

**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 SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
**AND COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**MARCH 1, 2024**  
**9:50 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

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

Chairs Dela Cruz and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees:

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



February 26, 2024

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

**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.)**

**Friday, March 1, 2024, 9:50 a.m.; State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & 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 WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER  
PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

**SB1590 SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Friday, March 1, 2024, 9:50 AM  
Conference Room 221 & Videoconference

Chairs Dela Cruz & Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Moriwaki & Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees,

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





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March 1, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

**TESTIMONY ON SB 1590, SD1**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
9:50 AM

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz and Keohokalole, Vice-Chairs Moriwaki and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committees:

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 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 as opposed to 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 have local inspection 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.



**LATE**

Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS & MEANS AND COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION  
Friday, March 1, 2024 — 9:50 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1590 SD1, Relating to Agriculture.**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committees:

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*



**SB-1590-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:17:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/1/2024 9:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Even though some states have legalized marijuana for medical (or even recreational) purposes, it is still illegal to possess, use or distribute marijuana according to federal law. According to the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws (NORML), 1 ounce gives you around 60 cigarettes. The current version of the bill will allow for 3 ounces per person (six plants in a residence with up to ten plants if multiple people are living in residence.). THAT IS A LOT OF POT!
- Marijuana use WILL increase if it is made available. Hawaii’s keiki will be the ones who will suffer the most. Hawaii already has a higher-than-average youth usage of e-cigarettes. It is irresponsible to think they will NOT access marijuana. In addition, states that have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes have seen an increase in children being brought to emergency rooms.

[\(Star Advertiser, February 25, 2024\)](#) No Time for Pakalolo High by David Shapiro  
[\(Star Advertiser, October 8, 2023\)](#) Legalizing Marijuana Will Cause Harm (Prosecutor Steve Alm)

[\(New York Times, June 22, 2023\)](#) Psychosis, Addiction, Chronic Vomiting: As Weed Becomes More Potent, Teens Are Getting Sick

[\(Washington Post, April 25, 2023\)](#) We Should Not be Celebrating Marijuana Use  
[\(USA TODAY, January 2023\)](#) More kids are being treated for eating marijuana-laced gummies, other edibles at home

[\(Drug Free 2022\)](#) Children’s ER Visits for Accidental Exposure to Marijuana Rise After Legalization

[\(Living Healthy Hawaii\)](#). Hawaii Youth Vaping is at Epidemic Levels

[\(Honolulu Advertiser, February 2021\)](#) Tighter Control Needed for E-Cigs

- Suicide rates for teens could rise. [\(Read this article from Massachusetts General Hospital\)](#). Massachusetts has legal recreational marijuana.
- Today’s marijuana is not the 1970’s version of “Maui Wowee” or “Kona Gold.” [THC contents are astronomically higher.](#)
- Drugged driving will plague Hawaii’s roads. In their 2019 testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, [Hawaii Department of Transportation reported](#) that “22 percent of fatal crashes that occurred during calendar years 2013 to 2017 resulted in positive

findings for marijuana in drivers, bicyclists or pedestrians. ” The preamble of SB 3335 states that "there are practical difficulties in identifying individuals who may be impaired by cannabis while driving, including the lack of a cannabis analogue for a breathalyzer for alcohol."

- Under legalization, a [black market](#) will still sell tax-free marijuana to adults and youth. In fact, the preamble of the bill states " Legalization is also not a panacea for eliminating the illicit market in cannabis, as the experience of other states is that the illicit market continues to exist in parallel to the legal, regulated market. "
- According to the testimony of the Honolulu Police Department (February 19, 2021 to Senate PSM) “[m]arijuana plants can grow in excess of eight feet with numerous branches off one root system. One plant can produce several ounces of marijuana. In addition, the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol in marijuana edibles can vary greatly, which could lead to abuse and adverse effects.”
- Legally, marijuana is already decriminalized in Hawaii, with users possessing less than three grams facing only a \$130 civil fine. The current version of the bill would raise the limit to an ounce and cut the fine to \$25.