

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 21, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 606 HD1](#) – RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING.

Hearing: February 23, 2023, 11:30 a.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the measure's intent and provides comments. DHS defers to the Departments of Agriculture, Land & Natural Resources, Health, the County of Maui, and the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness.

PURPOSE: The bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan by 7/1/2025 to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services. Appropriates funds. Effective 6/30/3000.
(HD1)

The HD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Postponing the date by which the Department of Agriculture must develop and implement the plan from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2025;
- (2) Changing its effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's innovative proposal to increase local food production, mitigate the deer population that impacts the environment, and create a distribution process for the meat to be delivered to under-resourced communities. With food prices in Hawaii continuing to rise, Hawaii's low-income residents need access to affordable quality food. Recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can access more local produce through the "double bucks" program that increases the value of SNAP benefits. In addition, HB 1248 HD1 appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program (HHFIP). Taken together, these measures will support low-income residents' food security.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 23, 2023
11:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 606, HD1
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESING

Chairperson Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 606 HD1. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness; Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife; and Department of Health, Food Safety Branch, in consultation with the County of Maui Axis Deer Task Force, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by nonprofit food distribution services by 7/1/2025. The bill also appropriates funds. The Department supports the measure to promote processing and donation of meat in the state.

The Department appreciates that the implementation date of the measure was amended from the initial 7/1/2024 to 7/1/2025 because implementing a plan by 7/1/2024 may be challenging due to the multiple agencies and regulations involved. The department is hopeful this new timeline is achievable however, the department cautions it has recently taken two years to restore a state meat inspection program in another state. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 5:35:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yoshito L'Hote	Aina Ho'okupu o Kilauea	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

So many times we look at pigs, deer, and chickens as invasive but they really are a resource if we have the proper processing capacity. Wild meats are offered everywhere around the world and here we are not able to serve it. Once legal the problem will turn into an economic opportunity that we cannot overlook. hopefully, we will be including other species so that we can address a holistic approach to managing those now invasive species. I am in full favor of this bill



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 23, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 606, HD1
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
11:30 AM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 606, HD1, which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services by 7/1/2025.

Across the State, various invasive species are creating havoc in agriculture as well as the ecosystems in which they exist. Maui County's Axis Deer population is a good example of nature getting out of control with populations exploding due to abundant forage following rainfall events. They continue to destroy crops and pasture lands by devouring any living vegetation as they continue to spread. Feral pigs damage crops by consuming them or by their rooting and trampling of crops. They will eat almost any crop. Feral pigs damage pasture grasses, killing desired plant species and often encouraging the growth of undesired weed species. They can also devastate orchards by consuming fruit, citrus, and nuts and their rooting can severely damage, or even kill saplings, shrubs, and vines directly or by facilitating the spread of soil-based fungal diseases. Feral pigs can also break irrigation lines, rip or tear nets, drying racks, and other agricultural structures and equipment.

These and other feral populations can pose a danger, especially as populations grow and their health is put into jeopardy due to inadequate food. Diseases that they normally tolerate will become serious debilitating illnesses that could put our domestic livestock industry in jeopardy. Such fears are not unreasonable, as incidences such as bovine tuberculosis spread from feral pigs have been documented in Molokai.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are working to provide Hawai'i with an increased level of self-sufficiency, but will not be able to do so if their products are consumed or damaged by feral animals. Axis Deer, feral pigs, and other invasive species can cause major damage to property, agriculture (crops and livestock), Hawai'i's native species and ecosystems, and Hawai'i's cultural and historic resources. They can also threaten the health of people, wildlife, pets, and other domestic animals. As Hawai'i's feral animal populations continue to expand, these damages, costs, and risks will only keep rising

Current state law specifically prohibits the inclusion of meats as a donation. Wild game can be a significant source of protein for Hawai'i's residents in need. Wild game can provide a beneficial outlet for meat harvested from invasive species and provide a tool for long-term sustainable invasive management for Axis Deer and Feral Pigs.

Several states have amended their Good Samaritan laws to use them as a tool for invasive white-tail deer management programs. Wild game meat donated under this provision does not need to undergo antemortem inspection requirements as long as stated conditions are met. Conditions for donations can be specified to allow the donation of this important protein source for our neighbors in need. Utah is the most recent state that passed such a measure and can be used as a model for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

TESTIMONY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 23, 2023
11:30 AM
Conference Room 308

HB 606 HD1

RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB is a general agriculture advocacy organization representing farm and ranch families and organizations on the island of Maui.

MCFB STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 606 HD1, requiring the Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by nonprofit food distribution services by 7/1/2025.

Everyone recognizes that we have an axis deer overpopulation problem. In defense, fences are being erected to protect property. However, this does not address the need to reduce populations. Concurrently, there is a public desire to utilize the animals for beneficial use. Other states have developed programs such as "Farmers & Hunters Feeding the Hungry" <https://feedingthehungry.org/> that work and can be utilized as templates for a program for Hawaii.

These programs address the gap between the hunter and distribution to the needy. The process will require coordination as well as development of sustainable funding mechanisms. This proposal seeks to develop such a working group. A side benefit from this effort will be addressing the need for additional meat processing capacity in Hawaii, especially for multi species needs of our smaller farmers and ranchers. Cattle past their prime processing time loses value. Currently ranchers often suffer significant loss waiting for processing opportunity. Maui has a hog processing plant that will cease when the current operator retires due to conditions of the land use permit. Expansion of processing capacity will help address this problem.

Covid demonstrated the need for smaller plants. Federal funding is available for CIP needs while programs such as Feeding the Hungry provide templates for long term operation. Hawaii needs a long term strategy to manage feral wildlife populations. This is a step in that direction. MCFB respectfully requests your strong support of this measure and assistance in identifying workable strategies.

HB 606 HD1 includes a very important aspect in addressing the problem which is development of grassroots support. The measure defines the process by which the program is to be developed, recognizing the role of the various parties. It additionally addresses funding needs.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter. Please contact Warren Watanabe at 8082819718 if there are any questions.



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Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki
Kauai

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB606.**

We recognize the dire need for options to reduce reliance upon conventional protein sources, particularly in light of the climate emergency. Expanding and diversifying access to locally-sourced protein through initiatives like HB606 are essential in order to build a more agriculturally-resilient and resource-secure food system.

Expanding the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services is essential to the success and vitality of both the agriculture industry and the non-profit food distribution services. With increased and improved processing options, our farmers, ranchers, and local communities have the opportunity to access and benefit from local meat.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 10:18:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leanne Kami	Kohana Family Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou, my name is Leanne Kami. I work in Hilo as a strategy consultant for Kamehameha Schools, focused on sustainable food system development in Hawai‘i. I also own and manage Kohana Family Farms, a small organic farm in Pana‘ewa. I am writing this letter in my personal capacity as a farmer and member of the Hawai‘i Farmers Union United, and the Hawai‘i Farm Bureau Federation.

I strongly support HB606, which supports allowing non-profits to harvest and distribute axis deer. Feral ungulates are wreaking havoc on our ecosystems across the state. Leaving axis deer populations unmanaged jeopardizes our natural habitats, farmers/ranchers livelihoods and food security.

Eradication is not a solution when so many in our communities are in need of food assistance. As evidenced during the COVID19 pandemic, our community non-profits know how to come together to feed each other. Please pass HB606 so we can address the food and farming needs of our communities.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

HB606 HD1
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Thursday, February 23, 2023, 11:30 AM
Conference Room 308

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

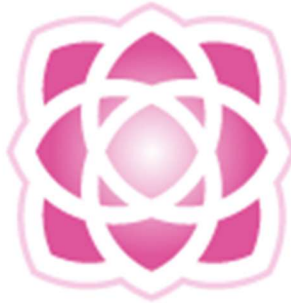
The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB606 HD1** which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services.

Expanding access to processing and allowing for the donation of wild game to under-resourced communities allows us to feed these communities high quality sources of protein, while also creating an outlet for efforts to remove invasive species such as deer, goat, sheep, and pigs from the environment. Unmanaged ungulates damage our ecosystems and cause detriment to farming and ranching operations. Expanding access to meat processing will help us to meet both environmental and social needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023 AT 11:30 A.M.

To The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Finance

SUPPORT FOR HB606 HD1 RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **supports HB606 HD1** which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services by 7/1/2024.

The Chamber would like to point out that axis deer, an invasive species that poses a continuing threat to Hawaii's environment, could provide significant quantities of meat as a protein source for nonprofit food distribution services, such as the State's network of food banks and Feed My Sheep, Inc. of Maui County. However, there is a gap between the hunters and the retailers and nonprofit services because the meat requires processing prior to distribution. For meat donation, other states such as Wisconsin and Michigan offer models that Hawaii can assess to develop processes for plan implementation and program funding, including licensing fees and other funding sources managed by wildlife agencies or nonprofits.

For these reasons, we **support HB606 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 10:13:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 11:08:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frederick M. Mencher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

I support HB 606, HD1, which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services by 7/1/2025.

Across the State, various invasive species are creating havoc in agriculture as well as the ecosystems in which they exist. Maui County’s Axis Deer population is a good example of nature getting out of control with populations exploding due to abundant forage following rainfall events. They continue to destroy crops and pasture lands by devouring any living vegetation as they continue to spread. Feral pigs damage crops by consuming them or by their rooting and trampling of crops. They will eat almost any crop. Feral pigs damage pasture grasses, killing desired plant species and often encouraging the growth of undesired weed species. They can also devastate orchards by consuming fruit, citrus, and nuts and their rooting can severely damage, or even kill saplings, shrubs, and vines directly or by facilitating the spread of soil-based fungal diseases. Feral pigs can also break irrigation lines, rip or tear nets, drying racks, and other agricultural structures and equipment.

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animals. Axis Deer, feral pigs, and other invasive species can cause major damage to property, agriculture (crops and livestock), Hawai'i's native species and ecosystems, and Hawai'i's cultural and historic resources. They can also threaten the health of people, wildlife, pets, and other domestic animals. As Hawai'i's feral animal populations continue to expand, these damages, costs, and risks will only keep rising.

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Several states have amended their Good Samaritan laws to use them as a tool for invasive white-tail deer management programs. Wild game meat donated under this provision does not need to undergo antemortem inspection requirements as long as stated conditions are met. Conditions for donations can be specified to allow the donation of this important protein source for our neighbors in need. Utah is the most recent state that passed such a measure and can be used as a model for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Mencher

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 11:53:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am in support of HB1382 HD2, as I believe that the donation of high-quality meat, provided it meets safety requirements, is a wonderful provision for those who do not have access to this product to to financial constraints and I am in agreement with amending our laws so that we can accept donations of meat under certain safety standards. Mahalo for your time.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 8:22:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2023 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry COMMENT on HB 606 RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING.

Due to climate change, the State of Hawaii food supply should increase "plant base food" consumption. Cow dung negatively effects the ozone and environment.