Antona, D.; Lanzetta, D. Thyrotropin secretion before and after ovariectomy in premenopausal women. *Gynecol. Endocrinol.* **1993**, *7*, 279–283. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
57. Liu, J.; Chen, G.; Meng, X.; Liu, Z.-H.; Dong, S. Serum levels of sex hormones and expression of their receptors in thyroid tissue in female patients with various types of thyroid neoplasms. *Pathol. Res. Pr.* **2014**, *210*, 830–835. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Zwida, K.; Kutzler, M. Luteinizing hormone receptor is immunoexpressed within the canine thyroid. *Clin. Theriogenol.* **2019**, *11*, 23–29.
59. Van Hagen, M.A.E.; Ducro, B.J.; Broek, J.V.D.; Knol, B.W. Incidence, risk factors, and heritability estimates of hind limb lameness caused by hip dysplasia in a birth cohort of boxers. *Am. J. Vet. Res.* **2005**, *66*, 307–312. [[CrossRef](#)]
60. Dassler, C.L. Canine hip dysplasia: Diagnosis and nonsurgical treatment. In *Textbook of Small Animal Surgery*, 3rd ed.; Slatter, D., Ed.; Saunders: Philadelphia, PA, USA, 2003; pp. 2019–2020.
61. Demko, J.; McLaughlin, R. Developmental Orthopedic Disease. *Vet. Clin. North Am. Small Anim. Pr.* **2005**, *35*, 1111–1135. [[CrossRef](#)]
62. Martin, S.W.; Kirby, K.; Pennock, P.W. Canine Hip Dysplasia: Breed Effects. *Can. Vet. J.* **1980**, *21*, 293–296.
63. Priester, W.A.; Mulvihill, J.J. Canine hip dysplasia: Relative risk by sex, size, and breed, and comparative aspects. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1972**, *160*, 735–739.

64. Witsberger, T.H.; Villamil, J.A.; Schultz, L.G.; Hahn, A.W.; Cook, J.L. Prevalence of and risk factors for hip dysplasia and cranial cruciate ligament deficiency in dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2008**, *232*, 1818–1824. [[CrossRef](#)]
65. De La Riva, G.T.; Hart, B.L.; Farver, T.B.; Oberbauer, A.M.; Messam, L.; Willits, N.; Hart, L.A. Neutering Dogs: Effects on Joint Disorders and Cancers in Golden Retrievers. *PLoS ONE* **2013**, *8*, e55937. [[CrossRef](#)]
66. Kiefel, C.; Kutzler, M.A. Luteinizing hormone receptor expression in canine anterior cruciate and femoral head ligaments. In Proceedings of the International Symposium on Canine and Feline Reproduction, Paris, France, 22–25 June 2016.
67. Asher, L.; Grainger, K.; Grierson, J. An investigation into risk factors for bilateral canine cruciate ligament rupture. *Vet. Comp. Orthop. Traumatol.* **2011**, *24*, 192–196. [[CrossRef](#)]
68. De Rooster, H.; De Bruin, T.; Van Bree, H. Morphology and Function of the Cruciate Ligaments. In *Advances in the Canine Cranial Cruciate Ligament*; Wiley: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2013; pp. 1–12.
69. Knebel, J.; Meyer-Lindenberg, A. Aetiology, pathogenesis, diagnostics and therapy of cranial cruciate ligament rupture in dogs. *Tierärztliche Praxis Ausgabe K Kleintiere Heimtiere* **2014**, *42*, 36–47.
70. Vasseur, P.B.; Pool, R.R.; Arnoczky, S.P.; E Lau, R. Correlative biomechanical and histologic study of the cranial cruciate ligament in dogs. *Am. J. Vet. Res.* **1985**, *46*, 1842–1954.
71. Duval, J.M.; Budsberg, S.C.; Flo, G.L.; Sammarco, J.L. Breed, sex, and body weight as risk factors for rupture of the cranial cruciate ligament in young dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1999**, *215*, 811–814.
72. Whitehair, J.G.; Vasseur, P.B.; Willits, N.H. Epidemiology of cranial cruciate ligament rupture in dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1993**, *203*, 1016–1019.
73. Osmond, C.S.; Marcellin-Little, D.; Harrysson, O.L.A.; Kidd, L.B. Morphometric assessment of the proximal portion of the tibia in dogs with and without cranial cruciate ligament rupture. *Vet. Radiol. Ultrasound* **2006**, *47*, 136–141. [[CrossRef](#)]
74. Griffon, D.J. A Review of the Pathogenesis of Canine Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease as a Basis for Future Preventive Strategies. *Vet. Surg.* **2010**, *39*, 399–409. [[CrossRef](#)]
75. Slocum, B.; Devine, T. Cranial tibial thrust: A primary force in the canine stifle. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1983**, *183*, 456–459.
76. Morris, E.; Lipowitz, A.J. Comparison of tibial plateau angles in dogs with and without cranial cruciate ligament injuries. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2001**, *218*, 363–366. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
77. Prodromos, C.C.; Han, Y.; Rogowski, J.; Joyce, B.; Shi, K. A Meta-analysis of the Incidence of Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tears as a Function of Gender, Sport, and a Knee Injury–Reduction Regimen. *Arthrosc. J. Arthrosc. Relat. Surg.* **2007**, *23*, 1320–1325. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
78. Dragoo, J.; Castillo, T.N.; Braun, H.J.; Ridley, B.A.; Kennedy, A.C.; Golish, S.R. Prospective Correlation Between Serum Relaxin Concentration and Anterior Cruciate Ligament Tears Among Elite Collegiate Female Athletes. *Am. J. Sports Med.* **2011**, *39*, 2175–2180. [[CrossRef](#)]
79. Hopkins, S.G.; A Schubert, T.; Hart, B.L. Castration of adult male dogs: Effects on roaming, aggression, urine marking, and mounting. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1976**, *168*, 1108–1110.
80. Neilson, J.C.; A Eckstein, R.; Hart, B.L. Effects of castration on problem behaviors in male dogs with reference to age and duration of behavior. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1997**, *211*, 180–182.
81. Maarchalkerweerd, R.J.; Endenburg, N.; Kirpensteijn, J.; Knol, B.W. Influence of orchietomy on canine behavior. *Vet. Rec.* **1997**, *140*, 617–619. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
82. Zink, M.C.; Farhooody, P.; Elser, S.E.; Ruffini, L.D.; Gibbons, T.A.; Rieger, R.H. Evaluation of the risk and age of onset of cancer and behavioral disorders in gonadectomized Vizslas. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2014**, *244*, 309–319. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
83. Kim, H.H.; Yeon, S.C.; Houpt, K.A.; Lee, H.C.; Chang, H.H.; Lee, H.J. Effects of ovariohysterectomy on reactivity in German Shepherd dogs. *Vet. J.* **2006**, *172*, 154–159. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
84. Borchelt, P.L. Aggressive behavior of dogs kept as companion animals: Classification and influence of sex, reproductive status and breed. *Appl. Anim. Ethol.* **1983**, *10*, 45–61. [[CrossRef](#)]
85. Reisner, I.R.; Houpt, K.A.; Shofer, F.S. National survey of owner-directed aggression in English Springer Spaniels. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2005**, *227*, 1594–1603. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
86. Lei, Z.M.; Rao, C.V.; Kornyei, J.L.; Licht, P.; Hiatt, E.S. Novel expression of human chorionic gonadotropin/luteinizing hormone receptor gene in brain. *Endocrinology* **1993**, *132*, 2262–2270. [[CrossRef](#)]

87. Croxatto, H.; Arrau, J.; Croxatto, H. Luteinizing Hormone-like Activity in Human Median Eminence Extracts. *Nature* **1964**, *204*, 584–585. [[CrossRef](#)]
88. Bagshawe, K.D.; Orr, A.H.; Rushworth, A.G.J. Relationship between Concentrations of Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin in Plasma and Cerebrospinal Fluid. *Nature* **1968**, *217*, 950–951. [[CrossRef](#)]
89. Emanuele, N.V.; Tentler, J.; Scanlon, S.; Reda, D.; Kirsteins, L. Intracerebroventricular luteinizing-hormone (LH) depresses feeding in male-rats. *Neuro Endocrinol. Lett.* **1991**, *13*, 413–418.
90. Kawakami, M.; Sawyer, C.H. Induction of behavioral and electroencephalographic changes in the rabbit by hormone administration or brain stimulation 1. *Endocrinology* **1959**, *65*, 631–643. [[CrossRef](#)]
91. Telegdy, G.; Rozsahegyi, G. Effect of gonadotropins on extinction of an avoidance conditioned reflex and exploratory behaviors in the rat. *Acta Physiol. Acad. Sci. Hung.* **1971**, *40*, 209–214.
92. Oates, S.M. Uncloning cognitive decline: The emergence of canine cognitive dysfunction in veterinary medicine and its implications for understanding Alzheimer’s disease. *Vet. Herit. Bull. Am. Vet. Hist. Soc.* **2014**, *37*, 47–51.
93. Schütt, T.; Toft, N.; Berendt, M. Cognitive Function, Progression of Age-related Behavioral Changes, Biomarkers, and Survival in Dogs More Than 8 Years Old. *J. Vet. Intern. Med.* **2015**, *29*, 1569–1577. [[CrossRef](#)]
94. Hart, B.L. Effect of gonadectomy on subsequent development of age-related cognitive impairment in dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **2001**, *219*, 51–56. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
95. Casadesus, G.; Milliken, E.L.; Webber, K.M.; Bowen, R.L.; Lei, Z.; Rao, C.V.; Perry, G.; A Keri, R.; Smith, M.A. Increases in luteinizing hormone are associated with declines in cognitive performance. *Mol. Cell. Endocrinol.* **2007**, *269*, 107–111. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
96. Verdile, G.; for the AIBL Research Group; Laws, S.M.; Henley, D.; Ames, D.; Bush, A.I.; Ellis, K.; Faux, N.G.; Gupta, V.B.; Li, Q.-X.; et al. Associations between gonadotropins, testosterone and β amyloid in men at risk of Alzheimer’s disease. *Mol. Psychiatry* **2012**, *19*, 69–75. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
97. Butchart, J.; Birch, B.; Bassily, R.; Wolfe, L.; Holmes, C. Male Sex Hormones and Systemic Inflammation in Alzheimer Disease. *Alzheimer Dis. Assoc. Disord.* **2013**, *27*, 153–156. [[CrossRef](#)]
98. Leroy, B.E.; Northrup, N. Prostate cancer in dogs: Comparative and clinical aspects. *Vet. J.* **2009**, *180*, 149–162. [[CrossRef](#)]
99. Cornell, K.K.; Bostwick, D.G.; Cooley, D.M.; Hall, G.; Harvey, H.J.; Hendrick, M.J.; Pauli, B.U.; Render, J.A.; Stoica, G.; Sweet, D.C.; et al. Clinical and pathologic aspects of spontaneous canine prostate carcinoma: A retrospective analysis of 76 cases. *Prostate* **2000**, *45*, 173–183. [[CrossRef](#)]
100. Leav, I.; Ling, G.V. Adenocarcinoma of the canine prostate gland. *Cancer* **1968**, *22*, 1329–1345. [[CrossRef](#)]
101. Reiter, E.; McNamara, M.; Closset, J.; Hennen, G. Expression and functionality of luteinizing hormone/chorionic gonadotropin receptor in the rat prostate. *Endocrinology* **1995**, *136*, 917–923. [[CrossRef](#)]
102. Tao, Y.-X.; Lei, Z.; Woodworth, S.; Rao, C. Novel expression of luteinizing hormone/chorionic gonadotropin receptor gene in rat prostates. *Mol. Cell. Endocrinol.* **1995**, *111*, R9–R12. [[CrossRef](#)]
103. Ponglowhapan, S.; Church, D.; Khalid, M. Expression of luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone receptor in the dog prostate. *Theriogenology* **2012**, *78*, 777–783. [[CrossRef](#)]
104. Hardie, E.M.; Barsanti, J.A.; Rawlings, C.A. Complications of prostatic surgery. *J. Am. Anim. Hosp. Assoc.* **1984**, *20*, 50–56.
105. Basinger, R.R.; Rawlings, C.A.; Barsanti, J.A.; Oliver, J.E. Urodynamic alterations associated with clinical prostatic diseases and prostatic surgery in 23 dogs. *J. Am. Anim. Hosp. Assoc.* **1989**, *25*, 385–392.
106. Osborne, C.A.; Low, D.G.; Perman, V.; Barnes, D.M. Neoplasms of the canine and feline urinary bladder: Incidence, etiologic factors, occurrence and pathologic features. *Am. J. Vet. Res.* **1968**, *29*, 2041–2055.
107. Strafuss, A.C.; Dean, M.J. Neoplasms of the canine urinary bladder. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1975**, *166*, 1161–1163.
108. Tarvin, G.; Patnaik, A.; Greene, R. Primary urethral tumors in dogs. *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1978**, *172*, 931–933.
109. Wilson, G.P.; Hayes, H.M.; Casey, H.W. Canine urethral cancer. *J. Am. Anim. Hosp. Assoc.* **1979**, *15*, 741–744.
110. Esplin, D.G. Urinary bladder fibromas in dogs: 51 cases (1981–1985). *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* **1987**, *190*, 440–444.
111. Norris, A.M.; Laing, E.J.; Valli, V.E.O.; Withrow, S.J.; Macy, D.W.; Ogilvie, G.K.; Tomlinson, J.; McCaw, D.; Pidgeon, G.; Jacobs, R.M. Canine Bladder and Urethral Tumors: A Retrospective Study of 115 Cases (1980–1985). *J. Vet. Intern. Med.* **1992**, *6*, 145–153. [[CrossRef](#)]

112. Ponglowhapan, S.; Church, D.; Khalid, M. Differences in the expression of luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone receptors in the lower urinary tract between intact and gonadectomised male and female dogs. *Domest. Anim. Endocrinol.* **2008**, *34*, 339–351. [[CrossRef](#)]
113. Schwalenberg, T.; Stolzenburg, J.U.; Ho, T.P.; Mallock, T.; Hartenstein, S.; Alexander, H.; Zimmermann, G.; Hohenfellner, R.; Denzinger, S.; Burger, M.; et al. Enhanced urothelial expression of human chorionic gonadotropin beta (hCG beta) in bladder pain syndrome/interstitial cystitis (BPS/IC). *World J. Urol.* **2012**, *30*, 411–417. [[CrossRef](#)]
114. Wycislo, K.; Fan, T.M. The Immunotherapy of Canine Osteosarcoma: A Historical and Systematic Review. *J. Vet. Intern. Med.* **2015**, *29*, 759–769. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
115. Cooley, D.M.; Beranek, B.C.; Schlittler, D.L.; Glickman, N.W.; Glickman, L.T.; Waters, D.J. Endogenous gonadal hormone exposure and bone sarcoma risk. *Cancer Epidemiol. Biomark. Prev.* **2002**, *11*, 1434–1440.
116. Ru, G.; Terracini, B.; Glickman, L. Host related risk factors for canine osteosarcoma. *Vet. J.* **1998**, *156*, 31–39. [[CrossRef](#)]
117. Yamamoto, S.; Hoshi, K.; Hirakawa, A.; Chimura, S.; Kobayashi, M.; Machida, N. Epidemiological, Clinical and Pathological Features of Primary Cardiac Hemangiosarcoma in Dogs: A Review of 51 Cases. *J. Vet. Med. Sci.* **2013**, *75*, 1433–1441. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
118. Lei, Z.M.; Rao, C.V.; Pridham, D. Novel coexpression of human chorionic gonadotropin/luteinizing hormone receptors and their ligand hCG in human fallopian tubes. *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* **1993**, *132*, 2262–2270.
119. Reshef, E.; Lei, Z.M.; Rao, C.; Pridham, D.D.; Chegini, N.; Luborsky, J.L. The Presence of Gonadotropin Receptors in Nonpregnant Human Uterus, Human Placenta, Fetal Membranes, and Decidua. *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* **1990**, *70*, 421–430. [[CrossRef](#)]
120. Ware, W.A.; Hopper, D.L. Cardiac tumors in dogs: 1982–1995. *J. Vet. Intern. Med.* **1999**, *13*, 95–103.
121. Zwida, K.H.; Valentine, B.A.; Kutzler, M.A. Immunohistochemical Localization of LH Receptors in Canine Splenic Hemangiosarcoma. *J. Vet. Sci. Anim. Husb.* **2018**, *6*, 410.
122. Shoop-Worrall, S.; Marlow, S.; Church, D.B.; English, K.; McGreevy, P.; Stell, A.; Thomson, P.C.; O'Neill, D.; Brodbelt, D.C. Prevalence and risk factors for mast cell tumours in dogs in England. *Canine Genet. Epidemiol.* **2015**, *2*, 1. [[CrossRef](#)]
123. Venencie, P.Y.; Méduri, G.; Pissard, S.; Jolivet, A.; Loosfelt, H.; Milgrom, E.; Misrahi, M. Luteinizing hormone/human chorionic gonadotrophin receptors in various epidermal structures. *Br. J. Dermatol.* **1999**, *141*, 438–446. [[CrossRef](#)]
124. White, C.R.; Hohenhaus, A.E.; Kelsey, J.; Procter-Gray, E. Cutaneous MCTs: Associations with Spay/Neuter Status, Breed, Body Size, and Phylogenetic Cluster. *J. Am. Anim. Hosp. Assoc.* **2011**, *47*, 210–216. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
125. Moccia, V.; Löhr, C.; Kutzler, M. Immunohistochemical localization of LH receptors in canine cutaneous mast cell tumor. In Proceedings of the Symposium for the Alliance for Contraception in Cats and Dogs, Boston, MA, USA, 22–24 July 2018.
126. Vail, D.M.; MacEwan, E.G.; Young, K.M. Canine lymphoma and lymphoid leukemia. *Small Anim. Clin. Oncol.* **2001**, 558–579.
127. Su, S.; Fang, F.; Liu, Y.; Li, Y.; Ren, C.; Zhang, Y.; Zhang, X. The compensatory expression of reproductive hormone receptors in the thymus of the male rat following active immunization against GnRH. *Gen. Comp. Endocrinol.* **2013**, *185*, 57–66. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
128. Ettinger, A.M.; Gust, S.K.; A Kutzler, M. Luteinizing hormone receptor expression by nonneoplastic and neoplastic canine lymphocytes. *Am. J. Vet. Res.* **2019**, *80*, 572–577. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
129. Flint, C.; Gust, S.; Kutzler, M.A. Luteinizing hormone receptor-mediated proliferation of isolated canine T-lymphoma cells. *Clin. Theriogenol.* **2019**, *11*, 477.
130. Waters, D.J.; Kengeri, S.S.; Clever, B.; Booth, J.A.; Maras, A.H.; Schlittler, D.L.; Hayek, M.G. Exploring mechanisms of sex differences in longevity: Lifetime ovary exposure and exceptional longevity in dogs. *Aging Cell* **2009**, *8*, 752–755. [[CrossRef](#)]



SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 10:59:25 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shari Longboy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong opposition to SB3012, which would require all dogs imported into the State of Hawai‘i to be spayed or neutered.

While I understand and support the goal of reducing irresponsible breeding and animal overpopulation, this bill is overly broad and creates serious unintended consequences for responsible dog owners, ethical breeders, and the show dog community.

First, show dogs cannot be spayed or neutered. Altering a dog disqualifies it from conformation shows and permanently eliminates its ability to compete. Hawai‘i residents who participate in dog shows—many of whom bring dogs into the state specifically for competition, preservation of breed standards, and education—would be unfairly excluded. This bill effectively shuts Hawai‘i out of the national and international show dog community.

Second, responsible breeders are not the problem this bill is trying to solve. Individuals who import dogs for breeding purposes are typically making a significant financial investment—often tens of thousands of dollars—along with extensive health testing, genetic screening, contracts, and long-term care commitments. These are not irresponsible or backyard breeders. They are preservation breeders who are deeply invested in the health, temperament, and future of their breeds.

Requiring mandatory sterilization punishes responsible breeders while doing little to address the true sources of animal overpopulation, such as unregulated local breeding, abandonment, and lack of enforcement of existing animal welfare laws.

Third, this bill infringes on responsible ownership and property rights. Decisions regarding breeding should be based on education, ethics, and accountability—not a one-size-fits-all mandate. Many imported dogs are brought in for future breeding after maturity, health clearances, and evaluation. Forcing sterilization at import eliminates that possibility entirely, regardless of the owner’s qualifications or intentions.

Finally, SB3012 may have negative economic and genetic impacts. Hawai‘i already faces geographic isolation when it comes to maintaining healthy breeding lines. Restricting the import of intact dogs limits genetic diversity, which can increase hereditary health issues over time and ultimately harm the very animals this bill aims to protect.

There are better alternatives—such as strengthened enforcement against irresponsible breeders, targeted penalties for abuse or neglect, breeder licensing, or exemptions for show dogs and proven responsible breeders—that would address the issue without harming ethical owners and breeders.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose SB3012 or substantially amend it to include clear exemptions for show dogs and responsible breeding programs.

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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 11:46:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Toma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WE STRONGLY OPPOSE SB3012!

We believe that the intention of this bill will not solve overpopulation and irresponsible dog breeding issues.

Irresponsible dog and cat owners are already contributing to the problems related to this bill. If this bill passes, what is going to be done to register these owners as breeders.

There is no reference in this bill as to what Breeder registration will entail: process to register, requirements, guidelines, breeders rights concerning property access, etc.

As purebred dog owners who have bred litters in the past, our process is to screen all potential buyers if not known, place the puppies with a written contract that states if the buyer can no longer keep the puppy/dog it comes back to us and does not end up in a shelter. The majority of the dogs in shelters are not purebred dogs, they are mixed breeds.

Potential dog owners that import dogs into the State, may not want to breed but are interested in participating in dog shows held by local clubs or traveling abroad to participate in mainland or international shows. In order to do so the dog/pet must not be altered. Dog show venues help to educate spectators and future dog owners in responsible dog ownership, specific characteristics of the breed they are thinking of owning, and guidance on what to consider before breeding (getting health checks done, temperament of animal, etc.).

The exception to allow a temporary 90 day stay may jeopardize the health of the animal if a person decides to bring in an already pregnant female that will give birth in a few days or weeks upon arrival and can remain with the litter for 6-8 weeks before being shipped back by the 90th day. Also, how is the State going to monitor and ensure that the animal is actually shipped back.

Importing altered animals into the State is not the solution to overpopulation therefore WE OPPOSE SB3012.

Darrell and Cathy Toma

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 1:35:07 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Herbert Richard's III, and members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose this bill that would require any cat or dog imported into the State to be spayed or neutered. Also, I oppose the establishment of a breeder registry. I firmly believe that this bill would not solve the problems we as a State might be facing. Furthermore it uis already extremely difficult to obtain healthy pets within the State, and this measure would undoubtedly make it even more difficult for all of us to have reasonable choices and alternatives,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 2:11:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

These "free roaming" cats and dogs are not the animals being brought to Hawaii by your family, friends, neighbors, Military personel--your fellow citizens. People who bring in a cat or dog- even if it can reproduce, are not responsible for the problem you seek to solve. It takes a load of money, vet bills, time, effort and paper work, esp. for rabis quarentine issues; these are responsible folks who take care of their animals. To lump them with free roaming and "wefare" doesn't make sense, nor does punishing them for a problem they didn't create and cannot fix. Please vote no on this bill. Mahalo. S.Govier

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 2:38:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support the bill

SB3012: Testimony in support

I am support of SB3012 relating to animal importation.

This measure requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions; and requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish a breeder registry and adopt rules.

The bill does establish spay/neuter as the norm for dogs and cats coming into the state. **It does so because we already have more pets in need of homes than families able or willing to adopt them. The suffering caused by pet overpopulation in our state is enormous. In addition, abandoned unaltered pet cats contribute to the Free-Roaming cat population.**

The bill does NOT prevent people from importing intact cats and dogs. If they choose to opt out of the spay/neuter requirement, they must declare that they are importing intact dogs or cats and provide information to the State Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity regarding who they are and where those animals will be kept.

No responsible pet breeder or breed enthusiast should object to this minimal level of transparency, but the breed groups strongly opposed the House version of this bill. We need to support this measure in large numbers to ensure that lawmakers see that the benefits of this bill to pets and wildlife outweigh the concerns of people who do not want to be on record as importing unaltered animals.

This measure:

- Reduces the number of unaltered animals entering the state
 - Unaltered animals contribute to pet overpopulation, as well as the population of Free-Roaming cats
- Asks for minimal accountability from people who wish to bring unaltered animals into the state

Signed,

Judith Aikawa, MD

37 Apali Way

Kula, HI 96790

602 432 1573

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 4:38:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bobbi K Steer	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB 3012 relating to the mandatory surgical sterilization of imported dogs & cats into Hawaii. If passed SB 3012 will not address pet overpopulation in Hawaii, however, the culling and removal of feral dog packs and cat colonies from our communities will address this problem. Since the Hawaii state legislature has the power of the purse string, give the Hawaiian Humane Society the necessary funding and resources needed to do this job humanely and effectively.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 8:23:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Painter	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill. It will not accomplish the desired objective.

Catherine Painter

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:12:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arlyn Campo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Hawaii State Legislator,

I am submitting a testimony opposing this bill.

The reason I oppose this bill is due to the fact that this will affect many Hawaii participants in the dog Shows, not only in Hawaii but across the US. Another reason I am opposing this bill is for the responsible and ethical breeders in the state of Hawai'i. There are many who dedicate endless love, devotion, countless of hours and money into our dogs of Hawaii to make many breeds better. Better in health, temperment and the overall breed of the dog. Thirdly, there are many dog owners who do not wish to spay and neuter due to beliefs and do not plan to breed in any way. These owners usually keep their dog away from other dogs of the opposite sex to prevent unwanted litters. I believe this bill will not help the community of Hawaii, but further push Hawaiian descendants or local Hawaii families away from home. Please rethink this bill.

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 10:29:51 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Samantha Januszewski, and I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to SB3012

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

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

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

SB3012 would also negatively impact organizations such as the Cat Fanciers of Hawai‘i, which promote education, responsible ownership, and animal welfare.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB3012 in its current form or amend it to exempt registered CFA Preservation Breeders

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Samantha Januszewski
Faith&Whiskers LLC
Registered CFA Preservation Breeder
Hawai‘i

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 7:39:49 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

- Reduces the number of unaltered animals entering the state
 - Unaltered animals contribute to pet overpopulation, as well as the population of Free-Roaming cats
- Asks for minimal accountability from people who wish to bring unaltered animals into the state

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:17:32 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill will help a lot to reduce the overpopulation issues the State currently is experiencing. And it allows breeders to bring in their intact animals with just minimal transparency. This needs to pass. Mahalo.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:31:34 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Gabbard, Vice Chair Senator Richards and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

Please support SB 3012 which, to my understanding, will help reduce pet overpopulation and requests minimal information from people who want to bring intact cats and dogs in to Hawaii. There should be a state registry and rules regarding importation of intact cats and dogs. People should not be able to freely import these animals when doing so can increase pet overpopulation.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:34:59 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

The dogs being brought in to Hawaii have already gone through rabies testing, or they require quarantine, both of which are not cheap. This in itself signifies these animals are well cared for and loved. It does not, however, mean that these pets are being brought in for breeding.

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

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

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

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

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:41:49 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold, and I live in Kaimuki. I am testifying in favor of SB3012, which would require that any dog or cat brought into Hawai'i must be sterilized. (There is an exemption for breeders.) This would help to address the pet overpopulation in Hawai'i. Thank you.

Jane Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu HI. 96816

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 9:55:30 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

- Reduces the number of unaltered animals entering the state
 - Unaltered animals contribute to pet overpopulation, as well as the population of Free-Roaming cats
 - Hawaii has more unhousted pets already needing homes.
- Asks for minimal accountability from people who wish to bring unaltered animals into the state. It does not prevent merely requires registration.
- Hawaii Kai voter

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:08:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marja Rennholm	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable members,

As someone who has moved to Hawai'i and experienced the requirements of importing my dogs, the people importing/bringing dogs and cats to the islands of Hawaii are already subject to very strict rules and regulations. A mandatory sterilization would now impose an additional time frame delay for arrival in Hawaii, as animals would need to recover from surgery before transport. Anyone willing to subject themselves and their animals to these existing requirements are not the ones contributing to the animal overpopulation problem in Hawaii. These individuals have shown themselves to be respectful of the laws of the State of Hawaii and concerned for the welfare of their animals as well as the ecosystem of the islands.

To impose a mandatory sterilization puts additional burdens on these responsible individuals and yet imposes no penalties to residents who casually breed and offer their puppies for sale on the side of the highway or dump them in boxes on the beach hoping they will find homes. Or tied to a fence or thrown off the back of a truck. I know people who have dogs as a result of the last two circumstances. The rest of the puppies/kittens become the burden of our humane societies and rescue groups, if they survive.

Current medical studies are showing consistently that early sterilization can result in future health issues for the animals. We already have a lack of veterinary care in our State, so imposing mandatory sterilization on animals being imported by responsible owners places an undue burden of future veterinary medical costs upon them and the likelihood that they will also not be able to find care for their animals.

Not all, but many people that I am familiar with, are bringing purebred breeds to the islands. These animals usually come with contracts with breeder as to whether or not breeding is permissible. As such, they are not contributing to the problem. The wrong group of people is being punished with this legislation.

This does nothing to prevent the owners of the existing dog/cat population from continuing their practices. These "accidental" litters are much more likely to contribute to the overpopulation issue than individuals and/or families moving to the islands with their animals. Even those of us who live here and wish to add a dog/cat to our ohana from a reputable breeder off island, are only bringing one or two animals because of the stringent existing rules and regulations.

The problem is not the people moving to the islands with their animals or living here and importing them. The problem is already here and that's what needs to be addressed. It is our kuleana to address the existing problem. If not, there may be unforeseen consequences like encouraging backyard breeders to fill the demand. Please, you must do what is pono.

Respectfully and with aloha,

Marja Rennholm

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:36:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill, as the state is already over-run with unspayed/un-neutered animals, and importing more adds to our over-population problem in the state. The benefits of the bill far outweigh the mild inconvenience of paperwork for those who opt out of the program.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:41:37 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

As a responsible land/farm owner, livestock breeder, and dog breeder/AKC show participant, I would like to speak out against SB3012.

I support the Humane Society and wish that they would direct their efforts to more spay and neuter, community support helping to capture and rehome stray animals, and helping with the homeless animal population. I contribute monetarily to their cause every year.

HOWEVER, I do think that this bill is not warranted or necessary. It will make it very hard for responsible dog breeders like myself others to improve our breeding stock to improve our programs without additional paper work and being monitored and labeled as breeders. It will also be difficult to enforce, what about the military or pet owners bringing animals in as pets that do not wish to, or have the funds to spay or neuter their animals? Who is going to enforce and pay for the spaying and neutering of these animals?

There is a lot of literature confirming that it is not always in the best interest of the animal to get spayed or neutered due to age, or having them develop correctly.

I feel that it is an infringement on our rights to require the spaying or neutering of pets. I have been monitoring the HHS and they don't even offer those services to the public often or at all. It costs nearly \$1000 to spay a dog right now at any vet clinic.

I humbly ask that you consider these points before advancing bill SB3012.

Thank you for your time.

Terry Nii

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 10:53:15 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Those wishing to import an intact dog or cat should be required to register with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity. It allows breed enthusiasts to import the animals they care about while allowing the state to have some transparency about the intact dog and cat population. Please move this bill forward.

This bill does not establish spay/neuter as the norm for dogs and cats entering Hawaii. It does not prevent the importation of intact cats and dogs. It just requires providing information.

Please move this bill forward.

lynne matusow

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:33:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I respectfully OPPOSE SB3012. I support humane efforts to reduce overpopulation, but a blanket sterilization requirement tied to importation is overly broad and will have unintended consequences for responsible owners and ethical, health-tested breeders who follow strict veterinary standards. It will reduce access to carefully bred, healthy animals and may push demand toward unregulated sources instead of improving animal welfare. Please reject SB3012 and pursue targeted approaches that address abandonment, illegal breeding, and free-roaming overpopulation without penalizing compliant programs. Mahalo.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:57:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Boyd Ready	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Committee members,

Feral felines and canines are the problem, not pets brought in by responsible owners. The costs of importing a pet are already high, weeding out irresponsible owners.

Better to increase the funding for animal control workers who are already doing it.

Mahalo,

Boyd Ready

Haleiwa

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 1:59:01 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose SB3012. SB3012 unfairly targets responsible ownership and will shut Hawai'i out of the show and preservation breeding communities. Ethical breeders and importers are not the cause of pet overpopulation. Show dogs cannot be spayed or neutered. You are also targeting military families unjustly when they are stationed in Hawaii forcing them to pay for surgeries that can be a financial burden.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:54:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please vote against this bill. It is unfair to animal moms like myself who prefer to have a purebred dog as part of their family. I've been a proud mom to four papillons (and one rescue cat) over the past 33 years and I wouldn't have any other breed in my home. My paps all came from responsible and reliable dog breeders who care for their animals as if they were their human children!

Testimony in Opposition to SB3012

Relating to Mandatory Sterilization of Imported Animals and a Breeder Registry

Hearing: February 10, 2026

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong **opposition** to SB3012.

While Hawaii's rabies-free status and concerns regarding animal welfare, overpopulation, and environmental protection are serious and deserving of thoughtful policy responses, SB3012 does not meaningfully address the problems it claims to solve.

SB3012 assumes that intact animals imported into Hawaii are a primary driver of pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals. There is no data presented in the bill to support this assumption. Intact animals imported into the state are often purpose-bred dogs and cats brought in for specific purposes such as conformation shows, sports, service work, or companionship. Many are never bred. Labeling every owner who imports an intact animal as a breeder and subjecting them to undefined breeder regulations is unfair, overly broad, and unsupported by evidence.

Mandatory sterilization prior to embarkation would directly impact dog show exhibitors. Dogs must be intact to participate in AKC conformation events. Hawaii hosts licensed dog shows that contribute to the local economy and rely on participants traveling with intact animals. This bill would effectively eliminate participation from many exhibitors without demonstrating any measurable benefit to shelter populations or public safety.

SB3012 would also disproportionately affect military families relocating to Hawaii. Many families receive pets from other military households, and original sterilization records are often unavailable. Veterinarians cannot reliably confirm a spay by physical exam alone and are unlikely to certify a surgery they did not perform. Imaging to confirm sterilization adds financial burden and increases the risk that families abandon pets on the mainland rather than bring them to Hawaii.

If the concern is free-roaming animals, available evidence points toward issues connected to homelessness, unmanaged feral cat colonies, and lack of access to affordable veterinary care. SB3012 does not address public education, access to low-cost spay and neuter services, enforcement of existing animal welfare laws, or transparency in shelter and rescue data. Without statewide data, it is inappropriate to imply that breeders or imported intact animals are the source of Hawaii's animal welfare challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee not advance SB3012. The bill's restrictions are misaligned with its stated goals and would create unnecessary hardship for responsible pet owners, exhibitors, and military families without addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Angel
Island of Oahu
(808) 445-8972

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 3:25:56 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 4:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

To: The Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

From: Cassidy Jones

Date: 08feb2026

While the goal of addressing pet overpopulation is noble, this bill creates significant logistical, financial, and ethical hurdles for Hawaii residents and the Department of Agriculture. We respectfully oppose this measure for the following reasons:

- **Financial Hardship for Relocating Families.** This mandate adds a substantial financial burden to military families and residents moving back to Hawaii. Between airline fees and quarantine costs, adding mandatory surgery—which can cost hundreds of dollars—may lead to families surrendering beloved pets rather than bringing them home.
- **Health Risks of Premature Sterilization.** Current veterinary research indicates that early-age sterilization (especially in large-breed dogs) can lead to increased risks of hip dysplasia, certain cancers, and urinary issues. By requiring sterilization prior to entry, this bill forces owners to choose between their pet’s long-term health and moving to the islands.
- **Administrative Overreach.** The Department of Agriculture is already stretched thin managing the Rabies Quarantine Program. Requiring them to manage a mandatory breeder registry and verify surgical documentation for every imported pet will divert critical resources away from biosecurity and disease prevention.
- **Ineffectiveness Against Local Overpopulation.** The "free-roaming" animal crisis mentioned in Section 1 is largely a result of local abandonment and lack of low-cost spay/neuter access *within* the islands. Targeting highly regulated, imported pets—which are already subject to strict microchipping and health requirements—does not address the root cause of Hawaii’s stray animal population.
- **Enforcement Challenges.** Distinguishing between a "temporary stay" of 89 days and 91 days is practically impossible for the Department once an animal has cleared quarantine, making the 90-day exemption difficult to monitor or enforce.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to **defer** this measure and instead focus on expanding local low-cost sterilization programs.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 2:59:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill. It seems to me when I moved over 20 years ago, sterilization was required then... but my cat was already fixed so no problems. We had to do rabies test months in advance too.

To get the dog and cat overpopulation under control, we need to have this law in place. Being an Island State has its advantages...we can limit or restrict what is allowed in. So our spay neuter efforts can be most effective.

Aloha & Mahalo

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:07:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:22:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edgardo Diaz Vega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill as the state's unique flora and fauna must be protected from the impacts of stray cats and dogs. We already face uncontrolled stray cat populations that put our local wildlife at risk. This bill prevents future stray pets from reaching our shores.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 6:48:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I would like to respectfully request the opposition of SB3012.

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

•There is an increasing amount of evidence that delaying the age certain breeds of dogs be surgically altered may provide significant health benefits- such as reduced incidence of degenerative joint disease, urinary incontinence, and/or reduced incidence of cancers. Please see the data posted by the University of California - Davis for more information (<https://www.ucdavis.edu/health/news/when-should-you-neuter-or-spay-your-dog>). It is unrealistic to expect families to wait until some breeds are two years old to alter their pet or alter early and potentially increase their risk of cancer or debilitating joint disease. Additionally, the data indicates that female golden retrievers are likely healthier if they are NEVER spayed, so, as a veterinarian, spaying female golden retrievers that do not have a medical necessity for the procedure (such as a pyometra) is potentially unethical as it can result in harm to the animal.

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

Respectfully,

Keri O'Neal, DVM

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:10:02 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of this committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB 3012**, which requires, as a condition of entry into the State, documentation verifying that any dog or cat imported into the State has been surgically sterilized, subject to certain exemptions. Hawai‘i must take action to protect its wildlife and address the overpopulation of these companion animals in its shelters.

The free-roaming dog and cat issue in Hawai‘i is well-documented, primarily because free-roaming cats devastate native wildlife. SB 3012 is a common-sense measure to ensure that companion dogs and cats coming to the islands will not contribute to the problem. It includes exemptions for animals with health concerns and to protect the interests of breeders. To address some concerns from interested parties who opposed SB 3012's [companion bill](#):

- Department of Agriculture & Biosecurity (DAB): DAB's Animal Quarantine import requirements are already quite stringent and time-consuming because of Hawaii's mandate to mitigate the entry of rabies and other diseases and pests associated with dog and cat importation. Free-roaming cats spread *T. gondii*, which constitutes a biosecurity threat to Hawaii's marine mammals. Preventing the breeding of cats should be part of DAB's biosecurity mandate. If DAB requires additional resources to implement the program to limit the entry of unaltered cats and dogs into the islands, it is a worthy investment. Please ask DAB what resources it needs to make the necessary changes.
- Breeders and hobbyists: The bill includes appropriate exemptions to address the concerns of the breeder and hobbyist communities. Their interest (not wanting to register with DAB) does not outweigh the interests of the broader community in protecting wildlife and combating shelter overpopulation.

I can agree that this bill will not, by itself, solve Hawaii's pet overpopulation and free-roaming animal problem. However, it is an important step in preventing the problem from worsening and normalizing the sterilization of cats and dogs. That should be the rule, with limited exceptions as this bill provides for. Please prioritize the community and its ecosystems by voting to pass SB 3012.

Mahalo nui,

Emily Sarasa, Esq.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:39:14 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 7:35:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Connie Bowman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to oppose the implementation of SB3012.

i have travelled to Hawaii many times, my husband even more over the past 30 years as he has family there. We are very aware of the concerns of the residents about the stray cat population and the negative impact on the beautiful avian life on the Islands.

i oppose this measure as a member of the CFA. The purebred cat fancy and any limited breeding programs are in no way related to the stray cat issue and to require sterilization to bring intact purebred cats for shows and for private purebred show cats for residents would be detrimental to cat lovers everywhere.

i believe there could be a way to register the purebred show cats, purebred kittens, which through the CFA or TICA all require proof of breed, ownership and individual identification numbers. Not ideal, but perhaps to facilitate this, registration fees could be involved for the intact purebred cats with the proceeds to run TNR programs for the existing stray populations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Connie Bowman

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:44:30 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Ketcham	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

- Providing funding for spaying and neutering subsidies would be a better policy than more regulations.
- Animal shelters already spay and neuter animals taken in before making available out for adoption.
- Dog owners should not be forced to register as a breeder simply to own an intact dog. Neutering males often results in physiological changes - loss of bone for example. This happened to us with a dog that we neutered for other health reasons.
- Many people have experienced behavioral changes when dogs are neutered or spayed. Maybe the changes are desirable or maybe not but leave that to the owner rather than a regulatory mandate.
- Dogs must be intact to exhibit in AKC conformation shows which are focused on maintaining breed standards for behavioral and physical characteristics. Some people consider dog shows unimportant but that is not the case as they allow for maintenance and improvement of individuals within dog breeds through responsible breeding programs. Mandatory registrations would place unnecessary burdens on people who come in to Hawaii to exhibit at such shows and events.

I am the past president of Leeward Training Club of Hawaii with over 300 members. Although our focus is on obedience training, many of our members are involved in exhibiting in other states. This regulation would place a burden on them and reduce the activity.

This bill is a really bad idea and should be neutered.

Sincerely,

Ted Ketcham 808 292 0356 tedketcham@hawaii.rr.com

To the Chair and Members of the Committee:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda K. Teruya

Concerned and Caring Animal Owner

Sarah Woodworth
15-2694 Malolo St
Pahoa HI 96778
Woodworth808@gmail.com

AGAINST SB3012

Dear Legislators

Feral populations of chickens and cats are getting out of control, the origin of these animals is not imported pets.

The Hawaiian Humane Society on my island does nothing in way of animal control and has limited their access to even accept roaming animals found. Private groups such as PetFix have stepped in to try to help the massive amounts of animals needing spay/neuter. I would absolutely agree with funding for spay/neuter clinics and a return to actual animal control personnel and facilities to assist with the battle occurring now but *this bill does nothing to deal with current conditions.*

The intentions of this bill are, frankly put, that the public should leave all the feral animals roaming the street breeding and breeding and yet restrict the ability to bring in and have a well bred animal that is clearly cared for. The process of entering Hawaii is time consuming and expensive, it is not a decision made lightly.

Points I have issues with:

There is no information on what a 'breeder registry' is, how it is managed and who/how is someone confirmed to qualify. There are no details.

The short term stay exemption, who monitors that? How is it enforced?

Limiting importation of only sterilized animals reduces populations for new owners to whatever mixed animal is here. No new genetics, no new breeds or better bred animals.

I personally compete in AKC activities with my dogs. I travel to the mainland many times per year. I cannot compete with altered animals. My champion pugs do not contribute to nor replace adoptable animals in a shelter. The fees and process I have to go through each time I leave is already time consuming and limits my ability to make a quick choice to travel somewhere. In my breed we are continuously trying to better the breed. This would drastically reduce genetic diversity here.

Along with pugs, I currently have the ONLY Norwegian Buhund in the State. This is a rare and endangered breed dating back to Viking times. Every litter in the breed is celebrated as their numbers in the WORLD are diminishing.

How does this affect me in trying to continue this almost lost breed? He is a Westminster Breed winner 2025 and was a top Herding Group dog last year.

This is Eirik in Washington State with his breeder being shown. There are no other Buhunds in Hawaii so I have to travel to compete. At some point I may want a female to breed to. This impacts not only me and my efforts, but the breed itself.



Before something like this is pushed through, I would like to see actual data behind the intention.

How many pets brought in through quarantine are contributing to shelter numbers or 'breeding in the streets'?

How many purebred animals end up in shelters each year?

What are the requirements and rules proposed?

How can this pass with such vague intention and no direction, putting more administrative duties onto departments that cannot function at full capacity as it is?

Please DO NOT PASS this bill. Please focus more on spay/neuter clinics and public education. Please focus more on HHS being able to actually do animal control and housing for adoptable animals.

Thank you for your time,
Sarah Woodworth
Pahoa Hawaii

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:29:09 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Subject: Opposition to SB3012 – Protecting Hawai‘i’s Dogs and Owners

Dear Senators,

I am writing to strongly **oppose SB3012**. As a preservationist breeder of Afghan Hounds, this mandate destroys my ability to show dogs under AKC rules and ignores the fact that responsible imports aren't the source of our shelter crisis. Please protect our animal health and heritage by deferring this harmful bill.

Mahalo,

Royd Gano

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:51:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
linette barrios	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been a breeder and dog owner since 1966 and I have never broken any laws. As a breeder(I haven't had a litter in a few years) you need the ability to bring in new lines so that you don't produce medical problems within your lines. Everyone I know(which by the way our show/trial) people have committed to protecting our dogs, even when they go to other people. We work hard to they our dogs healthy and don't over produce

why would you find it necessary to pass this bill?

Yok Choi, Psy.D.

c/o 3102 E Highland Ave

Patton CA 92369

To the honorable legislators

My name is Yok Choi, and I am in opposition to SB3012, which would mandate sterilization of dogs and cats imported into Hawaii.

While I 100 % support responsible pet ownership and efforts to reduce overpopulation, this bill goes too far. Hawaii already has strict animal import and public health protections in place. Adding a mandatory sterilization requirement risks unintended harm without clearly addressing the root causes of pet overpopulation.

I urge the Legislature to reject SB3012.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Yok Choi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yok Choi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

2/10/26

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 12:35:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I strongly **OPPOSE** this proposal. Law-abiding and good citizens should not have their cats and dogs sterilized because they make the choice to move here. There are many good faith reasons why someone would not want to get their cat or dog sterilized and I do not think it is a worthy use of our tax dollars plus administrative burden to undertake such a task.

I **STRONGLY** urge the committee to **REJECT** SB3012!

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 12:48:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

We, breeders/ pet owners of the Cat Fanciers of Hawaii Cat Club (CFH), strongly OPPOSE this bill. The CFH is a local non-profit club that is part of the larger international Cat Fanciers Association. We are breed preservationists, passionate about preserving the healthy lines of breed specific cats. Many cats are “rare” with very few breeders available worldwide and take the commitment of special people to carry on healthy lines and genetics. These people are NOT “in it for the money” as many responsible breeders do not make any money from this hobby. They care about carrying on the cat breed and lines, no matter what it costs. With this, breeders expend costs for genetic and health testing, large veterinary costs for health maintenance, top tier food brands and supplements, as well as the importation of new breeding stock to ensure genetic diversity, among other things. Within CFH, there are only about 10 breeders who only put out a few litters a year. At the cat shows, intact cats make up only approximately 22 cats, with the majority of the cats being mainly fixed pet cats, approximately 45 cats. With these numbers, we ask, how is having pedigreed cats in Hawaii contributing to the overpopulation? For those owners who join in at shows, it is a beloved hobby for them and without breeders, they wouldn’t be able to participate in it. Because of Hawaii’s geographic isolation, it is difficult for breeders to import animals as it is. Many reputable breeders on the mainland do not want to hold on to kittens/ puppies for a longer period to meet quarantine requirements, but for those that are willing to help Hawaii breeders bring in new lines, it is a rarity and we cannot lose these relationships due to excuses that this will curb overpopulation.

As a breeder/ purebred cat owner, none of our cats are allowed to free roam per breeder contract. A purebred cat is not a cheap “investment”, and it would not be wise to allow it to free roam where it could potentially get hurt, killed, or pick up various diseases. This requirement is stated multiple times throughout the “adoption” process” and is a clear stipulation in contracts that kittens/ cats are to be indoor only, absolutely no free roaming cats. Per one breeder, “any potential owner stating they want an outdoor cat or may hint that a cat has free access to outdoors will be turned down”. Many of the breeders we work with within the CFH already send their kittens home fixed or have contract stipulations requiring the owner to fix their kitten by 6 months old due to being physically too small to fix before being sent home. We, breeders and pet owners within the CFH are already registered with our overall national registration in which we follow strict standards, bylaws, pay our dues, hold at least quarterly local club meetings, and attend an annual international association meeting. Realistically, responsible breeders of purebred cats are NOT contributors to the state’s feral over-population.

We DO NOT support a breeder registry as responsible breeders should not be penalized for problems that they did not contribute to. Our concern is that when these statues are created and only the handful of responsible breeders/ pet owners follow it the irresponsible people will continue to do as they do. If importation is cut off to irresponsible breeders, our fear is that they will continue to breed with what they already have, meaning using related animals (incest) and not caring about the consequences that imposes. It is unclear how this bill will address the real target issue of the FERAL CAT population. We believe that the wrong groups are being targeted and blamed for the overpopulation issues.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 7:05:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal DeGuzman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been informed about the SB3012 regarding any dog or cat entering the state of Hawaii to be sterilized. I do not support this bill. My family has a love for dogs and cats. Especially my daughters! Both of my daughters participate in dog sports and conformation through AKC. These sports and conformation requires “pure bred” dogs. If this is bill moves forward it would eliminate these opportunities for my kids and so many others. “Pure bred” dogs are so important for preserving these sports and jobs for each specific breed. This is why we need dogs to be allowed into the state without sterilization.

Also, the issue of over population is not caused by this select group of breeders. Very often I see mixed breed dogs in our Big Island shelters with reports of people dumping the dogs and puppies at the shelter. The breeders with AKC are the most responsible and ethical type of breeders. They not only love their dogs but provide them with the best care. They also are spending thousands of dollars on these dogs, their vaccines and transportation into Hawaii. Pure breed dogs are not the ones over crowding the shelters. As noted in your Position Statement you believe breeding should be done with the hopes of healthy animals and responsible owners. The breeders we have worked with abide by these guidelines. And they also take back dogs that may not be a good fit for their homes or if their owners life has had a sudden change.

Lastly, sterilization is not always in the best interest of an animal’s health. Peer-reviewed veterinary research has shown that early spay/neuter is associated with increased risk of certain cancers and orthopedic disorders in multiple breeds.

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

Additionally, this bill raises serious enforcement concerns. Which already seems to be a problem with trying to enforce people not feeding feral cats. For example, in Hilo at the Queen Liliuokalani Park the feral cats continue to be fed even after the law (bill 51) went into effect.

Again, I oppose SB3012, this is not the solution to the dog and cat over population problem in Hawaii.

Thank you, Krystal DeGuzman

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 7:14:49 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to this bill requiring mandatory surgical sterilization of all dogs and cats imported into Hawaii as a condition of entry.

While I fully support efforts to protect Hawaii’s rabies-free status and to address pet overpopulation, this proposal is overly broad, unnecessarily punitive to actually responsible pet owners, and likely to create unintended consequences.

First, this measure unfairly targets law-abiding residents, military families, professionals relocating to Hawaii, and responsible breeders who already comply with health, vaccination, and quarantine requirements. Mandatory sterilization removes an owner’s ability to make individualized, veterinarian-guided decisions about the timing and appropriateness of spaying or neutering—decisions that can significantly affect an animal’s long-term health, particularly for large-breed dogs. There is no Hawaii data to justify SB3012. Policy making is based on verifiable data.

Second, the bill will reduce genetic diversity and restrict access to responsibly bred animals. Hawaii already has limited access to specialized working dogs, service animals, and purpose-bred dogs for health or performance needs. This policy would unintentionally limit access to high-quality, ethically bred animals while doing little to curb irresponsible breeding practices.

Third, enforcement and verification will impose additional administrative burdens on the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity and on transport carriers. Creating and maintaining a breeder registry, verifying medical exemptions, and monitoring compliance will require substantial oversight. These resources may be better directed toward enforcing existing animal welfare laws and strengthening local spay-and-neuter initiatives.

Finally, pet overpopulation is primarily driven by irresponsible ownership and lack of access to affordable veterinary care—not by incoming family pets moving with their owners. A more effective approach would be to expand low-cost spay and neuter programs, strengthen penalties for abandonment, and support public education campaigns within the State. Another effective approach if I may add, is that all mixed breed dogs and dogs that don't have all proper health testing for their breed per their breed club, should be spayed and neutered. I believe this will solve a lot of irresponsible breeding and the overpopulation crisis.

This bill represents government overreach into private veterinary and ownership decisions and places unnecessary restrictions on responsible residents without clearly demonstrating that it will meaningfully solve the underlying problem.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote NO on this measure.

Sincerely,
Hikari Watanabe

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:45:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thos bill is extremely prejudicial towards pet owners who travel with their pets out of state and return with them. Many of these pets are pure bred animals who are intact. These people are not the cause of the problem this "bill is said to address". It's a thinly bailed attempt by special interest non Hawaii special interest groups like Peta and certain divisions of the human society that ultimately are anti pet ownership especially towards pure bred pets. We have a unwanted/stray pet over population issue. Most of these people who travel are responsible owners who take ethical care of their animals. Some would argue there is more evidence that sterilization can be detrimental pets health for various reasons and should be something owners and their vets discuss. Further the problem is irresponsible ownership, ignorance and not enough pet friendly housing that forces owners to relinquish their animals or abandon them. Responsible pet owners are not your problem, often we already are working to help to fostering rescued animals and participating in educational programs for pet ownership at rescue events. Please ask any local rescue like Aloha Ilio rescue. What we need is more free spay and neuter programs, more pet education programs for the public. Further as a registered voter I will be relaying my State Legistators in both houses my displeasure and ultimately my vote will reflect this particular bill for me it's one issue that will cause me to vote against any supporting it. Of course that comes with my campaigning with like minded friends and family to promote the right response in our state government.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:20:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

The import of dogs and cat have owners that are participating in AKC Conformation DogShows should not be required to sterilize their dog,(Feline Fancier shows) cat. These dogs and cats are not the overpopulation problem, whoms owners are responsible citizens in the community. Many travel to the Continental US to participate in AKC Conformation Dog Shows. These event shows bring income to the State.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:09:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Faulkner	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Hawaii State Legislation involving HB1594/SB301 requiring the mandatory spay & neutering of dog & cats imported into Hawaii.

I greatly oppose this bill. I understand the importance of keeping Hawaii rabies free, but this bill will greatly impact breed diversity entering into the state.

This bill will affect ethical breeders, ones who care about the well being of their chosen purebred animals. Ones that health test their animals, only breed the best specimens of their breed, & place their puppies & kittens under contract with a mandatory return if they cannot keep them throughout the lifetime of the animal.

The problem with pet over population here in Hawaii, as across the US, are the backyard breeders & those careless enough not to control their pets from reproducing. These people are breeding dogs for profit, with no regard to their health or well being in the life of the animal. They sell these puppies & kittens without caring who buys them, & what happens to them throughout their life.

Contrast that to an ethical breeder. They study breed standards, breed to those breed standards, show them to prove they conform to the breed standard, & prove them in dog sports relevant to their breed. They have long, lifetime contracts with their puppy & kittens buyers, keep in contact with them throughout their lifespan, & will guarantee to take any animal produced by them back within their life.

By passing this Bill, the importing of quality show quality animals that will help keep purebred animals thriving & being able to reproduce in Hawaii would be eliminated.

I humbly ask for members of the board to vote NO in regards to this bill.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Faulkner

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:24:17 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in opposition of this bill. The responsible person who is brining in an intact dog from the mainland or other country is not the reason for over crowded shelters. The population of homeless dogs are out of control. There needs to be more education put forth about spaying/neutering these animals. These anikals are left to reproduce every 6 months locally. No one's bringing these animals in, it is the lack of response from The human society to catch and spay or neuter these animals that is over populating our shelters. The problem is mixed breeds that are over populating our shelters. There are rarely pure bred dogs in the shelters. We have brought dogs in from the mainland to show in AKC confirmation shows. These animals are shown and if they're health testing is good they may have a planed breeding which the puppies are sold to good homes with most breeders including in their contracts that if the puppy can't be cared for it's to be returned to the breeder. Purposefully bred dogs do not end up in the shelter. You would be killing the sport of showing dogs as an altered dog can' be shown per American Kennel club rules.

The problem is the "poi dog" population. This bill does nothing to address that issue and would only punish us the responsible show dog homes.

Please don't allow this bull to pass.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:45:22 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I OPPOSE this bill. Where is the documented evidence that intact imported animals are the issue and not irresponsible breeders? Are these decisions based on facts or better yet, based on research and analyzed evidence? Imported dogs breeding records can be tracked via AKC and they are imported for the betterment of the breed. Pet breeders have no records and are for profit. So using just that little common sense, how is it that imported dogs are the issue? Responsible breeders are very selective in their breedings and know exactly where each of their puppies are and always maintain contact with their puppy buyer. In fact most breeders have a "First Right of Refusal" in their contracts. Passing this bill, would be absolutely detrimental to the health and well being of dogs being imported.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:24:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Salazar	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB3012

Relating to Animal Importation

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

My name is Taylor Salazar, and I submit this testimony as a private individual in strong opposition to SB3012, which would require proof of surgical sterilization for imported dogs and cats and establish a registry for intact imported animals.

I recognize Hawai‘i’s need to protect its rabies-free status and to address concerns related to animal overpopulation, free-roaming animals, community well-being, and impacts to native ecosystems. These are legitimate issues that deserve thoughtful, evidence-based solutions.

However, SB3012 does not address the primary drivers of overpopulation and instead imposes broad medical mandates on imported animals while leaving in-state breeding activity largely unregulated.

The Bill Targets Imports, Not the Source of Overpopulation

There is currently no comprehensive statewide breeder licensing system in Hawai‘i, nor a regulatory framework that directly addresses routine in-state breeding of intact animals.

If overpopulation is the concern, the majority of breeding activity occurs within Hawai‘i—not through imported animals. SB3012 places restrictions on imported animals while leaving existing in-state breeding practices untouched. This structural mismatch makes it unlikely that the bill will meaningfully reduce shelter intake or free-roaming populations.

Ethical Breeders and Responsible Ownership

Responsible breeders take extensive steps to prevent irresponsible reproduction. In most cases, puppies are placed on limited registration under legally binding contracts that:

- Prohibit unauthorized breeding
- Prohibit surrender to shelters or rescues
- Prohibit resale without breeder approval
- Require the animal to be returned to the breeder at any point if the owner cannot keep it

Breeding rights, when granted, are rare and carefully controlled. Ethical breeders retain lifelong responsibility for the animals they produce and actively work to ensure those animals do not enter the shelter system.

Conflating responsible, contract-based breeding practices with overpopulation misidentifies the problem.

Intact Does Not Equal Breeding

Many animals are imported intact for legitimate, non-breeding purposes, including conformation dog shows and performance events. Dogs must be intact to compete in conformation.

Automatically classifying anyone who imports an intact animal as a “breeder” is overly broad and unsupported by evidence.

One-Size-Fits-All Sterilization Mandates Override Veterinary Judgment

Sterilization is a medical decision that should be made in consultation with a licensed veterinarian.

Peer-reviewed veterinary research has identified associations between early spay/neuter and increased risk of certain cancers and orthopedic disorders in multiple breeds. Responsible owners and breeders consider breed-specific health data when determining if and when sterilization is appropriate.

A universal mandate removes veterinary discretion and applies a one-size-fits-all requirement regardless of individual health considerations.

Genetic Diversity and Long-Term Welfare

Hawai'i's geographic isolation already limits genetic diversity. Responsible importation of intact animals helps prevent genetic bottlenecks and reduces the risk of concentrated inherited disorders.

Restricting this practice may unintentionally increase inbreeding and negatively impact long-term animal welfare within the State.

Education and Accountability Are More Effective Tools

Hawai‘i already provides numerous free and low-cost spay and neuter programs. Inconsistent participation suggests that the primary barrier is behavioral and educational—not access alone.

Effective long-term solutions would focus on:

- Expanded community education
- Targeted outreach in underserved populations
- Stronger enforcement of existing animal control laws
- Transparent statewide shelter and rescue data reporting
- Collaboration with veterinary professionals and registry organizations

These approaches address behavior and accountability rather than imposing blanket medical mandates on a limited subset of owners.

Enforcement and Documentation Concerns

SB3012 presents practical challenges:

- Animals change ownership.
- Records may be lost.
- Veterinarians are often unwilling to certify surgeries they did not personally perform.
- A physical exam cannot reliably confirm prior spay in female animals.

These realities create administrative and legal complications for owners acting in good faith.

Military families relocating to Hawai'i may be disproportionately affected, particularly when original documentation is unavailable.

Registry Framework Concerns

Establishing a registry tied to intact imported animals creates a regulatory framework that may expand over time. Even if limited in scope today, registry structures often broaden once implemented.

Structural changes of this nature should be approached cautiously and only when clear evidence demonstrates measurable benefit.

Conclusion

SB3012 does not meaningfully regulate in-state breeding, which is where overpopulation originates. Instead, it imposes a broad medical mandate on imported animals, overrides veterinary judgment, reduces genetic diversity, and creates enforcement complications—while leaving existing structural gaps unaddressed.

Hawai‘i’s animal welfare challenges require targeted, science-based, and collaborative solutions.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE SB3012.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Taylor Salazar

Concerned Hawai‘i Resident

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:35:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

While framed as a response to public health and shelter overpopulation, SB3012 is overly broad, medically problematic, economically harmful, and fundamentally unfair to responsible dog owners.

As advocates for responsible dog ownership, I strongly urge lawmakers to reject SB 3012.

A blanket sterilization mandate ignores well-established veterinary science. Numerous peer-reviewed studies demonstrate that delaying sterilization—particularly in large and giant breeds—can significantly reduce the risk of orthopedic disorders, certain cancers, and other long-term health complications.

Sterilization timing should be:

- Determined by a licensed veterinarian,
- Based on breed, size, sex, and individual health profile,
- A medical decision—not a statutory mandate.

A one-size-fits-all requirement substitutes legislation for medical judgment and may inadvertently cause preventable health problems.

Dogs must remain intact to compete in American Kennel Club conformation events under the rules of the American Kennel Club. SB 3012 would effectively bar Hawaiians from importing show-quality dogs and participating fully in AKC events.

AKC shows:

- Generate millions of dollars in local economic activity,
- Support hotels, restaurants, transportation, and small businesses,
- Promote responsible breeding and canine health standards.

By preventing residents from acquiring intact dogs from the mainland, SB 3012 would diminish Hawaii’s ability to host and sustain these events—hurting local communities and tourism revenue.

There is no evidence that requiring sterilization of all imported dogs addresses the root causes of shelter intake.

More effective solutions include:

- Expanding low-cost, voluntary spay/neuter programs,
- Investing in public education initiatives,
- Enforcing existing animal control laws,
- Supporting responsible ownership programs.

Responsible owners importing well-bred dogs are not the primary drivers of shelter overpopulation. Public policy should target irresponsible practices—not penalize law-abiding families.

SB 3012 would require any person wishing to import an intact dog to register as a breeder—even if they have no intention of breeding.

This creates:

- An unnecessary regulatory burden,
- Additional fees and compliance requirements,
- A stigmatizing classification for responsible owners.

Owning an intact dog does not make someone a commercial breeder. Many owners maintain intact dogs for:

- Veterinary health timing considerations,
- Participation in conformation, performance, or working events,
- Preservation of rare or specialized breeds unavailable locally.

The state should not compel residents to register as breeders simply to exercise responsible ownership.

Hawaii's geographic isolation already limits access to many breeds. Families often import dogs from reputable mainland breeders to:

- Obtain a specific breed not available locally,
- Ensure genetic health testing and documented lineage,
- Participate in performance or conformation events,
- Preserve working or service dog bloodlines.

SB 3012 restricts lawful access and punishes responsible sourcing practices.

We share the goal of reducing shelter intake and promoting animal welfare. However, effective policy must be:

- Evidence-based
- Targeted
- Respectful of veterinary science
- Economically responsible
- Fair to law-abiding dog owners

Mandatory sterilization of all imported dogs is none of these.

I respectfully urge the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment to vote NO on SB 3012.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 4:26:53 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Sir/ Madam

We are residents of Paia, Maui and own a home there and have lived on Maui on and off since 2012. We have always had pure bred dogs that have travelled with us to and from mainland and Maui. We are currently in California but were planning on returning to Maui within the year for a couple of years and then back to California and then back to Maui. This we have done since 2012 without issue. Our dogs have followed all import rules with regards to vaccination and registration. They are AKC registered show dogs and participate in conformation shows across the mainland United States. I currently have one Grand Champion and one Champion. Both are actively showing.

Your new proposed bill would prevent us from returning to Maui EVER! As we can not neuter our dogs and still participate in the sport we have participated in since early 2000. Neutered or spayed dogs are NOT allowed in conformation shows and this would prevent us from returning to our home on Maui as we would never leave them here.

Additionally my breed is the Newfoundland. Multiple studies over many many years have shown without doubt it is detrimental to the health of the dog to have these giant breeds neutered or spayed before at he earliest 3 years of age. This is due to the fact that their growth plates have not yet closed and early surgical intervention such as spay or neuter would seriously harm the growth of the dog leading to multiple health issues with joints including hip displaysia and elbow displaysia. Surely you can not wish a lifetime of pain on a dog due to unrealistic laws.

This new bill would not only prevent me from returning to MY home with my dogs but it would prevent me from showing them in Hawaii and on mainland in conformation sport and it would potentially cause them serious health issues as they grow. As the goal of getting a dog to championship is for the betterment of the breed and to possibly use the dog as a stud dog - how do you propose to do this on Hawaii if all the purebred dogs are neutered? This does not solve your issue of stray dogs in Hawaii which is caused by irresponsible owners allowing their dogs to roam freely without care or restriction. My dogs are never alone, roaming or otherwise and I would NEVER allow an irresponsible breeding with another breed or another dog because I am a responsible owner of my breed and I believe in the health and longevity of my breed.

This bill is quite honestly outrageous as you are discriminating responsible owners with purebred dogs who wish to show their dogs from returning to THEIR HOME EVER . How this is even legal is beyond me.

You say that the exemption is for breeders only. I am not a breeder I am a responsible owner. Your bill exemption at the very least should include dogs that are actively showing or has shown with proof of shows. This is still not acceptable but it would allow us to return home. I am beyond distraught over this. How can I possibly continue to love Hawaii and my home if I can never return to it.

Please consider my plea as there has to be a better way to control the strays and manage the influx of dogs in shelters. Forcing owners to neuter their dogs to return home is not the answer. Spay and neuter is not even allowed in many countries in Europe unless for medical reasons as it comes with serious health risks to the animal. This is a discriminatory bill which should be opposed by all dog loving individuals who understand that this is NOT THE ANSWER!

Thank you for your consideration

Samantha Spurgeon

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:39:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maile Harada	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As it stands, this bill is too vague and needs clarification (especially section 3, E). What are the rules? How can someone support this bill when the rules aren't reviewable?

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 2:50:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Elliott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Requiring proof of sterilization for pets entering into Hawaii will aid in reducing the feral pet population. This is an important action that is necessary to protect the delicate balance of the Hawaiian Islands. This is essential for the threatened and endangered birds, which are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai'i's Endangered Species Act. There is no time left; birds are declining now - we need to act.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 2:53:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB3012. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 3:01:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

This would be a huge help in reducing pet overpopulation. Please move this bill forward. Mahalo for your consideration of this issue!

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:43:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Armitage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been volunteering with Lucky Paws cat rescue and adoption organizaion for a number of years now and I also feed a cat colony once a week. I see first hand how bad the free roaming/community cat problem is on Oahu. Hawaii needs to do all that it can to reduce the cat population in Hawaii. Experts say there are over 300,000 feral/community cats on Oahu alone. Shelters like Lucky Paws that get no funding other than donations (HHS does not share their wealth) are overwhelmed by the number of cats that they are asked to take in on a daily basis. They only take sick, injured, or at risk cats and kttens, and even then they have to say no way too often for lack of room and resources. Preventing people from bringing in unaltered cats and dogs would go a long way to helping reduce the number of community cats in the State. Providing funding for free spay and neuter services for animals that already live here would also go a long way to reducing this popeulatiaon. And frankly, breeding and selling pure bred cats does NOTHING to help with this serious over population problem.

Thank you for the oppotunity to testify.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 6:22:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this to prevent further animal suffering from the overpopulation problems rampant on all islands.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 5:07:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Niide	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB3012.

SB3012 will a plausible means to help control the over population of Free Roaming felines.

The management the entry of felines will ensure that we can humanely address the current population of Free Roaming Felines.

Thank you!

Wayne Niide

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 1:01:10 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill will certainly cause the collapse of the AKC dog show sporting community in Hawaii. The predominant majority of purebred dog exhibitors are not breeders, and there are no local breeders for most of the breeds being shown in Hawaii. AKC requires all show dogs to be intact animals. So with no importation of intact dogs to nonbreeders, the number of breeder-exhibitors is insufficient to economically support the significant costs of hosting dog shows here.

I am a dog breeder and dog show exhibitor with several AKC Grand Champions. I showed my breed for 10 years with imported dogs before deciding that I had become sufficiently knowledgeable to become a breeder.

Gary Chock

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 2:42:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Connie Brock	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill and any future bills related to this matter.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 2:50:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill and any future bill that would relate to this matter!

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:01:02 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Caulk	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I respectfully submit testimony in strong opposition to SB3012.

While Hawai'i's rabies-free status and concerns regarding animal welfare, overpopulation, and environmental protection are serious and deserving of thoughtful policy responses, SB3012 does not meaningfully address the problems it claims to solve.

SB3012 assumes that intact animals imported into Hawai'i are a primary driver of pet overpopulation and free-roaming animals. There is no data presented in the bill to support this assumption. Intact animals imported into the state are often purpose-bred dogs and cats brought in for specific purposes such as conformation shows, sports, service work, or companionship. Many are never bred. Labeling every owner who imports an intact animal as a breeder and subjecting them to undefined breeder regulations is unfair, overly broad, and unsupported by evidence.

The requirement to have owners of cats and dogs who are imported to be spayed/neutered before embarkation is a blatantly discriminatory condition aimed at responsible owners who (who travel to and from the mainland) have Invested a significant amount of money (veterinary care, health screening, vaccination, cost of travel) and time to ready their animals for travel into the State. I find it counterintuitive to assume that these owners let their animals roam and breed freely since they have already made considerable investment in caring for their pets. The HDOA already requires microchipping, information about reproductive status, and rabies vaccination as well as owner contact information on the animal import form. If these owners did not care about the welfare of their animals, it is unlikely that they would invest the amount of money it takes to bring their animals with them

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

Until I see reliable evidence that cat or dog overpopulation can be attributed to the importation of intact animals, I will stand in opposition to any rule that mandates their spay/ neuter.

Mandatory sterilization prior to embarkation would directly impact show exhibitors. Dogs and cats must be intact to participate in conformation events. Hawai'i hosts licensed dog and cat shows that contribute to the local economy and rely on participants traveling with intact animals. This bill would effectively eliminate participation from many exhibitors without demonstrating any measurable benefit to shelter populations or public safety.

If the concern is free-roaming animals, available evidence points toward issues connected to homelessness, unmanaged feral cat colonies, and lack of access to affordable veterinary care. SB3012 does not address public education, access to low-cost spay and neuter services, enforcement of existing animal welfare laws, or transparency in shelter and rescue data. Without statewide data, it is inappropriate to imply that breeders or imported intact animals are the source of Hawai'i's animal welfare challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee not advance HB1594. The bill's restrictions are misaligned with its stated goals and would create unnecessary hardship for responsible pet owners, exhibitors, and military families without addressing the root causes of animal overpopulation in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Caulk

Island of Oahu

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 2:18:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail St. Denis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Requiring dogs to be sterilized prior to being brought into the state will not address or solve the problem of shelter overpopulation. Neutering dogs, especially young dogs, is known to open the door to serious health problems later in life, condemning both dogs and owners to suffering, and the owners to greater expenses. Neutering an immature dog is comparable to neutering a human child as they are entering adolescence, when many vital hormonal changes are occurring.

One of the largest influx of animals into shelters are from people indiscriminately breeding their animals in the hopes of making money, then abandoning them to the shelters, or from irresponsible owners allowing their animals to wander unsupervised. Anyone that would go through the expense of bringing their animal into the state is highly unlikely to fall into either of these categories. Many military families have family pets. Many people relocating to Hawaii to work have pets. To force them to put their family members through mandatory sterilization is beyond imagination.

I recently brought a purebred Golden Retriever puppy home from Georgia. Golden Retrievers are notorious for hip and elbow dysplasia so careful breeding is necessary. With Hawaii's limited population of wellbred Goldens, I had to go out of state to find a breeder who would research the pedigree at least 5 generations back to weed out health weaknesses. Since animals coming into Hawaii have to go through the rabies protocol, I had to find not only a top-notch breeder, but one that would be willing to raise the puppy until it was old enough to go through the protocol. I made several visits to Georgia in the interim to visit and bond. We did chartered flights all the way from Miami, which was quite expensive. I do not intend to neuter or breed my puppy, but want him to have the best chance possible of a long and healthy life. After all the time and expense, you can be assured that he will not be roaming the streets or be used to bring unwanted puppies into the world.

A more effective way to reduce shelter overpopulation would be to support low-cost spay/neuter programs, especially among the homeless population. Another effective way would be to support strong enforcement of current animal control laws. Some of the biggest influxes of animals into shelters were from puppy mills and animal hoarders, not from people willing to bear the expense of flying a family member into the state.

Please take a closer look at the real issue on the table and ask yourself if mandatory sterilization would even start to solve that problem.

Thank you,

Gail St. Denis

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:23:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bailey Daniels	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe animals that arrive in Hawaii need to be sterilized due to the overwhelming number of pets that wind up on the streets. People moving to Hawaii or importing pets should have to have them sterilized prior to arrival. I've seen so many cats and dogs abandoned, when reported to animal control they claim they do not have the space or ability to rescue any that aren't an immediate threat or safety hazard. People do not responsibly care for there pets and because of this there are cat colonies in every park and stray dogs on most backroads. Steinbeck on Hilo side Big Island is a known dumping ground for pets. If we are able to reduce populations, we will hopefully see a reduction in abandoned pets. Stray dogs have been shown to form some packs and harm people. Feral cats spread disease and negatively impact our native species here. Harming monk seals, Nene and Hawaiian Forest birds. This would be a good step in the right direction to improve the impacts of feral species in Hawaii.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 4:04:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ben Catcho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly **support** this measure requiring proof of surgical sterilization for dogs and cats imported into the State, with appropriate exemptions, and establishing a breeder registry under the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Hawai‘i’s geographic isolation makes our islands uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of introduced species. Uncontrolled reproduction of imported pets contributes directly to pet overpopulation, abandonment, feral animal populations, public health concerns, and harm to native wildlife. Preventing the introduction of animals that can reproduce unchecked is a proactive, humane, and fiscally responsible approach.

Requiring sterilization prior to entry will help:

- Reduce the number of unwanted animals that may later be abandoned or surrendered
- Decrease strain on local shelters, rescue groups, and county resources
- Support responsible pet ownership and ethical breeding practices
- Limit the growth of feral dog and cat populations
- Protect native wildlife and ecosystems from increased predation
- Reduce disease transmission risks associated with unmanaged animal populations

Establishing a breeder registry is also an important accountability measure. Responsible breeders who follow best practices should have no difficulty complying, while the registry helps deter irresponsible or unregulated breeding operations that contribute to overpopulation and animal welfare issues.

This policy does not prevent pet ownership. Instead, it sets reasonable standards that prioritize animal welfare, community safety, and environmental protection while still allowing for legitimate exemptions where appropriate.

Hawai'i has long recognized the need for strong biosecurity measures to protect our people, animals, and natural heritage. This bill represents a forward-thinking step that addresses problems at their source rather than reacting after harm has already occurred.

For these reasons, I urge the passing of this much needed measure.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 6:06:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Agard	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 12, 2026

Testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 3012

Relating to animal importation

Members of Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

I along with many other Dog Fanciers in Hawai'i strongly oppose the above Senate Bill. I do not believe the problems identified in this bill will be resolved with the implementation of the proposed bill.

It is unreasonable to imply that the intact animals coming into Hawai'i are the major cause of animal over population when the majority of these dogs, in this case are entering Hawai'i to participate in a dog show and thus must be intact to participate.

In addition people from Hawai'i travel to the mainland with their intact pets and would be fearful of this legislation upon return to Hawai'i.

I currently have 7 dogs, all intact and have never bred any of them. I also have many friends with a similar situation who are responsible pet owners.

Thank you for your consideration of my opposition as well as my family's to the passing of this bill.

Carol Agard

2157 Awikiwiki Pl

Pearl City, Hi 96782

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 6:15:16 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sabrina Gustafson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Sabrina Gustafson and strongly oppose to SB3012. As a a long-time dog owner who participates in AKC sanctioned events AKC requires that dogs be intact to participate as pure-bred dogs.

This Bill does not serve it's end goal of reducing the animal population and will have unintended consequences to "kill" dog events where hundreds of dogs participate for their fun and interaction with other dogs and their humans.

Pet owners that spend thousands of dollars meeting quarentine standards to import their animals into Hawaii are not releasing these animals on the streets therefore requiring them be steralized before entering Hawaii will not help the proplem.

Instead creater harsher punishments for people that dump animals illegally or require profit breeders to adhere to standards and registrations to promote ethical breeding practices.

Please oppose the bill.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 6:16:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nani Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I STRONGLY urge committee to support sterilization of cats and dogs imported to Hawaii. We have a gross overpopulation problem that is heartbreaking and dangerous for our delicate ecosystem. We cannot continue to delay action on this matter. Close to 30k cats are euthanized yearly and similar for dogs. We have colonies of cats that are being TNR'd and cared for but they still impact our environment. Supporting this bill would give us a fighting chance at being humane and saving our endangered species. It is unnecessary to breed cats and dogs here at this time and preventing breeding is a simple and humane answer to this problem. Mahalo.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 6:29:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kara Forstie	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I am writing in respectful opposition to Senate Bill 3012.

As a resident of Hawaii, I have personally imported a dog into the state as a puppy due to the lack of availability of this breed locally. Responsible, ethical breeders of certain breeds simply do not exist or are severally limited within our islands. Importation is often the only way for residents, such as myself, to obtain a well-bred, purposefully selected dog.

Although I ultimately chose to sterilize my dog, it was done under the professional guidance of my veterinarian, who recommended waiting until she was at least one year old to reduce the risk of negative health outcomes associated with early sterilization. A blanket requirement that mandates sterilization prior to import disregards individualized veterinary advice and current research regarding optimal timing for a dog's long-term health.

Additionally, being able to bring my dog into Hawaii as a puppy allowed me to develop a strong, healthy bond during her critical developmental stages. Early socialization and bonding are foundational to producing stable, well-adjusted adult dogs. Requiring sterilization before import would effectively prevent many residents, like myself, from responsibly raising a puppy during this important developmental window.

This issue is not about individual or animal welfare, it is about imposing a broad restriction that fails to address the root causes of shelter overpopulation. Responsible owners who thoughtfully import dogs are not contributing to that problem.

If the Legislature's focus is truly animal welfare, efforts should be directed toward:

- Strengthening enforcement of existing laws
- Expanding access to voluntary spay and neuter programs
- Supporting education on responsible ownership
- Addressing irresponsible breeding and abandonment within the state

A mandatory sterilization requirement for all imported dogs unfairly impacts responsible owners while doing little to meaningfully improve shelter outcomes.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote no on SB 3012 and instead pursue targeted solutions that genuinely prioritize animal welfare.

Mahalo,

Kara

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:09:44 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April McDavid	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha-

My name is April and I am very involved in cat and dog rescue on Kauai. I see hundreds of unwanted, discarded, breeding cats and dogs and there is little to no option for them. Given the huge pet overpopulation in the state I generally support this bill but would like to see a couple changes- Remove the temporary stay exemption and add much more regulation to the breeder registry. My reasoning is as follows:

Remove the temporary stay exemption- Animals entering for 90 days can still get pregnant and give birth, adding to overpopulation, because the average gestation period for both cats and dogs is 2 months. They could also be pregnant upon arrival and give birth here, which has definitely happened. I could understand if the temporary stay exemption was only a week or 2, but 90 days is far too long.

The breeder registry needs much more regulation and many more rules. As written, anyone can be on the breeder registry by providing their name, business address, and breed of dog. That is so simple anyone who doesn't want to alter their dog would join. To be registered as a breeder there needs to be rules such as the number of litters allowed per year (1), the puppies being sold must be altered so they don't all become breeders which quickly adds to the pet overpopulation problem that this bill is trying to curb, genetic testing of the breeder dog to identify potential genetic disorders to ensure healthy puppies, as well as other rules that I won't go into since that is not the point of this bill. As written, the breeder registry is so simple to join that it acts as a loophole so that anyone who wants to bring an intact dog or cat into the state still can.

Thank you very much for allowing my input and please reach out with any questions or for further information from my personal experience.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:27:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Ibaraki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE SB3012 and related bills

i seriously doubt that pet overpopulation or free roaming animals are due to the importation of purebred dogs. Purebred dogs are imported to improve the local breed type in accordance with the American Kennel Club (AKC) standards. These animals are imported to compete in AKC events, which mandates that they MUST BE INTACT. They are NOT imported only for breeding purposes and will not necessarily contribute to the pet population. If you know anything about AKC dogs, you would know how valued they are to their owners and would never be dumped to roam the streets.

I have imported dogs to compete for AKC titles and as such, would not qualify for a breeders list. By passage of this bill, I would be prohibited from importing a dog and denied my freedom to participate in this dog sport and it is a sport.

I have imported dogs in the past and have paid all the State Quarantine fees to import. Passage of this bill will surely decrease State Quarantine revenues for the State.

it is my opinion that BACK YARD BREEDERS who contribute to pet overpopulation would never spend the money to buy an AKC dog from the continent, pay for the 6 month boarding and services to qualify for importation to Hawai'i then pay for the shipment and all State Quarantine fees to bring an AKC dog to Hawai'i as I have. The local dog exhibitors are a very dedicated and responsible group and I think it ridiculous that this restriction would be imposed on them to prevent pet overpopulation or loose animals in the community. Please reject SB3012 and any related bills. Thank you

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:56:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather A Scott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB 3012 / HB 1594 — Animal Importation & Sterilization

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Heather Scott, VTS (ECC), with three decades of veterinary clinical experience. I support SB 3012 / HB 1594.

Hawai‘i’s geographic isolation makes animal population control uniquely important. Every intact animal imported into the state contributes to potential overpopulation pressure in a system already managing limited shelter capacity and high cost of care.

Mandatory sterilization prior to entry, with appropriate medical and breeder exemptions, is a preventative strategy rooted in population medicine. Prevention is far more effective and less costly than attempting to manage the downstream consequences of uncontrolled breeding.

Long-term positive impacts include:

- Reduced shelter overcrowding
- Lower municipal animal control costs

- Decreased stray populations
- Reduced transmission of infectious and reproductive diseases
- Greater accountability among breeders

As someone trained in both biology and emergency medicine, I have seen firsthand the medical complications associated with intact animals — including pyometra, mammary tumors, dystocia, and reproductive cancers. Preventative sterilization improves both animal health and community outcomes.

Mahalo for advancing forward-thinking public health policy.

Heather Ann Scott RVT, VTSECC

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 8:16:00 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie O'Brien	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support any bill the reduces the amount of cats

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:10:35 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott hertrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please save the dogs. Check out how many are put down each year. Unacceptable! This bill will bring the numbers down

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 11:11:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julieta Aguilera-Rodriguez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have frequently seen cat roadkill everywhere in the Big Island over the past few years including all the way up to Saddle Road, and so many cats are constantly being dumped in state parks, many in horrible condition. People have been adopting dozens of cats into private catios to since shelters are full. The harm to the fragile habitats here is terrible since cats enjoy killing birds more than rats or coquis, all the while outdoor cats feed rats which love the predigested food. Please stop bringing fertile or outdoor cats to Hawaii.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 10:09:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jennifer schneider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

i support SB 3012.

there is a huge cat and dog overpopulation problem on the island.

this bill is vital stop people from bringing unaltered animals in.

please join me and vote for this bill.

mahalo nui

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:37:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lukanicole zavas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT OF: SB 3012 - RELATING TO ANIMAL IMPORTATION

I strongly support this measure requiring proof of surgical sterilization for dogs and cats imported into the State, with appropriate exemptions, and establishing a breeder registry under the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity.

Hawai‘i’s geographic isolation makes our islands uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of introduced species. Uncontrolled reproduction of imported pets contributes directly to pet overpopulation, abandonment, feral animal populations, public health concerns, and harm to native wildlife. Preventing the introduction of animals that can reproduce unchecked is a proactive, humane, and fiscally responsible approach.

Requiring sterilization prior to entry will help:

1. Reduce the number of unwanted animals that may later be abandoned or surrendered
2. Decrease strain on local shelters, rescue groups, and county resources
3. Support responsible pet ownership and ethical breeding practices
4. Limit the growth of feral dog and cat populations
5. Protect native wildlife and ecosystems from increased predation
6. Reduce disease transmission risks associated with unmanaged animal populations

Establishing a breeder registry is also an important accountability measure. Responsible breeders who follow best practices should have no difficulty complying, while the registry helps deter irresponsible or unregulated breeding operations that contribute to overpopulation and animal welfare issues.

This policy does not prevent pet ownership. Instead, it sets reasonable standards that prioritize animal welfare, community safety, and environmental protection while still allowing for legitimate exemptions where appropriate.

Hawai‘i has long recognized the need for strong biosecurity measures to protect our people, animals, and natural heritage. This bill represents a forward-thinking step that addresses problems at their source rather than reacting after harm has already occurred.

For these reasons, I urge the passing of this much needed measure.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:07:17 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 3012, which would require documentation that dogs and cats entering Hawai‘i be surgically sterilized, with reasonable exemptions for temporary stays, medical necessity, and registered breeders.

SB 3012 is a humane and evidence-based response to Hawai‘i’s ongoing pet overpopulation crisis. Our state faces limited shelter capacity, high owner surrender rates, and a continued lack of widespread spay and neuter education and accessible resources. Requiring sterilization upon entry is a proactive step to prevent unintended litters that too often end up in shelters or abandoned. This bill promotes responsible pet ownership, protects public health, and reduces euthanasia and suffering — a compassionate outcome for both animals and our communities.

Opposition from segments of the show-dog community claims this bill penalizes responsible owners and will not address shelter overcrowding. However, in 2024 alone, approximately 20,000 dogs and cats entered Hawai‘i. Allowing large numbers of intact animals to enter the state without safeguards contributes to uncontrolled breeding and further strains an already overwhelmed system. That is not responsible stewardship of our islands’ limited animal welfare resources.

Importantly, this bill does not prohibit responsible breeding. Individuals who wish to breed can register as breeders and be exempt from the sterilization requirement. This ensures that legitimate breeding programs may continue. However, I strongly urge that the criteria for breeder registration be strengthened beyond the minimal requirements currently listed. Responsible breeding should include standards such as genetic health testing, ethical placement practices, and a lifetime commitment to take back dogs produced if an owner can no longer keep them. Stronger standards will ensure that exemptions truly serve responsible breeders, not casual or backyard breeding.

Claims that this bill harms canine health are also overstated. The bill includes a medical exemption allowing a licensed veterinarian to certify when sterilization is not safe for an individual animal. This protects animal welfare while still encouraging responsible ownership overall.

Hawai‘i’s rabies-free status and limited animal welfare infrastructure already justify careful regulation of animal importation. Reducing the inflow of fertile animals lowers the risk of free-

roaming populations, abandonment, and the significant public and financial burdens associated with sheltering and animal control.

While SB 3012 should not be the only measure addressing overpopulation, it is a meaningful and practical component of a broader strategy. Import sterilization works alongside local spay and neuter programs to reduce preventable litters at the source. This approach appropriately targets reproductive potential that directly contributes to overpopulation, without restricting dogs owned for legitimate, responsible breeding purposes.

SB 3012 strikes a reasonable balance. It preserves the rights of responsible breeders while protecting animals, communities, and the limited resources of our island state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support of SB 3012.

To: Hawaii Senate Committee for SB3012

I would like this testimony to be shared with the Committee BEFORE they vote. There are a few things that need addressing before you vote.

1 – Important to acknowledge at the get-go is that felines and canines are totally different in many ways, including their reproductive systems. One strategy CANNOT work for both species. I am not a knowledgeable cat person, so I will be addressing dogs only.

2 – With respect to dogs, “early” sterilization of a canine can result in serious personality problems – which will add to animals being dumped at shelters. The experts agree that small dogs should NOT be sterilized before at least a year old, and large dogs not till 2 years old. This is because sterilization can stymie the normal maturity process and leave the animal at that state. Yes, puppies are adorable, they are energetic, but they also (like young children) have very short attention spans. Training takes a lot of time. Think about an animal that would now be forever at that puppy stage – because that is what early sterilization would do.

3 – Children raised with dogs show a significant decrease in allergies, which has become a significant problem today. Allergic reactions can and DO cause death, not to mention all of the headaches and time lost from school or work and the medical money expenses.

4 – There is a common “old wives’ tale” that early neutering of males prevents prostate cancer. IF that were true, then we should be neutering young human males – so they don’t develop prostate cancer in their later years. Having treated a male dog with radiation for bladder cancer, I learned that they seldom, if EVER, have an unneutered male patient with prostate cancer – it’s always those that were neutered, and at an early age.

5 – AKC conformation shows require an intact pure-bred animal to compete. The basis for AKC was “to find and reward good breeding stock”! Once neutered, the animal can not reproduce. By limiting the number of dogs coming into your world, you effectively shut down this entire industry. People LOVE to go to conformation shows where they get to see breeds they’ve never seen, where they see dogs that have the breed type in appearance and personality, and where “KIDS” are given the opportunity to excel in an adult world!!! With over 35 years involvement in dog shows and having been an educator, the children that participate in Junior Showmanship are far more likely to stay out of drugs and alcohol, more likely to stay in school, and are all-around better grounded. With mandatory early sterilization, you are effectively removing this opportunity for children to learn about and become involved with dogs at a higher level. This argument isn’t even taking into consideration the substantial financial impact to your state. People travel to dog shows – meaning, hotels, possibly more expensive vehicles, restaurant meals, more involved with the health of their dogs entails better veterinary care, etc. The financial impact goes way beyond the initial purchase of a dog.

There are many more reasons that I could list, but these 5 should be enough to make your committee think more seriously about your choices. YOU have the future of Hawaiian children

in your hands. Numerous studies have shown that children growing up with dogs become better adults!!! Don't take that away from them! SB3012 would do just that!!!!

Regards –

Carol Hamilton

AKC, UKC, NASDA judge and a preservationist breeder (of a rare breed)

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 9:49:30 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Davis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristen Davis, and I strongly OPPOSE SB3012, which would require proof that any dog or cat imported into Hawai‘i has been surgically sterilized as a condition of entry, with limited exemptions, and would authorize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to establish a breeder registry to allow certain intact imports.

While well-intentioned, this bill will produce outcomes opposite of its goals. It will reward irresponsible backyard breeding, restrict access to ethical and health-tested animals, undermine dog sports and related industries in Hawai‘i, and pressure owners into medically inappropriate, one-size-fits-all sterilization decisions.

1) The bill incentivizes backyard breeding while blocking ethical breeders

Ethical preservation breeders invest significant time and money into health testing, genetic screening, temperament selection, and responsible placement. Many place dogs intact until physical maturity or under structured contracts requiring delayed sterilization.

By requiring sterilization prior to import, SB3012 effectively cuts Hawai‘i off from these responsible breeding programs.

At the same time, the bill allows intact imports through a breeder registry that does not require proof of health testing, ethical practices, or meaningful oversight. Anyone seeking to import an

intact animal could simply register, creating a loophole that benefits irresponsible sellers while restricting access to reputable sources.

The predictable result is fewer responsible options and greater reliance on unregulated backyard breeding already occurring locally.

2) It undermines dog shows, working dogs, and related economic activity

Dogs must be intact to compete in AKC conformation events, and many sport and working dog prospects are imported intact for evaluation, training, and competition before sterilization decisions are made.

These events support local clubs, trainers, judges, vendors, boarding facilities, and generate tourism spending through visiting exhibitors and competitors. Hawai'i events attract participants who spend on hotels, restaurants, transportation, and local services.

A mandate that effectively prevents residents from importing competitive prospects threatens not just hobbyists but an entire ecosystem of businesses and community organizations connected to dog sports.

3) Mandatory sterilization timelines ignore veterinary best practices

SB3012 pressures owners to sterilize animals based on travel logistics rather than veterinary guidance.

Scientific research shows optimal sterilization timing varies depending on breed, size, sex, and intended use. Early sterilization in some dogs has been associated with increased orthopedic disease risk, altered skeletal development, urinary incontinence, and elevated risk of certain cancers in specific breeds.

This testimony is not an argument against spay and neuter. It is an argument against government mandating a single medical timeline for all animals entering Hawai'i regardless of individual health considerations.

4) The bill does not address the true drivers of shelter overpopulation

Shelter intake in Hawai'i is overwhelmingly driven by uncontrolled local reproduction, abandonment, and lack of compliance with existing animal control laws — not by imported dogs acquired through responsible channels.

Effective solutions include expanding access to low-cost spay/neuter programs where they actually reduce unintended litters, enforcing licensing and roaming laws, supporting microchipping compliance, and focusing enforcement on chronic irresponsible breeders and sellers already operating locally.

Mandatory sterilization before entry does not address these root causes.

Request to the Committee

I respectfully ask the Committee to oppose SB3012. If the Legislature wishes to address pet overpopulation and animal welfare concerns, solutions should focus on targeted, evidence-based interventions that do not:

- Block ethical, health-tested imports
- Incentivize irresponsible breeding through registry loopholes
- Undermine dog sports, working dog programs, and related economic activity
- Force blanket medical decisions on pet owners

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:44:49 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anastacia Abellera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our native species are slowly & surely on the path to extinction. What will Hawai'i be? Just another American State? In order to save Hawai'i, we need to save our native ecosystem, which means, our birds, turtles, monk seals, etc.; sterilization of all incoming pets are critical for the survival of Hawai'i's native species. It's not the animals fault, it's human ignorance, greed, selfishness, & whatever thoughts they are thinking that are not aligned with what is best for our native species. Toxoplasmosis is a big disrupter and only cats are hosts yet has proved to kill our turtles, Hawaiian monk seals, and whales in the Pacific Northwest. People dump their cats, people dump puppies; an aged-old argument. Predatory animals will hunt naturally for food and for fun that is the bottom line. Supporting this bill; people will have consequences instead of trying to make a buck out of back yard puppy mills and kittens galore. Sterilization will help control pet population; hence, hopefully, native birds will have a chance along with the rest of our native species. Background studies at Bel-Rea Institute of Animal Technology & worked as a Vet-Tech in HI. I hope that legislation is working alongside with Conservation to keep Hawai'i, Hawai'i. That is the only way for our future, our Hawai'i. Hawai'i is different if all of you forgot and only think it is part of the States.

SB-3012

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:45:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/13/2026 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antoinette Sardillo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Antoinette Sardillo, and I am writing in strong opposition to SB3012.

I am a professional dog trainer in Hawai‘i and actively participate in AKC dog sports and conformation events. I work daily with pet owners, performance dogs, and responsibly bred purebred dogs. From both a professional and practical standpoint, I have serious concerns about legislation that broadly mandates sterilization without considering health, behavioral, and sporting implications.

First, current veterinary research shows that blanket spay and neuter requirements do not account for breed specific health outcomes. A large study conducted by researchers at the University of California, Davis evaluated the long term health effects of neutering across multiple breeds. The study found that early neutering was associated with increased risks of joint disorders such as hip dysplasia and cranial cruciate ligament tears, as well as increased risk of certain cancers in some breeds. The researchers concluded that recommendations should be breed specific rather than universal. This research demonstrates that sterilization timing is a medical decision that should be made between an owner and their veterinarian based on the individual dog.

Second, as someone involved in dog sports and conformation, intact dogs are necessary for ethical breeding programs, preservation of breed standards, and participation in certain competitions. AKC conformation events require dogs to be intact. These events promote health testing, temperament evaluation, and responsible breeding practices. Mandating sterilization would effectively remove the ability for responsible preservation breeders and sport participants to continue their work while doing little to address irresponsible backyard breeding.

Third, from a training perspective, responsible intact dogs are not inherently behavior problems. I regularly work with intact dogs that are stable, social, and well managed. Behavior issues stem from poor management and lack of training, not simply reproductive status. Policy should focus on irresponsible ownership and neglect rather than penalizing responsible dog owners who follow health testing and ethical breeding standards.

I support efforts to reduce shelter overpopulation and irresponsible breeding. However, broad sterilization mandates are not supported by current veterinary research and fail to account for the health and sporting realities of many dogs in Hawai‘i. Education, accessible veterinary care, and enforcement of existing animal welfare laws would be more effective approaches.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB3012.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.