



**HB409**  
RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS  
House Committee on Agriculture

February 3, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Room 325

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend that the Board of Trustees **OPPOSE** HB409, which would encourage the proliferation of inhumane cat “colonies” and the increased abandonment of cats that pose serious threats to both native wildlife and local residents, including Native Hawaiians.

**Introduced cat populations have devastating effects on island ecosystems and native species.** Through food competition, disease transmission, predation, and displacement, cats have directly and indirectly contributed to the endangerment and extinction of dozens of native species; a 2011 study concluded that, on island ecosystems throughout the world, “feral cats preyed on at least 175 endangered vertebrates (25 reptiles, 123 birds and 27 mammals) and are at least in part responsible for 14% of global bird, mammal and reptile extinctions, currently affecting 8% of critically endangered birds, mammals and reptiles.”<sup>1</sup> Native birds appear particularly sensitive to cat introductions: for example, in the Phoenix Islands, the threatened bristle-thighed curlew can no longer be found on islands with feral cat populations; in Tuamotu, feral cats compete with the endemic and critically endangered Tuamotu kingfisher; on Kerguelen Island, the reproductive success of the native skua has greatly decreased as a result of competition with feral cats; on Ascension Island, feral cats limit settlements and often kill sooty terns, masked boobies, and frigates; and in Port Cros island in the Mediterranean, cats are responsible for the high mortality rates of young Yelkouan shearwaters.<sup>2</sup>

**The Hawaiian archipelago is no exception to the long list of islands whose ecosystems have been impacted by cat introductions.** As early as 1903, an ornithologist reported how “on Lāna‘i, in walking up a single ravine, I counted the remains of no less than 22 native birds killed by cats.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, feral cat predation on Hawai‘i’s threatened and endangered bird species continues to this day: between 2012 and 2015, the Kaua‘i National Wildlife Refuge attributed the deaths of 237 endangered waterbirds to feral cats alone; in addition, feral cats have also been documented preying on Newell’s shearwaters, wedge-tailed shearwaters, the O‘ahu elepaio, ‘alae ‘ula, and Hawaiian petrels, among others. **In one**

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<sup>1</sup> Medina, et. al., *A Global Review of the Impacts of Invasive Cats on Island Endangered Vertebrates*, GLOBAL CHANGE BIOLOGY, 2011, at 3509 (emphasis added); see also Medina, et. al., *Underlying Impacts of Invasive Cats on Islands: Not Only a Question of Predation*, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, 2014, at 328.

<sup>2</sup> Medina, et. al., *Underlying Impacts of Invasive Cats on Islands: Not Only a Question of Predation*, BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, 2014, at 327-338.

<sup>3</sup> Kim Steutermann Rogers, *Feral Cats are a Serious Threat to Hawai‘i’s Endangered Birds, Monk Seals and Dolphins*, HONOLULU MAGAZINE, Oct. 12, 2016.

**recent case on Kauaʻi, a single feral cat has been estimated to have killed 101 endangered birds over a six month period.** In addition to depredation and associated displacement from critical habitat, forensic evidence now suggests that cats may also impact a range of endangered native species through the transmission of fatal diseases, such as cat-borne toxoplasmosis;<sup>4</sup> dead specimens of critically endangered ʻalaʻala and ʻĪlioholoikauaua, as well as naiʻa, have recently been found to have been infected by this disease.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, feral cats, including cats that have been trapped, neutered, and released, have now been added to Hawaiʻi's most impactful invasive species list, and have been recently recognized as one of the top 25 invasive terrestrial species in the Western United States.<sup>6</sup> **Without proactive and timely controls over our ever-increasing feral cat population – estimated in 2012 to number 300,000 on Oʻahu alone – many such culturally significant native species face devastation and even potential extinction in the near future.**

**The failure to address feral cat populations in a timely manner may also pose a particular threat to Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, rural community members, and others who frequently recreate in and subsist from nearshore waters, or who consume produce grown in areas that may be frequented by feral cats.** Toxoplasmosis infection, which results from the *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite that reproduces only in felid intestinal tracts, is considered extremely dangerous to pregnant woman and individuals with compromised immune systems.<sup>7</sup> Even in otherwise healthy individuals, toxoplasmosis infection has been linked to higher rates of mental illness, including schizophrenia, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, and brain cancer.<sup>8</sup> Toxoplasmosis can also significantly slow reaction times, with one study showing that infected individuals may be two and a half times more likely to be involved in a traffic accident.<sup>9</sup> **With the ability to survive for six months or more in soil or warm seawater,<sup>10</sup> toxoplasma oocytes shed by feral cat colonies may pose a substantial health risk for those who swim in, eat from, or otherwise enter our nearshore waters, including Native Hawaiians in particular, as well as all those**

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<sup>4</sup> Toxoplasmosis results from infection by *Toxoplasma gondii*, a parasite that reproduces only in the digestive tract of felid, and that spreads through consumption of oocytes or transmission by mosquitoes or other insects. Oocysts can remain infectious even after extended periods in harsh conditions, and can survive for more than a year in warm moist soil, up to a few years in cold water, and for six months or longer in seawater. D.S. Lindsay, et. al, *Sporulation and survival of Toxoplasma gondii oocysts in seawater*, 50 J. EUKARYOT MICROBIOL 687 (2003); Thierry M. Work, et. al., *Fatal toxoplasmosis in free-ranging endangered ʻalaʻala from Hawaii*, 36 J. OF WILDLIFE DISEASES 205, 209 (2010); see also THE CENTER FOR FOOD SECURITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY, TOXOPLASMA INFECTION 2 (2017), available at <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/toxoplasmosis.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 210; NOAA Fisheries, A Cat-astrophic Threat for Seals - How *Toxoplasma gondii* makes its way from mountain to ocean, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/files/2018/03/toxoplasmosis-faq-fnl.pdf> (last accessed March 15, 2018); Paul Kvinta, *Hawaii's crazy war over zombie cats*, OUTSIDE MAGAZINE, October 28, 2016; Associated Press, *Dolphin found to have died from parasite found in cats*, HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER, May 4, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Jessica Else, *Feral cats make invasive species list*, THE GARDEN ISLAND, March 18, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Astrid M. Tenter, et. al. *Toxoplasma gondii: from animals to humans*, 30 INT. J. PARASITOL 1217 (2000);

<sup>8</sup> E. Fuller Torrey & Robert H. Yolken, *Toxoplasma gondii and Schizophrenia*, 9 EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES 1375 (2003); Jaroslav Flegr, *Effects of Toxoplasma on human behavior*, 33 SCHIZOPHRENIA BULLETIN 757 (2007).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Lindsey, *supra* note 4.

**who consume produce from home gardens, community gardens, and commercial farming operations where feral cats may be present.**

In addition to the propagation of *T. gondii* oocysts in the environment, it should be noted that cat colonies may also pose a number of other threats to public health. **Cats are known carriers of various other parasites and infectious diseases that may be transmitted to humans and other animals (including native species as well as companion animals such as dogs), including giardia, salmonella, cryptosporidium, and hookworms; while house pets can normally be screened for such parasites and diseases through annual veterinary checkups, stray cats are unlikely to be recaptured, much less taken a veterinarian, after their first experience being trapped and “returned.”**<sup>11</sup> Cat colony feeding may also result in the proliferation of flies, lice, cockroaches, and other pests; notably, house flies alone are “strongly suspected of transmitting at least 65 diseases to humans, including typhoid fever, dysentery, cholera, poliomyelitis, yaws, anthrax, tularemia, leprosy and tuberculosis.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the potential exposure to these diseases and other nuisances associated with cat feeding may even discourage the use of open public spaces and nearshore areas, a social determinant of health that may further impact individual and community health outcomes.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, contrary to the unsupported assertions in this measure’s preamble, numerous studies have shown that “Trap-neuter-return” (TNR) strategies do not reduce feral cat populations, or provide any relief from the ecological and public health threats caused by feral cat populations. **On the contrary, the visible maintenance of a feral cat colony has been shown to increase rates of cat abandonment, including cats that have not been sterilized:**

A study of TNR implemented countywide in San Diego showed that feral cat populations had not decreased after 10 years, and a similar result was found after 7 years in Alachua County, Florida, where feral cat populations increased (Foley et al. 2005). Four years of TNR at a colony in London saw the population fluctuate between 19 and 17 with no indication of further decline (Neville

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<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Parasites – Giardia, <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/giardia/index.html> (last accessed March 16, 2018) (“*Giardia* is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body for long periods of time and makes it tolerant to chlorine disinfection. While the parasite can be spread in different ways, water (drinking water and recreational water) is the most common mode of transmission”); CDC, Parasites – Cryptosporidium, <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/crypto/index.html> (last accessed March 16, 2018) (“The parasite is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body for long periods of time and makes it very tolerant to chlorine disinfection. . . . *Cryptosporidium* is a leading cause of waterborne disease among humans in the United States.”); CDC, Parasites – Zoonotic Hookworm, <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/zoonotichookworm/> (last accessed March 16, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Insect Advice from Extension, <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/house-flies> (last accessed March 16, 2018); see also Hawai’i State Department of Health Vector Control Section, Domestic Flies, <http://health.hawaii.gov/san/files/2014/04/DOMESTIC-FLIES-Edit-04012014.pdf> (last accessed March 16, 2018). For example, a typhus outbreak in Orange County was specifically linked to feral cats near schools. Sharon Bernstein, Orange County Typhus Cases: Symptoms and Treatment, <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/symptoms-treatment-typhus-orange-county-155417285.html>.

<sup>13</sup> See Act 55 (Reg. Sess. 2014); HRS § 226-20.

1989). Ten years of TNR in Rome showed a 16–32% decrease in population size across 103 colonies but concluded that TNR was “a waste of time, energy, and money” if abandonment of owned cats could not be stopped (Natoli et al. 2006). Two colonies subject to TNR in Florida were tracked for over a year and population size of both colonies increased owing to the influx of new cats dumped at the highly visible sites (Castillo & Clarke 2003).<sup>14</sup>

Notably, Trap-Neuter-Release is also considered an **inhumane** approach for cats themselves, by animal welfare organizations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.<sup>15</sup> **For example, feral cats generally succumb slowly and painfully from untreated illnesses, injuries, infections, and in some cases from human malice.** Even allowing an “owned” cat outdoors is frowned upon by the Veterinary Centers for America, due to the frequency of injury from vehicles and other animals, as well as the risk of infection by contagious diseases. Accordingly, the increased abandonment of cats as a result of the visible maintenance of feral cat colonies will likely only increase the number of cats that experience the suffering and inhumane conditions of living in an unsheltered environment.

By exempting cat “caretakers” from state and laws relating to the feeding and harboring of feral cats, and promoting the maintenance of cat colonies throughout the islands, this measure may tie the hands of the state and counties from addressing the substantial and growing threats that feral cats pose to our native wildlife and to public health. **Again, TNR strategies have not been shown to successfully reduce cat populations, and have been shown to in some cases increase rates of cat abandonment, including cats that have not been sterilized.**<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, this measure may only exacerbate feral cats’ impacts on our native wildlife and communities, and severely inhibit our government’s ability to address the looming environmental and public health crisis that may be posed by feral cats.

Therefore, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **HOLD** HB409. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

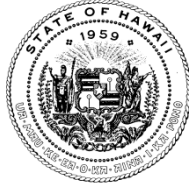
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<sup>14</sup> Travis Longcore, et. al. *Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return*, 23 CONSERVATION BIOLOGY 887, 891 (2009); see also Allison D. Roebing, et al., *Rabies Prevention and Management of Cats in the Context of Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, Release Programs* 61 ZOOLOGICAL PUBLIC HEALTH 290 (2014) (“[C]laims by TNR advocates that managed colonies can reduce feral cat populations and control rodents are contradicted by research”); Daniel Castillo and Alice L. Clarke, *Trap/neuter/release methods ineffective in controlling domestic cat “colonies” on public lands*.23 NAT AREA J. 247 (2003).

<sup>15</sup> See PETA, Animal Rights Uncompromised: Feral Cats, <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/why-peta/feral-cats/> (last accessed February 8, 2018); Daphna Nachminovitch, *TNR Is Dangerous Both to Cats and to Other Animals*, CHANGING PLANET, Mar. 8, 2017, <https://blog.nationalgeographic.org/2017/03/08/tnr-is-dangerous-both-to-cats-and-to-other-animals/>.

<sup>16</sup> Travis Longcore, et. al. *Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return*, 23 CONSERVATION BIOLOGY 4, 887 (2009). Notably, Trap-Neuter-Release is also considered an inhumane approach for cats themselves, by organizations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. See PETA, Animal Rights Uncompromised: Feral Cats, <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/why-peta/feral-cats/> (last accessed February 8, 2018).

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



**TESTIMONY BY:**

JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
LYNN A.S. ARAKI-REGAN  
DEREK J. CHOW  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 3, 2021  
10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Teleconference

**H.B. 409**  
**RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS**

House Committee on Agriculture

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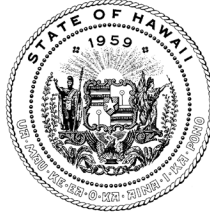
The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** H.B. 409 which seeks the sterilization of feral cats to limit their impact on indigenous and rare wildlife, especially birds.

Ground nesting seabird species, such as Newell Shearwaters ('a'o), are especially prone to predation by feral cats or mongoose. Therefore, the control of predators will increase the adult population and hatchling survival of 'a'o and other endangered bird species.

Implementation of a feral cat control will greatly enhance the conservation and restoration of rare or endangered species in the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA  
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL  
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

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
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Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

10:00 AM

Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 409  
RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS

House Bill 409 proposes to have the Department of Health contract with a nonprofit animal rescue group to oversee caretakers of feral cats and mongooses and would exempt those caretakers from state laws and county ordinances related to the feeding and confinement of cats and mongooses. This measure would also establish a formal trap-sterilize-return process. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly opposes this measure.**

Feral cats and mongooses are problematic in Hawai'i for a number of reasons: they are predators of native wildlife, including species protected under federal law; they are hosts of parasites that can threaten both wildlife and humans; and "managed" colonies on public lands leave fecal matter in some of our most valuable natural areas, including State Parks and conservation areas managed by the Department. Across the U.S., cats kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds per year. Reducing predation is a critical component of avoiding further declines in the populations of Hawai'i's endemic species, for which state agencies and partners spend millions of dollars annually.

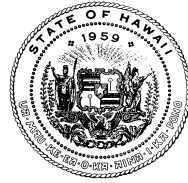
A number of scientific studies are summarized in a 2009 review paper by Longcore et al, which describes how trap-neuter-return (TNR) does not reduce colony populations over time. The Department also notes there are challenges to the claims found in this measure that TNR is "more humane than euthanization" and "less costly." People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals opposes TNR as a method of feral cat management, as it prolongs the life of cats living on the landscape that are more likely to suffer from disease, injury, and malnourishment. With regard to cost, a 2013 study by University of Hawai'i researchers Cheryl Lohr and Christopher

Lepczyk found that TNR was less cost-effective than implementing a program of trapping and euthanasia.

The Department notes that the State of New York was sued by the American Bird Conservancy for allowing feral cat colonies to be maintained in a state park containing a federally listed, threatened species of plover, as a violation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Department also notes with regard to mongooses, this bill would be in direct conflict with existing Hawai'i statutes and administrative rules. Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §142-92 Mongoose; keeping or breeding; penalty prohibits the introduction, keeping, or breeding of mongoose. Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) §13-124 lists mongooses as injurious wildlife and HAR§13-124-3 (c) prohibits the release of injurious wildlife into the wild.

The Department supports cat and mongoose management options that combine humane treatment wherever possible with the ecological reality of mammalian predators existing on islands with vulnerable native, threatened, and endangered wildlife. Sociable cats should be adopted into homes wherever possible, and the Department is aware and supportive of options, such as cat sanctuaries or outdoor enclosures (called "cacios") that allow cats to live outside of homes but remain separated from Hawai'i's native wildlife. However, any realistic approach to the feral cat and mongoose problem in Hawai'i must include euthanasia for animals that cannot be placed into homes or sanctuaries. Implementing a TNR program would likely exacerbate the problems Hawai'i faces from feral cats and mongooses, while exposing the State to potential lawsuits under the ESA and conflicts within Hawai'i's own statutes and rules.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



LATE

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 409  
RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS**

REPRESENTATIVE MARK J.HASHEM, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Hearing Date: 2/3/2021

Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This bill has fiscal implications not included in the Governor's Executive  
2 Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and personnel  
3 priorities.

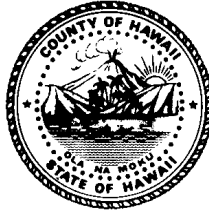
4 **Department Testimony:** The Department appreciates the intent of HB 409 to seek a resolution  
5 to the feral cat and mongoose population. It requires the Department to contract with a nonprofit  
6 animal rescue group to oversee caretakers of feral cats and mongooses; however, the  
7 Department respectfully opposes this measure as we do not believe it is a human health and  
8 environment issue.

9 It has been determined that each county already has ordinances that to varying degrees  
10 address the management of feral cats and other wildlife. They each have the ability to contract  
11 with a third party to implement the control and management of feral animals. The Department  
12 respectfully requests that this measure be deferred and allow the counties to enforce their  
13 respective established ordinances instead of creating new state regulations. We also have  
14 concerns about the caretakers being exempted from state law and county ordinances and the lack  
15 of funding to implement this measure.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



County of Hawai'i  
Council District 9 -  
North and South Kohala



**LATE**

Phone: (808) 961-8564  
(808) 887-2069

Email: [tim.richards@hawaiiicounty.gov](mailto:tim.richards@hawaiiicounty.gov)

**Chair:** Committee on Regenerative  
Agriculture, Water, Energy, and  
Environmental Management

**HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III**  
**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**District 9**

25 Aupuni Street, Ste. 1402, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 2, 2021

House Committee on Agriculture  
Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Email: [rephashem@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:rephashem@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
Honorable Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair  
Email: [repperruso@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repperruso@capitol.hawaii.gov)

RE: **Opposition of HB 409**  
Hearing Date/Time: February 3, 2021

Dear House Representatives:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **testimony in STRONG OPPOSITION of HB 409**, which requires the Department of Health to contract with a nonprofit animal rescue group to oversee caretakers of feral cats and mongooses.

As a veterinarian for the past 35 years, I understand the love of animals. However, this bill does nothing to protect our environment nor our endangered species from toxoplasmosis.

Toxoplasmosis is the term used to describe infection with the parasite *T. gondii*. Felines are hosts of the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* (*T. gondii*). Pursuant to scientific studies and reports by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Marine Science Department, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and United States Department of Agriculture, *T. gondii* relies on felines to complete its life cycle, as the sexual reproduction of *T. gondii* takes place only in a feline host. Felines are the only animals to excrete infectious oocysts and a single cat may excrete up to

House Committee on Agriculture  
Honorable Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Honorable Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair  
February 2, 2021

hundreds of millions of infectious *T. gondii* oocysts in its feces. These oocysts may remain infectious in the environment for months to years. *T. gondii* is present in feral cats and they continue to spread this parasite in the environment.

This infection is one cause of death of Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*). To date, there have been 11 confirmed deaths of Hawaiian monk seals by toxoplasmosis with only approximately 300 remaining in the main Hawaiian Islands. Toxoplasmosis has proven to be detrimental to other terrestrial and aquatic wildlife as well, including ‘Alalā (Hawaiian crow; *Corvus hawaiiensis*), Nēnē (Hawaiian goose; *Branta sandvicensis*), and the Hawaiian spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*). According to State wildlife officials, as recently as January 7, 2020, a feral cat killed an endangered Hawaiian petrel chick on Kaua‘i. According to the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council, because predation by the feral cat is instinctive, even well-fed cats will still hunt and kill wildlife.

The passing of and the implementation of this bill is detrimental to the overall health of our environment, endangered species, and our native Hawaiian wildlife, and I therefore strongly urge the deferment of HB 409.

Please feel free to contact me should you need to discuss my position and knowledge of this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Richards", with a stylized flourish at the end.

TIM RICHARDS

Hawai‘i County Council, District 9



**Hawaiian Humane Society**  
People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waiālae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826  
808.356.2200 • [HawaiianHumane.org](http://HawaiianHumane.org)

Date: Feb. 1, 2021

To: Chair Rep. Mark J. Hashem  
Vice Chair Rep. Amy A. Perruso  
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Public Policy Advocate  
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony with comments on HB 409: Relating to Animal Caretakers  
Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021, 10 a.m., Capitol room 325

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Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members.

The Hawaiian Humane Society supports the intent of House Bill 409 as it relates to assisting the work of cat colony caregivers and protecting them from laws that might hinder their efforts. Responsible trap-neuter-return-manage is a humane and effective strategy to reduce the number of Free-Roaming cats and improve their quality of life. As the bill points out, that goal is in the interests of both the conservation and animal welfare communities.

Hawaiian Humane opposes including mongoose in the bill. Cats and mongoose have very different status under existing law. It is illegal, for example, to keep a mongoose as a pet. In fact, it is illegal to care for mongoose at all without a permit from the Department of Agriculture (HRS142-92, 93, 93.5). Therefore, I know of no veterinarians who will spay/neuter a mongoose with the intent of returning it to where it was found. Mongoose do sometimes reside in cat colonies, but I do not know of any colony managers who intentionally care for them.

Hawaiian Humane would be delighted to work with the sponsors of HB 409 to engage stakeholders with expertise in TNRM to develop program terms, protocols and goals. To achieve effective results, leaders representing the dedicated volunteers who manage cat colonies across the state should be included in the designing the state's TNRM program.

Mahalo for considering our comments on HB 409 and please let me know if I can be of assistance.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 10:50:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Springer Kaye	Big Island Invasive Species Committee	Oppose	No

Comments:

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee opposes this bill.

Thanks to the good foresight of Hawaii's leadership, this state has legally protected a great deal of the land supporting Native Hawaiian forest birds and shoreline species. With their habitat protected from development, the greatest threats to our native wildlife are invasive predators and the diseases they carry.

While reasonable people may always find room to disagree about the role of animal euthanasia in managing the environment, animal control measures used by public agencies are reviewed to ensure they are humane, in that they achieve the goal of limiting the impacts of invasive predators while inflicting the least pain and suffering on the individual animal. I'm not sure the same can be said for trapping and transporting a wild animal for surgery, holding it through recovery, then transporting it again for release. In addition to causing prolonged distress to the captured animals, this prohibitively expensive process will not accomplish the stated goal of reducing the population over time, as no animals will be removed from then predator population, many animals will escape capture to continue breeding, and new reproductive animals will join the colony through migration and dumping of unwanted pets.

Because the TNR process so rarely meets the stated goal of reducing the impacts of invasive predator populations (we know of no objectively documented successes, and certainly the impact of zoonotic disease remains unaddressed), this bill contemplates conducting unnecessary, pointless surgeries on feral animals, while depleting funds that could be used more productively to protect endangered wildlife.

Considering the scarce resources afforded to the conservation of Native Hawaiian birds, the cost of performing surgery on mongooses and cats must be weighed against use of vastly more cost-effective lethal control measures. Forest restoration (i.e. watershed funding) and mosquito control research and development are other positive ways to support Native Hawaiian Bird recovery.

We respectfully ask that you defer this bill.



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 7:16:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Martin	Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project	Oppose	No

Comments:

Ladies and Gentlemen of the legislature,

There are so many inherent flaws with HB409, such that professional organizations such as Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project, along with our large network of community advocates and stewards of the land are left wondering how such a deficient proposal could even be before us. It does not escape the notice of casual observation that the very founding assumptions of this proposal do not follow reasonable logic, e.g. " The legislature further finds that the trap-sterilize-return process is not only more humane than euthanization, but less costly." Keeping domestic pet species alive in unnaturally dense concentrations, out of doors without adequate shelter, where they are exposed to vehicle death, community spread of feline infections, etc. is not more humane than euthanasia. Pet species belong indoors or under the direct supervision of their owners at all times, without exception, especially here, in arguably the extinction capitol of the world, where the two species concerned in HB409 have been directly involved in ecological catastrophe. Not even the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals approves of the practice of keeping so-called "community cats" out on the landscape. The proponents of return-to-field programs like that proposed in HB409 are a narrow subset of animal advocates, who have forgone the advice of experts in favor of their own agenda. They are variously backed by interest groups which either place the priorities of unowned, feral domestic animals above wildlife and community health, or in some cases, even stand to profit from the status quo.

As well, a lay person can readily observe that euthanizing an animal is less costly than capturing, transporting, operating on, returning to field, and subsequently providing care to these animals. It is from the very beginning of HB409 that willful suspension of disbelief begins, and only individuals without sustained critical assessment skills would continue reading to further interpret the fantasy of TNR as a solution.

There is copious research in peer reviewed literature documenting the failure of Trap Neuter Release programs. I am sure others will provide you with the education that some members of this legislature so obviously need if they are to represent the people of Hawai'i Nei with legitimacy. On the other hand, there is a paucity of peer-reviewed literature extolling the virtues of TNR programs, and in fact, any positive impacts of these programs is usually found in studies commissioned from within the domestic

animal advocacy community, with the results going unpublished because of their lack of scientific integrity.

I would like to direct your attention to the Center for Disease Control's One Health Initiative, which seeks to unify the standards of practice of keeping healthy pets and communities as one endeavor. It is shameful that we must look to national standards programs that address the holistic approach of environmental and public health here in Hawai'i, where the great traditions of mālama 'āina and mālama pono should otherwise have led us there long ago. To the extent that the introducers of HB409 have claimed any affiliation with these principals, they must withdraw this proposal immediately and work with public health and environmental health professionals to lead us in the correct direction, which, needless to say, does not involve spending precious resources in the employ of subsidizing invasive pest species. In the past year, due to the covid-19 pandemic, a vast majority of citizens have come to see the connections between personal responsibility and community health, and the moment is upon us to apply this connection to feral animal management here in Hawai'i Nei.

If we fail to act as I and my colleagues insist, future generations will see us as a failed stewards of the land. If TNR programs are legitimized, the harm they have been doing for several years now without official approval will be cemented in our legacy. Groups such as the Humane Society of the United States, and the local Humane Society groups operating independently within each of our counties must cease and desist the subsidies they provide to feral cats. We completely and emphatically reject the concept of "community cats," which assign the blame for the damaged caused by these animals de facto upon the community. In the case of harm to endangered species, it would be reasonable to find the entire community at fault for violations of the Endangered Species Act. I urge the legislature to formally reject such an injurious and deflating course of events.

As always, we in the wildlife management and conservation community stand ready to collaborate with lawmakers to find a solution that uses peer-reviewed literature, not sentimentality, as a guiding principle. We implore you to put aside HB409, and join us in protecting the biocultural resources of Hawai'i Nei.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Martin Frye

Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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February 2, 2021

RE: Support for House Bill HB 409, A Bill Relating to Animal Caretakers.

Dear Chair Hashem and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

The Humane Society of the United States supports the expansion of humane free-roaming cat population programs in Hawaii.

The HSUS understands that managing free-roaming cats is a complex issue that concerns many legislators and agencies mandated to serve and protect the public and the environment in which we live. These challenges will not be solved by a single piece of legislation; however, we believe that the intent of HB 409 can assist in effectively and humanely managing the state's free-roaming cat population.

The presence of free-roaming cats across Hawaii is nothing new. Where cat populations are present, the choice is between having a managed population that declines over time and having an unmanaged population that continues to reproduce, creating an unhealthy situation for cats, wildlife and people. Programs that rely on lethal control are ineffective, waste scarce resources, and are unpopular with the general public. Moreover, they do not work. If they did, we would not be discussing the issue today.

What is known to work on free-roaming cat populations around the globe is a comprehensive approach that involves sterilization programs and actively managing cat colonies. Animal welfare organizations, volunteers, and dedicated local cat caregivers use a variety of tools including trap-neuter-return (commonly called TNR and referred to in the bill as trap-sterilize-return), rehoming, conflict mitigation, and supplemental feeding. When such strategies are allowed and encouraged by government agencies, sterilization can occur at the scale needed to reduce the number of cats and eventually eliminate the problem. Eventually, the colonies will die off, due to attrition.

Such programs should be more widely practiced and should have broader support, particularly from agencies concerned with the negative impacts of free-roaming cats. Fewer cats mean less predation on native wildlife and a less of a chance for the transmission of disease. An extensive environmental impact report on the City of Los Angeles free-roaming cat sterilization program, issued last fall, found that the program, designed to reduce the city's cat population, would have no negative impact on the environment nor on native wildlife. While there is no current, accurate estimate of the number of free-roaming cats in Hawaii, we can agree the state has a relatively large population of cat already existing on the landscape.

Properly implemented, without excessive barriers, trap-neuter-return programs will reduce cat populations, are squarely in line with public opinion, and can tap into a willing volunteer workforce comprised of hundreds of dedicated people.





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Recognizing the value of trap-neuter-return efforts and the people who volunteer their time and money to provide a public service, the Hawaii Legislature has defeated efforts to ban the feeding of free-roaming cats time and again. HB 409 firmly establishes the Legislature's position on the issue and the desire for humane resolution of free-roaming cat overpopulation. HB 409 sets up a voluntary registration system for caretakers working on public lands where government agencies and local governments may have enacted misguided prohibitions against trap-neuter-return efforts and managing free-roaming cats through regular feeding; a system that is managed through an animal welfare organization that has a formal agreement with the Department of Health for such purposes. While this is a great step, registration systems typically have not proven effective when employed elsewhere and the goal of the bill may be achieved by simply removing prohibitions on sterilization and feeding efforts on state and county owned lands.

We share common ground with conservationists and animal welfare advocates as our ultimate goal is no feral cats living outdoors, leading to better welfare for the cats themselves, no predation of birds and wildlife, the elimination of potential public health concerns, and no nuisance-related issues. Until the day when we realize that vision and all cats live in loving homes, the HSUS supports and promotes humane management of outdoor cat populations.

Cats living outdoors is the current reality and we have a choice to actively manage the problem or not. We ask that you support the expansion of trap-neuter-return, for the benefit of the cats, people, and environment of Hawaii and enable problem-solving solutions on public lands by an engaged citizenry.

Thank you for your consideration on this important topic. We respectfully urge the committee to advance HB409.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bays  
Senior Analyst, Cat Protection & Policy  
The Humane Society of the United States

Lindsay Vierheilig  
Hawaii State Director  
The Humane Society of the United States



**Submitted to the House Committee on Agriculture  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 10:00am  
Hawaii State Capitol Room 325, Video Conference  
HB 409: Relating to Animal Caretakers**

Conservation Council For Hawaii **opposes** HB 409.

Native wildlife, plants, and delicate ecosystems are an integral component of the traditional practices, values, and livelihoods of indigenous people in Hawai'i. Our islands cover less than 0.2% of the United States land mass, but are the only home to over 25% of the species listed under the Endangered Species Act, making us the endangered species capital of the world.

While HB 409 acknowledges the negative impact feral cats and mongoose have on native wildlife, the focus and intent of this bill does not address the natural predatory instinct of cats and mongoose, free roaming cats and other invasive mammalian predators. The strategy of trap, return, and manage may, in some limited and highly controlled situations, begin to show limited population control after an extended period of time. However, free-roaming predators still kill imperiled native species, and spread *Toxoplasma gondii*, a parasite that only reproduces in the gut of felines and is shed in feces. The parasite can cause severe health impacts and disease in humans and has killed significant numbers of endangered species such as 'alalā (Hawaiian crow), nēnē (Hawaiian goose) and 'ilioholoikauaua, our treasured Hawaiian monk seal.

CCH opposes HB 409 as written and urges consideration of the following comments and recommendations:

1. Recognizing that feral and free roaming cats are also largely a human issue and require major changes in the norms for responsible pet ownership, progress needs to be made with pet owners, and other community groups, including rescue and welfare organizations on islands to stem the source of the problem. CCH recommends consistent and enforceable county and state ordinances to limit outdoor cats and reduce the numbers of feral and free-roaming predators.
2. Promote related actions to restrict free-roaming cat populations associated with human activities on islands, as well as support education programs (such as American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors Program) and common-sense rules to eliminate or reduce the impact of outdoor cat activity on native island species.
3. Appropriate funds to develop and/or adopt appropriately designed, targeted, and science-based efforts by government and conservation organizations to reduce and eliminate populations of non-native mammalian predators to protect and restore biodiversity throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our testimony in **opposition** of HB 409.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:58:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jay Penniman	Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

I wish to state my unequivocal opposition to HB409.

This bill makes a mockery of the work that my organization, Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project, stands for. We work to restore native and endangered seabirds and their habitats. Cats and mongoose are the nemesis of our seabirds, as well as our native forest birds and Hawaiian monk seals. In Maui County alone, organizations working to protect and restore native flora and fauna spend over a half a million dollars a year controlling feral cats. These animals do not belong on the landscape and the program touted in this legislative proposal, Trap, Neuter, & Release (TNR) has been shown in peer reviewed scientific literature to be a failure at reducing the number of feral animals on the landscape. (Castillo, Daniel & Alice L. Clarke. 2003. Trap/Neuter/Release Methods Ineffective in Controlling Domestic Cat "Colonies" on Public Lands. Department of Environmental Studies Florida International University). The legislature should be working on regulating the ownership of cats in the same way as dogs are regulated in the state. Cats must be licensed, owner's information recorded, and under owner's control at all times. When not in the house, or a fenced yard that the cat cannot escape, cats must be leashed. With very few exceptions, all cats must be spayed or neutered. These policies would provide for safe and humane treatment of cats. Cats loose in the environment are at risk of disease, vehicle collision and violent inter-animal interactions. Cats are obligate hosts for the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*. This organism causes disease in other mammals, including humans and monk seals, as well as birds, including our state bird, the Nene. Without cats on the landscape, Toxoplasmosis would be greatly reduced and, eventually, eliminated. This legislative attempt to bypass the sensible regulations now in place to limit feral cats in public spaces, such as boat harbors, is being pushed by a loud, vocal minority of cat lovers. My organization is constantly being called by members of the public asking how they can get rid of feral cats that are pooping in children's sandboxes, under houses and in gardens. Humane societies are misguidedly promoting returning feral cats to where they were collected. These animals are not community responsibility to maintain on the landscape! Seabirds were and are responsible for bringing marine nutrients to the terrestrial habitat. In doing

so, they formed the soils in which our native plant community evolved. These same nutrients nourish the nearshore coral reef habitats that protect our islands from erosion and provide abundant food and recreational activity. We can restore the ecological service of seabirds but we have to remove feral cats from the landscape. Bring the feral cats into fenced sanctuaries, such as has been created on LÄ• na'i. This sanctuary is one of the largest tourist draws on the island. Sanctuaries allow for the control of disease ridden cat feces, thus removing them from the beaches and gardens of island residents. Monk seals would then be at reduced risk of toxoplasmosis. The idea of sterilizing mongoose and releasing them is totally absurd. It is illegal now to release mongoose in the state. Mongoose were introduced as an early biocontrol for rats without sufficient research to show that they could control rats. Only after mongoose were here did people realize that mongoose are active in the daytime and rats at night. Thus the two coexist, doubling our invasive mammal problem without controlling the intended target. Scientific studies show that predators do not control prey, rather prey populations control predator populations. The same is true for cats – they will not limit rodent populations. Please dump this misguided attempt to legitimize a bad situation making it worse worse for human and native wildlife health!

Jay F. Penniman, Manager, Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project

808-280-4114, jayfp@hawaii.edu



February 2, 2021

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair

February 3, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**Re: TESTIMONY IN STRONG OPPOSITION OF HOUSE BILL 409 - RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS.**

Aloha Chair Hashem and Distinguished Members of the Board,

Please accept these comments submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity (Center) in **strong opposition of HB 409**. Science has demonstrated that trapping, sterilizing, and then returning (TNR) feral cats to the landscape does not adequately address the myriad of harms the overpopulation of feral cats cause throughout Hawai'i.

The Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership corporation dedicated to the protection of native, threatened, and endangered species and the habitats they depend on to survive. Through science, policy, and environmental law, the Center is actively involved in species and habitat protection issues throughout Hawai'i. The Center has more than 88,000 members throughout the United States, including Hawai'i, with a direct interest in conserving fragile and impacted ecosystems and the endangered and threatened species that depend on them.

Feral cats are one of Hawai'i's most harmful invasive species. The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources' Hawai'i Invasive Species Council website recognizes the serious threat from feral cats, in part because of the risks to native Hawaiian birds such as endangered Palila, 'Alae Ke'oke'o (Hawaiian Coot), 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater), 'Ua'u (Hawaiian Petrel), and others. For example, a 2015 report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recorded 252 likely cat kills of native birds just at Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge between 2012 and 2014. Feral

cats, sterilized or not, are highly efficient predators that, like brown tree snakes, do not belong on Hawai'i's landscape.

Feral cats also spread deadly parasites and diseases, such as the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis. Each cat may spread hundreds of millions of infectious eggs in its feces, contaminating the environment for years. Infection in humans can result in miscarriages, blindness, memory loss, or death and has been linked to several neurological disorders. Recent deaths of Hawaiian monk seals, Nēnē, dolphins, and other species suggest widespread cat-caused contamination of land and water. Maintained feral cats in colonies concentrates the spread of toxoplasmosis, threatening the health of Hawai'i's residents, tourists, and rare species.

Although trapping and sterilizing feral cats is an important component of management, the rerelease of these cats throughout the state is detrimental to human health and wildlife alike. Not only is this release inhumane abandonment, scientific studies have overwhelmingly indicated that TNR programs do not reduce feral cat populations<sup>1</sup> and are opposed by the public in Hawai'i.<sup>2</sup>

**For these reasons and more the Center requests that this committee defer HB 409 and look towards other mechanisms to address this serious problem.**

Mahalo for your consideration,

*/s/ Maxx Phillips*

Maxx Phillips, Esq.

Hawai'i Director and Staff Attorney

Center for Biological Diversity

1188 Bishop Street, Suite 2412

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

(808) 284-0007

[MPhillips@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:MPhillips@biologicaldiversity.org)

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<sup>1</sup> [Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap–Neuter–Return \(abcbirds.org\)](http://abcbirds.org)

<sup>2</sup> [Desires and management preferences of stakeholders regarding feral cats in the Hawaiian islands - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](http://nih.gov)



GOODSILL

LATE

Lisa A. Bail  
lbail@goodsill.com | (808) 547-5787

February 2, 2021

*Via Capitol Website*

Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: **HB 409 – Relating to Animal Caretakers**

**Hearing: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 10:00 am**

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to HB409.

I am a partner with Goodsill Anderson Quinn & Stifel and have practiced in the area of environmental law for more than 20 years. Part of my practice involves representing clients who face potential liability under state and federal laws regarding threatened and endangered species. These species include our native seabirds, which are subject to predation by feral cats and mongooses. This predation increases my clients' potential liability under state and federal endangered species laws.

As explained by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, "Once grounded, the seabirds experience difficulty in resuming flight and are vulnerable to introduced predators . . ." If a downed seabird can be recovered before it is subject to predation, it can be delivered to an organization like Save Our Shearwaters on Kauai which rehabilitates and releases these seabirds. The presence of feral cats reduces the possibility that downed seabirds can be recovered. Allowing reintroduction of feral cats therefore increases potential liability under endangered species laws and should not be allowed, even in managed colonies.

February 2, 2021  
Page 2

I respectfully request that you vote against HB409.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa A. Bail". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "A".

Lisa A. Bail

LAB



LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 5:21:50 PM  
Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christy Martin	UH PCSU/Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committees,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **is in opposition to HB 409 Relating to Animal Caretakers**. The aim of this measure is to require Hawai'i Department of Health to contract with an animal rescue group to oversee caretakers of feral cats and mongooses and to exempt registered caretakers of feral cats and mongooses from state laws and county ordinances relating to the feeding and confinement of cats; and establish a trap-sterilize-return process.

Beyond just negative impacts to wildlife from predation, colonies of feral cats and mongooses increase the number and volume of pathogens in the soil, streams, beaches, and parks. The expansion and support of feral animal colonies must be addressed for the benefit of society, not just these two species of animals.

Not more than a generation ago, pet dogs were allowed to roam off-leash, whether they were being taken for a walk, or just simply let out in an area without fences and there were growing populations of feral dogs in many areas. Many of those feral or free-roaming dogs were not adoptable. Against the wishes of a segment of the population, concerned citizens and decision-makers began to change laws, and attitudes and norms began to change. Today, there are still feral dogs, and some irresponsible pet owners, but I think you'll agree that the situation is better, for pets, people, and the environment. Efforts to normalize the support of feral cats in public areas may seem humane for the feral cats, but it is not in the best interest of cats, communities, and the environment.

There are several agencies that can attest to the difficulty of trapping mongooses, but to my knowledge, there are no studies on the efficacy of TNR for managing mongooses. For cats, the scenario and "science" that TNR advocates use to support this model is flawed. When people start taking care of feral cat colonies, they are ADDING resources, which supports more cats, so more cats come. Spaying/neutering at least 90% of the original cats (which is the very best that many caretakers can do), still leaves 10% of cats that can repopulate the colony within a few years. In addition, new cats will continue to move in because of the increased available resources, guaranteeing that a

colony caretaker never reaches 100% spay/neuter, and never achieving maintenance, let alone reduction in population over time.

Further, when society normalizes TNR, it increases the number of people participating, increasing colony locations and the available resources, which impacts a segment of the community and the environment, and the feral cats still aren't well-protected or cared for.

A reduction in the number of feral cats over time is an admirable goal, but TNR advocates have yet to provide a scientifically valid and repeatable method for achieving this, nor does the language of this bill support such an outcome. Exempting colony caretakers from the relevant laws is equally, if not more problematic. Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Christy Martin, CGAPS

LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 7:17:51 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
LYNN Y MURAMARU	Pacific Pet Alliance	Support	No

Comments:

The Pacific Pet Alliance supports the passage of this bill.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/29/2021 8:40:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Constance Arthur	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please consider the native birds and other animals like the monk seals who have been so negatively impacted by the over population of the feral cats. We need a humane euthanasia program. Continued overpopulation is so detrimental to Hawaii! We love cats, but we can't see thousands of feral cats being allowed to contaminate the beaches (thereby killing the monk seals) and freely kill more native birds. Enough is enough!

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/29/2021 8:43:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Angela Huntmer	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

This is complete folly. Our native birds and seabirds have enough to contned with without activiely enabling people that support cats and mongoose. Toxoplasmosis (from cat feces also kills monk seals and dolphins). Mongoose and feral cats need to eridaicated from our islands. Please do not lend your support to the further destruction of our native fauna. Thank you.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/29/2021 8:55:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Chris Reed	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please consider a humane euthanasia program, there are literally thousands of cats and mongoose on the Big Island . The native bird population is under consent attack from a number of invasive problems , the cat and mongoose problem is reversible but not , if we don't get a handle on it now .

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 4:54:05 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Erica Gallerani	Individual	Oppose	No

## Comments:

I feel so grateful to have been able to work so closely with the amazing native bird species of Kaua'i island for almost 2 years. I have witnessed some really incredible things but also some very devastating things in this state's native forests. I know first hand that the destruction possible from one cat can be absolutely devastating on the native bird populations of Hawai'i. While I understand and respect those who respect the lives of cats and mongoose, a trap-sterilize-release program will certainly ensure that even more birds species will go extinct from Hawai'i forever. Cats will never go extinct, is the risk of losing these endemic bird species worth it? I don't think so. I encourage the legislature to do the right thing and save the essential ecological, cultural, and economic resource, Hawai'i's native avifauna!

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 6:01:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Teresa Powell	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Feral animals and their caretakers should not be protected or encouraged. No feral animals should be allowed to roam free neutered or not. They still carry disease, prey on native species, and roam around on property they do not belong to. What's next? Wild dogs, feral pot bellied pigs? We need to introduce legislation to protect our environment, native species and our right to live in a neighborhood not teeming with feral animals. If caretakers want to protect cats and chickens they should be registered with the state and have to contain the animals in their property with proper fencing, noise reduction, and assurances it they won't be a nuisance to their neighbors.

Please don't pass this bill it just makes things worse. Trap and release programs should never be considered.



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 7:13:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dana Fergerstrom	Individual	Oppose	No

## Comments:

I oppose this bill because this bill does not address the endangered populations of native birds. This is not the answer to control an already out of control population of cats. Feral cats and cat colonies pose an incredible danger to not only native birds, but to the health risks of people and other native wildlife. People who feed cat and mongoose colonies should be held accountable not be exempt from it.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 10:46:43 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michelle G Smith	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please vote NO

I have been working in Hawaiian conservation for over 10 years and I have seen the negative effects of feral cat colonies on the health and population of native bird populations on Maui.

Allowing caretakers to be exempt from feeding laws will drastically increase the amount of food and therefore the population size of colonies all accross the island. TNR has been proven to be NOT effective and reducing population size. This bill will allow for animal hoarding, unhealthy conditions, and extreme hazard to native bird populations. It would be extremely careless for this bill to pass.

Please vote NO

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 1:16:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kim De Souza	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

We need to do more to protect the native birds of Hawaii from extinction - the mongoose and feral cat populations are out of control and the TNR program will not be enough to curb the rapidly growing population of mongoose and feral cats.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 3:09:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lahela Hite	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am strongly opposed to this measure on multiple grounds. First, this measure will have an undue, disproportionate, and irreversible negative impact on our native birds (many of which are on the brink of extinction and all of which suffer at the hands of introduced species of animals and parasites). This measure will most likely only further encourage and embolden those who care for feral cats and mongoose, and do little to stop the spread or force the decline of those animals' respective populations. These two animals, in particular, have had a terrible impact on native birds. Second, the impacts of this measure, with special emphasis on native birds, fly in the face of the purpose and intent of the Federal Endangered Species Act (which protects those birds). It could, therefore, be preempted or superseded by Federal Law. Third, this Legislative Body should have an eye on the future. The potentially catastrophic harms greatly outweigh any certain, more immediate benefits. I think this measure to be short sighted in that regard.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 5:11:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Andrew Fox	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please vote NO on this measure. Feral cats and mongooses are causing worsening extinction threats to native birds. They need to be suppressed, trapping and killing are the main methods of accomplishing this. Aiding a growing population of either species is extremely poor judgment.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 8:50:05 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Danya Weber	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

We need people to understand the importance of our native wildlife. For instance, seabirds helped Hawaiians find these islands. Seabirds also provided the nutrients that plants needed to grow upon the barren lava rock in the middle of the ocean. Our forest birds then carried seeds up the mountain and helped build the beautiful forests that we enjoy today. These birds, these manu o Hawai'i, are vital to the rich culture and scenic landscapes that surround and sustain us.

However, many of our birds have been lost. Many have gone extinct and the few we have left are disappearing in the blink of an eye. This is due to threats introduced by modern human settlement. Two of these biggest threats are cats and mongoose—both of these introduced from foreign lands far from Hawai'i. Cats and mongoose—though seemingly harmless—prey upon our native birds, who have no way of protecting themselves unless we (humans) do so for them. Allowing cats and mongoose to roam freely leads to further endangerment of Hawaiian birds. It is our responsibility as a conscious community to take all measures possible to prevent further loss of wildlife. We must do this for the forests, for the culture, and for future generations to cherish.

Prioritizing introduced species over native Hawaiian species shows that we have chosen to give up in the fight for what is right. Our native birds have been here for thousands of years, and we cannot let them vanish within mere decades due to the impacts of humanity. We must make an example for the world to see that Hawai'i truly cares for the native species with which we share our home.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 9:09:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tasia Yamamura	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha kōkou-

I am writing in strong opposition of HB409 relating to the management of feral cats and mongooses. Though I find it commendable that supporters of this bill have the humane treatment of animals in mind, we must weigh this against the detrimental effect feral cats and mongooses have on native ecosystems. As you probably are aware, these are both invasive species. Mongooses are known to prey on the eggs and young hatchlings of native, ground-nesting birds (including the our State bird, the nēnē) as well as sea turtles, all of which are considered endangered species. In fact, mongooses are associated with the extinction of ground-nesting birds in both Jamaica and Fiji.

As for feral cats, they have already contributed to the extinction of 33 species throughout the islands and continue to be a threat to native, endangered birds here. Feral cats are also known to be hosts to toxoplasmosis; they are the only hosts in which this parasite can reproduce. Spread through cat feces, toxoplasmosis sickens and kills endangered Hawaiian monk seals (NOAA has identified it as a leading threat to our monk seal population), nēnē, 'alala (Hawaiian crow), and spinner dolphins.

As you can see, the issue with feral cats and mongooses is not merely due to population size (i.e.- it is not an issue that can be resolved by a spay/neuter and release program). The fact that these invasive species continue to exist in and threaten our native species and ecosystems require catch/kill programs. This is difficult for me to say because I don't take taking another being's life lightly. However, this is necessary to protect our native ecosystems, particularly our many beloved endangered species.

Mahalo nui for taking this testimony in opposition to HB409 into consideration.

Tasia Yamamura

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/30/2021 9:17:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jody Smith	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Trap/neuter/release strategies are terrible for Hawaii. TNR is not effective here in our island ecosystems. From our tropic birds on East O'ahu to our endangered pueo nesting in the grasses of West O'ahu, our native birds are dangerously imperiled by feral cats and other introduced predators such as mongoose and rats. TNR does not eliminate the instinct in cats and mongoose to HUNT. This cannot be mitigated in any way -- these animals can no longer be allowed to live freely on our Hawaiian landscapes.

Furthermore, TNR is not truly compassionate -- caretakers merely providing food to these animals, without medication and medical care is not truly compassionate, it's just cheap to do. These animals need to be cared for in a sanctuary environment, such as is being done in the Lana'i Cat Sanctuary, where both cats and birds are protected. [lanaicatsanctuary.org](http://lanaicatsanctuary.org). Or they need to be humanely euthanized.

Don't fall for these false arguments about TNR citing studies from the mainland, where we have local scientists who have documented the DAMAGE free roaming cats and mongoose are causing on our islands.

Don't forget the problem of TOXOPLASMOSIS organisms which multiply in the gut of cats and are transferred by water and infected food to our endangered monk seals. Of course this disease poses a threat to humans as well.

Please oppose.





**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 12:48:08 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Danielle Lewis	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am a resident and homeowner in Kailua. I strongly oppose HB409. If passed and enacted into law, this will harm native wildlife. Protecting and restoring the precious native ecosystem on the islands should be a top priority. It will benefit the land and provide jobs! I live close to where endangered birds nest and raise their young. I feel blessed to see them, but I also see the cats and mongoose multiplying. Instead of feeding mongoose and cats, which will lead to increased predation and disease spread in native animals, we should double down on efforts to spay and neuter cats and mongoose without feeding them, erect predator fencing to protect native species, and rehabilitate native habitats. I want future generations to see flourishing island communities and habitats, but that won't happen without our help. I appreciate the trap and sterilize aspects of this bill, but feeding these invasive predators would be devastating to the local ecosystems. My family and I only vote for federal, state, and local politicians that stand up for the environment.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 5:36:32 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kaylei Gaemop	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

SAVE THE BIRDS!!!! NO BILL!!!

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 11:07:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melissa Akoni	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose HB409 on the basis that many studies have been conducted proving that TNR/TSR is an unreliable and inefficient strategy to successfully manage feral cat populations. Given the extreme negative impacts the feral cat and mongoose populations have on our native flora and fauna, I believe more effective methods and actions need to be taken in order for these populations to be successfully controlled. Too many of our native species are critically endangered, and as each day passes these species are increasingly at risk of going completely extinct. TSR/TNR is simply not an effective enough method to truly mitigate the risks posed by these feral invasive populations.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 4:55:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tenaiya Brookfield	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I believe the win win solution for both cats and birds would be the creation of a cat sanctuary.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 6:07:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Corrina Carnes	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to oppose this bill due to the harmful impacts its implementation will have on native wildlife, including critically endangered birds and Hawaiian monk seals. Due to these potential impacts, I also request that the legislature actively seek testimony from wildlife experts throughout the state in considering this bill.

The text of the bill states that Trap-Neuter-Return policies "can" gradually reduce cat colony populations over time; however, this claim is not substantiated by any peer-reviewed studies of TNR in action, which in fact show the opposite: that TNR practices sustain cat colonies and in many cases contribute to their growth. The American Bird Conservancy provides an excellent collection of resources on this topic.

All evidence suggests that further promoting TNR practices in Hawai'i will result in sustained or increased cat populations and therefore in a continuation of their consequences for wildlife - namely, predation of native bird nests and Toxoplasmosis infection in Hawaiian monk seals.

While I believe that this bill originated from a love for animals and a desire to care for them, in practice, it serves to protect invasive species while causing substantial harm to wildlife. Again, I am calling on the legislature to do its due diligence in consulting with state and federal wildlife experts in order to better understand the implications of this bill.

Warmest regards,

Corrina Carnes

Waialua, Hawaii

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 7:42:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura Berthold	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose HB409: relating to animal caretakers.

When are we as a State going to take the impact that feral cats, mongooses, and other non-native mammals have on native wildlife seriously? I could spit off several studies showing you that Trap-neuter-release doesn't work, doesn't effectively reduce populations, prevent these animals from killing native species, and it is not relatively "more humane" but I'm sure you have heard enough of the scientific information from either side. There are hundreds of thousands of feral cats and mongooses, if not millions, across this state. There is nothing controlling their populations but a few conservation organizations that do not get the support that they need to do this. Trap-neuter-release is not less expensive than euthanizing them. Yes, new animals show up once one is euthanized but we need to deal with the problem of people, such as the Humane Society, releasing these animals back onto the landscape, where they do NOT belong. Keep your animals in your house, in a fenced outdoor location on your property or on a leash, not in the public domain!

As the famous animal lover, David Attenborough said, we are choosing human-controlled landscapes and creatures over wildlife and wild places. We will no longer have the diversity in life that this planet once had. This bill chooses cats and mongooses over native birds and native marine wildlife. I have watched at Kealia Ponds National Wildlife Refuge on Maui as a mongoose attacked a bird and later ate the eggs in its nests. I have watched mongooses chase after adult 'Apapane and eat from their nests, high up in the ohia trees in Waikamoi Preserve on Maui. I have carried out carcasses of Hawaiian Petrels or 'Ua'u from Haleakalā Crater (to give to proper authorities) as proof that cats are killing these endangered birds. How can we turn a blind eye to this? How can we support any preservation of invasive species like mongooses and cats? It's desecrating the Hawaiian land or 'Āina, the Hawaiian people and culture.

As you review this bill, consider the State of Hawai'i motto: Ua Mau ke Ea o ka 'Āina i ka Pono (The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness). We have been wreaking havoc on the planet, the Hawaiian land, it is our responsibility, kuleana to protect what we can and do the work that helps keep this land in perpetuity and its species alive.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 10:34:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Darcey Iwashita	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose this bill based on the information provided by Dr. Christopher Lepczyk and Dr. David Duffy in *Ecology and Management of Terrestrial Vertebrate Invasive Species in the United States* (2017; William C Pitt, James C Beasley, and Gary W. Witmer, eds.).

"Unfortunately, **TNR [trap-neuter-return] does not eliminate free-ranging cats** (Castillo and Clarke 2003; Winter 2004; Foley et al. 2005) and thorough critiques (Dauphiné and Cooper 2009; Longcore et al. 2009; Duffy and Capece 2012; Spotte 2014) have indicated that its goal is to “keep cats alive as long as possible through provisioning, veterinary care, and favorable legislation” (Spotte 2014). **Beside the negative effects of TNR on wildlife** (e.g., Longcore et al. 2009; Lepczyk et al. 2010), **TNR cat colonies are an ineffective management option for disease risk reduction as they may actually increase risk** as they “can increase immigration and kitten recruitment, which would lead to native populations of cats that would be a source for zoonotic diseases including rabies and toxoplasmosis” (Gerhold and Jessup 2012). **Because colonies that do not have adequate and continuing veterinary care could infect free-ranging domestic cats** (Murphy et al. 1999), it could “**impose a financial and emotional burden on adjacent cat owners** that are either not usually considered in discussions of cat colonies, or are dismissed (Duffy and Capece 2012).” Furthermore, having a large number of cats in any colony simply **poses a greater potential for disease transmission due to density dependence**. Given that TNR is less cost effective (Lohr et al. 2013) and less preferred than removal approaches (Lohr and Lepczyk 2014; Lohr et al. 2014), coupled with **the fact that no peer-reviewed studies have demonstrated it to work, the use of TNR for managing feral cats is a poor choice.**"

DOH also does not seem like the appropriate agency to oversee a cat and mongoose TNR program.



January 31, 2021

Testimony of James B. Friday  
Opposing HB409 Relating to Animal Caretakers  
House Committee on Agriculture  
Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 10:00 AM

Dear members of the House Agriculture committee,

I am writing to oppose House Bill 409, Relating to Animal Caretakers. The bill presents a choice between our native Hawaiian birds and feral cats and mongooses. Uncontrolled spread of cat populations has been a major factor contributing to the decline of our native birds. I wish you could see the videos of cats entering shearwater burrows to eat the chicks or climbing mamane trees to raid the nests of the palila. We will always have cats (and mongooses!) with us but if we don't take action, we will lose our native birds. I love cats too, but feral cats are not pets, they are pests. Trap neuter and release strategies don't work and have been a failure everywhere they have been tried. Cats belong in our homes but not in our forests, shorelines, and beaches. Please don't tie the hands of those trying to protect our native birds. Mahalo for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JB Friday". The letters are cursive and fluid, with the "J" and "B" being particularly prominent.

James B. Friday  
Hilo, Hawaii

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 1/31/2021 11:57:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Daniela Escontrela	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I STRONGLY oppose this bill. Cats and Mongoose are invasive to Hawai'i and have devastation among local Hawaiian wildlife, especially bird populations. Using government funds to feed cats and mongoose is the opposite of what we should be doing. These funds should be used to eradicate these invasive species and be used in support of LOCAL wildlife conservation.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 11:01:03 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Erika Kekiwi	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Feral cats and mongooses are destructive predators that negatively impact native birds and have been documented repeatedly depredating endangered species. Trap-neuter-release (TNR) is a deeply flawed methodology that is not an effective management strategy for population decline (Foley et al. 2005). Some studies even suggest that TNR increases the population of a colony as more cats are attracted to a feeding area or if it is seen as a good location to abandon cats (Castillo & Clarke, 2003). Even if cats are neutered and provided with food regularly, they still are capable of depredating wildlife and passing on diseases to both humans and wildlife. Anecdotally, I have seen evidence of depredated birds feet away from maintained cat feed stations, further suggesting that cats will continue killing even if they are well-fed and "cared" for. I am not aware of any studies suggesting that TNR would function any better for mongoose. Mongoose are ubiquitous and maintaining a population of neutered mongooses large enough to make any impact at all seems impossible. TNR programs do not operate in a vaccum and are a waste of time and money. While I believe that there are good intentions behind TNR programs, it is inhumane to leave cats in the streets where they are susceptible to disease, abuse, being hit by cars, and other dangers. Beyond direct depredations of wildlife damage, feral cats also are carriers of toxoplasmosis, a threat to both wildlife and humans. Feral cat and mongoose populations should be actively controlled and TNR and the maintaining of cat colonies discontinued.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 11:15:21 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lizzy Baxter	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

The bill is outrageously irresponsible. Feral cats and mongoose are actively causing the extirpation and extinction of endemic, rare Hawaiian native wildlife. To prioritize the care of invasive predators over our own native species, especially in the extinction capital of the world, is offensive to native Hawaiian culture and all those who dedicate their lives to conservation. Feral cats have been proven to kill native, endangered wildlife even in the most remote habitats, from lava fields off Kilauea volcano to Kaua'i's Na Pali coast ridgelines. They spread zoonotic disease in our environment, including to humans, Hawaiian monk seals, dolphins, and humpback whales. This bill is gross disregard for efforts that have been put in trying to save wildlife and instead will work directly against conservation goals. To pass this bill surely would mean the active extinction of rare wildlife that exists only here. We need to be proud of the unique wilderness that is here, not actively work against it. I wholly oppose this bill.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 11:23:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Irene Newhouse	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Neutered cats returned to the out-doors will continue to prey on ground-dwelling birds like our endangered seabirds. And actually, as I've seen in Lao Valley, they can climb quite high up trees & ravage nests as well. All this time they are also shedding toxoplasmosis in their poop, which washes out to sea in the rain, where it infects seals & kills them. Feral cats should be euthanized or maintained in colonies that are fully enclosed, NOT returned outdoors. Cats can spread these diseases to people:

- **Campylobacteriosis.**
- Cat scratch disease.
- Cat tapeworm.
- **Cryptosporidiosis.**
- **Giardiasis.**
- Hookworm.
- Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus (MRSA)
- Rabies.

Mongoose should not be returned to roam either, though what effect their pathogens have on other animals is not as well-studied as cats. We do not want to be the guinea pigs.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 12:21:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a conservationist and animal lover, I am in strong support of this resolution.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 1:05:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Debbie Schatz	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

This bill offers funding for services with no oversight, and no articulation of how the caretakers are responsible for the feral cats and their affects on the communities. Not if, but when, cats or other animals, fight with other animals in the neighborhood, spread diseases and unfortunately even die under peoples houses there is no sense of responsibility or prevention from the caretakers.

Another important point is that the cats are attacking the local bird populations.

I recommend supporting the programs offered by the humane society, or similar programs, that actively fix the cats, prepare them to be domestic pets, promote them to be adopted and facilitate the process finding homes. I also support their programs of people caring for the kittens until they are big enough to be prepared for adoption- for cats I believe it is 2 lbs. I do not support the groups who hold onto the cats. With the pandemic there is a demand for pets, and this is not only a community benefit, but emotional benefit not only for the owners, but the pets.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 1:07:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I don't 100% agree with this bill, but it is a great place to start. We need to humanely deal with the numbers of feral cats, and TNRM is that humane method. If colony caretakers are actually supported, the number of cats will go down. In order to prevent further destruction of native species, we humans need to make some changes to how we do things, since we are the number 1 reason these native species are in trouble. We need laws to protect our wildlife, and we certainly do not need to be killing feral cats as a stop gap. Mahalo.



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 1:09:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brailey Hirose-Hulbert	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

**OPPOSING HB409 - RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS.**

**Aloha,**

**I oppose the establishment of the trap-sterilize-return (TSR) process because this process, and those like it, have not proven effective at reducing feral cat populations. The following statistics from a recently published journal from the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation: University of Florida Extension from March 2020 comments,**

**In theory, sterilizing enough cats so that the birth rate is less than the death rate would reduce the cat population in a given area. However, this assumes a closed population, a phenomenon that has not been observed in any of the studies. Instead, the studies observed cats immigrating into colonies, dispersing from other areas or being released into colonies by people. Even in a closed population, a large proportion of the colony must be sterilized (71% to 94 %) before the population will decline over time (Andersen et al. 2004), which requires a significant input of resources.**

**Do not invest in this TSR process. Listen and elevate testimony and plans put forth by native wildlife biologists and community animal shelters.**

**Further, I believe the exemption of caretakers from state laws and county ordinances maintains and promotes the feeding of feral cats, which is one of the least beneficial tools to reducing cat populations outside. Instead, budgetarily support the efforts of local animal shelters and public education campaigns. It is particularly frustrating read within this legislation (on page 9 line 11-12) that “provided that a caretaker shall not be required to comply with paragraphs (5) through (8) if compliance is cost-prohibitive.” Especially section 8 concerning flea infestation and communicable diseases. These are the biggest factors to quality of life and public health impact with feral cats and be honest, it will always be cost-prohibitive. Require the compliance of section 8 at a bare minimum.**

**Also, why are mongooses even in this conversation? They are a known, devastatingly invasive species that have never been domesticated on the islands. The state goal should always be aimed toward eradication, not compromise and include mongooses in this legislation because they hang around the cat food.**

**Mahalo for your attention and consideration.**

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 1:13:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Kaaumoana	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha, I have worked on feral cat issues on Kauai for three decades. Kauai convened the Kauai Feral Cat Task Force which produced recommendations to address the issue and threats cats present on Kauai.

**HB 409 does not address any of the issues on Kauai.**

**HB 409 does not protect the very last of Hawaiian native birds living only on Kauai.**

**HB 409 does not protect our children from playing in cat feces on our beaches.**

1. TNR programs do not successfully reduce feral cat populations (e.g., [Longcore et al. 2009](#));
2. TNR programs are not the preferred management strategy among Hawai'i residents ([Lohr and Lepczyk 2014](#));
3. TNR maintains cats and mongooses on the landscape, where they continue to hunt and kill wildlife and spread diseases to people and animals (e.g., [Lepczyk et al. 2020](#));
4. Alternatives to TNR (e.g., Lana'i Cat Sanctuary, Kaua'i Feral Cat Task Force Recommendations, treating cats like we treat dogs) exist and are more effective at addressing the various concerns regarding roaming cats on the landscape (i.e., population reduction, public health, wildlife health, animal welfare);
5. This bill fails to identify a process by which owned and unowned cats outdoors can be distinguished, which could easily result in the unwanted sterilization of an owned pet;
6. Provides no recourse for residents or neighbors who may not want feral cat or mongoose colonies on or next to their property;

7. Does not mention which vaccinations are to be administered to a “feral cat or mongoose;”
8. Exempts a “caretaker” from even the modest program requirements if such requirements are deemed “cost-prohibitive;” and
9. Opens up the state to significant legal liabilities associated with harm to people or threatened/endangered species by state-authorized “feral cats” or released mongooses.

**You must kill HB 409.**

Mahalo, Makaala Kaaumoana

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 3:23:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
helen raine	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Legislatures,

I strongly oppose bill HB409.

I am a conservation professional working to protect endangered and endemic native Hawaiian birds, particularly wetland birds and seabirds. These birds are found nowhere else in the world and in some cases, such as the 'alae 'ula (Hawaiian Common Gallinule), there are less than 1000 individuals left in the world. They evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them.

Allowing cats to roam free on the landscape is a disaster for these birds. In a four-year period (2014 – 2018), over 250 native waterbirds were killed by feral cats on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge in Kauai, including around 100 Hawaiian Gallinules and 40 Koloa Ducks. That is a major crisis for any endangered bird species.

In addition, there is a serious human health risk to allowing cats to roam our islands. Cats are carriers of diseases such as toxoplasmosis, which spreads through only through cat feces to Hawaiian Monk Seals, dolphins and humans, where it causes miscarriage, birth defects and can be fatal.

'Trap-Neuter-Release' (TNR) is not an answer. Spayed/neutered cats which remain outside are still a threat to human health, endangered birds and marine mammals. Cats belong indoors to protect the delicate balance of our ecosystem in the Hawaiian Islands. It is safer for the cats, and essential for the birds.

A comprehensive study of Hawaii residents by [Lohr and Lepczyk in 2014](#) revealed that the vast majority of Hawaii residents agreed with this stance. We should not allow our native Hawaiian birds to be pushed to extinction by a minority of people who do not understand the drastic impact that cats have on an isolated island ecosystem.

As a State, we invest millions of dollars in the conservation of endangered species. I am very tired of finding literally hundreds of carcasses of endangered or native birds ripped apart by feral cats every year. If this bill passes, it will perpetuate that slaughter, undermining efforts to protected endangered species and wasting our conservation dollars and resources.

Thank-you for your consideration,

Helen Raine

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 4:43:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Bret Mossman	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Kā• kou,

I am a resident of the Pana'ewa Homesteads on Hawai'i Island, and as a wildlife biologist I am reaching out to you as sponsors of HB409 and would like to respectfully request that you reconsider. Many may not know but tragically, Hawai'i is the extinction capital of the world. We have lost 77+ species of endemic birds alone. More than a dozen of our native Hawaiian birds have gone extinct, while others including the enigmatic 'i'iwi have declined by over 50% in just the last 50 years. The three leading causes for these declines and extinctions are disease, loss of crucial habitat, and predation by invasive mammalian predators (specifically cats, mongoose, and rats). HB409 if passed would directly contribute to this tragic cycle of loss and extinction threatening ecosystems and the cultural foundation of Hawai'i, which is why I implore you to please reconsider.

Unfortunately, over the last few decades, there has been an extremely successful campaign, much of which is misinformation spread by the cat feeding community, who advocate for methods of control such as sterilization and release. Although these methods come from a good place, they aren't able to protect our native wildlife and there isn't any biological evidence that this is a sustainable or successful method of population control. An example of how even a small number of non-native mammalian predators can negatively affect our native Hawaiian wildlife: a single feral cat was documented to have killed 11 'ua'u chicks (an endangered native seabird) in just one week on Kaua'i (September 2020). This alone takes a huge toll on their population, as a pair of 'ua'u only have one chick per year. 'Ua'u take 8 months to raise their single chick, with parent birds flying back and forth from Alaska every two weeks to find food, only heartbreakingly returning to empty burrows and often be killed themselves by invasive predators such as mongoose and cats.

Trapping cats and mongoose by those feeding them, further threatens the survival of native species even in more “remote” areas for the following reasons: 1.) cats have been documented moving over 60 miles away from capture/feeding sites; 2.) trapping animals allows them to learn to avoid traps making them more difficult to capture in the future; and 3.) cat colonies are often near threatened native wildlife.

Another reason why a different approach and control method would be beneficial to the general public is that by maintaining these large populations of non-native mammals at feeding stations, it dramatically increases the chances of spreading potentially harmful pathogens/disease in our islands. Particularly concerning is the threat of “stowaway animals” finding their way to a feeding station. Highlighting this point, is the recent arrival of two skunks in Hawai’i (one on Maui and one in Honolulu). Skunks are one of the primary carriers of rabies.

I’d also like to emphasize that our state currently spends millions of dollars every year to work towards mitigating the negative impacts of invasive mammalian predators. Legislation such as HB409 undermines the effect of not only the large amount of money being spent, but also the thousands of hours work that myself and countless others put in to protecting our native species.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, I’d be happy to meet with you or send additional resources. As those who hold leadership in our community, I hope that you can find it in your heart to help our precious native species who are depending on all of us to protect them and end this bill for good. With your help, we can work towards ending extinction in our islands. It is our kuleana to ensure that native species can survive so that future generations can engage in cultural practice and otherwise enjoy creatures found nowhere else on earth.

Mahalo piha

Bret Nainoa Mossman



\*I, Bret Nainoa Mossman am an employee of the Hawai'i Island Natural Area Reserve System and the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, the statement above is my own, and does not represent the views from either of these agencies.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 4:54:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Andre Raine	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear legislators

I would like to submit testimony in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to HB409 which would authorize trap, neuter, release (TNR) of at-large cats and mongoose in Hawai'i and exempt participants from animal care and control provisions.

As an indoor cat owner myself, I completely understand the connection many people feel with these important companion animals. However, at the same time, in my job as conservationist working on native seabirds and waterbirds on Kaua'i I see on a daily basis the impact that feral free-ranging cats have on our native and endangered wildlife. Each year I find literal piles of dead shearwaters on the coast that have been predated by cats; in the mountains I see cats entering the burrows of endangered seabirds and dragging them out to kill them (leaving the chicks to starve if they don't kill them as well); and on the news I see the regular reports of dead Hawaiian Monk Seals due to the cat borne disease toxoplasmosis (which also impacts on human health). All of these conservation issues relate in large part to outdoor feral cats.

Feral cat control is therefore critical both for our native and endangered wildlife and for our own health. I know that TNR (trap-neuter-release) is often suggested by people as an alternative to humane cat control. There are now many scientific studies, published in peer-reviewed journals, that demonstrate how TNR does not in any way deal with the number of cats on the landscape. All it does is perpetuate the feral cat population into the future. On the island of Kauai, TNR has been used by multiple cat advocate organisations for decades at cat colonies with no impact at all – these colonies (which can easily be seen by anyone interested in going to have a look at them) still exist decades later in the same (or larger) numbers. On the other hand an effective, well-planned and humane cat control project can quickly remove cats from the landscape.

I also note that this bill is a reintroduction of HB2593 from 2018, except that this time around an additional highly invasive predator (the mongoose) has also been added to the bill. Combined, mongoose and cats have been the root cause for numerous documented extinction events of native species around the World. The inclusion of a second introduced predator to this bill makes it even more critical that this bill be opposed.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the fact that several of the endangered species in the Hawaiian Islands are the focus of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and the take of these species could leave the State open to legal action by multiple concerned organisations. On the island of Kauai, cat control is actually a requisite for entities involved in the Kauai Seabird Habitat Conservation Plan; leaving cats on the landscape would violate these HCP requirements.

In the meantime, my thanks again for your time and consideration. And stay safe and healthy in these troubled COVID19 times!

Sincerely,

Dr André Raine

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 4:58:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jordan K Lee Loy	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose this bill. On behalf of our native birds, this bill should not be passed.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 5:22:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Van Wishingrad	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

This bill lacks an ecological impact study to address its effects on endemic bird populations.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 5:37:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hannah Weipert	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

1. TNR programs do not successfully reduce feral cat populations (e.g., [Longcore et al. 2009](#));
2. TNR programs are not the preferred management strategy among Hawai'i residents ([Lohr and Lepczyk 2014](#));
3. TNR maintains cats and mongooses on the landscape, where they continue to hunt and kill wildlife and spread diseases to people and animals (e.g., [Lepczyk et al. 2020](#));
4. Alternatives to TNR (e.g., Lana'i Cat Sanctuary, Kaua'i Feral Cat Task Force Recommendations, treating cats like we treat dogs) exist and are more effective at addressing the various concerns regarding roaming cats on the landscape (i.e., population reduction, public health, wildlife health, animal welfare);
5. This bill fails to identify a process by which owned and unowned cats outdoors can be distinguished, which could easily result in the unwanted sterilization of an owned pet;
6. Provides no recourse for residents or neighbors who may not want feral cat or mongoose colonies on or next to their property;
7. Does not mention which vaccinations are to be administered to a "feral cat or mongoose;"
8. Exempts a "caretaker" from even the modest program requirements if such requirements are deemed "cost-prohibitive;" and
9. Opens up the state to significant legal liabilities associated with harm to people or threatened/endangered species by state-authorized "feral cats" or released mongooses.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 5:39:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Caitlin Scott	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose HB409 for the following reasons:

1. TNR programs do not successfully reduce feral cat populations (e.g., [Longcore et al. 2009](#));
2. TNR programs are not the preferred management strategy among Hawai'i residents ([Lohr and Lepczyk 2014](#));
3. TNR maintains cats and mongooses on the landscape, where they continue to hunt and kill wildlife and spread diseases to people and animals (e.g., [Lepczyk et al. 2020](#));
4. Alternatives to TNR (e.g., Lana'i Cat Sanctuary, Kaua'i Feral Cat Task Force Recommendations, treating cats like we treat dogs) exist and are more effective at addressing the various concerns regarding roaming cats on the landscape (i.e., population reduction, public health, wildlife health, animal welfare);
5. This bill fails to identify a process by which owned and unowned cats outdoors can be distinguished, which could easily result in the unwanted sterilization of an owned pet;
6. Provides no recourse for residents or neighbors who may not want feral cat or mongoose colonies on or next to their property;
7. Does not mention which vaccinations are to be administered to a "feral cat or mongoose;"
8. Exempts a "caretaker" from even the modest program requirements if such requirements are deemed "cost-prohibitive;" and
9. Opens up the state to significant legal liabilities associated with harm to people or threatened/endangered species by state-authorized "feral cats" or released mongooses.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 7:04:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jennifer Rothe	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

TNR is often touted as a humane way of managing feral cats, but it's a false promise.

Firstly, the data indicate that TNR programs don't actually meet their purported objective of successfully managing feral cat populations ([Longcore et al. 2009](#)). Secondly, leaving cats on the landscape is in no way humane! Is it humane to be subjected to fights with aggressive neighborhood cats? To be infested with parasites and disease? To be hit by a car and die slowly on the side of the road? Is it humane for the birds they kill (even when well fed)? We are in the unique position of living in one of the most remote island chains in the world, with some of the world's most specialized and highly endangered avifauna. Are their lives worth less than those of an introduced predator with global distribution? The existence of entire species--species which help make Hawai'i the special place it is--hangs in the balance here. We need to employ every method available to us to get feral cats and mongoose removed from the Hawaiian landscape!



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 7:18:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alex Wang	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

TNR is an ineffective means of controlling invasive pests such as cats and mongoose. We need not limit ourselves to only using this inefficient tool, rather all methods should be employed from aerial baits to kill traps. There are literally cats all over this planet and they are extremely talented predators of our native avifauna from the liwi to the ua'u which only exist in Hawaii. It's a no brainer. And rather than this bill, we should be passing legislation that outlaws feeding and thus increasing the populations of these pests on state land in Hawaii. Save our native birds, get rid of domestic cats and the small Indian mongooses.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 7:33:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lainie Berry	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

My name is Dr Lainie Berry, I have worked in the Pacific Islands for 15 years on wildlife research and endangered species conservation. I vehemently oppose HB409. Cat and mongoose colonies are a danger to human health, threaten Hawaiian endangered species and are an inhumane approach to the feral cat problem in Hawaii. Cat and mongoose colonies will not suppress feral populations as claimed in this bill.

Mongoosees are one of the worst invasive species to be introduced to Hawaii. Trapping, neutering and releasing mongoosees back into the wild is not an effective tool to the problem of mongoosees in Hawaii. There is no evidence that this technique would suppress feral populations. It makes zero sense. Any captured mongoosees should be euthanized.

Exempting “caretakers” from State laws and county ordinances is dangerous territory. I can think of no other examples where certain private citizens are given such powers to subvert written laws – all State laws, rules and county ordinances should apply to all individuals equally.

There is no evidence to support the claim that establishment and maintenance of cat colonies suppresses feral cat populations. Feral cat colonies in public locations are a public health threat – they create massive amounts of cat faeces that directly enter the environment and waterways. Cat faeces are a known transmitter of toxoplasmosis – a disease that affects humans and wildlife. Dumping large amounts of cat food into public spaces to feed feral cats creates a food source for rodents. Cat colonies are inhumane – the cats are at risk of dog attack, car strike as well as numerous diseases spread from so many cats living unnaturally in close proximity.

Mongoosees do not belong in Hawaii, and certainly not in human-assisted colonies. Cats belong in homes, not in large colonies in public spaces.

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

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 7:54:09 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Joshua Pang-Ching	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

For the sake of Hawaii's precious native bird and wildlife species I oppose HB409. Mongoose and feral cats are a detriment to native Hawaiian wildlife, especially birds, and their survival should not be promoted and encouraged by the measures that this bill proposes. Our native birds and wildlife hold true importance to our Hawaiian culture and have a rooted place in Hawaiian history. Cats and mongoose do not. Cats belong in homes. Not roaming feral killing countless amounts of birds.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 8:13:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dena Sedar	Individual	Oppose	No

## Comments:

I strongly oppose HB409 because it does nothing to protect native and endangered species, rather it endangers threatened species by not eradicating an invasive species that not only preys on vulnerable species but also can cause death through the spreading of a deadly disease (toxoplasmosis). Please, talk to the conservation community in Hawaii to learn about the multiple threats that cats (and mongoose) pose to nesting birds and marine mammals. Anchialine pool and fishpond managers along the Kona coast have to work diligently to make sure that invasive cats and mongoose don't eat the eggs of nesting endangered Hawaiian stilts, so it seems counter-intuitive that there would be a bill that protects those who feed deadly and non-native species.

The Legislature needs to support measures to eradicate invasive mammals that kill native species, not enable cat lovers to continue to feed feral cat colonies that only harm our native ecosystem. Please oppose this bill. It is time that Hawaii politicians stood up for all of the endangered and threatened bird and marine mammal species, rather than protecting two species that actively harm native species.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 9:16:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JoAnna Maney	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB409, "relating to animal caretakers." I am very concerned that this proposed legislation disregards the direness of the situation facing Hawaii's native wildlife species. Our native and endangered animals should have the highest level of priority in our islands, not the invasive species. I am extremely concerned that legislation HB409 misses that fact entirely while making assertions and putting forth solutions that are not based on scientific evidence.

In fact, the science is very clear on this, trapping/spaying/neutering(TNR) feral cats has failed to even maintain what is currently already a large overpopulation of feral cats. It's been tried for years and it's just not working. It is vital we get this right because the extinction of multiple species, known only to exist here in Hawaii, hinges on humans making the hard decisions to do the right things to correct the mistakes we ourselves have caused to this unique and fragile ecosystem we call home. Humans created this problem. We brought cats to Hawaii and we have to be the ones to make the hard decisions to sustain these ecosystems.

I often hear the assertion put forth that "caretakers" providing food for feral cat colonies reduces the need for cats to hunt and kill other creatures like birds. This is false. In fact, next to humans, cats are the 2nd most effective predator on the planet and one of only a few other species that \*kills for sport.\* Cats are to blame for at least 63 modern-day extinctions worldwide. That includes 40 bird species, 21 mammals, and 2 reptiles. They are cute but they are also lethal. And feeding them supplementally only gives them a greater advantage over indigenous wildlife. A single cat can decimate an entire seabird colony in one night. It just happened again this past summer to a endangered shearwater colony—the entire colony, chicks and parents, gone in one night and only one bird eaten for food by a single loose cat. Remote cameras have repeatedly captured these massacres and a quick google search will yield the tragic photos from multiple incidents.

I volunteer my time as a transport driver for Hawaii Wildlife Rescue. I have personally escorted endangered seabirds recovering from predatory attacks from the veterinarian's office to the airport so that they can recover at the rehab facility on the Big Island. It takes a lot of time, a lot of coordination, a lot of altruism, to save just one bird but we do

it because we understand how vulnerable and how valuable every individual member of these species are. Extinction is forever.

I love all animals, including cats and the truth is many of these poor cats are not thriving and often suffer with disease, pest infestations, and lingering injury and infection. They spread toxoplasmosis which infects and sickens wildlife as well as people. Indigenous species protected by the isolation of the islands have no resistance to toxoplasmosis, and for them, it is lethal. Cat feces washing into the ocean and infecting the seals is one of the main contributors to the decline of our Hawaiian monk seals. We cannot dismiss the immediacy of this crisis, there are only around 1100 Hawaiian monk seals left.

This is urgent. There is no recovery from extinction. I really believe we have to do what we can, what's in our power, to prevent the complete, permanent loss of these unique Hawaiian creatures. I honestly hate the choices, but allowing any other species to go extinct because we can't manage cat populations has to be the most poor choice we could possibly make. Its not fair, no, but it's not a balance-able equation and it never was.

These precious species of native honeycreepers, and seabirds, and monk seals are facing challenges from so many directions right now. This is one area we can truly help have a positive impact for them. Do we really want to wake up one morning and hear the news that we have lost the last 'i'iwi? Or seal? How would you feel if you could only describe them to your youngest family members and know they'll never see one for themselves because they are all gone? How would we feel knowing we didn't do everything in our power to save them? These wonderful creatures attract tourism dollars for our economy but more importantly, they are valuable to Hawaiian culture, Hawaiian history, and Hawaiian identity. We should celebrate them because they are precious and they only exist here in these magnificent islands. They need our help and we will surely regret not meeting these challenges with decisive action if they disappear forever.

Thank you sincerely for your time,

JoAnna Maney

Also, please find following, a summmary of the American Bird Conservancy's opposition to HB409.

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American Bird Conservancy is opposing HB 409 for the following reasons:

TNR programs do not successfully reduce feral cat populations (e.g., Longcore et al. 2009);

TNR programs are not the preferred management strategy among Hawai'i residents (Lohr and Lepczyk 2014);

TNR maintains cats and mongooses on the landscape, where they continue to hunt and kill wildlife and spread diseases to people and animals (e.g., Lepczyk et al. 2020);

Alternatives to TNR (e.g., Lana'i Cat Sanctuary, Kaua'i Feral Cat Task Force Recommendations, treating cats like we treat dogs) exist and are more effective at addressing the various concerns regarding roaming cats on the landscape (i.e., population reduction, public health, wildlife health, animal welfare);

This bill fails to identify a process by which owned and unowned cats outdoors can be distinguished, which could easily result in the unwanted sterilization of an owned pet;

Provides no recourse for residents or neighbors who may not want feral cat or mongoose colonies on or next to their property;

Does not mention which vaccinations are to be administered to a "feral cat or mongoose;"

Exempts a "caretaker" from even the modest program requirements if such requirements are deemed "cost-prohibitive;" and

Opens up the state to significant legal liabilities associated with harm to people or threatened/endangered species by state-authorized "feral cats" or released mongooses.

Kellen Apuna  
redcoot22@gmail.com

Aloha. I am Kellen Apuna, a junior at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, and I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 409. As a local birder (birdwatcher), I have seen the effects these introduced mammals have had on our native species.

Simply put, introduced mammals, like the feral cat and the moongoose, have wreaked havoc upon Hawaii's native wildlife. As the bill establishes, both feral cats and mongooses are known to prey upon various species of native bird, notably impacting ground-nesting seabirds like the 'Ua'u kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwater, *Ardenna pacifica*), the A'o (Newell's Shearwater, *Puffinus newelli*), and the 'Ua'u (Hawaiian Petrel, *Pterodroma sandwichensis*); wetland birds, like the 'Alae Ke'oke'o (Hawaiian Coot, *Fulica alai*), the 'Alae 'Ula (Hawaiian Gallinule, *Gallinula galeata sandvicensis*), and the Ae'o (Hawaiian Stilt, *Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*); and forest birds, like the critically endangered Palila (*Loxioides bailleui*). These are just a few of many that have been impacted by predation.

Additionally, feral cats are known to host *Toxoplasma gondii*, a protozoa responsible for the disease toxoplasmosis. Although other animals can contract toxoplasmosis, the protozoa itself reproduces exclusively in feral cats. This disease will persist so long as feral cats roam our islands. Toxoplasmosis poses a clear threat to human health; but is also known to have killed 'Alalā (Hawaiian Crow, *Corvus hawaiiensis*), Nēnē (Hawaiian Goose, *Branta sandvicensis*), and perhaps most strikingly, multiple 'Īlio-holo-i-ka-uaua, or Hawaiian Monk Seals (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*).

So why do I oppose this bill? It does—after all—promise a decline in feral cats and, apparently, mongoose populations, which would be great for our native species. My opposition is founded in the proposed “trap-sterilize-return” component of this bill. This concept, better known as TNR, or Trap-Neuter-Release, is a process many advocate as a solution to feral cat problems. As the name implies, cats are captured, neutered, and then re-introduced into “colonies,” which are often maintained by people. Because these cats can no longer reproduce, it is argued that cat populations will then decline over time. This sounds like an ideal solution; however, published scientific literature and research demonstrate that TNR has little to no effect on cat populations, and instead, may be causing more issues in the long run.

Because TNR colonies are not closed, cats will continue to migrate into an existing colony. People will also feel free to dump their unwanted cats at these colonies, subsequently leading to an expansion of the cat population. I urge you to closely examine the research papers I've linked below. I highly recommend the literature review published by the University of Florida. If you'd like to learn more, a simple search of “Trap-neuter-release” on Google Scholar will provide many studies against the implementation of TNR. Many biologists living in the state of Hawaii, who work with our native species, will assure you, this bill certainly favors feral cats and mongooses, two notoriously invasive species, over our declining native wildlife.

The fate of our wildlife, and public health, rests in your hands. I urge you to vote no to HB409.

Mahalo.



Background about feral cats in the islands:

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1111&context=usgspubs>

Assessments of TNR as an ineffective solution:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/29738823.pdf>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23360334.pdf>

[https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw468?fbclid=IwAR1jEr1yxJD-2J1C-](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw468?fbclid=IwAR1jEr1yxJD-2J1C-embu9_zp6fnM0m6RRgK7micsKjumc1lrFWneE1LWro)

[embu9\\_zp6fnM0m6RRgK7micsKjumc1lrFWneE1LWro](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw468?fbclid=IwAR1jEr1yxJD-2J1C-embu9_zp6fnM0m6RRgK7micsKjumc1lrFWneE1LWro) – (University of Florida literature review)

Chris Farmer  
11-3888 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Volcano, Hawai'i 96785  
February 2, 2021

House Committee on Agriculture  
Conference Room 325  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

**RE: Opposition to HB 409**

Dear Chair Hashem and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

I wish to submit my testimony as a private citizen of Hawai'i in **strong opposition to HB 409**. This bill would be horrible for Hawai'i's native wildlife, the citizens of our state, and for feral cats themselves.

Hawai'i's native species are found nowhere else in the world. Both cats and mongooses are not native to Hawai'i, and have huge negative effects on our native birds and wildlife, so much so that it is also the bird extinction capital of the world. One of the biggest threats to our birds are cats. They directly kill our native birds, as well as spreading diseases that also kill and harm our native species. Feral cats are also harmful to humans. They spread toxoplasmosis, which has wide-ranging detrimental effects to people.

Trap-Sterilize-Return, or as its commonly known Trap-Neuter-Release, has never been scientifically shown to reduce or eliminate feral cat colonies. It maintains the cat colony on the landscape, allowing continued depredation of native birds, spread of disease, and does not reduce the cat population.

**I strongly urge you to oppose HB 409 – for the benefit of the people and wildlife of Hawai'i.**

Mahalo,

Chris Farmer

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 10:22:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Thomas Bojorquez	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Hawaii is the endangered species capital of the world. This bill is a major threat to all of Hawaii's Endemic species. I strongly oppose this bill and I urge you to vote no. Please save Hawaiian wildlife and vote No.

Mahalo, Thomas Bojorquez

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 10:27:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Shiho Koike	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose HB 409. It is not an effective way to help and protect our native and unique ecosystem on Hawaii.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 10:31:25 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Karen J Comcowich	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I **OPPOSE HB409**: relating to animal caretakers.

1. am an animal lover, ironically particularly cats. When was younger, I saw “crazy cat lady” in my future. have been known to rescue a feral cat or two. adore cat’s fierce wildness, despite being domesticated. Watching them stalk their prey is beautiful. However, that is the problem with feral, even fixed feral, cats in Hawai’i. They are natural predators; their instinct is to hunt and kill. Unfortunately, **Hawai’i’s native animals have no natural defenses.**

I am also fascinated by the mongoose. One of my favorite stops on the way to Hana is a place we call Mongoose Falls. You cannot leave anything on the tables because it will be snatched by one of these sly creatures. They are so sneaky it is hilarious. Again that is the problem, they will sneak into a bird’s nest and take their eggs. **The native and endemic birds of Hawai’i have no natural defenses.**

Recently I had the pleasure of tagging ‘Ua’u Kane, a beautiful ground nesting sea bird. To band the adults, we went at night and carefully plucked them out of their nests. Even after being handled and tagged, the birds just kind of looked at us indignantly and wandered back to their nest. The babies were even easier because it was during the day. If a klutzy human with no predator instinct can grab them that easily, imagine what a dexterous cat or a sly mongoose could do.

**Please oppose H409 because you love animals, especially our native and endemic animals that are unique to Hawai’i. These beautiful animals also have the right to a beautiful, protected life in paradise.**

Thank you for your  
time,  
Comcowich, Lahaina, HI

Karen

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 11:01:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rae Okawa	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

February 1, 2021

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to HB409 relating to animal caretakers. I am providing this testimony on behalf of myself, and not on behalf of any other individual, group or organization.

I am a Hawai'i resident, born and raised on Oahu, with a degree in Biology and a Masters in Environmental Studies. While my testimony specifically mentions cats, the same principles apply to mongoose.

TNR does not work. Just because "no kill" methods may make us feel better, it doesn't change the fact that TNR is inhumane, fiscally irresponsible, and a national embarrassment. I'm disheartened and frustrated by the increasing numbers of cats smashed on roadways, hunting in protected areas, emptying burrows in native seabird colonies, and using public beaches as litter boxes. I've been seeing cats up in mountain areas where I had not seen them before. I've been trapped in a hotel parking lot because a colony of cats was being fed behind my car. The smell is what hits your first. Then looking at these animals, I could see the poor condition in many of the cats were in. No amount of food thrown at them could make up for the lack of ongoing care. And I'm tired of reading articles that highlight the political will and conservation efforts of places like New Zealand, then juxtaposing their triumphs with the struggles of Hawai'i and the rest of the United States to get the feral cat issue under control because the solutions are tough and unpopular. We are islands. There is finite space. And this finite space is occupied by rare native species that are found nowhere else in the world. Species that have been shown via video footage or necropsies to have suffered mortalities due to these predators.

TNR cannot possibly do enough to stem the growth of the hundreds of thousands of cats in our islands. TNR is not the solution to help reduce our growing feral cat epidemic. When a cat is taken out of the population and humanely euthanized, it can't reproduce. When a cat is sterilized and returned to a colony, it can't reproduce. The only difference between the two scenarios is that one is returned to the population and

the other is removed. If you keep with the humane euthanasia program, you can begin chipping away at the population numbers.

TNR is also not less costly than humane euthanasia. For humane euthanasia you need to trap, transport, and euthanize the animal. For TNR, you would need to trap, transport, sterilize, remove fleas, provide vaccinations, and transport the animal back to the colony. I'm also assuming you'd also want to continue care when possible. So add on to the initial TNR costs the additional costs of ongoing veterinary care for sickness and injuries, food, water, maintenance, etc. Plus, you are negating all of the efforts and funding devoted to restoring native species, building seabird colonies, and protecting natural resources (i.e. water and soil quality). The statement that TNR is less costly just doesn't add up.

Furthermore, feral animal caretakers should not be exempt from state law and county ordinances. Laws and ordinances are created for a reason – to safeguard our communities, natural resources, and quality of life – and we all should have to follow them. It's infuriating that organizations/individuals taking actions that degrade our environment, put cats in inhumane conditions, jeopardize our native wildlife and natural resources, and deteriorate public health would be granted immunity for their actions. I understand that caretakers mean well, they put a lot of effort and heart into their work. However, good intentions do not change reality.

For the sake of our environment, native wildlife, public health and even the welfare of cats, please do not move HB409 forward. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/1/2021 11:13:53 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Christina Levang	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

As a little girl, I remember walking along the south shore of Maui, where I grew up, hearing the familiar sounds of waves and seabirds. Later on, as a teenager, my friends and I would go in the middle of the night to hear the strange cries of the native 'u'au kani and spook each other for they sounded like crying babies! This is a memory I hold dearly and share to you, state representatives, because it is what makes our home; *home*. Now that I am older, I walk this same shore and see people, usually haole women that just moved from the mainland, feeding feral cats and at first I thought, "what a good service they are doing," but I was wrong. I am voting no because I want my future children to know what home *really* is. Home is the sounds and sights of native plants and animals, not introduced predators. To vote yes is to say goodbye to native species and culture. If the native species are gone, what do my children have to connect them to the place that they call home? Home will become foreign and what was will be forgotten.



To the members of the House Agriculture Committee,

My name is Lorraine Waiyanuhea, I am a registered voter and a professional in the field of conservation in Hawaii. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Biology with minors in Fisheries & Wildlife, and Chemistry from Oregon State University.

I strongly **OPPOSE HB409** because the Hawaii Invasive Species Council and State of Hawaii recognize through the adoption of **Hawaii Invasive Species Council Resolution 19-2** that the methods proposed in HB409 (Trap-Sterilize-Release) do NOT reduce feral cat populations, and therefore are not recommended as a form of management for feral cats by the State of Hawaii.

Feral cats and mongooses are invasive species in Hawaii, not pets. According to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) website, "**Chapter 194, Hawaii Revised Statutes, mandates that the HISC coordinate the State's position on issues relating to invasive species, and that the HISC provide advice to the Governor and State Legislature...**" Therefore, Resolutions adopted by the HISC are the State of Hawaii's position concerning invasive species, and the House Agriculture Committee has a responsibility to vote on proposed bills according to HISC Resolutions when the proposed bill concerns the management of invasive species.

**Hawaii Invasive Species Council Resolution 19-2** (adopted January 29, 2019) mandates that the State of Hawaii should NOT support the HB409 Trap-Sterilize-Release program to manage feral cat populations because "...numerous scientific studies, summarized in a meta-analysis titled 'Critical Assessment of Claims regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap-Neuter-Return' by Longcore et al (2009) in the journal *Conservation Biology*, have shown that 'Trap-Neuter-Return' is not an effective strategy to reduce the number of feral cats in a given area or the predation and disease impacts of feral cats..." Resolution 19-2 continues, "**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii Invasive Species Council does not recommend the use of 'Trap-Neuter-Return' or other efforts that support the feeding or re-release of feral cats into the wild or into public spaces...**" Resolution 19-2 was voted for and signed by State officials, Keith Kawaoka D. Env. (Department of Health), Suzanne Case (Department of Land and Natural Resources), Denise Albano (Department of Agriculture), and David Rodriguez (Department of Transportation).

As a voting resident and a taxpayer in Hawaii, I am extremely alarmed that HB409 will require the Department of Health to provide funds for a Trap-Sterilize-Release program even though the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, which includes a State official from the Department of Health, recognizes that scientific research has shown that Trap-Sterilize-Release programs do not reduce feral cat populations.

As a conservationist, I know that lethal control of invasive predators is necessary in Hawaii from the results of peer-reviewed scientific research and from first-hand experience of seeing the carnage that feral cats and mongoose inflict on our native Hawaiian wildlife. It is truly

heartbreaking to find native Hawaiian wildlife killed by feral cats and mongoose, knowing that their deaths could have been prevented if invasive predators were removed from the landscape.

In conclusion, I urge the members of the House Agriculture Committee to please **OPPOSE HB409**.

Mahalo,  
Lorraine Waianuhea

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 5:07:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jason	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB 409. The bill clearly limits the options we have for controlling introduced and harmful species and will lead to the extinction of our beautiful Hawaiian birds. We do not have time to spare with ineffective solutions. Our birds are already very rare.

TNR does not work to reduce the number or impact of feral cats. TNR cats remain feral and live very difficult lives.

Please, let's work together to reduce the number of feral animals in Hawaii. HB 409 will only make that job harder, and will increase the number of feral animals while carelessly misusing limited resources.

Mahalo,

Jason Gregg, Kauai

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 6:20:40 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Christine Lonie	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

This proposal is based on faulty science and cost-analysis studies. The number of feral cats has continued to skyrocket in the islands despite using the trap-sterilize-return process. It also fails to recognize the impact these invasive species continue to have on native endangered and threatened species.

Feeding feral cats and mongoose do not prevent them from hunting wildlife. Cats and mongoose have extremely strong predatory instincts and even the most well-fed will actively hunt and kill prey, though they may not eat what they kill. Here in Hawaii they are considered apex predators as there are not animals that hunt and kill them.

Feral cats are also responsible for the existence of Toxoplasmosis in our environment that has impact not only on endangered hawaiian monk seals, it also poses a risk to human health. The traditional view regarding humans is that the greatest threats are to the developing babies of pregnant women and immunosuppressed people like HIV patients. However, Toxoplasmosis is the most common cause of eye inflammation in the world and one of the leading causes of blindness. Recent research identified the presence of toxoplasmosis in multiple species of fish.

The best and most effective way to tackle the impacts on humans, endangered and threatened species is therefore through euthanasia to remove these invasive species. Similar to the only way to deal with invasive plants is with their removal. We do not water and keep invasive plants "trimmed and healthy" and just remove their flowers so they do not propagate, so why would we even think a similar approach is appropriate with invasive animals.

Please recognize good science and the fact that euthanasia is a HUMANE way to actually deal with these invasive species. Mahalo.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 7:38:33 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Vincent Van Dyke	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I would like to share my testimony for the opposition of HB 409 for the following reasons. Trap neuter and release programs have been scientifically shown that they do not reduce feral cat populations (e.g., [Longcore et al. 2009](#)), they are not the preferred management practice of Hawai'i residents ([Lohr and Lepczyk 2014](#)), and this approach to manage mongoose and feral cats continues to allow these two species to roam the landscapes of Hawai'i causing irrevocable deaths to our native fauna including marine mammals such as the critically endangered monk seal (via toxoplasmosis) as well as spreading diseases to animals and humans alike (e.g., [Lepczyk et al. 2020](#)).

HB409 opens up the state to significant legal liabilities associated with harm to people or threatened/endangered species by state-authorized "feral cats" or released mongooses.

HB 409 will result in more harm to our precious ecosystems and native fauna that are currently being fought for so hard to be saved. Our native fauna need to be saved for the health of our islands and for our future generations to look at in awe and fall in love with. Consideration of alternatives to trap neuter release should be looked in to heavily as they are more effective.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 7:43:01 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Scott Driskill	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am writing in fervent opposition to the embarrassment that is bill HB 409. This bill is poorly-written, poorly-concieved, and most certainly will be poorly-executed if passed. Perhaps paramount among the myriad issues of this bill, and the "solution" it proposes is the fact that TNR HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE INNEFFECTIVE AT REDUCING FERAL CAT POPULATIONS. I would strongly encourage any supporter that has Dunning-Kreugered themselves into a position of support for this bill on the basis of animal welfare to read *any* of the scientific literature on the topic. While cats are charismatic animals, the issue at hand is not one of animal welfare, but environmental welfare. The impact of these cats is devastating to Hawaii's fauna, resources that we can harldy afford to put in jeopardy, and cannot be sacrificed in the name of an overpopulated, disease spreading super-predator that a vocal group of toxoplasmosis infected supporters have decided to arbitrarily exalt above the many impacted native species of these islands.

Date: February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Via Video Conference

Conference Room 325

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

To: House Committee on Agriculture

Representative Mark Hashem, Chair

Representative Amy Perruso, Vice Chair

Re: Opposition for HB409

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture,

My name is Dr. Jeanette Purvis and I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to bill HB409 relating to animal caretakers.

My ancestor was a man named William Herbert Purvis. William came to Hawaii in 1878 as an agriculturalist seeking prosperity across the islands. He went on to introduce the Macadamia Tree to Hawaii, establishing this valuable crop to the islands. But like many early settlers, he also brought certain destruction. Shortly after William's arrival to the islands, he introduced the mongoose from the West Indies as an ill-informed effort to curb the rat population, leading to massive destruction to crops and native wildlife that has yet to be abated.

HB409 is a dangerous bill. Like my ancestor before me, it seeks to "manage" a dangerous, invasive animal population at the hands of those without adequate scientific training. Nonprofits are not by default equipped or educated on how to manage two invasive species that have been driving native species in Hawaii to extinction for over 100 years. Additionally, the focus of this bill is not to save native species. This is a bill that ultimately will maintain feral cat and mongoose populations. There are not enough veterinarians on this island to neuter hundreds-of-thousands of feral cats. Additionally, the "release" portion of trap-neuter-release is simply re-introducing an invasive predator into native environments. This is not pono.

Providing exemptions for people to feed feral populations will surely increase the numbers of feral cats and mongoose, even with these registered caretakers bringing sick cats into veterinary care. Anyone can see this if you spend time in East Honolulu. Here, there are thousands of feral cat populations. They're along the Manoa and Palolo streams--sacred water sources that brought life and sustenance to the Hawaiian people. Every day I watch a group of people dump cat food along the ancient slopes of Le'ahi, with hundreds of cats emerging from the woods to feast.

When I see this, I imagine the run off bringing their defecation to the beach, where Hawaiian Monk Seals lay on the beach, helpless to the effects of toxoplasmosis from which they have no protection.

Feeding feral cats and mongoose, which are not native to Hawaii and have no claim to this land, is not humane. It is inhumane. These animals go on to live short, brutal lives. They are hit by cars. They develop infections and injury. They are left outside to the elements to suffer. We cannot accelerate a problem brought by the colonists of Hawaii claiming it is humane, when the net-effect to the 'aina is harm. We must significantly reduce these animals' numbers and we must do it quickly.

We need to create sustainable, culturally appropriate and comprehensive plans in concert with native hawaiian community members, scientists, and conservationists to successfully and responsibly address the issue of feral cats and mongoose. This bill will only further distort the efforts to address this issue in a comprehensive way.

My ancestor William Herbert Purvis is merely one testimony to what happens when single individuals or small groups attempt to mitigate an invasive species without proper training, education, and planning. As the descendent of the man responsible for introducing this species, it is my kuleana to try to end the destruction his actions caused. I request your consideration to vote against this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jeanette Purvis  
jpurvis@hawaii.edu



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 8:15:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lukanicole Zavas	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha kōkou,

I am writing to state that I oppose the passing of HB409. TNR programs have not been found to be successful at reducing the population of feral cats- this also will not address the point source of diseases , such as toxoplasmosis, into the environment. Mongoose also do not need to be protected. They are a non-native mammilian predator that is contributing to the low populations of our endangered waterbirds. Promoting the caretaking of this species can only foster stronger attachment to them- thus making it harder to remove them completely from the landscape.

Thank you for taking time to read my testimony. May you have a wonderful day,

Luka

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 8:38:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cody Lane	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Hello,

I am a Kapa'a resident and wildlife biologist writing to you with great concern regarding HB409. Before I dive into my testimony, I must urge you to listen to the science, the facts, and the evidence. The loudest voices in this situation will always be those advocating in support of free-ranging cats on the landscape, but the voices that need your support the most are the ones which cannot advocate for themselves and will cease to exist without it. Those voices belong to Hawaii's wildlife.

Hawaii is the extinction capital of the world, having lost 95 of Hawaii's 142 endemic bird species (found nowhere else in the world) since the arrival of humans: we can still make changes to save what precious few native species we have left. Of the 44 remaining Hawaii endemic birds, 33 of them (75%) are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Legally this bill conflicts with existing requirements for the County of Kaua'i Habitat Conservation Plan.

Advocates of TNR will tell you that cats, when fed and spayed/neutered don't hunt. This is definitively false, and in fact cats, even ones which live in a home and are allowed to roam, kill regardless of hunger or sexual status. Scientific studies estimate that free-ranging (owned and unowned) cats kill 1.3–4.0 billion birds and 6.3–22.3 billion mammals annually, and that the majority of diet items are native species (Loss et al. 2013). Even owned and fed cats hunt prey in addition to provided food, and often do not consume it (Woods et al. 2003). According to a study using animal-borne cameras, owned free-ranging cats only bring 23% of their killed and injured prey items to owners, consuming only 28% of prey at the kill site, and leaving 49% behind (Loyd et al. 2013). Based on these studies, it's understandable why cat owners self-report lower estimates of wildlife kill, as they cannot observe everything their pet does at all hours.

TNR advocates will tell you that spaying/neutering reduces cat home ranges and prevents them from dispersing, but science has shown that sexual status (neutered/spayed vs. unneutered/unspayed) has been found to have little influence over home range size (Horn et al. 2011, Thomas et al. 2014). Proponents of free-ranging cats on the landscape argue that predation by such cats on wildlife is negligible when compared to other sources of mortality, however many studies have shown that cats are a major, if not the greatest, source of mortality to native birds, mammals and herpetofauna (Lloyd et al. 2013, Loss et al. 2013, Lepczyk et al. 2003, Van Heezik et al. 2010, Beckerman et al. 2007). While loss of habitat is the primary cause of many species extinctions, cats are responsible for the extinction of at least 63 species around the world (Doherty et al. 2016).

Beyond direct predation, cats are the obligate host of *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite, which is lethal to monk seals, and other marine mammals as well as the Hawaiian Crow, 'Alalā'. *Toxoplasma* seroprevalence was recently found to be almost 40% in chickens on Kaua'i, and will only become a bigger problem if cats are not controlled island-wide (Chalkowski 2020).

TNR does not reduce feral cats on the landscape, opposite of what advocates claim (Castillo and Clarke, 2003), and scientists researching the topic stress that TNR is not an advisable solution in "ecologically sensitive areas" (Schmidt et al. 2009). Please notice that, on Kaua'i, we can see native species, susceptible to negative impacts from outdoor cats, across the entire island and in every watershed. Gallinule (alae 'ula) in golf courses, and the Hanalei refuge, Hawaiian stilts on the Lihue Safeway property and the mana wetland, monk seals at Lydgate beach and Poipu beach, and nene from the Honouliuli Pali bogs to Puhi Park.

Even PETA opposes TNR, saying "Many (outdoor cats) are in "managed" colonies, which usually means that they are fed. Having witnessed the painful deaths of countless feral cats, we cannot in good conscience advocate trapping, altering, and releasing as a

humane way to deal with overpopulation and homelessness." The safest place for a cat is indoors, where it cannot cause harm or be harmed.

Unequivocally the scientific consensus is that TNR is not a humane or ecologically-responsible solution for Hawaii and that lethal control of cats is not only a permissible solution but a recommended one. TNR is an agenda pushed by advocates who value

the lives of cats above all else, and we as caretakers, residents, and dependents of this land must do all we can to protect the species native to it, not its invaders.

Sincerely,

Cody Lane

Beckerman, A. P., M. Boots, and K. J. Gaston. 2007. Urban Bird Declines and the Fear of Cats. *Animal Conservation*. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-1795.2007.00115.x.

Castillo, D., and A. L. Clarke. 2003. Trap/Neuter/Release Methods Ineffective in Controlling Domestic Cat "Colonies" on Public Lands. *Natural Areas Journal*.

Chalkowski, K., K. Fiedler, W. G. Lucey, S. Zohdy, and C. A. Lepczyk. 2020. Spatial epidemiology of *Toxoplasma gondii* seroprevalence in sentinel feral chickens (*Gallus gallus*) in Kaua'i, Hawai'i. *Pacific Conservation Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PC20045>

Doherty, T. S., A. S. Glen, D. G Nimmo, E. G. Ritchie and C. R. Dickman. 2016. Invasive Predators and Global Biodiversity Loss. *PNAS*. 113(40):11261-11265.

Horn, J. A., N. Mateus-Pinilla, R. E. Warner, and E. J. Heske. 2011. Home Range, Habitat Use, and Activity Patterns of Free-Roaming Domestic Cats. *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 75(5):1177–1185.

Lepczyk, C. A., A. G. Mertig, and J. Liu. 2003. Landowners and Cat Predation Across Rural-to-Urban Landscapes. *Biological Conservation*. 115:191-201.

Loss, S. R., T. Will, and P. P. Marra. 2013. The Impact of Free-Ranging Domestic Cats on Wildlife of the United States. *Nature Communications*.

Loyd, K. T., S. M. Hernandez, J. Carroll, K. J. Abernathy, and G. J. Marshall. 2013. Quantifying Free-roaming Domestic Cat Predation Using Animal-borne Video Cameras. *Biological Conservation*. 160: 183-189.

Schmidt, P. M., T. M. Swannack, R. R. Lopez, and M. R. Slater. 2009. Evaluation of euthanasia and trap-neuter-return (TNR) programs in managing free-roaming cat populations. *Wildlife Research* 36:117-125.

Thomas, R. L., P. J. Baker, and M. D. E. Fellowes. 2014. Ranging Characteristics of the Domestic Cat (*Felis catus*) in an Urban Environment. *Urban Ecosystems*. 17(4): 911-921.

Van Heezik, Y., A. Smyth, A. Adams, and J. Gordon. 2010. Do domestic cats impose an unsustainable harvest on urban bird populations? *Biological Conservation* 143:121-130.

Woods, M., R.A. McDonald, and S. Harris. 2003. Predation of wildlife by domestic cats *Felis catus* in Great Britain. *Mammal Review* 33(2):174-188.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 8:47:25 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
HANNAH MOON	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

As a conservation scientist pursuing her PhD, as a biologist who has worked with Hawaii's native seabirds, and as a person who loves our native fauna, I beg you to reject HB409. Both cats and mongoose are introduced predators on our islands capable of extreme damage to populations of native birds. Mongoose are the reason our state bird, the Nene, can only thrive on Kaua'i where mongoose don't exist.

Trap-Neuter-Release doesn't work, especially on our small islands. (Lohr, Cheryl A., Linda J. Cox, and Christopher A. Lepczyk. "Costs and benefits of trap• neuter• release and euthanasia for removal of urban cats in Oahu, Hawaii." *Conservation Biology* 27.1 (2013): 64-73.). There are too many cats being abandoned by owners who don't want them anymore that increase populations faster than they can be neutered.

Live cats are still apex predators who kill for fun, and even if they are fed can roam far and wide and cause plenty of devastation to our native fauna. Cats also pass toxoplasmosis to our monk seals (Littnan, Charles L., et al. "Survey for selected pathogens and evaluation of disease risk factors for endangered Hawaiian monk seals in the main Hawaiian Islands." *EcoHealth* 3.4 (2006): 232-244.)

Once educated on the issue, most people in Hawaii support the removal of cats (and presumably mongoose) via live trapping and lethal injection (Lepczyk, Christopher A., Cheryl A. Lohr, and David C. Duffy. "A review of cat behavior in relation to disease risk and management options." *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 173 (2015): 29-39.)

Please, the evidence is out there if you look. People love cats and it can be hard at first to make the choice to remove something seen as cute and cuddly, but our precious land and ecosystem is at risk- allowing cats and mongoose to stay is an active choice against the plants and animals that make our islands so unique.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 8:52:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Troy Taylor	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

**OPPOSING** HB409 - RELATING TO ANIMAL CARETAKERS.

Aloha,

I oppose the establishment of the trap-sterilize-return (TSR) process because this process, and those like it, have not proven effective at reducing feral cat populations. The following statistics from a recently published journal from the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation: University of Florida Extension from March 2020 comments,

In theory, sterilizing enough cats so that the birth rate is less than the death rate would reduce the cat population in a given area. However, this assumes a closed population, a phenomenon that has not been observed in any of the studies. Instead, the studies observed cats immigrating into colonies, dispersing from other areas or being released into colonies by people. **Even in a closed population, a large proportion of the colony must be sterilized (71% to 94 %) before the population will decline over time** (Andersen et al. 2004), which requires a significant input of resources.

Do not invest in this TSR process. Listen and elevate testimony and plans put forth by native wildlife biologists and community animal shelters.

Further, I believe the exemption of caretakers from state laws and county ordinances maintains and promotes the feeding of feral cats, which is one of the least beneficial tools to reducing cat populations outside. Instead, budgetarily support the efforts of local animal shelters and public education campaigns. It is particularly frustrating read within this legislation (on page 9 line 11-12) that “provided that a caretaker shall not be required to comply with paragraphs (5) through (8) if compliance is cost-prohibitive.” Especially section 8 concerning flea infestation and communicable diseases. These are the biggest factors to quality of life and public health impact with feral cats and be honest, it will always be cost-prohibitive. Require the compliance of section 8 at a bare minimum.

This reminds me of when mongooses were first introduced to Hawai'i in order to lower the rat population, then people realized that rats are nocturnal and mongooses are diurnal. This echoes a complete mismanagement and misunderstanding of how ecology functions. Please don't make the same mistake again.

Mahalo for your attention and consideration.

Troy



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 8:58:17 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Fern Duvall II	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Honorable House Agriculture Committee Members:

I am writing you as a private citizen who has worked for over 33 years as a DLNR Biologist and now a Program Manager for the Native Ecosystem Protection and Management Program for Maui Nui in DIFAW. I wish to fully oppose this TNR legislation, as I did for 2018 HB 2593 until it died.

TrapNeurterRelease is not humane to the cats, and certainly does not remove them from their obligate killing of wildlife, of native seabird and forest bird chicks/nestlings or adults. As for mongooses another serious non-native predator now in Hawaii: It is illegal by current DLNR-DOFAW rules to harbor, or release mongooses since they are listed injurious species; current HRS in HDOA also prohibits Monogooses management except to destroy them as injurious. Since 2000 - over 2 decades - I have been reporting on the numerous kills of seabirds on Lanai, Molokai and Maui islands caused by cats at large. Not all but many of the cats were TNR cats that obliterated seabirds in their nesting colonies. If people want to feed and maintain non-native cats have them build and run fully enclosed cat retaining enclosures (like done now small scale on Lanai). Cats and mongooses need to be prevented from destroying native wildlife in Hawaii and not have run of the land. Cat diseases, and parasites are a liability for the public, to kids at school grounds (from sand boxes, school gardens in particular) and ultimately liabilities for the State. If the recent skunks that now seem to get to Hawaii should harbor rabies then feral cats, and mongooses, would be plentiful contiguous and excellent vectors. Feral cats/colony cats ARE NOW rabies affected at mainland cat colony areas - these have bitten their feeders and others - this cannot happen in Hawaii. Please do not pass this legislation - rather help foster and protect Hawaii's unique native wildlife and resources - keep Hawaii safer from cats at large and their diseases, and parasites, and do the right thing by the cats for the cats. Make cats identifiable like dogs, treat them legally like dogs, and prevent them from freedom on the landscape. Thank -you.

Dr. Fern P. Duvall II, Maui

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:25:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
afsheen siddiqi	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Free and roaming cats and mongoose are detrimnetal to Hawaii's native ecosystem and a program to manage these species in a manner to keep them on the landscape will cause harm to our native plants and animals, many of which are endangered. Please do not support this bill.

Mahalo!

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:36:33 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kassandra Talamantez	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Hawai'i and someone who serves in conservation, I strongly oppose this bill and cannot continue watching it be overlooked. The effects of invasive predators to our native species has done nothing but increase. Although the importance of spay/neuter has increased, the effects feral cats have within the areas they live and thrive does not change. As a former employee of the Hawaii Island Humane Society, I understand the abundance of feral cats and why there needs to be more done. Health problems such as feline aids, feline leukemia, and toxoplasmosis was highly common in feral cats. These cats also struggled to pass behavior testing because their natural state of mind from being feral for so long could not be changed. We also had many people running feeding colonies inform us that they were unable to afford the costs of food because of the abundance of feral cats. Mongoose also benefit from feeding colonies because they are given a reliable food source that continues to let them thrive. The need for change is unavoidable and passing this bill will only benefit these invasive predators. This opposition will not only protect our community but also endangered native species such as the Hawaiian monk seal and the palila.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:38:42 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Miya DeVoogd	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha. Please do not pass this bill. Hawaii's manu (birds) are irreplaceable and in many cases endemic, meaning they are no where else in the entire world. They are already under so many threats, mostly due to invasives or habitat destruction. Mosquitoes and cats are already wrecking enough havoc on native manu species. Cats never belonged as feral cats in Hawai'i; there used to be barely any native predators here, which is why so many species have already died off forever. Many of Hawaii's manu species only have a few hundred left. Cats are cute but they don't belong in the wild here. There's already way too many people enabling wild cats by feeding them outside or letting their cats go freely outside. Cat poop is known to contain sickness deadly to endangered monk seals and humans. Please consider health, safety, and our beloved (struggling) native species. Mahalo nui, Miya

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:44:08 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Katrina Scheiner	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill and am deeply disappointed to see this bill proposed under the auspices of caring for animal welfare and wildlife. The arguments for Trap Neuter Release/ Trap Sterilize Release presented in this bill are not based in any actual science. I also question how performing surgeries on hundreds of thousands of animals (the number that would be required to even begin to make a dent in their populations) is actually more cost effective than a euthanasia program. Feral cats do cause extreme damage to native ecosystems not only by transmitting toxoplasmosis, but also directly by hunting and killing endemic birds. Mongoose cause similar damage, even if they do not transmit toxoplasmosis. The issue of feral cat control is an emotional one fraught with complexities as cats are also pet and companion animals, and it is difficult for many people to separate the appeal and ties they may have to their own, or friends', pets. However it is critical to recognize that feral cats are an invasive species, just as are mongoose. They are not pets, and control measures should be considered accordingly.

Trap Neuter Release or Trap Sterilize Release programs have been in effect for decades all over the country with little to no impact on feral cat populations. These programs do not reduce feral cat populations. Cats are intelligent and the percentage of individuals that can be caught in humane traps to be sterilized is quite small compared to the total number of feral cats in the wild. Short of a truly massive, intensive, and continuous trapping effort, there is simply no way to sterilize enough cats to make even a small change in their overall populations. And that says nothing of the damage they would continue to cause for the remainder of their natural lives after being sterilized. Unless all feral cats and mongoose are removed from the islands, they will continue to persist, continue to reproduce, and continue to cause problems.

The concept of removing cats creating a vacuum for others to fill is also a myth - these non-sterilized cats already existed in the ecosystem, they did not simply materialize as another cat was removed. The only way to reduce feral cat populations, and to also mitigate the damage and havoc they wreak on native wildlife, is to physically remove them from the ecosystem. TNR/TSR may prevent some cats from reproducing, but they will continue to hunt and kill wildlife for the remainder of their lives. The issue of feral cat management so often comes down to a life value judgement - which animals deserve to be here more, the introduced, invasive species, or the native wildlife? It is not the cats' fault that they are present, but nor should the onus be put on native wildlife that did not

evolve with such predators and so who have zero defenses against such animals and are face with looming extinction.

Furthermore, TSR release programs are not as humane as is often touted. An animal may be treated a single time for fleas or other injuries that are present at the time that they are sterilized, but then then receive zero follow up care. Event while sterilizing animals is a straight-forward procedure, there is still much opportunity for post-operative complications. For our own pets, we monitor them, perhaps keep a cone on them so they do not lick or chew on the surgical site, and we make sure they receive antibiotics and other treatments as needed. Feral animals do not get any of this care and are at risk for infection or worse. Their surgical site cannot be kept clean, there is no way to prevent dirt, feces, and contaminated water from getting into the wound. They are smart and trap shy and thus are very unlikely to be able to be trapped again for any follow up care. Feral animals often suffer flea, tick, and parasite infestations and their guts are often full of worms as they do not receive the monthly preventative care our own pets are given. We must consider quality of life when we discuss which approach to feral cats is actually more humane. The idea of euthanasia is not a pleasant one, to be sure, but we must be able to see the forest through the trees.

Applying TSR programs to mongoose, animals that do not even have the emotional benefit of being the same species as a companion animal, is frankly appalling and deeply insulting to native wildlife and to all who have dedicated their lives to conservation and mitigating damage to native ecosystems. Mongoose are introduced, invasive predators and must be removed from the ecosystem. Non-profit groups hardly have the funds and resources to issue traps to conduct TSR with feral cats, let alone mongoose. I am baffled as to why mongoose are even included in this bill, as controlling invasive species should absolutely not be put onto non-profit animal welfare groups. Such actions must be conducted by conservation organizations, as controlling, managing, and removing invasive species such as mongoose is ultimately a conservation issue.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:47:39 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Madelyn Jacobs	Individual	Oppose	No

## Comments:

This bill is a step in the wrong direction for protecting our native species. Please listen to the scientists, the people working tirelessly to preserve and restore what's left of our unique aina. Do not allow mongoose and cats to permanently take away what rightfully belongs here. They are introduced hunters with advantages our native fauna cannot battle. TNR is not a solution for our system, as the hunters will continue to kill while our imperiled native species quickly go extinct.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:56:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sarah Puhr	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear House Agriculture Committee,

I am a resident of Kailua and I **vehemently oppose** HB409. I am a wildlife photographer and on O'ahu I primarily photograph birds, trekking to Ka'ena Point every Sunday to photograph the moli soaring and ambling over to Hamakua on weekday afternoons to sit with the a'eo, kolea, 'alae 'ula, 'alae ke'oke'o, and 'auku'u. When travel was safe, I would go to the Big Island to photograph pueo and to Maui to track i'iwi. I cannot stress to you enough how deleterious the feral cat and mongoose population is to these very fragile avian ecosystems. Since humans arrived, 95 of 142 bird species found nowhere else have become extinct on Hawai'i. Thirty-three of Hawai'i's remaining 44 endemic birds are listed under the Endangered Species Act; 11 of those have not been seen for decades and are likely extinct. Hawai'i is an extinction hotspot. These rare and wondrous birds, which were themselves integral to Hawaiian culture, became extinct due to destruction of habitat, human encroachment on habitat, mosquito-borne avian diseases, climate change, and invasive/alien predators such as cats and mongooses. **We must act now to protect the bird species that remain.** HB409 will set us back in this goal and will cause irreversible damage; it will not provide adequate oversight for cat/mongoose population control and trap-neuter-release (TNR) will not protect the birds. TNR does not even appear to decrease cat population size unless significant resources and efforts are made to remove animals via adoption; even if cats are adopted, owners treat them as outside pets. Further, cats that remain appear to live shorter lives and are subject to disease and injury. It is much more humane to capture a healthy cat, and, if cannot be adopted, have it euthanized instead of returning it to the outdoors, where it will suffer during its life and will cause significant damage to the ecosystem. **We will not get these bird species back when they are gone.** Please, please, please, please vote against HB409 so that my grandkids and yours have birds left here to photograph and enjoy. Thank you for listening! Stay healthy!



**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:57:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ilana Nimz	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Trap-sterilize-return is NOT a viable option to preserve the endemic and unique species of Hawaii. Though the animals are not reproducing, they are still in the environment, and pose a threat to native species. Considering the lifetime of a cat is up to 20 years, that is a pervasive threat, even if it cannot reproduce. Furthermore, that is a daily input of toxic feces containing oocysts of toxoplasmosis, which are a danger to marine animals and humans. into the environment. Feral cats and mongooses are invasive species and should be eradicated from ecosystems. Cats should be treated like dogs, and kept indoors or secured in private homes. If Hawaii does not want to go down in history as the extinction capital of the world, then cats and mongooses must be culled, not allowed to remain in the environment.

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:59:08 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Erin Bell	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

There is ample evidence suggesting that TNR program do not work for the purpose of protecting native wildlife. Hawaiians should take a firm stand in protecting their native wildlife instead of the invasive predators we as humans introduced into the landscape and as a result, have ravaged the ecosystems. If you haven't seen a native seabird colony wiped out by a single cat or a critically endangered native forest bird chick killed by a mongoose, then I suggest you look up those images. They are not isolated cases. This is a constant and major threat on the survival of important biodiversity on these islands. By promoting the survival of invasive predators such as cats and mongoose, we are promoting the destruction of our ecosystems.

LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 10:51:39 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Linda Elliott	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB409.

LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 11:18:26 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kialoa Mossman	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

My name is Kialoa and I am giving my testimony in opposition of HB409 that require the department of health to contact nonprofit organizations to oversee the care of feral cats and mongoose and I especially oppose the sterilization and return process of these animals. These alien animal species has made a huge impact on our native animal populations, decimating both forest and sea bird populations as well as our vulnerfrts oafble turtele populations. The efforts made in protecting our endangered native bird populations have not only helped bring back some species from the brink of extinction (palila, 'akohekohe, moli, etc.) but allow many of these species to endure and live free from the dangers that we as humans have introduced. By allowing this bill to pass, we effectively erase all those efforts and waste the funds allocated to such projects. Allowing this bill to pass would also cost the state more money in trying to provide these nonprofits with the resources and personnel to carry out this proposal. We also would be condemning native species to death through 1. Not attending to the feral cat and mongoose problem in time and allowing these animals to reak havoc on our forest and coastal areas before nonprofit organizations to arrive. 2. Allowing steralized feral cats and mongoose to return to the wild would be condemning our native species to death. Though I do not wish harm on any life, I also thing it is not fair that many native species have to loose their lives due to no fault of their own. As humans, we are responsible for bringing in these feral animals, and it is our responisbility to remove them as quickly as possible, for the protection of our native species here in Hawaii.

LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 8:44:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Allison Baird	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB409. Our beautiful endemic species have only one home in the world: Hawaii. TSR is simply not effective enough fast enough to stop the widespread slaughter of native birds or curtail the spread of fatal toxoplasmosis from cats to monk seals. We must put the very survival of our threatened and endangered native species first. Mahalo for considering my testimony and opposing this harmful bill.

LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 9:16:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mira Gurung	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha honorable members of congress, thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony as follows:

This bill is necessary to humanely take care of our feral cats and mongoose and stop the populations from growing out of control, much needed for our animals!

Mahalo,

Mira Gurung

LATE

RE: HB 409

Dear Member of the Committee on Agriculture,

I am an ecologist, certified by the Ecological Society of America, who has worked on feral cats for >20 years, including nearly 15 years of work across the Hawaiian Islands. The work of myself and colleagues has been published in a number of peer-reviewed journal articles that are the gold standard of science. Based on the data that we have collected, it is important to note that much of the stated information in HB 409 is factually incorrect, has no basis in science, and provides false equivalencies as follows. First, there is no such phenomenon known as the 'vacuum effect.' While the spatial distribution of cats on the landscape can be reduced via removal (such as removing cat colony), new cats do not simply fill this void unless new cats are dumped into the colony. Moreover, if feeding is removed at a site, immigration of cats across the landscapes is unlikely. Second, there is no recognized declaration by veterinary science or animal science that declares TNR to be more humane than euthanasia. In fact, organizations such as the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) consider TNR to be less humane than euthanasia. Furthermore, my own research across the islands notes that the public considers euthanasia a more acceptable form of management than TNR. Third, the statement that TNR leads to a decrease in population size over time is factually incorrect. To date there are no data that demonstrate the method to work as a management technique. Fourth, our research demonstrates that TNR is more expensive to carryout than removing cats from the landscape. Fifth, notably missing from the bill is an honest assessment of the damage and risk to human and wildlife presented by feral cats on the landscape. Our research has found the presence to *Toxoplasma gondii* across the islands of Kauai and Oahu, where we have looked. Notably, cats are the only definitive host of this parasite that has deadly effects on native wildlife and also has a number of associated health impacts to humans. Moreover, cat colonies that we have found *T. gondii* at include public lands that are widely used by the public. Based on these points, I am opposed to this bill and believe that it will be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of people, wildlife, and cats.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Lepczyk

References of Note:

Chalkowski, K., K. Fiedler, W.G. Lucey, and C.A. Lepczyk. 2020. Spatial epidemiology of *Toxoplasma gondii* infection risk in sentinel feral chickens (*Gallus gallus*) in Kaua'i, Hawai'i. *Pacific Conservation Biology* 26:1–7.

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LATE

**HB-409**

Submitted on: 2/3/2021 6:51:44 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/3/2021 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Leilani Ng	Aloha Kitty TNR	Support	No

Comments:

We suport this bill. We promote responsible animal welfare through education and prevention which advocates for the spay/neuter of all cared for animals.