

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

APRIL 6, 2022
1:30 P.M.
VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. 2837 SD2 HD1
RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2837, SD2 HD1 relating to spaying and neutering of animals. Senate Bill 2837, SD2 HD1 establishes a spay and neuter special fund and allows funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the special fund. Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care. Senate Bill 2837, SD2 HD1 also requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by June 30, 2023. The Department of Agriculture offers comments and defers to Budget and Finance and the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The measure allows an advisory committee created by this measure, to determine the criteria and protocols for disbursement of funds. That committee is directed to prioritize funding to organizations that specialize in trap-neuter-release practices. The Department notes that less restrictive criteria would increase the



availability of spay and neuter services to pet owners, particularly those with lower incomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022
1:30 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 308, Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2837, SENATE DRAFT 2, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Senate Bill 2837, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1 proposes to establish a spay and neuter special fund, allow funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the spay and neuter special fund, and require the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by 6/30/23. This measure also proposes to require the Department to submit a report to the Legislature on the point-in-time count prior to the Regular Session of 2024. **The Department offers the following comments.**

While the intent of Senate Bill 2837, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 1 to reduce the environmental and health risks posed by cats is good, the scope of the feral cat problem is enormous and complex. Undertaking a comprehensive survey to determine distribution and abundance of feral cats statewide would be valuable, and important step in framing the scope of the problem, although the timeline in the bill to achieve this is ambitious. Designing a comprehensive statewide survey would be a complex undertaking requiring research into the various methods needed to develop such an estimate. Cats range from the tops of the mountains to the edge of the shoreline, and the methods to count them in various habitats and over the landscape would vary by terrain. Determining feral versus free-ranging pet cats and other considerations would require some analysis.

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council, which the Department co-chairs, approved Resolution 19-2 (<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/files/2019/01/HISC-Reso-19-2-Feral-Cats-and-TNR.pdf>)

“Supporting the keeping of pet cats indoors and the use of peer-reviewed science in pursuing humane mitigation of the impacts of feral cats on wildlife and people”. This measure cites

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 each area or the predation and disease impacts of feral cats.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

**TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2837, S.D. 2, H.D. 1**

**April 6, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) opposes this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2837, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, adds a new section to Chapter 143, HRS, to: 1) establish a Spay and Neuter Special Fund (SNSF) within B&F to finance spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats; 2) establish an advisory committee to assist B&F in establishing SNSF disbursement eligibility criteria and procedures; and 3) set membership and reporting requirements for the advisory committee. The bill also amends Section 235-102.5, HRS, to allow taxpayers to contribute \$5 of their income tax refund to be deposited into the SNSF; appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 23 to be deposited into the SNSF; and appropriates an unspecified amount of special funds out of the SNSF for B&F in FY 23 to establish the SNSF and allow income tax refund contributions to be deposited into the SNSF. The bill also requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in coordination with animal welfare groups and organizations, to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by June 30, 2023, and submit a report to the Legislature.

B&F strongly believes that it is not the appropriate agency to administer the SNSF and its related program functions. B&F does not possess the required subject-matter expertise on spaying and neutering animals or any other related veterinary services which do not fall under the purview of the department. Further, with the start of the statewide financial management replacement project in March, B&F staff will be fully engaged and committed to working on the project and doing its regular work; therefore, additional staff and funding would be necessary to administer the SNSF.

B&F recommends funds be appropriated directly to the counties because they have historically been responsible for animal control functions. The counties can then allocate these funds to entities best able to perform the desired services.

B&F also notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

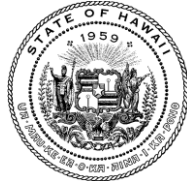
- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN M.D.
LT. GOVERNOR



ISAAC W. CHOY
DIRECTOR OF TAXATION

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION
P.O. BOX 259
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair;
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair;
and Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Isaac W. Choy, Director
Department of Taxation

Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Time: 1:30 P.M.
Place: Via Video Conference, State Capitol

Re: S.B. 2837, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

The Department of Taxation (Department) offers the following comments on S.B. 2837, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, for the committee's consideration.

S.B. 2837, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, amends section 235-102.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to add a new check-off box on individual tax returns authorizing taxpayers whose state income tax refund is at least \$5 to designate \$5 of that refund to be deposited into a new spay and neuter special fund. In the case of a joint return of a married couple having a state income tax refund of \$10 or more, each spouse would be allowed to designate that \$5 be deposited into the special fund. As with other existing check-off boxes, if no designation was made on the original tax return when filed, a designation may be made by the individual on an amended return filed within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for that taxable year. A designation once made, whether by an original or amended return, may not be revoked. This measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 2050 with Section 3, relating to state income taxes, applying to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2021.

Assuming that a functional effective date is inserted, the Department is able to administer this measure for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2022 as currently written.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 11:14:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We refer to [SB2837, SD2, HD1](#) Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals to be heard by the House Committee on Finance on Wednesday, April 6.

SB2837, SD2, establishes a spay and neuter special fund for the spay/neuter of pet cats and dogs and Free-Roaming cats, and allows funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the special fund. The bill has been amended to also call for a census of Hawai‘i’s Free-Roaming cat population.

Investing in spay/neuter is a proven way to address overpopulation – we are informed that Hawai‘i has more homeless companion animals than families looking to adopt.

This bill allows compassionate Hawai‘i taxpayers an easy way to support the spay/neuter of companion animals and Free-Roaming cats at no significant cost to the state.

This measure would support groups who are actively working to humanely reduce the population of Free-Roaming cats, which benefits both cats and wildlife.

We would stress the word ‘humanely’.

Non-profits who rescue and re-home animals often struggle to fund pre-adoption spay/neuter to make sure the animals they adopt out are not contributing to overpopulation.

Many low-income and houseless pet owners struggle to access affordable spay/neuter for their animal companions.

This must be even more difficult in these troubled times for everyone.

We are asking lawmakers for amendments to part two of the bill, relating to the cat census, to clarify that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is being asked to work with other stakeholders on a plan to count cats, not to complete the count by next June.

AIA begs to support the motion and the amendment and we thank you for the opportunity to help your vulnerable animals, both companion and free-ranging.



Bringing back the birds

**Testimony of American Bird Conservancy
In Opposition to SB 2837_SD2_HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals
House Committee on Finance | April 6, 2022**

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy and our members throughout Hawai'i, we are writing to express our **strong opposition to SB 2837_SD2_HD1**.

American Bird Conservancy supports cat sterilization as part of a suite of responsible cat owner practices, but this bill would not only authorize *but also prioritize* the use of public funds for the purpose of trapping, sterilizing, and then **releasing unowned cats to the landscape** through the program known as trap, neuter, release (TNR). State sponsorship of such programs would not only fail to reduce cat populations, as has been shown in numerous scientific studies, but would also cause tremendous harm for Hawai'i's people and wildlife. **Stray and feral cats, whether sterilized or not, continue to attack and kill Threatened and Endangered birds, spread infectious parasites and diseases, and contribute to public nuisances.**

Cats are among the world's most harmful invasive species and are instinctive predators that have contributed to the extinction of two endemic Hawaiian species, the Lāna'i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail), and the decline of countless others. Sadly, Hawai'i is already the bird extinction capital of the world, and **the continued presence of cats on the landscape only increases the likelihood of future extinctions**. Research has repeatedly shown that cats are a [major threat to Hawai'i's unique birds](#), such as 'A'o (Newell's Shearwater) and 'U'au (Hawaiian Petrel), two species which have experienced [94% and 78% population declines](#), respectively.

Cats can also carry a large number of infectious parasites and diseases, including *Giardia*, tularemia, hookworms, and more, and these pathogens can be spread to people. For example, a study at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children found that **keiki in Hawai'i had approximately 3.5 times more incidences of disseminated cat scratch disease** as compared to the continental U.S., which the researchers suggested was due to the large numbers of cats roaming the landscape. Sterilizing and releasing cats enables further keiki infections.

Toxoplasmosis, which is caused by infection with the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, is another pathogen of concern. The **parasite can only complete its life cycle in a cat**, and a single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called "oocysts") into the environment via its feces. These oocysts remain **infectious for months to years** and can infect any bird or mammal. Infection in people can cause miscarriages, fetal deformities, blindness, organ failure, and death and has also been linked to neurodegenerative diseases. This parasite is the reason women are told to avoid changing cat litter while pregnant, but **cats roaming the landscape, whether sterilized or not, turn the entire environment, including beach parks, gardens, and nature preserves, into one giant, contaminated litterbox.**



Bringing back the birds

Scientific studies in Hawai'i have shown that **feral cats contribute to widespread environmental *T. gondii* contamination, and this contamination is dangerous for people and wildlife.** For example, researchers found that [three of four feral cat colonies on O'ahu were actively excreting *T. gondii* oocysts.](#) On Kaua'i, scientists found the parasite "at nearly every sampled site" but observed [higher coastal contamination at beach parks and harbors](#), which has serious implications for public health because of the increased likelihood of human exposure. Infections in wildlife further underscore **widespread environmental contamination by cats – and only cats – and the dangerous consequences of exposures to contaminated landscapes.** *T. gondii* infections have been identified [in Nēnē \(Hawaiian Goose\) from Kaua'i, Maui, and Moloka'i](#), and *T. gondii* infections in 'Alalā (Hawaiian Crow) pose a [significant risk to this species' conservation.](#) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that toxoplasmosis is also a [leading threat to the recovery of Endangered Hawaiian monk seals.](#) **Supporting programs that purposely keep cats roaming the landscape, regardless of their sterilization status, contributes to environmental *T. gondii* contamination and puts people and wildlife at risk.**

Although American Bird Conservancy supports provisions of this bill that direct the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats, **SB 2837_SD2_HD1 would inappropriately and unnecessarily put the State of Hawai'i in the cat abandonment business** and create a variety of legal liabilities from the "take" of federally Threatened and Endangered species and human health risks. **This bill, however, could be strengthened by eliminating the foreseeable and preventable harms to people and wildlife by restricting use of public funds to support the sterilization of owned cats**, especially for underserved communities (see example below). Were such an amendment adopted, American Bird Conservancy could eagerly support this bill.

As it is, SB 2837_SD2_HD1 would facilitate ongoing harms caused by at-large cats and filter precious public resources toward a program that will only contribute to ongoing harms to Hawai'i's people and wildlife. For these reasons, **we urge you to oppose SB 2837_SD2_HD1.**

Mahalo for your consideration,

Grant Sizemore, M.S., CWB®
Director of Invasive Species Programs

Chris Farmer, Ph.D.
Hawai'i Program Director

**Suggested Amendments to SB 2837_SD2_HD1
Section 2**

Page 1

16 §143-_____ Spay and neuter special fund. (a) There is
17 established the spay and neuter special fund to be administered

Page 2

1 by the department of budget and finance. Moneys received by the
2 department from:

3 (1) State income tax refund designations to the special
4 fund pursuant to section 235-102.5(e); and
5 (2) Appropriations or other moneys made available,
6 shall be deposited into the special fund. All interest earned
7 or accrued on moneys deposited in the special fund shall become
8 part of the special fund. Moneys in the special fund shall be
9 expended to reduce the pet overpopulation and the reproduction of
10 **owned**, free-roaming cats by providing spaying and neutering surgery
11 and associated veterinary care; provided that the uses and
12 expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall **only apply to owned**
13 **cats and** follow the eligibility criteria established by the advisory
14 committee established under subsection (b).

15 (b) There is established an advisory committee to assist
16 the department of budget and finance in establishing the
17 eligibility criteria and procedures for disbursements from the
18 special fund; ~~provided that, in establishing the eligibility~~
19 ~~criteria, the advisory committee shall prioritize funding to~~
20 ~~organizations that specialize in trap-neuter-release practices.~~
21 The advisory committee shall include the following:

Page 3

1 (1) One representative from the department of budget and
2 finance;
3 (2) One representative from the Hawaii Animal Welfare
4 Association or its successor organization, who shall
5 be invited to participate;
6 (3) One representative from the Hawaii Veterinary Medical
7 Association, who shall be invited to participate;
8 (4) One member from a Hawaii-based private non-profit
9 animal welfare organization, who shall be invited to
10 participate; and
11 (5) Two members from the general public, who shall be

- 12 invited to participate.
- 13 Members of the advisory committee shall be selected by the
- 14 director of finance, who shall also select a chairperson from among
- 15 the members. All members of the advisory committee shall be
- 16 residents of the State and shall serve three-year terms. All
- 17 members shall have an active interest in humanely reducing pet
- 18 overpopulation and the number of free-roaming cats in
- 19 the State.
- 20 (c) The advisory committee shall submit an annual report
- 21 to the director of finance, in a form prescribed by the

Page 4

- 1 director, identifying the total amount of funds that were
- 2 disbursed from the special fund in the previous fiscal year and
- 3 the amount of funds to be carried over to the next fiscal year.
- 4 The advisory committee shall submit the report to the director
- 5 within ninety days from the close of each fiscal year.
- 6 (d) The members of the advisory committee shall serve
- 7 without pay but shall be reimbursed for their actual and
- 8 necessary expenses, including travel expenses incurred in
- 9 carrying out their duties.



April 5, 2022

Testimony in OPPOSITION to SB 2837

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the finance committee,

Hui Ho'omalua is a party to several legal and legislative actions regarding the impacts of feral cats on our people and resources. Legislation like this may appear benign and well intended but is entirely misdirected and misinformed. For Hawaii, and specifically Kauai, feral cats present the largest threat to our native endangered species and our environment.

TNR on Kauai is responsible for cat carcasses on our roads everyday and for the demise of our native koloa maoli duck, surviving only on Kauai and Niihau.

Cats kill native birds. They make people sick. They turn our beaches into litter boxes where our keiki play. They sicken and kill our native seals and dolphin, all of which are in peril.

The concept of TNR likely has positive effects on the continent but for an island it is not pono. And for Kauai is it deadly! For Kauai, we are the very last hope of many of our rare and endangered water and seabirds and cats present the major threat.

Asking DLNR to count cats without funding that effort is poor planning and bad management. It would be good to know how many cats there are but it would be a major project and would require funding at an appropriate level.

We OPPOSE this legislation which is myopic and hewa for Hawaii.

Me ka pono,

Makaala Kaaumoana
Vice Chair

Hui Ho'omalua i ka 'Aina is a taro root organization founded in the early 1980's by traditional practitioners of moku Halele'a to address threats and impacts to the natural and cultural resources of Kauai. Founded by farmers and fishermen, weavers and hunters, we seek to provide context for issues related to the ecology of our ahupua'a. The organization is an active advocate for those native things and ways that are disappearing. We are not a nonprofit, we are an activist organization. We do not whine and wait, we act.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: INCOME, Check-off for Spay and Neuter Special Fund

BILL NUMBER: SB 2837 HD 1

INTRODUCED BY: House Committee on Agriculture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes a spay and neuter special fund and allows funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the special fund. Requires the department of land and natural resources, in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by 6/30/23. Requires DLNR to submit a report to the legislature on the point-in-time count prior to the regular session of 2024.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new section to chapter 143, HRS, to establish a spay and neuter special fund. Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided that the uses and expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall follow the eligibility criteria established by a new advisory committee created by the bill.

Amends section 235-102.5, HRS, to allow an income tax check-off for \$5 to be deposited into the new special fund, or for a joint return each spouse may designate \$5.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2050; provided that section 3 shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2021 and sections 4 and 5 shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

STAFF COMMENTS: In the long run, the cost of administering the checkoff merely siphons resources that should otherwise be used for providing needed public services.

If lawmakers believe certain programs are of great importance, then they can prioritize those programs through the appropriations process. With the Hawaii tax burden already so heavy, why should taxpayers turn any more of their hard-earned dollars over to government? What lawmakers also do not recognize is that by creating these checkoffs, they add to the cost of administering the law, a cost which steals funds from other programs including those enumerated for a checkoff designation.

Instead of further clouding the financial picture of the state, all earmarked funds and the programs they underwrite should be brought back to the general fund table so that lawmakers can properly exercise their oversight responsibility, including measuring the needs of those programs against all the other pressing needs of the state. Only then will lawmakers and taxpayers be able to set proper funding priorities.

Digested: 4/4/2022



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waiialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826
808.356.2200 • HawaiianHumane.org

Date: April 4, 2022

To: Chair Rep. Sylvia Luke
Vice Chair Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita
and Members of the Committee on Finance

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Community Engagement Director
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in support of SB 2837, SD2, HD1:
Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals
Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 p.m., Room 308 or Videoconference

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for Senate Bill 2837, SD2, HD1, which establishes a spay and neuter special fund; allows funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the spay and neuter special fund; requires the department of land and natural resources, in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by 6/30/23; requires DLNR to submit a report to the legislature on the point-in-time count prior to the regular session of 2024; and appropriates moneys.

Pet animal and Free-Roaming cat overpopulation are persistent issues in Hawaii and efforts to reduce the resulting suffering through low- and no-fee spay/neuter receive no state funding. Rather than competing for general fund resources, this measure would allow compassionate state taxpayers to support a dedicated Spay/Neuter Fund by reducing the size of any income tax refund due. This low-barrier way to contribute to an unmet need could make a world of difference for the nonprofit groups and veterinarians on the frontlines of animal welfare in our state.

The Hawaiian Humane Society welcomed more than 10,700 cats and dogs to our Mō'ili'ili campus in FY2021, including entire litters of puppies and kittens in need of homes. We flew 96 cats and 6 dogs to the mainland for adoption to make room for more animals to get

help here at home. This struggle is repeated in every county in our state and has inspired a community of nonprofits to spring up to help, but they need resources to do their work.

We are a member of the Hawaii Animal Welfare Association, which includes the largest animal welfare organizations in each county, and the Oahu Animal Welfare Alliance, which is a broad consortium of entities devoted to animal welfare on the island including businesses, nonprofits and veterinary professionals. Both groups have identified increased access to no-fee or low-fee spay/neuter as one of the greatest unmet needs to better care of our state's animals and to assist struggling pet owners.

If established, this fund would provide help for:

- Low-income pet owners who want to prevent unplanned breeding of their pets
- Houseless pet owners who need to have their animals spayed/neutered to qualify for transitional or supported permanent housing
- 501c3 animal rescues who want to spay/neuter pets prior to adoption so they are not contributing to pet overpopulation
- 501c3 Free-Roaming cat management groups who collectively trap and spay/neuter thousands of cats annually to prevent continued breeding

States that have invested significant resources in no-fee or low-fee spay/neuter have seen drops in pet overpopulation. That is why Hawai'i groups are able to transfer animals to states like Washington, California, Arizona and Colorado for adoption. But it would be far easier on our animals and our pet-loving residents to tackle this issue right here at home. Spay/neuter improves animal health and wellbeing, and saves lives.

We recommend the following amendments to Part II of the bill. While we understand your committee is primarily concerned with the fiscal implications of the legislation, the census portion was added late in the bill's development and we want to make sure that part of the measure is set up to succeed in its intent.

We would ask the committee to pass SB 2837, SD2, HD1, with the following amendments. Mahalo for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.

THE SENATE
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2022
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 2837

S.D. 2

H.D. 1

H.D. 2
Proposed

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

PART I

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that overpopulation contributes to animal suffering in Hawaii. Spaying and neutering pets are proven ways to reduce pet overpopulation and euthanasia rates. The legislature also finds that the humane reduction of the free-roaming cat population is in the interest of cats, wildlife, the environment, and humans. However, the State does not contribute funds to address these issues.

Accordingly, the purpose of this part is to:

- (1) Establish a spay and neuter special fund; and

(2) Allow funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the special fund.

SECTION 2. Chapter 143, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§143- Spay and neuter special fund. (a) There is established the spay and neuter special fund to be administered by the department of budget and finance. Moneys received by the department from:

(1) State income tax refund designations to the special fund pursuant to section 235-102.5(e); and

(2) Appropriations or other moneys made available, shall be deposited into the special fund. All interest earned or accrued on moneys deposited in the special fund shall become part of the special fund. Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided that the uses and expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall follow the eligibility criteria established by the advisory committee established under subsection (b).

(b) There is established an advisory committee to assist the department of budget and finance in establishing the eligibility criteria and procedures for disbursements from the special fund; provided that, in establishing the eligibility criteria, the advisory

committee shall prioritize funding to organizations that specialize in trap-neuter-release practices.

The advisory committee shall include the following:

(1) One representative from the department of budget and finance;

(2) One representative of the Hawaii Animal Welfare Association or its successor organization, who shall be invited to participate;

(3) One representative of the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, who shall be invited to participate;

(4) One member from a Hawaii-based private, non-profit animal welfare organization, who shall be invited to participate; and

(5) Two members from the general public, who shall be invited to participate.

Members of the advisory committee shall be selected by the director of finance, who shall select a chairperson from among the members. All members of the advisory committee shall be residents of the State and shall serve three-year terms. All members shall have an active interest in humanely reducing pet overpopulation and reducing the number of free-roaming cats in the State.

(c) The advisory committee shall submit an annual report to the director of finance, in a form prescribed by the director, that identifies the total amount of funds that were disbursed from the special fund in the previous fiscal year and the amount of funds to be carried over to the next fiscal year. The advisory committee shall submit the report to the director of finance within ninety days after the close of each fiscal year.

(d) The members of the advisory committee shall serve without pay but shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in carrying out their duties."

SECTION 3. Section 235-102.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§235-102.5 Income check-off authorized. (a) Any individual whose state income tax liability for any taxable year is \$3 or more may designate \$3 of the liability to be paid over to the Hawaii election campaign fund, any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, when submitting a state income tax return to the department. In the case of a joint return of a [~~husband and wife~~] married couple having a state income tax liability of \$6 or more, each spouse may designate that \$3 be paid to the fund. The director of taxation shall revise the individual state income tax form to allow the designation of contributions to the fund on the face of the tax return and immediately above the signature lines. An explanation shall be included which clearly states that the check-off does not constitute an additional tax liability. If no designation was made on the original tax return when filed, a designation may be made by the individual on an amended return filed within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for [~~such~~] that taxable year. A designation once made whether by an original or amended return may not be revoked.

(b) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any individual whose state income tax refund for any taxable year is \$2 or more may

designate \$2 of the refund to be deposited into the school-level minor repairs and maintenance special fund established by section 302A-1504.5, when submitting a state income tax return to the department. In the case of a joint return of a [~~husband and wife~~] married couple having a state income tax refund of \$4 or more, each spouse may designate that \$2 be deposited into the special fund. The director of taxation shall revise the individual state income tax return form to allow the designation of contributions to the special fund on the face of the tax return and immediately above the signature lines. If no designation was made on the original tax return when filed, a designation may be made by the individual on an amended return filed within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for [~~such~~] that taxable year. A designation once made, whether by an original or amended return, may not be revoked.

(c) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any individual whose state income tax refund for any taxable year is \$5 or more may designate \$5 of the refund to be paid over to the libraries special fund established by section 312-3.6, when submitting a state income tax return to the department. In the case of a joint return of a married couple having a state income tax refund of \$10 or more, each spouse may designate that \$5 be deposited into the special fund. The director of taxation shall revise the individual state income tax form to allow the designation of contributions to the fund on the face of the tax return and immediately above the signature lines. If no designation was made on the original tax return when filed, a

designation may be made by the individual on an amended return filed within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for that taxable year. A designation once made, whether by an original or amended return, may not be revoked.

(d) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any individual whose state income tax refund for any taxable year is \$5 or more may designate \$5 of the refund to be paid over as follows:

(1) One-third to the Hawaii children's trust fund under section 350B-2; and

(2) Two-thirds to be divided equally among:

(A) The domestic violence and sexual assault special fund under the department of health in section 321-1.3;

(B) The spouse and child abuse special fund under the department of human services in section 346-7.5; and

(C) The spouse and child abuse special account under the judiciary in section 601-3.6.

When designated by a taxpayer submitting a state income tax return to the department, the department of budget and finance shall allocate the moneys among the several funds as provided in this subsection. In the case of a joint return of a [~~husband and wife~~] married couple having a state income tax refund of \$10 or more, each spouse may designate that \$5 be paid over as provided in this subsection. The director of taxation shall revise the individual state income tax form to allow the designation of contributions

pursuant to this subsection on the face of the tax return and immediately above the signature lines. If no designation was made on the original tax return when filed, a designation may be made by the individual on an amended return filed within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for ~~[such]~~ that taxable year. A designation once made, whether by an original or amended return, may not be revoked.

(e) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any individual whose state income tax refund for any taxable year is \$5 or more may designate \$5 of the refund to be deposited into the spay and neuter special fund established by section 143- , when submitting a state income tax return to the department. In the case of a joint return of a married couple having a state income tax refund of \$10 or more, each spouse may designate that \$5 be deposited into the special fund. The director of taxation shall revise the individual state income tax form to allow the designation of contributions to the fund on the face of the tax return and immediately above the signature lines. If no designation was made on the original tax return when filed, a designation may be made by the individual on an amended return filed within twenty months and ten days after the due date for the original return for that taxable year. A designation once made, whether by an original or amended return, may not be revoked."

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to be deposited into the spay and neuter special fund.

SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the spay and neuter special fund the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the purposes of this part.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of budget and finance for the purposes of this part.

PART II

SECTION 6. The legislature finds that free-roaming cats in Hawaii pose risks to native wildlife, public health and animal welfare, and all stakeholders share the common goal of reducing their numbers. Currently there is no reliable data on the actual number of free-roaming cats on the main Hawaiian islands.

A count of the cats, followed by periodic updates, is necessary to implement programs that are demonstrably effective at achieving population reduction. Cat counts would allow for evaluation of methods, including trap-neuter-return, and for adaptive management.

The purpose of this part, therefore, is to require that cat counts on all of the main Hawaiian islands should be performed.

~~The legislature finds that feral cats contribute to widespread ecological disruptions that threaten native wildlife, particularly in island jurisdictions. The legislature additionally finds that feral cats are responsible for the spread of diseases such as *Toxoplasma gondii* -- a potentially lethal parasite shed exclusively in the fecal matter of cats that contaminates terrestrial, freshwater, and marine~~

~~environments and has been shown to negatively impact birds, humans, and other mammals that may become infected with toxoplasmosis.~~

~~The legislature further finds that there is strong support among Hawaii residents for effective management to reduce the abundance of feral or free-roaming cats in the Hawaiian islands. The legislature believes that the State must actively manage its invasive feral cat population in the interest of public safety and for the protection of and critically endangered native wildlife.~~

~~The purpose of this part is to require the department of land and natural resources, in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by June 30, 2023.~~

SECTION 7. (a) The department of land and natural resources, in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, to ~~conduct~~ plan a point-in-time count of ~~feral~~ free-roaming cats per main island and present a report to the legislature including an estimated timeline for completing the initial count, a schedule for periodic recounts to evaluate methods of achieving population reduction, the budget needed for implementation of the plan, and any proposed legislation necessary to complete the count no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of ~~by June 30, 2023.~~

SECTION 8. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to be expended by the department of land and natural resources in collaboration with animal

welfare groups and organizations to plan a count of free-roaming cats in the main Hawaiian islands.

~~SECTION 7. (a) The department of land and natural resources, in collaboration with animal welfare groups and organizations, shall conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats per main island by June 30, 2023.~~

~~(b) The point-in-time count under this section shall include the population and distribution of feral cats on each main island.~~

~~(c) The department of land and natural resources shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2024.~~

PART III

SECTION ~~89~~. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION ~~910~~. This Act shall take effect on July 1, ~~2050~~ 2022; provided that:

(1) Section 3 shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2021, ~~and~~.

~~(2) Sections 4 and 5 shall take effect on July 1, 2022.~~

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 10:31:13 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i (formerly the LGBT Caucus) Hawai‘i’s oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports SB 2837 SD 2 HD 1.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 10:37:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair, The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **SB2837 SD2 HD1 RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS.**

Hearing: Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 p.m., CR 308 and by videoconference

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition is a group focused on protecting corals and other marine wildlife, including Monk Seals. The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB2837 SD2 HD1!**

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition is particularly concerned about the large population of feral cats spreading **toxoplasmosis**. This disease is caused by infection with the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, a pathogen of concern for any bird or mammal, but especially for endangered **Monk Seals**. The parasite can only complete its life cycle in a cat, and a single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called "oocysts") into the environment via its feces. These oocysts remain infectious for months to years and can infect any bird or mammal. Infection in people can cause miscarriages, fetal deformities, blindness, organ failure, and death and has also been linked to neurodegenerative diseases.

Feral cat populations need to be controlled for the health of humans, Monk Seals, and other mammals and birds. Providing funding for spaying and neutering feral cats through an income tax check-off will help reduce the feral cat population.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 10:38:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Penniman	Maui Nui Seabird Recovery Project	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TNR does not work! Conflicts with wildlife and cats continue to exist as cats are remaining free roaming on the landscape. The claims of TNR proponents have been solidly refuted by scientists in peer reviewed literature. I cite just one reference here, a review that debunks TNR advocates claims:

Critical Assessment of Claims Regarding Management of Feral Cats by Trap–Neuter–Return

TRAVIS LONGCORE,*‡§ CATHERINE RICH,* AND LAUREN M. SULLIVAN†

*The Urban Wildlands Group, P.O. Box 24020, Los Angeles, CA 90024-0020, U.S.A.

‡Department of Geography, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0255, U.S.A.

†Department of Geography, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1524, U.S.A.

I can provide many more studies documenting the failure of TNR programs. Please reject SB2837! I run a program to restore native seabird populations on Maui. These birds are vital to building coastal and terrestrial resiliency. They do this by transporting marine nutrients to the terrestrial habitat during their breeding seasons. These nutrients feed coral reef ecosystems with beneficial nitrogen and phosphorous. Introduced, alien mammals - Cats, loose on the landscape are the biggest threat our native seabirds face. Cats do not belong free on our lands. In Maui county aone, conservation organizations spend over a half a million dollars each year trying to limit cat predation on seabirds, forestbirds, waterbirds and waterfowl. Cats need to be regulated as dogs are. All cats should be licensed (owned), micrchipped, and controlled as dogs are. Outdoors, cats need to be walked on leashes or provided with fenced yards or parks. It is far better for cats to be kept indoors except, as with dogs, when they are exercised/walked. Cats on the landscape spread disease and are the obligate host for the parasite that causes Toxoplasmosis. Our endangered monk seals are dying from this disease, as well as our state bird, the nene! Please support removal of cats from the landscape by funding cat sanctuaries as has been done on Lāna'i. And progrms such as the Good Cat Network on Maui that socializes trapped cats and sends them to the mainland for adoption. We absolutely reject the concept of "community cats". These animals are out of control predators of our native and endangered wildlife and must be eliminated from freely roaming our islands. Finding should require Humane societies to adopt out cats as indoor pets. Training of adopting people should include introduction to catios, litter

boxes, leash walking, and building positive relationships with their indoor pet. Indoor cats are more healthy and safer than cats that roam on the landscape. It is far better and more healthful for cats to live indoors. These methods will result in reducing free ranging cats that predate wildlife and spread disease. Please reject SB2837 SD2 HD1, it is a misguided attempt to legitimize TNR, a failed approach to managing feral cat populations.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 11:18:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hob Osterlund	Kauai Albatross Network	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou Chair Luke and House Finance Committee.

As native wildlife advocates, we stand in strong opposition to SB 2837. Although trapping and sterilizing feral cats might be a good idea, **ABANDONING CATS IS FATAL TO OUR NATIVE WILDLIFE. A STERILIZED CAT STILL HAS TO HUNT AND EAT.**

You may know that the County Council of Kaua'i recently passed Bill 2842, which **prohibits abandoning and feeding cats on County land, and prohibits abandoning cats on private land without landowners' permission.**

We do agree with the portion of the bill that requires a count of feral cats by DLNR; however, it should be certain that such an effort is funded and completed.

ABANDONING CATS OR DOGS ON THE LANDSCAPE IS ALWAYS A BAD IDEA, WITHOUT EXCEPTION. THE ONLY BENEFICIARIES OF SB2837 ARE THE PET FOOD CORPORATIONS AND THE AGENCIES THEY FUND.

Please stand strong for our native wildlife and OPPOSE SB 2837.

Mahalo.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:09:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Springer Kaye	Big Island Invasive Species Committee	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

While the Big Island Invasive Species Committee supports several of the proposals in this bill, particularly conducting counts of feral cats and funding spay and neuter programs for owned, pet cats, we cannot support its current form. This is due to the clause specifying that funds be prioritized for organizations specializing in the Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) of feral cats. Conducting TNR explicitly goes against Hawaii State policy as stated in Hawaii Invasive Species Council Resolution 19-2, signed off by the directors of six state agencies, including the Departments of Health, Land and Natural Resources, and Agriculture--all agencies with considerable expertise in the management of wildlife and wildlife-borne disease. This document emphasizes that numerous peer-reviewed scientific studies have shown TNR to be ineffective at carrying out its stated goal of reducing free-roaming cat populations on the landscape. TNR does nothing to reduce the impacts feral cats have on our native wildlife populations, both through direct predation and by spreading the disease toxoplasmosis. Even worse, TNR manages to give the impression that something is being done about the uncontrolled growth in cat populations in Hawaii, when it has no substantive effect. This can discourage county government from taking up the unpleasant but really very necessary work of reducing cat populations through euthanasia. Further, DLNR has specific rules prohibiting the transport and release of injurious wildlife, and most counties prohibit the feeding of feral cats on County owned property. By funding TNR programs, the legislature is tacitly encouraging private individuals to illegal release and feed feral animals on public property--often at our beach parks and scenic overlooks, creating an unsanitary and foul-smelling situation for the public.

We respectfully ask that you oppose this bill, and consider a clean bill to fund spay and neuter programs for owned cats, a population count, and animal control operations that are badly needed in every county.

HISC Resolution 19-2 can be found at the following link:

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/news/resolution-19-2-keeping-cats-indoors-using-peer-reviewed-science/>

Respectfully,

Springer Kaye,

Manager, Big Island Invasive Species Committee

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:12:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maxx Phillips	Center for Biological Diversity	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Center for Biological Diversity is in strong opposition to SB 2837 SD2 HD1. Trap, neuter, and release programs are problematic for a myriad of reasons. State funding of such programs will not reduce cat populations on the landscape, but instead would continue to cause harm to Hawai'i's people and imperiled wildlife. Stray and feral cats, whether sterilized or not, continue to attack and kill Threatened and Endangered birds, spread infectious parasites and diseases, and pollute our public parks and beaches with their urine and feces creating a public nuisance. This bill would put the State in the cat abandonment business thus creating a variety of legal liabilities resulting from the "take" of federally and state protected Threatened and Endangered species. Please oppose this SB 2837 SD2 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Maxx Phillips, Esq.

Hawai'i Director and Staff Attorney

Center *for* Biological Diversity

1188 Bishop Street, Suite 2412

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

www.biologicaldiversity.org

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 2:25:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Jones	Hawaiian Monk Seal Preservation Ohana	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a long-time protector of one of Hawaii's most endangered species, I think that organizations and programs should consolidate efforts to help protect both species. We will never enjoy or agree to the indiscriminate killing of cats. We MUST consolidate our efforts to protect the HMS while mitigating the long-term effects of out-of-control populations. The only way to make a difference is to Trap, Neuter, and Adopt. To that end, many organizations are working together to help both species. Addressing free-roaming cats and dogs should be a priority and making sure all animals are fixed will be a large part of controlling the population. Secondly, science should be working harder to find a vaccine or cure for toxoplasmosis, for the good of everyone.

Mahalo nui loa,

Dana Jones, Executive Director, Hawaiian Monk Seal Preservation Ohana

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 10:34:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 2:28:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill. It will help animals in Hawaii.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 3:22:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are in strong support of this bill which establishes a spay and neuter special fund for the spay/neuter of pet cats and dogs and free-roaming cats which allows funds from an easy income tax check-off to be deposited into the special fund by compassionate individuals to address overpopulation and support non-profits and volunteers who do the work and provide low-income and houseless pet owners access to services.

We are also in strong support of the HHS amendments to part two of the bill, relating to the cat census, to clarify that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is being asked to work with other stakeholders on a plan to count cats, not to complete the count by next June. Support for the count **only** if it is conducted in collaboration with animal welfare stakeholders.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 3:24:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Having DLNR involved in this bill is uncalled for. Their record of how to control animal overpopulation is decades old- KILL...which of course has not worked ...if it had, we would not be having this meeting today! What helpful or usefulness could DLNR provide now? I hope DLNR gets non of these funds or control !! I want my tax dollars to go to GOOD use please support Free / Low Cost spay /neuter of community cats. Aloha & Mahalo

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 3:59:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Prostor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 4:00:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joanna p milo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i vote yes

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 4:23:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2837, SD2, HD1 with the ammendments to Part II, as proposed by The Hawaiian Humane Society. I live in Sunset Beach, Oahu.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 5:18:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony to House Committee on Finance

Please support passage of SB2837 SD2 HD1 relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

The provisions in this bill would provide the linchpin for reducing overpopulation of free-roaming cats and facilitate efforts to protect endangered wildlife.

A particularly effective feature is the establishment of a special fund for the spay/neuter of pet cats and dogs, as well as free-roaming cats, and allow funds from an income tax check-off to be deposited into the special fund. I believe many Hawaii taxpayers would welcome such a vehicle as a no-fuss way to address the issue; it also would make neuter/spay programs affordable to far more pet owners, as well as reinforcing understanding of the benefits of such programs.

Thank you.

Aloha

Alice Saul
Hawaii Kai, Honolulu

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 6:17:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2837, SD2 and encourage you to do the same.

This bill will have a substantial and positive effect on the lives of all living beings in Hawaii - including humans, cats, and dogs. We desperately need a special fund for the spay/neuter of pet cats and dogs and Free-Roaming cats!

Please support this bill!

Sincerely,
Nandita Sharma, Ph.D.

Bill highlights:

- Investing in spay/neuter is a proven way to address overpopulation as shown by states on the mainland that now have to import pet animals to meet the demand for adoption. Hawai'i, on the other hand, has more homeless pet animals than families looking to adopt.
- This bill allows compassionate Hawai'i taxpayers an easy way to support the spay/neuter of pet animals and Free-Roaming cats at no significant cost to the state.
- This measure would support groups who are actively working to humanely reduce the population of Free-Roaming cats, which benefits both cats and wildlife.
- Nonprofits who rescue and rehome animals often struggle to fund pre-adoption spay/neuter to make sure the pets they adopt out are not contributing to pet overpopulation.
- Many low-income and houseless pet owners struggle to access affordable spay/neuter for their animal companions.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 8:05:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

First, I must be clear: I love cats, but I also love birds and other wildlife. My cats were always indoors--the problem is with the number of cats either feral or let out by their owners. If we want to solve the problem of feral cat over-population, we need to face the unpleasant fact that those cats will have to be removed from the outdoors --from the cat colonies that well-meaning people continue to feed, and from the sensitive wild places where cats can decimate endangered bird populations and spread toxoplasmosis to Hawaiian monk seals. If those cats cannot be housed in some enclosed facility where they can be spayed, neutered, cared for, or adopted, then they should be humanely euthanized. There, I said the ugly word, and it is painful to say. But cats are born predators, and we have to keep them from preying on our precious bird and wildlife species.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 5:36:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Providing neutering services is an effective way of preventing overpopulation of animal in a humane way , access to low cost neutering for low income individuals/families and rescues who may experience financial hardship in getting their animals neutered. Please pass this bill

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 6:22:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bret Mossman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson Luke and members of the committee,

I am writing today as a member of your constituency to strongly oppose SB2837. I work as an ornithologist and have a BS in wildlife ecology with a MS in tropical biology with a special interest in feral and invasive animal management. While I fully support the funding of sterilizing owned pet cats, this bill also supports and even prioritizes sterilization of feral and unowned cats.

On the surface this sounds like a sound management strategy, but unfortunately that couldn't be farther from the truth. Here in Hawai'i we are the extinction capitol of the world, and a significant reason for that is because we continue to fail to address the threat of free roaming cats. This bill will make the problem even worse.

87% of the public in Hawai'i support feral cat control, and TNR is the least popular method. Please for the sake of the health of our community and wildlife do not let this bill advance.

Trap neuter return has not been found to be successful in removing or reducing free roaming cat populations and funding this type of action will only serve to continue to perpetuate large colonies of feral and wild animals in our shared public spaces. TNR gives the public and lawmakers a false sense that there is action being taken to reduce feral cats, when all it is really is a waste of taxpayer dollars to uphold the emotional needs of a vocal minority of individuals.

TNR is another policy from and supported by large multimillion dollar mainland organizations, that has no place here in our islands.

Please listen to your local residents and biologists in this important issue.

Mahalo for your time,

Bret Nainoa Mossman

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 6:48:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lizzy Baxter	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TNR is one of the most inhumane ways you can treat cats. You bring them in to shelter, where it is warm and safe, and then you rerelease them back into the wild uncertain world. They develop health problems and live unsafe lives. They kill rare endangered animals for fun, infrequently actually eating their prey, and they spread disease in our waterways that affect our seals and dolphins. It is embarrassing for Hawaii that the idea of having feral cats is still a supported notion. It is not compassionate, it is a cruel life, and it ignores the devastating impact that feral cats have on our native, rare, unique, precious wildlife. Don't get me wrong, I love cats and I have my own indoor cuddly monster, but he does not belong outside. I am a local on Kauai who has witnessed many sick feral cats, and many devastating corpses of native birds. I strongly oppose this bill and any funding that supports outdoor feral cats. Mahalo for your time.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 6:50:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tyler Bogardus	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not support funding Trap Neuter Release (TNR). TNR puts native wildlife, human health and feral cats in danger. Cats should belong to people as pets in their homes. Releasing them into the wild is cruel.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:09:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joseph simpliciano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

FERAL CATS (*FELIS CATUS*)

Feral Cats are wild-living variant of the common pet cat, introduced to Hawai‘i by Europeans. Feral cats have established populations on all eight of the main Hawaiian Islands and contribute to widespread ecological disruptions that threaten native Hawaiian wildlife. Feral cats are one of the most devastating predators of Hawai‘i’s unique wildlife. In addition to direct predation, feral cats also spread a potentially lethal parasite (*Toxoplasma gondii*) that contaminates terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments and has been shown to negatively impact birds and mammals – including humans.

this is from the state of Hawaii, shame on anyone who wants to perpetuate or fund invasive feral cats and waste taxpayers money for a handful of people. These cats damage the whole environment. I am the harbor master out of Waianae and these cats has decimated our native and federally protected 'Ua'u seabirds at Pokai bay to include just about everywhere else on the westside of Oahu! They are a direct threat to our seals and turtles and yet legislators and senators rather fund their existence rather than protect the health and welfare of the people of Hawaii. If these people want to help the cats take them home! They break all of the state and city laws (with signs posted) about not feeding animals in our public places. They also never come back to pick up their poop which gets washed into the water and kills and poisons all marine life and any human being that eats a fish that is infected. I have first hand experience with these invasive feral cats and funding their existence especially after being on the state of Hawaii's invasive feral species list isn't Pono! <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/info/invasive-species-profiles/feral-cats/> <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/>

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:19:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Forshey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB2837, SD2, HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

House Committee on Finance

To be heard **on Wednesday, April 6, at 1:30 p.m.**

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Chair Rep. Luke, Vice Chair, Rep. Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

I am delighted to voice my support for this creative and innovative approach to tackle a difficult environmental and safety issue impacting the entire state. I appreciate our representative's efforts to promote and favorably act on this proposal and I encourage all to "think outside of the box" for solutions to help our families, wildlife, and pets.

This spay and neuter special fund for pet cats and dogs and free-roaming/homeless cats, will provide an additional avenue for our citizens to combat state-wide dog/cat overpopulation and help to create safer, healthier parks, beaches, and neighborhoods.

I believe this fund will also support and assist pet owners, nonprofits, veterinary clinics and animals across our islands by funding pre-adoption spay/neuter for the pets they adopt out as well as help low-income and houseless pet owners access affordable spay/neuter options for their pets.

Giving compassionate Hawai'i taxpayers a simple way to contribute at no significant cost to the state is brilliant. Most citizens of our beautiful state want to malama our aina wherever possible - this provides citizens with an avenue to make a difference.

Mahalo for your careful consideration and support of SB 2837 SD2 HD1. I hope we are able to quickly move to put this special fund into place. M. A. Forshey, Ewa Beach

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:27:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Kealii Thoene	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

I humbly oppose the passing of this bill. This will be disastrous for our native bird population and only make our cat and invasive mammal problem worse.

Mahalo for your time.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:32:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cats should be eliminated from the landscape instead of encouraged to be there. We should be focusing efforts on removing them instead of encouraging their existence. While TNR is better than nothing, 30 years of TNR efforts have not reduced the feral cat population, and we need to seek more permanent solutions.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:34:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Kok	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill, as it would allow more feral cats endangering our native bird and seals, etc.
Feral cats should be humanely euthanized

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:55:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Gollero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a native, lifetime Oahu resident, in enthusiastic support of this innovative funding measure.

I OPPOSE A CAT-COUNT CONDUCTED SOLELY BY THE DLNR, without the involvement of, and input by the Hawaiian Humane Society (HHS), as well as all other humane, animal-welfare stakeholders, who can collectively develop a plan. The DLNR is the least knowledgeable on this issue, compared to the agencies or individuals who carry out the actual TNR work.

I OPPOSE ANY CAT-COUNT DEADLINE PROPOSED, as all the aforementioned stakeholders need to first discuss the required timeline needed to implement a collaborative plan which will be complex.

The recent amendment for a total cat-count of ferals island wide, a significant majority that are already fixed, doesn't make any sense, as this bill has to do with the funding for unfixed cats. It would also be redundant, as the HHS is already in the process of doing so. If you want to count those numbers that will be fixed after this bill is passed, that would be a more accurate measure of the valuable service TNR provides.

The effectiveness of, and the continued need for TNR is readily apparent. If you leave an abandoned cat that is not fixed to roam-free without TNR intervention, you will end up with more cats. Additionally, as long as irresponsible owners breed unfixed cats, and/or continue to repeatedly abandon them, many that are already pregnant, the resulting numbers will always be skewed, and therefore irrelevant. Please don't waste tax payer money on repeated counts of already fixed ferals on every island. It will be inordinately laborious and time consuming to the already burdened DLNR, and to do this "periodically", how much is this recurring expense going to cost?

The decision on whether it would even be necessary to spend tax dollars on a cat census should be left to the advisory committee which will be created by the Dept. of Budget & Finance, as proposed in this bill. Please pass this bill WITHOUT THIS UNECESSARY AMENDMENT, which is redundant, and adds significant labor and cost for no reasonable purpose.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 8:31:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There are tens of thousands of cats roaming free on every major island of our state, both tame and feral. Owner responsibility is not going to solve this problem. Many of these cats live in public areas: beaches, parks, and forest wilderness, subsisting on handouts from hikers and on predation of wildlife, including our irreplaceable endemic species. There are no owners to be responsible for them, no larger predator or other natural force (such as freezing winters) to keep them in check, and they are continuously multiplying.

A large-scale solution is needed. This spay/neuter bill doesn't go nearly far enough to address the problem, but at least it does something. A point-in-time count is also needed to define the level of additional public resources that will be necessary to effectively and permanently reduce the population of free-roaming cats.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 8:41:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Allen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. Releasing feral cats will be devastating for our native birds for the remainder of the cats life, being spayed or neutered won't have any effect on how many birds these cats will kill. Feral cats also pose a risk, due to toxoplasmosis, to the endangered monk seal population. Please do not pass this bill.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 8:56:34 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass SB2837. Thank you.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 8:58:19 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Rachel Sprague	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The islands of Hawai'i desperately need control and removal of feral cats to protect native species of wildlife that are part of the cultural and ecological heritage of this place. However, this bill is misguided and directs efforts exactly where they do not need to go.

First, peer-reviewed studies show again and again that TNR alone is ineffective at reducing feral cat numbers. Sterilization of **owned** cats can be a useful tool as part of a suite of management actions. But funding and prioritizing a trap and release program for feral cats in the absence of actual trapping and reduction of the existing population will be a waste of public money, at the cost of wide-spread continued massacre of native wildlife species.

Second, population assessments are most valuable if you would make different decisions about actions if you knew the population was a certain size (e.g., larger or smaller). In the case of feral cats in Hawaii, it is indisputable that the population of feral cats is already untenable and causing unacceptable negative impacts to our islands' native wildlife species. Even worse, this bill would give DLNR an unfunded mandate, potentially drawing desperately needed funds from other programs that are actually protecting native species. Given that, public money would currently be better spent on active reduction of the existing cat population using an integrated strategy with multiple tools across the landscape.

I love cats and have several that live in my home and sleep in my bed every night. However, I also love the native wildlife species that have existed in Hawai'i longer than humans and longer than our introduction of feral cats. I **OPPOSE** this bill because it would spend public funds on ineffective actions that would not appreciably reduce the number of feral cats on the landscape or actually make progress toward saving native wildlife.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 8:58:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily White	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The science is proven and undisputed: TNR programs do not control feral cat populations. Instead, they increase feral cat populations, extend feral cat suffering, and increase bird and other native animal extinction rates across the state.

TNR is not a solution to our feral cat problem; supporters of TNR do not care about our environment, water quality, animals suffering, or extinction; they simply care for themselves and the brief hit of self-importance they get from "caring" for feral cats.

Please do the right thing and oppose this measure that will hurt, not help, Hawaii.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 9:10:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will support efforts to prevent over population of dogs and cats.

I would appreciate it if you would amend the bill to clarify that the Department of Land and Natural Resources is being asked to work with other stakeholders on a plan to count cats, not to complete the count by next June.

I also ask that you get rid of the defective effective date, which many of us looking in from the outside view as a tactic to kill a bill as few of these defects make it into law.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 9:14:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Kellam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB 2837.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 10:10:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Rogers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully and strongly oppose SB2837 SD2 HD1.

The release of unowned cats to Hawaii's landscape is a violation of Hawaii's native and endemic--and often endangered--wildlife that embody much of Hawaii's culture. Cats also vector diseases that can be cause serious harm to humans.

I strongly urge you to oppose SB2837 SD2 HD1.

Mahalo nui,

Kim Rogers

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 10:42:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel Wolff	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop with this nonsense that has no basis in data!!! We need to exterminate the cats now!!! TNR is expensive and does not prevent the extinction of our native birds. They can still kill them for years to come! Have the courage to do what's necessary to protect native species and look at what Australia is doing which is killing the feral cats and making it illegal for these people to keep feeding them! Please we are begging you to do what's right!

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 11:00:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vaibhavi Dwivedi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

Cats are among the world’s most harmful invasive species and are instinctive predators that have contributed to the extinction of two endemic Hawaiian species, the Lāna‘i Hookbill and Moho (Hawaiian Rail), and the decline of countless others. Sadly, Hawai‘i is already the bird extinction capital of the world, and the continued presence of cats on the landscape only increases the likelihood of future extinctions. Research has repeatedly shown that cats are a major threat to Hawai‘i’s unique birds, such as ‘A‘o (Newell’s Shearwater) and ‘U‘au (Hawaiian Petrel), two species which have experienced 94% and 78% population declines, respectively. Cats can also carry a large number of infectious parasites and diseases, including Giardia, tularemia, hookworms, and more, and these pathogens can be spread to people. For example, a study at Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women and Children found that keiki in Hawai‘i had approximately 3.5 times more incidences of disseminated cat scratch disease as compared to the continental U.S., which the researchers suggested was due to the large numbers of cats roaming the landscape. Sterilizing and releasing cats enables further keiki infections. Toxoplasmosis, which is caused by infection with the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, is another pathogen of concern. The parasite can only complete its life cycle in a cat, and a single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called “oocysts”) into the environment via its feces. These oocysts remain infectious for months to years and can infect any bird or mammal. Infection in people can cause miscarriages, fetal deformities, blindness, organ failure, and death and has also been linked to neurodegenerative diseases. This parasite is the reason women are told to avoid changing cat litter while pregnant, but cats roaming the landscape, whether sterilized or not, turn the entire environment, including beach parks, gardens, and nature preserves, into one giant, contaminated litterbox.

Scientific studies in Hawai‘i have shown that feral cats contribute to widespread environmental *T. gondii* contamination, and this contamination is dangerous for people and wildlife. For example, researchers found that three of four feral cat colonies on O‘ahu were actively excreting *T. gondii* oocysts. On Kaua‘i, scientists found the parasite “at nearly every sampled site” but observed higher coastal contamination at beach parks and harbors, which has serious implications for public health because of the increased likelihood of human exposure. Infections in wildlife further underscore widespread environmental contamination by cats – and only cats – and the dangerous consequences of exposures to contaminated landscapes. *T. gondii* infections have been identified in Nēnē (Hawaiian Goose) from Kaua‘i, Maui, and Moloka‘i, and *T. gondii* infections in ‘Alalā (Hawaiian Crow) pose a significant risk

to

this species' conservation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports that toxoplasmosis is also a leading threat to the recovery of Endangered Hawaiian monk seals. Supporting programs that purposely keep cats roaming the landscape, regardless of their sterilization status, contributes to environmental *T. gondii* contamination and puts people and wildlife at risk.

Although American Bird Conservancy supports provisions of this bill that direct the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources to conduct a point-in-time count of feral cats, SB 2837_SD2_HD1 would inappropriately and unnecessarily put the State of Hawai'i in the cat abandonment business and create a variety of legal liabilities from the "take" of federally Threatened and Endangered species and human health risks. This bill, however, could be strengthened by eliminating the foreseeable and preventable harms to people and wildlife by restricting use of public funds to support the sterilization of owned cats, especially for underserved communities (see example below). Were such an amendment adopted, American Bird Conservancy could eagerly support this bill.

As it is, SB 2837_SD2_HD1 would facilitate ongoing harms caused by at-large cats and filter precious public resources toward a program that will only contribute to ongoing harms to Hawai'i's people and wildlife. For these reasons, we urge you to oppose SB 2837_SD2_HD1.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 11:04:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mele Khalsa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The state should not be supporting spay and neuter programs for damaging invasive species that further degrade the landscape and harm native species which are unique to Hawaii. This would be a terrible use of state funds and a bad precedent supporting free ranging feral colonies which should not be allowed in our fragile ecosystem.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 11:28:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Paulino	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Preservation of Hawaii's Native birds is very important. They play a big roll in Hawaii's ecosystem. Feral cats are the number one reason of death amongst Native species.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:05:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kristofor gellert	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill . Feral cats pose a risk to sea life and native Hawaiian birds and possibly humans . Do not use tax payer funds for this

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:12:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rae Okawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Although I think that a count of the cat population could be helpful, I cannot support the measure as written because it supports TNR efforts. Providing funding through official state channels for TNR is fiscally irresponsible at the very least, and could put the state at risk of violating federal law. With the hundreds of thousands of cats at last estimate, this effort is like bailing out a sinking ship with a thimble. Plus, providing funding for TNR will grant some boost of legitimacy to the practice that I don't believe is deserved. I acknowledge that people who do TNR do a lot at their own expense, and I don't think they are bad people. However, TNR efforts are extremely misguided and we are not doing anyone any favors by humoring a method of cat control that does not work.

I also wanted to note that the landmark 1979 Palila v. Hawaii Dept. of Land & Natural Resources case set a precedence that "take" under the Endangered Species Act does not just include direct bodily harm or distress. In this case, the State was found to be in violation of the ESA by maintaining feral sheep and goats in Palila critical habitat. It is not much of an extension then to think that as feral cats (and also the parasites they carry that have killed endangered monk seals and Nene) continue to spread into seabird colonies, up into mountains, down to the beaches, and into sensitive wildlife habitats, if the State is found to financially support the return of these predators/vectors into sensitive environments this could potentially lead to additional expensive lawsuits against the State citing further violations of federal law.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:12:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Elliott	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony to **strongly oppose** S.B. 2837. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

SB 2837 Supports TNR for feral cats, a known injurious species to Hawai'i's threatened and endangered wildlife and a well known threat to public health. TNR has been scientifically proven to be ineffective in reducing the feral cat population by multiple peer-reviewed studies.

The Hawaiian archipelago is known as the endangered species capital and is critically important for endangered and endemic native Hawaiian birds, particularly wetland birds and seabirds, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Native Hawaiian wildlife evolved without mammalian predators and have no defenses against them and need urgent action to protect them from extinction. As these native species are legally protected by the Federal and State of Hawai'i's Endangered Species Act, there is an obligation to meet that legal mandate.

Also of much concern is that it is inhumane to abandon cats outdoors without a family to provide for the necessary regular veterinary and routine health care and also the need for daily socialization of these domestic pets. Cats indoors and as members of a human family are healthier and they live longer and happier lives. It is essential that cats are required to be under the control of the pet owners at all times, whether on a leash, in a catio, or indoors. This protects the pets, the public and more urgently the threatened and endangered native wildlife of Hawai'i.

Another important factor is that Human Health is also at stake. Outdoor feral cats pose a serious health risk to humans, as they are a vector for toxoplasmosis. Toxoplasmosis is dangerous to humans, where it causes miscarriage, birth defects, and can be fatal. Cats are also a vector for multiple other diseases that can seriously affect humans, including cat scratch disease (*Bartonella henselae*), Campylobacter infection, Salmonella, Giardia and cryptosporidium. Additionally, endangered native birds, the Nēnē and 'Alalā have been killed by exposure to toxoplasmosis. Hawaiian monk seals, Hawaiian spinner dolphins and Humpback Whales are also at risk, as toxoplasmosis can and does kill marine mammals. In recent years it has been a significant cause of mortality for critically endangered Hawaiian monk seals in particular.

I look to the Legislature to meet the legal, the biodiversity conservation, the public health, and the humane obligations by opposing SB 2837.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critically important issue.

Linda Elliott,

Hāwī, HI 96719

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:13:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson Luke, Vice Chairperson Yamashita and House Committee on Finance Members.

I am Jennifer Chiwa, have lived on Oahu my whole life and currently reside in Makiki.

Please support SB 2837 SD 2 HD1 which would allow Hawaii taxpayers an easy way to support spaying and neutering of pet animals and free roaming cats. This bill would support groups working to reduce the population of free roaming cats, aid non-profits that rescue and rehome animals and help low income pet owners to access affordable spaying and neutering of animal companions.

Please also support an amendment being asked for by the Hawaiian Humane Society on the part of this bill pertaining to having a count of free roaming cats to be done by the Department of Land and Natural Resources in collaboration with stakeholders. It's my understanding that the Hawaiian Humane Society supports collaborating with DLNR on a plan for this cat count, but NOT by the date as currently stated in this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:52:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marc	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

t

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:54:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
helen raine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose bill HB2837.

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 and will use state funds to do so.

Thank-you for your consideration,

Helen Raine

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 12:57:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey Nietmann	DLNR-DOFAW	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill would be detrimental to our state's native wildlife including monk seals, sea turtles and many species of endangered birds.

Support for SB2837 SD2 HD1

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, April 6, 2022

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 308

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Dear Representative Luke, Representative Yamashita and members of the committee,

I strongly support SB2837.

This bill is greatly needed. The number of community cats is way too large, and trap, neuter, return (TNR) can be successful and humane, but getting them fixed is expensive. This would really help the dedicated people who trap to do even more. Often they are constrained by the sheer lack of funds and therefore curtail the amount of cats they could bring in. With more funding, TNR can really make more of an impact. Mahalo.

Lee Cuccia

Kailua, HI 96734

Wednesday, April 6, 1:30 P.M.
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and committee members.

I would like to see state funding for spay/neuter but allowing taxpayers an easy way to help is a good first step. I support SB2837.

Lack of access to free or affordable spay/neuter is an obstacle to the humane reduction of Hawaii's Free-Roaming cat population, and also perpetuates the uncontrolled breeding of pet dogs and cats. This leads to more animals in shelters than families looking for pets, which can have tragic consequences.

With additional funding for spay/neuter, we can do better for the people and animals in our community. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo!

Nina Alena Beatty
Haleiwa, HI 96712

Please Pass Senate Bill 2837

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 PM
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the Committee on Finance,

Please pass SB2837.

Pet animal and Free-Roaming cat overpopulation lead to animal suffering across our state. We've heard from lawmakers concerned about Free-Roaming cats. I share those concerns. Unchecked breeding by this population degrades the quality of life for innocent animals, increases threats to wildlife and creates nuisance issues for human beings.

I hope lawmakers who are interested in reducing the population of Free-Roaming cats will support this measure. This will benefit the groups who are engaged in this work for the benefit of cats and wildlife.

I urge you to support this bill.
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Selene Mersereau
Kailua, HI 96734

Wednesday, April 6, 1:30 P.M.
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and committee members.

I would like to see state funding for spay/neuter but allowing taxpayers an easy way to help is a good first step. I support SB2837.

Lack of access to free or affordable spay/neuter is an obstacle to the humane reduction of Hawaii's Free-Roaming cat population, and also perpetuates the uncontrolled breeding of pet dogs and cats. This leads to more animals in shelters than families looking for pets, which can have tragic consequences.

With additional funding for spay/neuter, we can do better for the people and animals in our community. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo!

Hamid Jahanmir
Honolulu, HI 96814

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 PM
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the Committee on Finance,

Please pass SB2837.

We are residents of Hawaii , who live here amongst nature and lovely animals who strive to exist too . We can help these animals by helping with the birth control instead of using inhumane and horrific ways . We live along with these animals . We should all strive to donate and support this measure so they can receive the care and not remain overpopulated to a point of harm to them by accidents etc. As we support each other on this island , let look after the innocent animals that are here too . Lets make us be proud of the hearts and kindness of Hawaii residents! Thank you!

Barbara Tsai
Honolulu, HI 96821

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 PM
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the Committee on Finance,

Please pass SB2837.

Pet animal and Free-Roaming cat overpopulation lead to animal suffering across our state. We've heard from lawmakers concerned about Free-Roaming cats. I share those concerns. Too many feral cats. Unchecked breeding by this population degrades the quality of life for innocent animals, increases threats to wildlife and creates nuisance issues for human beings.

I hope lawmakers who are interested in reducing the population of Free-Roaming cats will support this measure. This will benefit the groups who are engaged in this work for the benefit of cats and wildlife.

I urge you to support this bill.
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Debi Bukala
Haleiwa, HI 96712

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 PM
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the Committee on Finance,

Please pass SB2837.

Pet animal and Free-Roaming cat overpopulation lead to animal suffering across our state. We've heard from lawmakers concerned about Free-Roaming cats. I share those concerns. Unchecked breeding by this population degrades the quality of life for innocent animals, increases threats to wildlife and creates nuisance issues for human beings.

I hope lawmakers who are interested in reducing the population of Free-Roaming cats will support this measure. This will benefit the groups who are engaged in this work for the benefit of cats and wildlife.

I am supporting this bill
Aloha to our animals

Sincerely,
Ute Regan
Honolulu, HI 96813

SB2837 SD2 HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

1:30 p.m.

Conference Room 308

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Representative Luke, Representative Yamashita, and committee members,

I strongly support SB2837 SD2 HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals. This bill will save lives!

States on the mainland that have invested in subsidizing spay/neuter for pet animals have seen a drastic drop in pet overpopulation. Local shelters fly animals to the West Coast to find new homes because demand for pets exceeds the supply. That has not happened in Hawaii. Insufficient access to free or affordable spay/neuter services means there are more animals in need of homes than families looking to adopt across our state.

I believe Hawaii taxpayers are compassionate and will support this kind of a fund. Please pass SB2837 SD2 HD1 and give this a chance.

Sincerely,

Natalie Spencer

Honolulu, HI 96825

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Representative Luke, Representative Yamashita, and committee members,

I strongly support SB2837 SD2 HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals. This bill will save lives!

States on the mainland that have invested in subsidizing spay/neuter for pet animals have seen a drastic drop in pet overpopulation. Local shelters fly animals to the West Coast to find new homes because demand for pets exceeds the supply. That has not happened in Hawaii. Insufficient access to free or affordable spay/neuter services means there are more animals in need of homes than families looking to adopt across our state.

I believe Hawaii taxpayers are compassionate and will support this kind of a fund. Please pass SB2837 SD2 HD1 and give this a chance.

Sincerely,

Serena Stefanic-Phillip
Hauula, HI 96717

Support for SB2837 SD2 HD1

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, April 6, 2022

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 308

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Dear Representative Luke, Representative Yamashita and members of the committee,

Please pass SB2837 SD2 H1.

I am an elementary school student living in Honolulu.

I think that spaying and neutering cats is important because then it doesn't continue the overpopulation of cats.

I care about that because that will cause less destruction of native wildlife and will also have cats not be born without a home.

I urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Luke Nagasako
Honolulu, HI 96822

SB2837 SD2 HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

Wednesday, April 6, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Representative Luke, Representative Yamashita, and committee members,

I strongly support SB2837 SD2 HD1 Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals. This bill will save lives!

States on the mainland that have invested in subsidizing spay/neuter for pet animals have seen a drastic drop in pet overpopulation. Local shelters fly animals to the West Coast to find new homes because demand for pets exceeds the supply. That has not happened in Hawaii. Insufficient access to free or affordable spay/neuter services means there are more animals in need of homes than families looking to adopt across our state.

I believe Hawaii taxpayers are compassionate and will support this kind of a fund. Please pass SB2837 SD2 HD1 and give this a chance. **Let's get some funding for spay/neuter.**

Sincerely,
Pamela Maiava
Honolulu, HI 96816

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:07:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Crampton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a wildlife biologist and cat lover, I firmly oppose this bill.

The ecological harms caused by publicly funding TNR programs would be devastating to wildlife, much of which is found only in the Hawaiian islands and nowhere else in the world, and human health. TNR programs are also not good for cats, leaving cats on the streets, where they contract horrible diseases and get run over by cars.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Lisa Crampton

Kalaheo

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:07:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christa McLeod	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TNR is not a successful strategy for feral cat control. The native ground nesting birds, near shore marine life and human health should NOT be placed above non-native, feral felines. The do not belong on the landscape and should not be perpetuated by County, State or Federal governments. If Private citizens wish to protect them, then they may create fenced sanctuaries instead of tax dollars being spent to help feed and spay them and then simultaneously pay to create fenced predator-proof areas for native birds!

Mahalo and please oppose this version of this bill.

Sincerely,

Christa DeRaspe McLeod

Kaua'i Resident and 15 year Conservation Specialist for local wildlife agencies

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:12:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Driskill	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a bill with dire consequences for the native species of these islands and our ecosystems themselves, and anyone who is in support of the bill is either ignorant of the impacts or simply does not care. Appeasing a vocal minority with such a bill with such widespread consequences is the opposite of good governance. It is poorly intentioned, conceived, written, and ultimately will be poorly executed, causing more societal harm than good.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:18:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly High	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kelly High, I am a resident of Mountain View, Hawai‘i Island. I am asking you to oppose SB 2837, which would allocate taxpayer dollars for a trap-neuter-release program for feral cats.

This would be disastrous for our native bird population, which is already facing extinctions regularly. Just last year, something like 7 more native bird species were announced to be extinct. Cats play a large role in this, frequently hunting not for food but for sport, especially our vulnerable ground-nesting native birds. Cat excrement is frequently found by native bird carcasses, another indication of the havoc feral cats wreak on our endangered and precious species.

Please oppose SB2837, and instead move for legislation that prioritizes our native species over feral cats.

Mahalo,

Kelly High

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:20:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lukanicole Zavas	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am submitting testimony in **Opposition to SB2837_SD2_HD1**.

Although responsible cat owners - especially those who allow their pets outside- should spay/neuter their pets, I disagree that the state should fund a TNR for all outdoor cats (feral and owned). These are the following reasons: TNR does not achieve the intended population reduction goals; sterilization does not stop the cats from being predators of our endangered birds nor inhibit the spread of disease [toxoplasmosis]; TNR programs do not dissuade communities from abandoning their pets or maintaining feral cat colonies.

Instead, I support using the funds to trap, neuter, and rehome/relocate. These cats need to be removed from the landscape. They should be placed in shelters, adopted, or a sanctuary.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration - and I urge you also to **oppose SB2837_SD2_HD1**.

Sincerely,

Luka Zavas

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:23:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JoAnna Maney	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am so sad these misguided bills keep coming up again and again. My sadness comes from the fact that I expect this bill, like the others before it, will be largely supported with testimony by people who actually do not reside in the Hawaiian Islands and don't completely understand the situation. We've seen before where local voices have been buried in an avalanche of testimony from mainlanders and non-residents based on misinformation.

We don't allow populations of wild dogs to exist with TNR services and organized feeding programs. Colonies of escaped parrots are culled. Why are cats given special favor? Why is there so much bias for this one species? It makes no sense. Cats kill for sport and are one of the biggest dangers to island wildlife and TNR has proven not to work. Why are we still talking about it? Isn't that the definition of insanity—trying the same thing over and over again when it's doesn't work? The population of feral cats is constantly increasing and it will continue to do so while the birds and seals are running out of time. This is not, it cannot be about emotion, it has to be about the numbers. The introduced predators' count keeps going up and the native wildlife count keep going down. It's that simple.

We all share this finite amount of land, this environment, we can't have huge populations of hunt-for-sport predators and expect defenseless wildlife to survive. Not to mention the toxoplasmosis which is a hazard to humans on the beaches as well. We need to look to other island communities like New Zealand and the successful measures they've employed in protecting their native wildlife. Cats do not belong in the wilderness landscape of Hawai'i. We humans goofed big time here. Yes it's sad. It's really sad. But we humans created this problem and we have to be the ones to make the hard decisions to correct it.

The question is, how much will it hurt when we hear that another native bird species has gone extinct? How much are we willing to do to ensure our children's children can see an 'i'iwi fluttering around an Ohia Lehua or see an albatross chick in its nest or are we prepared to *only* be able to tell stories and share pictures?

We need legislators to be brave and make the hard decisions that need to be made to save the native Hawaiian wildlife from extinction. Extinction is forever. I'm so afraid Hawai'i will only wake up to this reality when it's too late and the native birds are gone.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:24:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruby Pap	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote no on SB2837 SD2 HD1. Cat sterilization as part of a suite of responsible cat owner practices, but this bill would not only authorize but also prioritize the use of public funds for the purpose of trapping, sterilizing, and then **releasing unowned cats to the landscape** through the program known as trap, neuter, release (TNR). State sponsorship of such programs would not only fail to reduce cat populations, as has been shown in numerous scientific studies, but would also cause tremendous harm for Hawai'i's people and wildlife. Stray and feral cats, whether sterilized or not, continue to attack and kill Threatened and Endangered birds, spread infectious parasites and diseases, and contribute to public nuisances.

Toxoplasmosis, which is caused by infection with the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, is another pathogen of concern. The parasite can only complete its life cycle in a cat, and a single cat can excrete up to hundreds of millions of *T. gondii* eggs (called "oocysts") into the environment via its feces. These oocysts remain infectious for months to years and can infect any bird or mammal. Infection in people can cause miscarriages, fetal deformities, blindness, organ failure, and death and has also been linked to neurodegenerative diseases. **This parasite is the reason women are told to avoid changing cat litter while pregnant, but cats roaming the landscape, whether sterilized or not, turn the entire environment, including beach parks, gardens, and nature preserves, into one giant, contaminated litterbox.**

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:27:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Lorraine Waianuhea and I **STRONGLY OPPOSE SB2837**, which would allow for taxpayer money to be used for Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) programs. While neutering pet cats and keeping them indoors at all times would greatly lessen the impacts of cats on our native wildlife and ecosystems, TNR has been proven to be ineffective at reducing feral cat populations. Modeling by researchers on the cost-effectiveness of TNR versus trap-and-euthanize programs found that a TNR program on O'ahu would cost at least twice as much money and would be ineffective at eliminating feral cat colonies even after 30 years if additional cats were abandoned at the colonies. Releasing feral cats back into the environment after neutering them does not prevent cats from spreading toxoplasmosis parasites (which can kill Hawaiian monk seals, and sicken humans) or prevent cats from killing native birds. TNR is not a sustainable or an effective way to eliminate feral cat colonies, and therefore the State and taxpayers should not waste money on a TNR program.

Please do not pass SB2837!

Mahalo for your time,

Lorraine Waianuhea

Hawai'i resident

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:53:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Kane	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In a misguided attempt to manage Hawaii's feral cats and appease a vocal minority of residents, the Hawai'i State Legislature is poised to pass [SB 2837 SD2 HD1](#).

While the survey of feral cat populations on each island would be beneficial, it is an unfunded mandate. Furthermore, the ecological harms caused by publicly funding TNR programs and allowing this detrimental species to remain on the land (causing harm to humans, wildlife, and sea creatures through a disease they carry called toxoplasmosis) would be devastating to wildlife and human health.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 3:05:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanner Jessel	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a trained ecologist. It is well known by ecologists and other professional scientists who study or work with wildlife and natural resources that free-roaming cats are devastating to indigenous populations of wildlife. Free roaming cats also pose a health hazard to people. In no way should public funds be directed toward trapping, neutering, and releasing cats. Removal and containment to private property is the only solution that protects wildlife.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 4:28:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JOANNE PARKER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this very compassionate bill.

We do have a feral problem in our state and many people don't know how to help in even a small way. This is that way and this will help those who can't take better care of their animals with spay/neutering, a very critical part of pet ownership.

Please also support the amendment that the HHS and others are supporting by not putting the counting of feral cats through out the state. More has to be done first in more humane ways.

Mahalo

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 4:31:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael D Parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

We know that our feral population is a big problem and this small donation can begin to help the situation.

Mahalo

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 4:33:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kate Maley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cats are far and away the most lethal threat to the native bird population in the U.S ([killing an estimated 2.4 billion birds annually](#)). This problem is compounded in an island ecosystem such as Hawaii. Unfortunately, multiple studies have shown TNR is not an effective method of controlling feral cat populations and is thus unable to mitigate the threat these cats pose to the native forest birds and seabirds that are already under siege from mosquitos and avian malaria, habitat loss due to human activity and climate change, and predation by other invasive species such as rats and Barn Owls.

In addition, feral cats pose a threat to public health as they carry a number of harmful parasites and diseases, including but not limited to Toxoplasmosis (which also poses a threat to Nene, Alalau, and Hawaiian monk seals).

Not only does TNR allow these threats to Hawaiian citizens and wildlife to perpetuate, it might not even be legal. A [University of Florida law review](#) found that TNR is likely a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act, and some states' laws prohibiting abandonment and release of non-native animals.

Publicly funding TNR is not an effective use of taxpayers' money and could have devastating consequences to both humans and wildlife.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 5:42:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Brittingham V	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a concerned citizen of Kaua'i who cares extremely deeply about the natural beauty of Hawai'i, I strongly oppose this bill as it would be a minimal effort by the State of Hawai'i when it comes to addressing the rampant feral cat problem. Simply spaying and neutering would reduce the likelihood of feral kittens (under the false assumption that every feral cat could be trapped and released) but it does not address the more harmful impact of the damage these animals cause to native birds of Hawai'i through direct predation of adults/chicks and the spread of toxoplasmosis through their feces which has been proven to kill monk seals (one of the most endangered sea mammals in the world) according to NOAA, and has been proven to be a health risk for humans particularly pregnant women. I am in the belief that cats should be removed permanently from these delicate ecosystems and thus a publicly funded TNR program would not be an effective change on the impact of feral cats in the environment and therefore it would be a waste of public funds which could be directed to more proactive and meaningful solutions. I implore the individuals voting on this bill to ask themselves if this is actually solving the core issue of feral cats roaming our Hawaiian ecosystems.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 6:38:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia F Tucker PsyD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing my testimony. I am a licensed Clinical Psychologist on the Windward side of O'ahu. I strongly support SB2837 SD2 HD1, as I have previously supported this bill, as an innovative way for the public to have a Spay and Neuter Special Fund, benefitting the free-roaming cat population, wildlife, and the environment. This fund allows compassionate Hawai'i taxpayers with an easy way to support the spay/neuter of pet animals and Free-Roaming cats, by many groups of Nonprofits who will work very to help to alleviate the suffering of outdoor cats who may have been not properly cared for by spaying and neutering by their owners, and/or become abandoned, dumped, owners' moved, etc, and also work to have them adopted after spaying and neutering. Spaying and neutering is a proven effective, and humane way, to reduce the feral or outdoor cat population as seen in other states, as well as some areas of O'ahu such as the study at UH Manoa.

Additionally, Nonprofits who rescue and rehome animals openly struggle to fund pre-adoption spay/neuter to make sure the pets they adopt out are not contributing to pet overpopulation. And many low-income and houseless pet owners struggle to access affordable spay/neuter for their animal companions.

Again, this is compassionate as well as innovative Bill and can allow good citizens and compassionate people to give vital resources from citizens for the Special Fund. I also believe it also to be good role modeling for our keiki, to learn innovative and humane approaches to complex issues that I would strongly support.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:28:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Rossiter	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. A) It overburdens the underfunded DOFAW. B) It will create costly legal liability for the state when TNR cats inevitably are documented to kill threatened and endangered species. C) It does nothing to reverse the steep declines of our endangered seabirds and especially our 'ilio holo i ka uaua (endangered Monk seals) who are very susceptible to the deadly Toxoplasmosis parasite spread by cat feces, even if the cat has been spayed/neutered.

Thank you.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:39:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Lane	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this measure. Spaying and neutering animals as a form of population control has been proven time and time again to be ineffective. We cannot allow taxpayer fund to be wasted on this method of control. If we do not remove the cats from the landscape, they will continue decimating native bird populations. It is almost impossible to control feral cat populations through TNR because nearly 100% of female cats need to be spayed for it to be effective. Please do not support this waste of taxpayer dollars. The only feasible solution for feral cats is complete removal from the wild.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 7:39:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jessica middleton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Spay and neuter does not work! They will continue to kill our native birds!!!

ask yourself what's more important: feral cats who are not from hawaii, are a nuisance and spread disease such as toxoplasmosis OR NATIVE BIRDS AND MONK SEALS WHO ARE FOUND NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD????

eradication of feral cats is the only answer. Look at New Zealand, they prioritize unique NZ natural resources over invasive pests!!! Get on board Hawaii!!!

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 8:44:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssa Piauwasdy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Trap, neuter, release does not work to control the massively damaging feral cat population. Creating a fund to support TNR would be a complete waste of money as it does not solve the root of the problem. TNR is the equivalent of pouring a bucket of water onto a burning building. It is undeniable that feral cats not only cause human health concerns, but are one of the biggest human-caused threats to dwindling native wildlife that are already under a myriad of threats. Hawaii is the extinction capital of the world. Supporting this bill to fund TNR would contribute to continued species extinctions even within our lifetime.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 9:10:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Madam Chair and Members:

Thank you for allowing me to express my support for a income tax check-off to fund spay and neuter services as found in SB2837 by Senator Rhodes. We very much need to address the over population of companion animals on our islands.

My concerns come from the amendment to the bill which requires a point-in-time count of feral cats and subsequent report to the legislature. The language in Section 6 of the bill is subject to spirited debate. I understand that the Hawaiian Humane Society has language that will significantly improve the proposal and clarify structure of the count without inflammatory rhetoric.

I am a member of a volunteer group which practices trap-neuter-release at the Keaau Transfer Station on Big Island. These cats are not feral; a great many are simply abandoned cats. Last week, I rescued a half-grown kitten who was so friendly that I could just reach down and pick him up. He is now being fostered, neutered, and is on his way to a permanent home.

Please do not distract from the very necessary legislation that Sen. Rhodes introduced. Please pass SB2837 with the amendment from the Hawaiian Humane Society or else return the bill to the form in which it passed the Senate.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 7:57:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Shepherd	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The purpose of this bill should be to protect the native bird species, not the cats. While I support doing surveys to establish feral cat population, establishing state funded TNR programs only increases the likelihood that people will intentionally abandon cats.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 8:45:18 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Ramirez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 8:46:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Kingsley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To who it is concerned,

I am writing to oppose bill SB 2837. The proposed actions as written in this bill are not fully thought out, funded, or have scientific relevance. For years Trap Neuter Release programs have been proven to not work effectively in reducing feral cat populations. Not only do these programs not work in reducing the numbers of overall population these programs give a false sense of security that people are doing good by these animals.

I have had the priveldge of working in conservation for many years including with Hawai'i's native bird populations. I have seen the true treasures of the Hawaiian forests. Our native species need all the help they can get. Supporting TNR and maintaining feral cat populations is a direct threat to our native species in more ways than one.

Please do I ask you to oppose this bill in order to help save our native species.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 8:50:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Skye Anderson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill as the ecological harms caused by publicly funding a trap, neuter release program on Maui would be devastating to both wildlife and human health.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 9:39:22 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Smith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cats must be removed from the landscape. Funding neutering agencies without requiring the removal of cats from the environment will exacerbate the existing problem, prolonging the suffering and extermination of Hawaii's native animals. Please require removal of feral cat colonies as part of the bill.

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 9:48:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hillary Foster	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good morning Representatives,

My name is Hillary Foster and I currently work in Hawaiian forest bird conservation in Hawai'i. I'm emailing you to briefly voice my strong opposition to bill SB 2837_SD2_HD1.

This bill would support a trap, neuter, release management program for feral cats, nonnative predators to Hawai'i, on Maui which would not alleviate the negative impact these cats have on the already extremely vulnerable native forest birds, sea birds, and monk seal populations.

Feral cats are present in the thousands on island, across the entire landscape. Depredation by feral cats has had serious negative effects on populations of avifauna and have been associated with extinctions of various types of species throughout the world. Feral cats also carry the deadly parasite, Toxoplasmosis, that is spread thru their feces into waterways. Toxoplasmosis has become an emerging threat to endangered monk seals in the main Hawaiian Islands over the last few years. Once it infects a monk seal, the result is typically lethal. The single biggest thing you can do to help is support keeping cats in Hawai'i inside.

A trap, neuter, release program would not remove feral cats from the environment, thus allowing these negative impacts on native avifauna populations to perpetuate. We need a different, science-based management approach to solve the feral cat problem on Maui and this bill is not it. There is no evidence that trap, neuter, release programs would benefit our native wildlife as efficiently as other methods, such as culling cats. It would also be more expensive to taxpayers.

Please vote against this bill and support our native wildlife!

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 9:54:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Brosius	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill seems to support the necessary means by which we can assess feral cat populations and provide a means to reduce their impact. Feral cats are very detrimental to native hawaiian species and especially the recovery of rare and endangered sea bird colonies and forest birds. We should protect these wonderful, ecologically important and culturally significant hawaiian species. Protection, restoration, and visting of native bird populations can also be a way to provide a meaningful and cherished visitor experiences which are authentic to Hawaii and translates into a prime example of how our environment is what sets us apart from the rest of the world. Without protecting native species we will lose our cultural identity. This bill will help enhance our ability to retain what is left of this heritage and provide a baseline upon which we can restore and enhance it. This bill is good for Hawaii!

SB-2837-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2022 9:56:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Evans	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cats are a big problem for many of our native species. They are a direct predator to our native birds and carry diseases that affect other species as well. This bill is proposing to help protect and use taxpayer dollars to manage feral cat populations across the state. These actions would be detrimental to our native bird populations. On these grounds I oppose SB2837. Please help us save our native birds.

From Monty Anderson-Nitahara

Resident of Mililani HI 96789

Aloha. I am writing in support of SB 2837 creating a special fund for a spay and neuter program for feral cats. This method of controlling the feral cat population is the most moral and humane method available. Available. Cats are God's creatures. They feel pain, they express affection and love, and they deserve compassion and respect as with any living creature. Simply exterminating cats is quick and easy, but it's also cruel and heartless. If we put the time and a small amount of resources into preventing their ability to procreate, we can show the world that Hawaii is a place of love and kindness even to the smallest among us.

Monty Anderson-Nitahara