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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FEBRUARY 15, 2023
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 576
RELATING TO FERAL CHICKENS

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 576 requires the department of land and natural resources and department of agriculture to collaborate on feral chicken management projects. Appropriates funds. The Department of Agriculture opposes this bill and offers comments.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is able to consult and provide technical information to the Department of Land and Natural Resources such as restricted use products however, HDOA does not have the resources to support operational or field work activities for these types of animal control projects. Animal control is better accomplished by the counties because it is under their jurisdiction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HB-576

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:52:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

ARH supports HUMANE feral chicken control such as contraception in feed. We strongly oppose lethal control.

Mahaho

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:09:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Streitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for taking action to address the feral chicken infestations throughout the islands, which are particularly concerning in our urban areas. This problem can be managed through thoughtful legislation and funding for eradication.

Although this bill specifically acknowledges feeding the homeless as a potential secondary benefit of the program, livestock feed could be another option, particularly if the quality of the captured chickens is not suitable for human consumption.

The bill's appropriation for a full-time specialist is critical. Dedicated staff allows for full attention on this growing problem. Staff can help with obtaining funding, identifying priority spots, education, facilitating a hunting program, and if time, assisting with trapping.

I appreciate this bill proposing creative ways to address the feral chicken population. In the spirit of this thoughtfulness, please also consider incorporating the following items:

- Utilize/mobilize free help by making it easier for do-it-yourselfers (DIYers):
 - Loan traps. Preference is not to charge a deposit so traps are more accessible and people don't have to worry about stolen or damaged traps costing them money. Accompanying legislation should make stiff penalties for stealing, tampering with, or damaging traps.
 - Drop-off locations. It is critical to provide the public free drop-off locations so people who catch feral chickens on their own don't let them become someone else's problem (e.g., residents catching chickens and dropping them off in another neighborhood's parks, which then also spread into the neighborhood). The Humane Society previously accepted feral chickens on Oahu, but not anymore. This may be one of the biggest contributors to the recent spread of feral chickens in previously uninfested neighborhoods.
 - Allow hunting on state property (e.g., parks). A permitting system could allow just pellet guns and bow/arrow, with a required safety course.
 - Legislation should remove legal liabilities affecting DIYers and remove any protected status of feral chickens so people don't have to worry if shooting a nuisance chicken. Hunting is not the same as animal cruelty and should be clarified. Hunting will probably be a last resort, after requesting government services or attempting to trap on own, but traps don't always work and owners shouldn't be expected to find/pay for costly

services for a common problem (crossing property lines) that falls upon government to deal with.

- Make interfering with feral chicken removal a crime, including tampering with traps (letting caught chickens out, damaging equipment) and harassing people trying to trap, regardless of whether they're a DIYer, contractor, or government employee.
- Remove feral chicken legal loopholes (where people can just say chickens are feral and don't have to do anything) and clarify responsibilities:
 - Require landowners to allow trappers on their property, if offered, or do it themselves within a certain timeframe. Otherwise, classify the chickens as de facto pets subject to noise laws and containment in a coop. This allows the City/State or neighbors to force action, while providing an option that removes financial burden from the owner.
 - Make it illegal to feed feral chickens, unless trying to trap (must prove by showing active trap to officer). Feeding attracts and retains the nuisance, while making it more difficult for those trying to trap them.
- Prioritize contractor funding to focus on hard-to-catch chickens (e.g., chickens that won't go in a cage). This will also cut down on the need for people to take things into their own hands via hunting as a last resort.

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:50:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vladimir Korolev	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The feral fowl situation on Oahu, and especially in Waimalu, Aiea, is out of control and adversely impacting our community. We need the Legislature's support to find a way to remove, re-home and/or to eradicate the feral fowl population.

As a business owner who has spent thousands of dollars landscaping our business and residential properties in Aiea with native Hawaiian plants, I'm frustrated that the foraging efforts of the feral fowl has extensively damaged our landscaping, again and again, which is counter to our efforts to keep Hawaii green and to help beautify our neighborhoods.

What started out as zero feral fowl in the neighborhood 3 years ago, has now grown to more than 55 on three sides of our properties, and the count keeps growing!

The feral fowl are a serious roadway hazard and a severe noise nuisance, especially to our first responders as tenants in our buildings that work graveyard shifts and try to get rest and sleep. Moreover, recently we've observed on multiple occasions that kids from surrounding areas, approximately aged between 9-14, have started to catch the feral roosters, take them to behind the Waimalu Shopping Center for cock fighting on nearly a daily basis. The presence of the feral fowl is only encouraging and enabling this type of illegal behavior.

As a community, many of us frustrated that the HB1095 and SB2195 last year did not get financing approval, have recently started to attempt to catch the feral fowl on our own but we need a place to take them to for re-homing. Some residents have suggested that we drop them off at the Capitol, to demonstrate the seriousness of the issue to the Legislature, but I recommend the State find a place for the fowl to be re-homed and to completely eradicate the feral fowl from residential communities.

In addition, if the Hawaiian Humane Society (HHS) is getting any type of grants or funding from the State or City & County, then the HHS should be required to accept again from the community feral fowls and feral cats for collection. The HHS idea of using feed, etc., to control the population does not address the serious and troubling issues of the feral fowl being a roadway hazard, a serious noise nuisance i nor correct the damaging landscaping effects of the feral fowl foraging.

Please assist the community by finding and approving an immediate way to gather and remove feral fowl from residential and business communities throughout the State!

Thank you!

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:04:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Murdoch Ortiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need immediate help by the State to remove and eradicate feral fowl from neighborhoods across the State! On Oahu, the problem is particularly serious in areas like downtown, Aiea-Waimalu and the Waianae-Makaha Valley areas.

The feral fowl are a major noise nuisance and has adversely impacted my health as I am unable to get rest due to the noise issue. Further, the presence of feral fowl is a dangerous roadway issue and I've observed on multiple occasions vehicles come to a stop due to the feral fowl all over the roadway which presents a dangerous situation for all drivers.

In addition, my yard and garden areas have been damaged and soil now is running out on to the street ,which is a safety issue as well as an unsightly mess.

Please pass legislation to initiate action to remove and eradicate the feral fowl population in business and residential locations and to also offer areas where if citizens catch feral fowl on their own, approved areas to take the feral fowl to.

Mahalo!

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:11:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Majid Joneidi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The feral fowl situation on Oahu, and perhaps throughout the State, is out of control and are a serious noise nuisance and very destructive of yards and gardens!

We need help from the Legislature to find ways to completely remove or eradicate the feral fowl from residential neighborhoods and business areas. We've tried to collect on our own the feral fowl but with limited success and moreover, there are not even known places where one can take feral fowl to if caught for re-homing purposes. We've contacted chicken farms in Waialua and in Wahiawa without success....perhaps farms can be given tax credits for accepting feral fowl caught by the State or by community residents?

Please approve this bill and help neighborhoods to regain their communities from the landscaping destruction and noise nuisance issues caused by the feral fowl.

Thank you!

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:19:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Peine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please help island communities statewide to eradicate and remove the out of control feral fowl population! We need immediate help and are frustrated that even if residents catch the feral fowl on our own, there are no known places to take the feral fowl to for re-homing.

Our yards and gardens have been destroyed and the noise nuisance and roadway hazards caused by the feral fowl are serious issues that need immediate attention.

The Waimalu-Aiea area is particularly bad but we've seen out of control feral fowl populations in many other residential and business areas as well.

Please approve this bill and enact action to remove the feral fowl from our residential and business areas immediately.

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:35:19 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ingrid & Albert Lagunte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please approve HB 576 and help address the serious issue of the feral fowl population on Oahu.

The situation is out of control and we need immediate assistance to collect, relocate and/or to eradicate the feral fowl populations in residential and business areas.

Not only do the feral fowl create a highly visible and unsightly mess with their fecal droppings, they are a serious noise nuisance and create extensive damage to our gardens, yards, etc.

We need immediate attention and resolution to this issue and urge the Hawaii Legislature to pass immediate legislation to help communities to eradicate the feral fowl situation.

Thank you.

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:29:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gloria Ortiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

Need the Legislatures help to help the communities throughout the state to remove feral chickens from residential and business areas.

The problem is getting worst and not only do the feral fowl make unsightly and unhealthy fecal droppings everywhere, but they are also a major noise nuisance and create hazardous conditions on our roadways.

Please approve this bill and find an immediate solution to eradicate and remove these feral fowl from our neighborhoods.

Aloha!

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:38:03 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Wilkinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On behalf of all of our tenants at Juliana Towers Apartments in Aiea, we strongly support this bill and seek immediate assistance from the State to resolve the serious issue of feral chickens in our business and residential communities.

We have many nurses and doctors residing at our property, many who work graveyard shifts so seek peace and quiet during the day to rest, but are simply unable to do so give the serious noise nuisance created by feral chickens.

In our area, the feral fowl population has grown dramatically over the past two years and not only are they creating a lot of damage to our native plants and shrubs, but they create an unsightly and unhealthy environment with large amounts of fecal droppings everywhere.

In addition, over the past few months, the feral chickens have been caught and used for cock-fighting by youngsters in the neighborhood and its become a daily practice that these unsupervised kids are taking advantage of the feral fowl to promote and support their cockfighting activities. Clearly, the State of Hawaii is enabling this behavior by failing to take action last year in proceeding with measures to remove and to eradicate the feral chickens from our neighborhoods.

We need more than a proposal by some to control the population of the feral fowl as this does not address the issue of the damage by foraging nor the roadway hazards and noise nuisance issues. Instead, we need removal of the feral fowl from state lands or to completely eradicate the feral chickens from our neighborhoods.

I urge you to approve and pass this bill and expedite relief to the communities on an urgent basis.

Thank you!

HB-576

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:07:22 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The feral roosters and chickens should be rounded up and processed for meat as should the pigs, goats and moufflon.

Hens could be housed in areas near the meat processing plants, say one acre, fenced and those that lay well kept until their egg production declines with age when they, too could be processed for meat. Eggs generated could be given to food pantries, nursing homes, daycares (both child and adult), homeless shelters and schools.

Also, cracking down on cock fighting and breeding of clocks for fighting to ship would help.

Thank you,

Mrs Ruth Love