

**SB 1009**

**nishihara5 - Randy**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 5:13 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** Leslie.Campaniano@hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1009 on 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM  
**Attachments:** SB1009\_AGR\_2-8-2011\_AGL-final.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Categories:** Red Category

Testimony for AGL 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM SB1009

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position:  
Testifier will be present: Yes  
Submitted by: Chair Russell S. Kokubun  
Organization: Hawaii Department of Agriculture  
Address:  
Phone: 973-9552  
E-mail: [Leslie.Campaniano@hawaii.gov](mailto:Leslie.Campaniano@hawaii.gov)  
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

Comments:

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
Governor



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

JAMES J. NAKATANI  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 Fax: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE  
STATE OF HAWAII

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
FEBRUARY 8, 2011  
2:55 P.M.  
STATE CAPITOL, CONFERENCE ROOM 229

SENATE BILL NO. 1009  
RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF ANIMALS

Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1009. The purpose of this bill is: (1) to increase the number of live, non-venomous male snakes that a government agency may import into the State from two (2) to six (6); (2) to allow a government agency to import up to ten (10) live male specimens of Flying Foxes (Pteropus sp), also known as Bats; and (3) to expand the purposes for which a government agency may import snakes or bats from zoo exhibition, to include education and research in the zoo.

The Department is opposed to this bill because it could negatively and unnecessarily impact Hawaii's threatened and endangered endemic species of bat by the introduction of internal and external diseases along with the imported animal. Rabies is another form of disease that is associated with bats and is undetectable when it is intercepted on animals that are rabies vectors in cargo unless euthanized and

tested using brain tissue. A flying fox was the first animal that was intercepted by the department and diagnosed as positive for rabies.

As for the bill's proposed increase in the number of snakes allowed for government zoos, increasing the number of snakes into Hawaii is not in the best interest of a state that currently is fighting the battle against illegal smuggling of non-venomous pet snakes. The importation and exhibition of more non-venomous snakes will increase the curiosity and interest in private individuals to possess these animals as "pets," and therefore encourage smuggling.

The Department is concerned that the bill not only increases the number and kind of prohibited creatures allowed for import by a government agency under this exception, but it also expands the purpose for import from government zoo exhibition to education and research in a government zoo. The Legislature prohibited snakes and flying foxes (bats) from entering the State because they are a threat to public health and safety, and in the case of snakes, a threat to the environment as well. The Legislature crafted a narrow exception for snakes for government zoo exhibition and for training of brown tree snake detector dogs and addressed public health and environmental concerns by allowing only two non-venomous males for zoo exhibition and up to four sterile male brown tree snakes for detector dog training. As prohibited creatures, snakes and bats are presently not allowed for import for education or research, even by the University of Hawaii. It is not clear from the bill what type of education or research would be conducted on snakes and bats at a government zoo, why such research needs to be conducted there, or whether a state government zoo is qualified in this regard. Expanding the narrow exception for import of prohibited creatures by a

government agency should only be done upon a demonstration of real need and for well-defined purposes under conditions that do not put public health and safety or the environment at risk.

For the foregoing reasons, the Department opposes S.B. No. 1009. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 1009.

**nishihara5 - Randy**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 1:31 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** Tracy.S.Oshiro@hawaii.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1009 on 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM  
**Attachments:** SB1009\_LNR\_02-08-11\_AGL.pdf

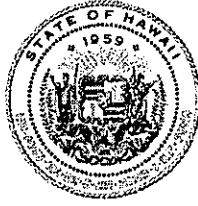
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Testimony for AGL 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM SB1009

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: Yes  
Submitted by: Tracy Oshiro  
Organization: DLNR  
Address: 1151 Punchbowl Street Honolulu, HI 96813  
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E-mail: [Tracy.S.Oshiro@hawaii.gov](mailto:Tracy.S.Oshiro@hawaii.gov)  
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

Comments:

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.  
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of  
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
AGRICULTURE**

**Tuesday, February 8, 2011  
2:55 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1009  
RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF ANIMALS.**

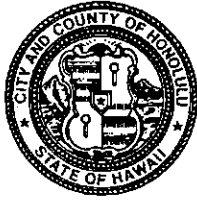
Senate Bill 1009 increases the number of live, nonvenomous snakes that a government agency may maintain in and import into the State from 2 to 6 and allows a government agency to import up to 10 individuals of the genus *Pteropus* flying fox. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports Senate Bill 1009.

As indicated in Senate Bill 1009, imported snakes and flying foxes may be held only for exhibition, education, or research in a government zoo, and only after evidence of male sex and measures to assure the prevention of escape have been provided. The Department believes that the measures to restrict the import to government agencies such as government operated zoos or department of agriculture for research or training purposes, and restrictions on numbers and sex - only males - are adequate to prevent the release, spread and establishment of non-native and damaging species through these activities.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

777 WARD AVENUE · HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814-2166  
PHONE: (808) 768-5400 \* FAX: (808) 768-5433 \* INTERNET: [www.honolulu.gov/des](http://www.honolulu.gov/des)

GOLF COURSE DIVISION \* HONOLULU ZOO \* NEAL S. BLAISDELL CENTER AND WAIKIKI SHELL



PETER B. CARLISLE  
MAYOR

SIDNEY A. QUINTAL  
ACTING DIRECTOR

February 4, 2011

**Memorandum**

TO: Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Gilbert Kahele, Vice Chair  
Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Tommy Higashino, Assistant Zoo Director

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY RELATING TO SB 1009 RELATING TO IMPORTATION  
OF ANIMALS**

**Hearing date: Tuesday, 08 February 2011**

**Hearing time: 2:55 PM**

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee on Agriculture:

My name is Tommy Higashino and I've been an employee of the Honolulu Zoo for thirty six years where I started off as an animal keeper trainee, worked most of the sections of the Zoo up to my current position as the Assistant Director of the Zoo.

There are only supposed to be two legal snakes in the State of Hawaii, both of them at the Honolulu Zoo, both males and non-venomous. During my career at the Zoo, I've seen a number of snakes pass through our facility as turn-ins under the amnesty donation program, confiscations or captures. Listed below are some statistics on the number of snakes we've held. Some were kept for display with the permission of the Department of Agriculture-Plant Quarantine Branch (DOA-PQ), but most were sent away to animal dealers on the mainland. These numbers are in addition to any resident snakes we had in our population at the time.

1985-4 1986-1 1990-4 1991-16 1992-30 1993-5 1994-9 1995-12 1996-5 1997-2  
2000-6 2001-4 2003-4 2004-2 2005-1 2006-4

As you can see between the years of 1991 and 1995, the Zoo cared for a total of seventy two snakes. The Honolulu Zoo was entrusted with the care and security of these snakes by DOA-PQ because they didn't have an adequate facility to house them until their new facility was built. It would've been easy to euthanize the snakes but ethically and morally, they didn't ask to be brought into the State where they are illegal



so the Zoo accepted the responsibility to care for these snakes at our expense until they could be shipped out. There has never been an escape of a snake placed under the Zoo's care.

As a Zoo, we would like to show the diversity of snakes and as we move into our Master Plan there is no way to do that with only two specimens so we are requesting to increase the number of snakes allowed at the Zoo from two to six at any one time. In addition, we want to educate the public about the introduction of alien species into the ecosystem and the impact these species can have and what better place to do this than at the Zoo where we have over 500,000 visitors per year.

Fruit bats are an integral part of many forests as pollinators and seed dispersers. They are also impressive creatures with wingspans of up to four feet. We are requesting approval to import up to ten male specimens. By importing only males, we insure that there will be no breeding should one or more of them escape. These will be acquired as captive-bred specimens from other Zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums who have to meet strict standards on health care and management.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this bill.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
Feb. 08, 2011  
Hearing 2:55 PM

**TESTIMONY SB 1009**

February 7, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an animal keeper at the Honolulu Zoo and the mother of 2-year-old son. As a mother, I want my child to learn about the natural world and to be exposed to as many things possible. My family travels often to the mainland so I am not worried about my son being exposed to snakes. He will see them at mainland zoos and in a limited capacity at our zoo. However, I know that there are children out there who won't have these opportunities. There are children in Hawaii who may never have a chance to travel out of state and be given that kind of opportunity. For this reason, I think that it is important for the Honolulu Zoo to be allowed six male snakes. Therefore, I am in support of SB1009.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Leong  
3327 Duval St.  
Honolulu, Hi 96815

Feb. 08, 2011

Hearing 2:55 PM

Testimony for SB 1009

To Whom it May Concern:

Having been a volunteer at the Honolulu Zoo in the reptile department for 18 years I have seen how interested children are in reptiles; especially snakes. Unlike the mainland where children have the opportunity to see many different snakes in the wild or at zoos—the Honolulu Zoo is the only place in Hawaii. It is very hard to get a full appreciation of snakes by just seeing one or reading about them in books. Why not give the children of Hawaii an opportunity to learn about and see many different snakes.

I am in support of the Honolulu Zoo having additional snakes to broaden Hawaii's children's knowledge and experience.

Thank you for your time.

Sandy Berk  
Reptile Volunteer at the Honolulu Zoo

2550 KOHIO AVE  
HONOLULU, HI 96815

**nishihara1 - Dale**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 3:02 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** andi\_winter@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1009 on 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM

Testimony for AGL 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM SB1009

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Andrea Matsumoto  
Organization: Individual  
Address:  
Phone: 8082064476  
E-mail: [andi\\_winter@hotmail.com](mailto:andi_winter@hotmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

**Comments:**

As a former volunteer at Honolulu Zoo for 6 years, I strongly support allowing the zoo to keep more solely male snakes at the zoo. They are very responsible keepers. Allowing more male snakes to be kept poses no risk to Hawaii's environment and benefits the educational purposes of children in the state. Thank you.

**nishihara1 - Dale**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 3:32 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** jermaui@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1009 on 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM  
**Attachments:** To Whom it May Concern.doc

Testimony for AGL 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM SB1009

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Jeremy Coburn  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 1202 Pihana Str. Honolulu, HI 96825  
Phone: 808-283-6889  
E-mail: [jermaui@yahoo.com](mailto:jermaui@yahoo.com)  
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern:

Testimony for SB 1009

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Jeremy Coburn and I am a volunteer at the Honolulu Zoo Reptiles Department. In this department we have an array of lizards, skinks, amphibians, and tortoises to share and educate the public. Although we can share these wonderful gifts with our community, we are very limited on our species of snakes as we only have one, "Bounce", our ball python. I feel it is very important to add more species of snakes to continue the global awareness of our planet's diverse animal kingdom as well as expand consciousness to living things globally in addition to understanding various eco-systems. As a result, I support the zoo in their efforts to increase the number of different species of snakes we can exhibit.

Sincerely,  
Jeremy Coburn

**nishihara5 - Randy**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 3:53 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** benjaminpries@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1009 on 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Testimony for AGL 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM SB1009

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Benjamin Pries  
Organization: Individual  
Address: Kaipii Street Kailua, Hawaii  
Phone: 808-620-0499  
E-mail: [benjaminpries@gmail.com](mailto:benjaminpries@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

Comments:

**nishihara5 - Randy**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 3:56 PM  
**To:** AGL Testimony  
**Cc:** srlouie86@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB1009 on 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Testimony for AGL 2/8/2011 2:55:00 PM SB1009

Conference room: 229  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Sean Louie  
Organization: Individual  
Address:  
Phone:  
E-mail: [srlouie86@gmail.com](mailto:srlouie86@gmail.com)  
Submitted on: 2/7/2011

Comments: