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**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**MARCH 21, 2018  
8:45 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5 SD1  
ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO EVALUATE THE  
IMPORT REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS FOR DOMESTIC ANIMALS**

Chairperson Creagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 5 SD1. This resolution encourages the Department of Agriculture to evaluate the import requirements and process for domestic animals. The Department opposes this bill because upgrades and solutions applicable to this resolution have already been implemented or are in-process.

Rabies is a progressive fatal neurologic disease that can infect all mammals, including humans. The rabies virus is usually transmitted via animal bites and has a variable incubation period from three weeks to three months, rarely exceeding six months. Globally, dogs are recognized as the leading source of rabies infections in humans. For this reason, Hawaii has maintained a rabies quarantine program to regulate the movement of dogs and cats into Hawaii. The Rabies Quarantine Branch is tasked with ensuring that a dog's or cat's capability to carry and transmit the rabies virus has been reviewed and validated for compliance with import regulations.

The program has been working with a vendor to replace the current computer system for the Animal Quarantine Station. In December 2017, the first of phase of a new database system was implemented. This portion of the system increased efficacy of internal operations for record review, Neighbor Island Permit creation, and accounting. An additional part of the system that is nearing completion is an online



portal that owners will be able to access. This web portal will allow payment with credit card and the capability for owners to register and see the status of their pet's application. It is estimated that this phase will be completed by summer 2018.

Service animals are provided modified entry requirements. For example, service animals are not charged any fees by the Department including the Direct Airport Release Program. In addition, service animals are not subject to the same timing requirements as other pets for passing the rabies titer test or rabies vaccination. Amendments to Chapter 4-29, HAR governing dog and cat importation are in process which will also reduce preparation time and increase the number of animals that qualify for direct airport release.

Honolulu is the only port of entry into Hawaii. To accommodate the request for direct flights to neighbor island ports, a Neighbor Island Inspection Permit (NIIP) system was put in place in 2008. Each entry is approved by the Department prior to the dog or cat's arrival by issuing a NIIP after confirming an approved veterinary facility will meet the animal to conduct an inspection and document review. Private facilities on the neighbor islands with veterinarians were enlisted to conduct these inspections and processing because the program only has staff on Oahu.

The Department does not control prices for services provided by private operations that perform inspection services on the neighbor islands. An endeavor to do so will likely result in significantly reducing the number of participating veterinary facilities. This was experienced when the NIIP system was developed. An alternative is for the state to perform neighbor island inspections and processing. However, the Animal Quarantine Special Fund does not receive general fund support and all expenditures must be defrayed by program fees. Based on the experience the Division gained with the Airport Animal Quarantine Holding Facility in Honolulu, the expense for personnel, equipment and facilities necessary to provide inspection capability on the neighbor islands would be ineffective in reducing costs to the NIIP pet owner while subsequently increasing fees for others that enter Honolulu.

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