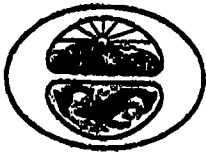


TESTIMONY

HB 2907

fax 594-6659



Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Hearing: Wednesday, March 12, 2008 2:45 pm

Room 414

Support for HB 2907 Making an Appropriation for Feral Pig Abatement

Aloha. The Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports HB 2907, which makes an appropriation to the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources for pig traps, etc. The DLNR has failed to control the range and numbers of feral and game mammals in Hawai'i. This is a tragedy, and the State must be held liable for the damage these animals cause on public natural area reserves, watersheds, habitats, and recreation areas, as well as private farms, orchards, ranches, gardens, and residences.

The DLNR should provide the staff and equipment to remove feral pigs and other feral and game mammals from private property. Private citizens should not have to foot the bill because of the DLNR's failure to manage game mammals in a responsible manner. I recently had 8 feral pigs removed from my property in 4 days. Hunters helped us out by placing a large cage trap and removing the animals. I am very grateful to these hunters, and have compensated them out of my own pocket. DLNR should reimburse private citizens who have to remove animals from their yards.

The larger issue is getting the DLNR to manage game mammals responsibly. We support any legislation that requires DLNR to develop and implement a plan to control feral pigs and other feral and game mammals statewide. Island-specific plans are needed to address this serious problem. Feral pigs in native forest and watershed are a problem on virtually every island. The federal and state governments took no action for years to control axis deer on Maui when there was a chance to remove them from the island. Now, it is probably too late, and the deer are exploding. Goats are exploding on the Big Island, especially in Kona and Kohala. They occupy native dry forest and other ecosystems, and cause serious erosion and damage to native Hawaiian plants. Goat herds are a regular occurrence along major highways and roadways on the Kona side, and it is only a matter of time before a major accident occurs on the highway because of the goats. Mouflon are also exploding on the Big Island. They are in native forest and watershed, and are a major threat to native species. A colleague recently saw a flock of mouflon with close to 200 animals. She didn't recognize "the line on the horizon" until she was close enough to realize it was a large flock of mouflon. They are also in the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve and are being moved to various parts of the island by private landowners and others for trophy and public hunting. This is tragic. Please require the DLNR to control these animals. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely, 
Marjorie Ziegler



Working Today for the Nature of Tomorrow

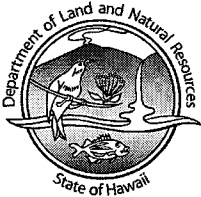
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

on House Bill 2907 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR FERAL PIG ABATEMENT

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER AND LAND**

March 12, 2008

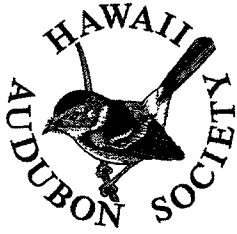
House Bill 2907 appropriates unspecified funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) for the reduction and abatement of the feral pig population, including the purchase and maintenance of tools and equipment necessary for abatement activities, such as box traps, baits, and corrals. While the Department supports the intent of this measure, it nonetheless has concerns with the fiscal impact this bill will have with funding, on the Executive Supplemental Budget request.

Complaints of feral pigs have increased in some areas in recent years, especially where public hunting is limited. The Department has responded by creating special hunts and opening new areas to allow public hunting to be used to assist the control efforts and working with the Oahu Pig Hunters Association and private landowners to control pigs. Expanded use of trapping methods would increase the success of the program, particularly in urban areas where public hunting must be limited.

Trapping methods can be extremely effective when deployed properly. Department staff are trained in the use of trapping methods and have used these methods effectively in many areas. The Department strives to use public hunting where appropriate, but trapping methods are often needed in cases where public hunting is not safe, feasible, and effective. In addition, the Department has assisted the public by providing training and workshops to landowners that wish to trap feral pigs on their lands.

It's worth noting that while the Department seeks to use public hunting wherever possible, a recent court ruling would prevent the establishment of such special hunts without a time-consuming rule making procedure. House Bill 2956 restores the Department's flexibility to open new seasons, increase bag limits and methods of take, with Board of Land and Natural Resources' action. These mechanisms enable the Department to quickly increase opportunities

for the public to participate in feral pig control and to address pig problems in urban areas, and the Department urges support for that bill (House Bill 2956)



For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife

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TO: Committee on Water and Land
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair & Senator Russell Kokubun, Vice Chair

HEARING: Wednesday, March 12, 2008; 2:45 P.M., Conference Rm. 414

Re: HB2907, Making an appropriation for feral pig abatement.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Chair Hee and Vice Chair Kokubun, and members of the Committee on Land and Water. On behalf of the Hawai'i Audubon Society I offer this written testimony in support of HB2907. The Hawai'i Audubon Society (HAS), was founded in 1939, and is Hawai'i's oldest conservation group, with over 1,500 dedicated members statewide. The Society's primary mission is the protection of Hawai'i's native birds, wildlife and habitats.

This Hawaiian honeycreeper was only discovered in the rainforest of Maui's Haleakala Volcano in 1973, and yet it probably holds the distinction of being the most endangered bird in the world. This species is now on the verge of extinction, with an apparent population of just three individuals. The exact causes of Po'o-uli's rapid population decline since the species' discovery in 1973, are not well understood at all. However the activities of feral pigs on the Hawaiian Islands have had a devastating impact on the native flora of the region, which in turn has had serious implications for the many unique Hawaiian bird species that evolved together with these plants. In Po'o-uli's current rainforest habitat, feral pigs have wiped out the forest understory in spots; this leads to erosion and disturbance of roots, which results in the death of subcanopy trees.

It is without contradiction that Feral pigs are one of the most destructive animals in the State of Hawai'i. It continues to be a serious threat to our native bird habitats and our native rain forest. Feral pigs are a major factor in rain forest degradation because they destroy native understory, which provides space of invasive species, creates massive erosion of soil and organic matter, and damages tree composition and root systems.

Over the years this degradation of the rain forest has led to the application of several control techniques, including fencing and snaring that this paper recommend for removal of feral pig in native Hawai'i rain forest. Fencing and snaring provided to be the most effective for managing feral pig population because they limit the dispersal of feral pig as well as remove of large number of pigs.

Making an appropriation to DLNR for feral pig abatement is both prudent and propitious. Unless controlled feral pigs with continue to destroy critical forest areas and along with it bird habitat. The Hawai'i Audubon Society urges the committee to vote to pass HB2907, for final hearing before the Committee on Ways & Means.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony here today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Massengale', written in a cursive style.

George Massengale, JD
Legislative Analyst

TESTIMONY

HB 2907

(END)