
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO AMEND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE
RULES TO ALLOW FOR COMMERCIAL SALE OF RABBIT MEAT FOR
CONSUMPTION.

1 WHEREAS, only fifteen percent of Hawaii's food supply is
2 grown locally, and the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan
3 identifies the goal of doubling local food production by 2030;
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, due to Hawaii's remote location and reliance on
7 imported food, Hawaii's food security is particularly vulnerable
8 to natural disasters and disruptions of the shipping and food
9 supply; and

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11 WHEREAS, by replacing only ten percent of the food Hawaii
12 currently imports, an estimated \$313,000,000 dollars would
13 remain in the State; and

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15 WHEREAS, in many countries and regions around the world,
16 rabbit meat is a widely consumed, commercially-available protein
17 source; and

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19 WHEREAS, rabbits have a high rate of reproduction, early
20 maturity, rapid growth rate, high genetic selection potential,
21 efficient feed and land space utilization, and high-quality
22 nutritious meat; and

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24 WHEREAS, rabbit meat is lower in fat, cholesterol, and
25 calories than beef, chicken, lamb, pork, and turkey with
26 comparable protein levels; and

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28 WHEREAS, developing a rabbit meat industry in Hawaii may
29 contribute positively to Hawaii's sustainability goals, allow
30 for increased food self-sufficiency, and support economic
31 development and more diverse product lines for Hawaii ranchers;
32 and



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2 WHEREAS, demand for rabbit meat in the United States is
3 gradually increasing due to increasing demand from restaurants
4 and consumers interested in sustainable and exotic meats; and
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6 WHEREAS, producers on the island of Hawaii are successfully
7 cultivating rabbits for subsistence consumption, but lack a
8 regulatory framework that would allow for the commercial sale of
9 the rabbit meat; and
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11 WHEREAS, according to title 9 Code of Federal Regulations
12 part 354 entitled "Voluntary Inspection of Rabbits and Edible
13 Products Thereof," the United States Department of Agriculture
14 (USDA) does not mandate the federal Food Safety and Inspection
15 Service (FSIS) to inspect the slaughter of rabbits, and the
16 inspection is voluntary and subject to fees and charges by the
17 FSIS; and
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19 WHEREAS, the Department of Health, pursuant to section 11-
20 50-31, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), allows for the sale of
21 game animals, including mammals such as rabbits, that are
22 commercially raised for food; provided they are raised,
23 slaughtered, and processed under a voluntary inspection program
24 conducted by the agency that has health jurisdiction, or a
25 routine inspection program conducted by an agency other than the
26 agency with animal health jurisdiction; and
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28 WHEREAS, there is currently no USDA voluntary inspection
29 program in the State of Hawaii, and there is no comparable state
30 voluntary inspection program for the inspection of rabbit meat
31 for commercial sale; and
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33 WHEREAS, Hawaii has no routine inspection program for game
34 animals allowing rabbit meat producers to commercially sell
35 their product as an approved food source under the Department of
36 Health's administrative rules; and
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38 WHEREAS, establishing a state voluntary inspection program
39 that would meet the federal requirements is costly and would
40 require additional state funds, personnel, and facilities; and



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1 WHEREAS, establishing a routine inspection program for game
2 animals under state agencies may also be cost-prohibitive; and
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4 WHEREAS, the Department of Health has previously amended
5 section 11-50-31, HAR, to allow for the commercial sale of
6 field-dressed wild game animals; provided the animals receive a
7 postmortem examination by an approved veterinarian or
8 veterinarian's designee; and
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10 WHEREAS, the lack of a clear and specific process for the
11 inspection of rabbits commercially raised for food is a
12 deterrent for producers to cultivate rabbits for intrastate
13 commerce; now, therefore,
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15 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
16 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
17 2020, that the Department of Health is urged to amend its
18 administrative rules to allow for the commercial sale of rabbit
19 meat for consumption; and
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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health
22 consider adopting a rule similar to section 11-50-31, HAR, that
23 would allow for the commercial sale of rabbit meat for
24 consumption; provided that the rabbit herd receives inspections
25 by a veterinarian who holds a valid license to practice in the
26 State of Hawaii; and
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Health is
29 encouraged to consider including other game animals, as defined
30 in section 11-50-2, HAR, in its amended rules; and
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
33 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health and
34 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.
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OFFERED BY: *David Iarnas*



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