

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**MARCH 13, 2024
8:30 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1590, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1590 SD1 which directs the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors, and also to assess fully transferring meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State. The measure appropriates funds for three full-time equivalent inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections. The Department supports this measure with reservation.

The department previously testified that a meat inspector program supervisor or manager is essential to establish and to operate a meat inspection program. This is because the Division does not have the personnel resources to have one of the existing Veterinary Medical Officers or Veterinary Program Manager oversee this specialized program. This is a key position and the department recommends the measure be amended to include 1.0 FTE Meat Inspection Supervisor/VMO.

It is estimated it can take approximately a year or more to reestablish state meat inspection positions, reorganize the division, and amend statutes and administrative



rules as needed to restart a supplemental program. Additionally, operating costs including equipment, vehicle(s), office space, travel expenses, laboratory testing and supplies such as PPE are needed. Payroll and operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures to continue the program once active, which are estimated to be approximately \$1,000,000 annually for a supplemental program. Fully transferring meat inspection authority to the state from the USDA FSIS requires substantially more positions, and expenditures to operate. Subsequently, the required financial and workforce commitment from the state is much higher.

The Department supports this bill that appropriates funding so long as it does not impact the budget priorities set forth in the Executive budget submitted.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-1590-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 11:41:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

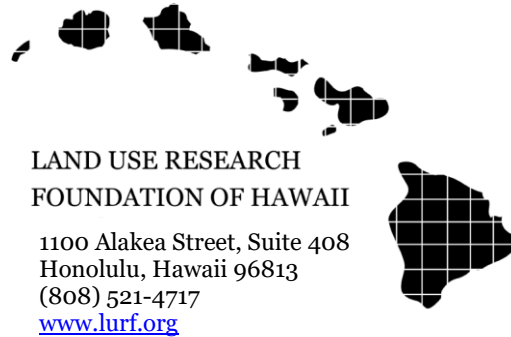
In 1995, the State relinquished oversight of slaughter to the Federal Government, citing inability to provide adequate staffing as well as financial reasons. During the almost 40 years since, DoA has come begging for funds constantly, for land and money to build a new slaughterhouse and processing plant. The Kalaeloa abattoir has undergone several iterations and now is run by a mainland company, killing only cows.

Now we are presented with the less than brilliant idea that the taxpayers pay for new facilities to kill pigs, goats, sheep and other small animals, and take over much of the enforcement of the HMSA (humane methods of slaughter act) along with a hefty financial grant for salaries, benefits, permits, planning and construction fees. We have not even been provided a business plan or an accurate costing out of all this -does DOA have even any idea how much this will cost-or are we being asked to write a blank check?

Livestock agriculture will never be self sustainable in Hawai'i. It is incredible that in this year of catastrophe and lack of housing for our people that you Legislators can possibly consider approving this nonsensical idea.

Please relegate SB1590SD1 to the trash, where it belongs.

Mahalo



March 11, 2024

Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Testimony in Support of SB 1590, S.D. 1, Relating to Agriculture (Requires the Department of Agriculture [DOA] to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State. Requires the DOA to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State. Appropriates funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspector positions within the DOA to perform meat inspections. Takes effect 7/1/2050.)

Wednesday, March 13, 2024, 8:30 a.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference.

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 1590, S.D. 1** and for the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture in Hawaii.

SB 1590, S.D. 1. The purpose of this measure is to 1) direct the DOA to assess steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors; 2) direct the DOA to assess steps necessary to fully transfer meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State; and 3) appropriate funds to the DOA for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspector positions to perform meat inspections.

LURF understands that consumer demand for locally grown beef, together with the surge in the axis deer population in Maui County have resulted in a lack of antemortem meat inspection capacity in the State. Due to the discontinuance of the State's meat

inspection program in the mid-1990s, local meat producers now have no alternative but to comply with inspection requirements of the USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service in order to sell meat to the retail and wholesale market. Supplementing federal authority to perform meat inspections with state inspectors, and eventually effectuating the complete transfer of meat inspection authority from federal authority to the State will bolster and expand Hawaii's livestock industry; address the use of axis deer; and provide the local livestock industry with greater access to the marketplace.

LURF's Position. LURF members include property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider efforts to protect and support agriculture significant to the continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve farming and ranching businesses into the future.

LURF supports SB 1590, S.D. 1 because the bill could allow local meat facilities to meet the needs of the State's diverse livestock industry by providing an alternative to USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection; assist in meeting the demand of Hawaii consumers; and increase processing capacity and diversify processing options.

This measure makes a significant effort to advance and facilitate needed meat production in Hawaii. By recognizing the issues faced by local farmers and ranchers, and by identifying the need to assist the local agriculture and ranching industries and implement measures which help to support the viability and maintenance of agriculture and ranching in the State, this bill helps to promote economically viable agriculture, increased food production, and food self-sufficiency in Hawaii.

For the reasons stated above, LURF **supports SB 1590, S.D. 1**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

SB1590 SD1

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, March 13 2024, 8:30am
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1590 SD1** which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State and requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State.

Access to inspectors to validate safety of harvest and processing of livestock is a necessary part of Hawaii's local meat supply chain. The creation of a state administered meat inspection could increase access to inspectors that facilities can utilize, which would increase the capacity of meat that could be processed – this is vital during a time when the demand for local beef is growing and there is a need to process all types of livestock, including invasive deer. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports the establishment and funding of a meat inspection program. The state program should be **supplemental to the existing federal inspection**, allowing for more options for processors to choose from to get the job done. **We caution against transferring full authority to the State and encourage the DOA to thoroughly assess this, as removing federal inspections may reduce access to inspectors. We also need to consider the resources that will need to be allocated to the DOA to successfully implement a full program.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. 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.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 — 8:30 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1590 SD1, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports SB 1590 SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State; requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State; and, appropriates funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections.

Ulupono supports the State's goal to increase local food production, which includes strengthening the local livestock industry. Establishing a state meat inspection program, with dedicated resources, provides Hawai'i's ranchers with additional tools to process locally raised meat to bring to market. This program directly supports our diverse, local livestock industry, including the efforts to control the axis deer population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

March 13, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 1590, SD1 RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
8:30 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

The Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB **strongly supports SB 1590, SD1** seeking to increase Hawaii's meat inspection capacity.

Food safety is a priority for a healthy community. Inspection of livestock prior to slaughter is a critical step to ensuring safety of our food supply. States across the nation had meat inspection capacity in addition to those provided by the Federal government. During the economic downturn, states, including Hawaii, eliminated these positions wholly relying on Federal inspection capacity.

Maui has an axis deer problem. Expansion of venison meat sales allowed with increased inspection capacity is an integral part of managing this invasive species. Expanded meat processing capacity provides one of the steps needed for a long term solution.

Over the years, small ranches raising a variety of animals have become commonplace and states are realizing the need for local capacity in addition to Federal capacity. Goat meat is becoming popular. Commercialization of this option will also require inspections.

MCFB respectfully requests your support of SB 1590, SD1 to strengthen local agricultural operations.

Please contact Warren Watanabe at 808-281-9718 if you have any questions.



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March 13, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 1590, SD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
8:30 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, 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 the intent of SB 1590, SD1, which requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State, requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State, and appropriates funds for three full-time equivalent inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections.

Federal law requires that meat and poultry sold for retail/wholesale markets be processed at a federally inspected facility. Currently, 27 states have State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Programs that operate under cooperative inspection agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS). States with MPI programs operate under a cooperative agreement with FSIS and must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and Poultry Products Inspection Act. However, State-inspected meat and poultry products are limited to intrastate commerce only unless a state opts into an additional cooperative program, the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program.

Hawai'i previously had its own meat inspection program, but it was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to cuts in budget and staffing, and since then, the USDA-Food Safety Inspection Service has assumed full responsibility for these obligations in the State. This means that Hawai'i facilities wishing to sell meat to retail/wholesale markets must be inspected by the USDA.

Hawai'i farmers and ranchers who raise livestock and poultry that sell directly to local consumers, restaurants, grocery stores, and farmers' markets are often challenged because they do not have USDA-inspected processing facilities available within a practical distance and at an affordable cost. A Hawai'i State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program could provide an alternative to FSIS inspection. It could help increase processing capacity, diversify processing options and reduce processing bottlenecks, allow producers to find a local facility to slaughter and process livestock in remote/rural locations, reduce transportation time and costs, and support producers' ability to donate locally produced meat to food banks and other community feeding programs. State MPIs are often more flexible and responsive to the unique needs of producers than USDA-FSIS. Under a cooperative agreement, USDA-FSIS can provide up to 50 percent of Hawai'i's operating funds, as well as training and other assistance.

In order to sell Axis deer meat, the meat must first be inspected by a USDA-FSIS inspector under voluntary USDA inspection. The USDA defines Axis Deer as a non-amenable species or exotic meat, which means that the cost of the inspection is not covered by the federal government, unlike other meats such as beef, pork, sheep, and domesticated birds. A Hawai'i State Meat and Poultry Inspection could pay for or subsidize the inspection cost for Axis Deer.

Reestablishing a Hawai'i meat and poultry inspection program will help promote the State's livestock industries. This will increase the ability to conduct local inspections of harvest facilities and help drive the growth of local protein production.

However, we are concerned about Section 2 (b) of the bill, which directs DOA to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State. We are unsure if DOA has the capacity or the resources to perform all meat inspection requirements of the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

SB-1590-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:12:08 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/13/2024 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to requiring the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary for the State to supplement federal authority to perform meat inspections within the State. Requires the Department of Agriculture to assess the steps necessary to transfer full authority over meat inspections from federal authority to the State. Appropriates funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspector positions within the Department of Agriculture to perform meat inspections.