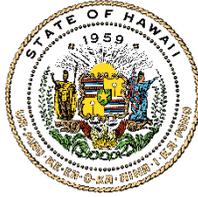


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Friday, January 31, 2025
10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325, and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1334
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

House Bill 1334 proposes to exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from specific laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill and offers the following comments.**

The disposition of game species as regulated by the Department's hunting rules, Hawai'i Administrative Rules Chapters 122 and 123, and the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, only restricts the sale or the offer for sale of any game animal or parts of the carcass of any game animal taken from any public hunting area. The Department supports allowing licensed public hunters the discretion to donate their quarry to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations.

While the Department regulates the taking of game animals, it does not oversee the processing or food safety aspects of meat donation. The Department defers to the Department of Health regarding health and safety requirements for donated wild game meat.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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LAND
STATE PARKS

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
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 AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

**JANUARY 31, 2025
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1334
RELATING TO MEAT DONATION**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1334. HB1334 requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop and implement a grant program to expand the meat processing capacity in the State and appropriate funds. The grant program established by this measure may include financial assistance to establish new meat processing facilities or expand existing facilities to enable hunters to donate meat from axis deer and other wild game to these facilities. Conditions for grants require that no grants shall be given unless money has been spent by the applicant toward expanding the meat processing capacity in the State.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (Department) supports HB1334. Increasing meat processing capacity in the state increases food production and benefits food security.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

January 29, 2025

TO: Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

FROM: Yuki Lei Sugimura
Councilmember

DATE: January 29, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR HB 1334, RELATING TO MEAT DONATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

I SUPPORT this measure as it addresses several important issues, particularly for Maui County. Overpopulation of axis deer, and other wild game animals, in Maui County has resulted in severe damage to our watersheds, ecosystems, and agricultural industry. Additionally, food insecurity is a daily reality for many of our residents. By removing barriers and clarifying the process for meat donations, this bill can help to address both the overpopulation of axis deer and food insecurity in our communities.

While not the only solution to address the damage caused by axis deer, hunters do play an important role in controlling the population. These hunters utilize axis deer meat to feed their families and friends, and have long sought to also donate this lean and healthy source of protein to those in need through local food banks and other organizations.

I respectfully request your support in moving this bill forward. Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony on this important matter.

For the foregoing reasons, I SUPPORT this measure.



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Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Kahaloha, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union 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 HB1334.**

The unchecked population of axis deer has posed significant threats to our local ecosystems and agricultural lands. By facilitating the donation of wild game meat, HB1334 not only helps manage this invasive species but also provides a valuable source of protein to communities in need, helping to alleviate food insecurity.

Moreover, HB1334 encourages a sustainable approach to wildlife management by turning a potential ecological threat into a community benefit. Farmers and landowners across Hawaii are confronted with the destructive impact of axis deer on crops and pastures, leading to economic losses and land degradation. This bill provides a viable solution by allowing these landowners to contribute positively to the community while mitigating damage to their properties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:03:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Kean	Maui Wild Game Management to Feed the Hungry	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is Robin Kean, and I am the founder of [Maui Wild Game Management](#), an organization dedicated to sustainable wildlife population management and ethical hunting practices. Our mission is to promote responsible wildlife conservation while providing communities with access to high-quality, locally sourced meat. Through humane harvesting methods, we strive to balance ecological health with food security, ensuring that Hawaii's natural resources are utilized efficiently and ethically.

Additionally, I have had the privilege of serving as a past director on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, where I worked to address food insecurity and improve food access for vulnerable populations. My experience in both wildlife management and food distribution has provided me with a deep understanding of the challenges we face in feeding our communities while maintaining environmental balance.

I am writing today in strong support of House Bill 1334, which seeks to exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This bill presents a critical opportunity to address both environmental and community welfare concerns in Hawaii.

Addressing Environmental Challenges

The overpopulation of non-indigenous species, particularly axis deer, has had devastating impacts on Hawaii's ecosystems. These animals contribute to habitat destruction, agricultural losses, and increased erosion, threatening native flora and fauna. As an organization committed to responsible wildlife management, we recognize that allowing for the donation of harvested wild game meat is an effective way to support population control efforts while reducing waste.

Enhancing Food Security

At Maui Wild Game Management, we believe that no harvested animal should go to waste, and HB 1334 aligns directly with this principle. Food insecurity remains a significant issue for many residents in Hawaii, and wild game meat represents a valuable, high-protein food source that can nourish communities in need. Having worked with Maui Food Bank, I have witnessed firsthand the growing demand for nutritious food options among families, seniors, and individuals facing hardship. By streamlining the donation process, this bill ensures that more locally sourced meat reaches food banks, shelters, and other charitable organizations, fostering a more resilient and food-secure Hawaii.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 is a critical step toward sustainable wildlife management and enhanced food security in Hawaii. By allowing for the donation of wild game meat, we can simultaneously mitigate ecological damage, support local communities, and reduce food waste. I urge the committee to pass this important legislation and help create a more sustainable and food-secure future for our islands.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Robin Kean
Founder, Maui Wild Game Management
Past Director, Board of Directors – Maui Food Bank
www.mauiwildgamemanagement.com



Date: January 31, 2025

Subject: Hawai'i Foodbank in Support of HB 1334 Relating to Meat Donation

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I support for HB 1334, Relating to Meat Donation. This bill exempts the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank has been committed to ensuring no one in Hawai'i goes hungry since 1983. We work with over 225 agency partners on O'ahu and Kaua'i to distribute food, and programs like Food 4 Keiki and 'Ohana Produce Plus provide nutritious meals to children and families. In addition to addressing daily needs, our organization mobilizes during emergencies to provide immediate relief and aid long-term recovery efforts.

Food insecurity is a growing crisis in Hawai'i, with nearly 1 in 3 households struggling to access adequate food. One in ten households go a whole day without food some or most months. Hawai'i communities benefit from the generosity of farmers and producers whose donations to Hawai'i Foodbank allow many families access to healthy, local foods. Allowing wild game donations would further expand the availability of healthy protein for people we serve. We support this program as a win-win for food security and invasive species management.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure and for your dedication to supporting our communities through initiatives like HB 1334.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:22:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janus padilla	Maui wild game management to feed the hungry	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is [Board Member's Name], and I am a board member of Maui Wild Game Management, an organization dedicated to sustainable wildlife population control, ethical hunting practices, and food security initiatives in Hawai'i. Our mission is to promote responsible wildlife conservation while ensuring that harvested game is put to beneficial use, rather than wasted. Through humane and ethical harvesting methods, we work to balance ecological health, protect agricultural lands, and provide high-quality, locally sourced meat to those in need.

I am writing today in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This bill presents a vital opportunity to address two critical challenges in Hawai'i: environmental conservation and food insecurity.

Addressing Environmental Challenges

The uncontrolled population growth of axis deer has led to severe ecological damage across Hawai‘i, including deforestation, soil erosion, and destruction of crops and native habitats. The rapid expansion of these herds puts Hawai‘i’s ecosystems, local farmers, and food sustainability at risk.

At Maui Wild Game Management, we work to mitigate these impacts through responsible harvesting methods that help restore ecological balance while also ensuring that the meat does not go to waste. By enabling these donations, HB 1334 ensures that our conservation efforts also serve a humanitarian purpose, turning an environmental challenge into a meaningful solution for our community.

Fighting Food Insecurity

As an organization that regularly works with local hunters and food providers, we recognize the ongoing struggle for many families to access high-quality protein sources. Wild game meat is a nutritious, organic, and locally harvested food that could significantly benefit food banks, shelters, and other community programs serving vulnerable populations.

By reducing unnecessary barriers to donation, HB 1334 allows this valuable protein source to reach those in need, rather than being wasted. With Hawai‘i’s heavy reliance on imported food, promoting local, sustainable protein sources is an essential step toward greater food security and resilience.

Federal Exemptions for Wild Game Donations

Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), wild game meat—including venison—does not require federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states already have successful programs that safely distribute harvested venison to food banks under these exemptions. HB 1334 would bring Hawai‘i in line with these existing models, ensuring that donated meat is safely handled while eliminating unnecessary regulatory barriers.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 is a practical, sustainable, and necessary solution to Hawai'i's growing environmental and food security challenges. By facilitating the donation of wild game meat, we can protect our ecosystems, strengthen local food security, and support families in need—all without additional taxpayer burden.

As a board member of Maui Wild Game Management, I strongly urge the committee to pass this bill and help create a more sustainable and food-secure future for our islands.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Janus padilla

Board Member, Maui Wild Game Management

www.mauiwildgamemanagement.com

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:28:43 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
eric benedit	Maui wild game management- to feed the hungry	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing as a concerned citizen and supporter of sustainable food practices and environmental conservation to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230. These bills would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawai'i faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Wild game meat is a nutritious, lean, and locally sourced food that could provide a valuable protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of letting harvested game go to waste, HB 1334 and SB 1230 ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Environmental Benefits

The overpopulation of axis deer is causing severe damage to Hawai'i's ecosystems, including:

- Deforestation and destruction of native plant life
- Soil erosion and damage to watersheds
- Devastating agricultural losses for local farmers

Responsible harvesting of these animals helps restore ecological balance, and allowing donations ensures that this effort also benefits our communities. These bills present a common-sense solution that supports both conservation and food security.

Safe and Responsible Meat Donation

Wild game meat donations have been successfully implemented in many other states, aligning with federal exemptions under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), which does not require inspection for donated venison. HB 1334 and SB 1230 follow proven models that allow for safe and regulated donation, ensuring that harvested meat is properly handled and distributed to those who need it most.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawai'i, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Eric Bedit

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:20:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Ulene	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is Steve Ulene, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Ulene
Board Member, Maui Food Bank



Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

January 30, 2025

RE: Support for HB 1334, Relating to Meat Donation

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Maui Food Bank, I express our strong support for HB 1334 Relating to Meat Donation which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

For 30 years, Maui Food Bank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Maui County. Maui Food Bank distributes food to families and individuals on Maui, Molokai and Lanai through direct service programs and through our network of 170 agency partners. Last year, we served an average of over 700,000 people each month, distributing a total of 8.7 million pounds of nutritious food, including 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

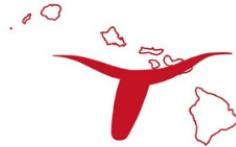


Maui Food Bank
Nourishing Lives. Feeding Futures

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony,

Lisa H. Paulson
CEO, Maui Food Bank



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

HB1334

RELATING TO MEAT DONATION

Friday, January 31, 2025, 10:00 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB1334** which exempts the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to a charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization to needy persons from certain laws regarding the inspection and transportation of meat.

Exempting wild game from the full extent of regulation when used for donation to our communities allows us to better feed these communities high quality sources of protein, while also creating an outlet for efforts to remove invasive species such as deer, goat, and pigs from the environment. Unmanaged ungulates damage our ecosystems and cause detriment to farming and ranching operations. The deer population in Maui County needs to be reduced dramatically in order to maintain the health of the land. Encouraging the hunting and donation of wild game will help us to meet both environmental and social needs.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. 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





MAUI ADAPTATION PROJECT

Our Mission is to protect and restore Maui's ecosystems through educating the community, growing native species, managing invasive species, and advocating for sustainable practices and policies that foster long-term resilience.

Testimony in Strong Support of House Bill 1334

Relating to Meat Donation

January 30, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I am writing as an environmental advocate and the Founder & Chair of Maui Adaptation Project. We are a nonprofit that envisions a resilient Maui where ecosystems and communities thrive for generations to come. Our nonprofit began with the idea of planting native species and eradicating invasive species. As the mission developed, I learned more about the Axis Deer crisis in Maui Nui and realized what an important piece of the puzzle it is. This led to the shift from *eradication* to *management*. Eradication isn't the right mentality because Axis Deer are a renewable, sustainable food source. A good friend who runs a nonprofit focused on combatting food security and supporting circular economics introduced me to Robin Kean, who runs Maui Wild Game Management. He shared so much with me about his experience from working in that space for over a decade, and I realized that we needed to work on legislation. Everyone experiences the impacts of "deerosion," as the Maui Food & Technology Center calls it, from ranchers and farmers to our watersheds. Many folks don't realize that the Axis Deer have crossed the Pali – they are found along the slopes of Pu'u Kukui and in the gulches adjacent to Lahainaluna. We know the deer are making our food cost more and it is only a problem that we can solve together. They don't care about property lines and fences only do so much. If you ask any farmer what would help them, their first answer is that something needs to be done about the deer.

Robin and I have been having discussions with County and State officials, legislators, and advocates, and HB 1334 is a bill that was born of those discussions. He felt that if we were to pass one bill this session regarding Axis Deer, it should be this one. We need liability protections for hunters that allow for the donation of venison without the additional limitation of a USDA inspector. There is no doubt that we need more meat processing & slaughterhouse capacity, but Federal Law:

- 1) Dictates that Axis Deer are considered "non-amenable," meaning they are not required to be inspected by the USDA (but rather the FDA).
- 2) The Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996 and Food Donation Improvement Act of 2023 both encourage the donation of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations for distribution to needy individuals or for donation directly to needy individuals.
- 3) Recently updated guidelines by the USDA's FSIS facilitate food donation by promoting the message that food is generally able to be donated unless there is a specific safety concern.

Regardless of these federal regulations, the State of Hawai'i's DOH places extra regulations on donors. Over a decade ago, I believe in 2013 – when Robin was first starting Maui Wild Game Management - he wrote guidelines that he had approved by DOH. He quickly realized that they were limiting the work that nonprofits could do to donate meat, because the cost of bringing a meat inspector on hunts was a burden carried by the organization. He tried to request an update to these guidelines, but DOH said they wouldn't do so without legislation (even though it was not legislation



MAUI ADAPTATION PROJECT

Our Mission is to protect and restore Maui's ecosystems through educating the community, growing native species, managing invasive species, and advocating for sustainable practices and policies that foster long-term resilience.

that created the approved guidelines). The current State guidelines have a grey area as to whether hunters who donate meat are protected from liability. According to Federal Law, venison *does not* need to be inspected by the USDA. This is an additional barrier that has been placed on hunters in Hawai'i and it limits donation capabilities. Furthermore, the veterinarian that he brought with him found no diseases in the inspection of thousands of deer.

When you have “the axis deer conversation,” it ultimately always ends up with a discussion of meat for sale. Yes, we *absolutely* need to expand our meat processing capabilities, but that's not what this bill is about. We are strictly talking about meat donation. To address this crisis, we need a kaka'o effort. Hunters must be granted the ability to donate meat without fear of liability. This will significantly improve the availability of fresh, local food to our communities – who are currently experiencing some of the worst food insecurity we have ever seen.

Environmental Benefits

The overpopulation of axis deer is causing severe damage to Hawaii's ecosystems, including deforestation, soil erosion, and destruction of agricultural lands. Responsible harvesting of these animals helps restore ecological balance, and allowing donations ensures that this effort also benefits our communities. This is a common-sense solution that supports both conservation and food security. Local venison is in many ways more environmentally friendly than vegetarianism because it is not imported to the island.

Safe and Responsible Meat Donation

Wild game meat donations have been successfully implemented in many other states, aligning with federal exemptions under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), which does not require inspection for donated venison. HB 1334 follows proven models that allow for safe and regulated donation, ensuring that harvested meat is properly handled and distributed to those who need it most.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 represents a win-win solution for Hawaii, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. **I urge the committee to support and pass this legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.**

If I have ONE comment on the bill, it's that I believe that it should be “axis deer” rather than “wild game,” because axis deer do not carry the same diseases that other ungulates like boar, goats, and sheep and lumping them into one category could create a reason for DOH to implement extra regulations.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Sincerely,

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina, HI



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiiifood.com

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Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: January 31, 2025

TIME: 10am

RE: HB1334 Relating to Meat Donation

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. Axis deer are an invasive species and keeping the population under control is necessary in order to protect our agricultural lands and ecosystems. Axis deer can be a plentiful source of affordable locally sourced meat, which can help address food insecurity in our state. Right now there are some unnecessary impediments that prevent axis deer meat from being donated. This measure would help remove those roadblocks and allow for meat donation. We encourage the committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:26:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Fahir	Maui Food Bank	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation

January 30, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is Marsha, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marsha Sharpe (nee Fahir)
Board Chair, Maui Food Bank
Cell Phone: 347 768 3326

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:58:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Faumuina	Hawaii Pacific Advisory Group	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Pacific Advisory Group (HPAG)

Before the House Committee on Agriculture

In Support of House Bill 1334 – Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of House Bill 1334**, Relating to Meat Donation. My name is James E. Faumuina, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Hawai‘i Pacific Advisory Group ([HPAG](#)), a consortium of interdisciplinary professionals chartered by the Hawai‘i Pacific Foundation, a Native Hawaiian Organization.

HPAG was formed as a volunteer advisory group in the wake of the Maui wildfires to provide recommendations, advice, and support to the people of Maui and the broader Pacific. Our mission is rooted in the commitment to ensuring that never again will a disaster of this magnitude devastate our communities without the necessary systems in place to protect, sustain, and empower the communities of Hawai‘i and the Pacific.

Sustaining Maui’s Future Through Local Resilience

We believe that any initiative that enables the residents of Maui to remain on their home island, contributing to and benefiting from its recovery, is essential to its long-term future. HB 1334 aligns with this vision by addressing food insecurity and economic sustainability, two critical components of Maui’s post-disaster recovery.

Fortifying Against Food Insecurity

Food security remains a pressing issue for many Maui residents, especially following the August 2023 wildfires, which disrupted local food systems and economic stability. Allowing the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, and nonprofit organizations provides a nutritious, locally sourced food supply that can support those in need,

including Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) families, kūpuna, and others who continue to face economic hardship as a result of the wildfires.

A Model for Resilience and Economic Revival

Beyond food security, HB 1334 represents an opportunity for Maui to showcase resilience as a driver of economic recovery. The overpopulation of axis deer continues to threaten local agriculture, water resources, and ecosystems, making their responsible harvesting a necessary and sustainable practice. By allowing these efforts to directly benefit Maui's communities, we ensure that conservation and economic revival go hand in hand.

Conclusion

HPAG supports systemic solutions that empower Maui's residents to remain, rebuild, and thrive. HB 1334 is a practical, community-driven approach that ensures Maui's food systems, economy, and environment remain strong. We believe that by supporting this bill, the legislature is not only fortifying against food insecurity but also providing Maui's people with the tools to exemplify resilience and economic revival.

For these reasons, **HPAG strongly supports HB 1334 and urges the committee to pass this measure.** Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Faumuina

Assistant Director

Hawai'i Pacific Advisory Group (HPAG)

James.Faumuina@hpfps.org

(808) 372-1701

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:40:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this proposal.

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:48:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1334 RELATING TO MEAT DONATION.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:53:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Todd Yukutake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1334

I do not want the game meat to go to waste rotting away in the fields. Please pass this bill so the community and non-profits can use this resource.

Mahalo

Todd Yukutake
toddykutake@gmail.com

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:56:47 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brendan Balthazar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are discarding a lot of venison that could be donated to the food bank or feed my sheep due to all the crazy rules. In other states you can donate your game animal to the food bank with no regulations. Its about time that we can do the same here.

Brendan

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:05:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicolaas van der Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing as a concerned citizen and supporter of sustainable food practices and environmental conservation to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230. These bills would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawai‘i faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Wild game meat is a nutritious, lean, and locally sourced food that could provide a valuable protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of letting harvested game go to waste, HB 1334 and SB 1230 ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Environmental Benefits

The overpopulation of axis deer is causing severe damage to Hawai‘i’s ecosystems, including:

- Deforestation and destruction of native plant life
- Soil erosion and damage to watersheds
- Devastating agricultural losses for local farmers

Responsible harvesting of these animals helps restore ecological balance, and allowing donations ensures that this effort also benefits our communities. These bills present a common-sense solution that supports both conservation and food security.

Safe and Responsible Meat Donation

Wild game meat donations have been successfully implemented in many other states, aligning with federal exemptions under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), which does not require inspection for donated venison. HB 1334 and SB 1230 follow proven models that allow for safe and regulated donation, ensuring that harvested meat is properly handled and distributed to those who need it most.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawai'i, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Nic van der Lee

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:01:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alison Pearce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is Alison Pearce, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alison Pearce
Board Member, Maui Food Bank

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:18:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Maeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing as a concerned citizen and supporter of sustainable food practices and environmental conservation to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230. These bills would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawaii faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Wild game meat is a nutritious, lean, and locally sourced food that could provide a valuable protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of letting harvested game go to waste, HB 1334 and SB 1230 ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Environmental Benefits

The overpopulation of axis deer is causing severe damage to Hawaii's ecosystems, including:

- Deforestation and destruction of native plant life
- Soil erosion and damage to watersheds
- Devastating agricultural losses for local farmers

Responsible harvesting of these animals helps restore ecological balance, and allowing donations ensures that this effort also benefits our communities. These bills present a common-sense solution that supports both conservation and food security.

Safe and Responsible Meat Donation

Wild game meat donations have been successfully implemented in many other states, aligning with federal exemptions under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), which does not require inspection for donated venison. HB 1334 and SB 1230 follow proven models that allow for safe and regulated donation, ensuring that harvested meat is properly handled and distributed to those who need it most.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

sincerely,

Paul Maeda

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230 Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

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Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to

support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With Aloha,

Chef Brian Etheredge
808-870-0144

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:58:47 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Curran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

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Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sean Curran

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:33:14 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing as a concerned citizen and supporter of sustainable food practices and environmental conservation to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230. These bills would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer from Maui, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

Axis Deer on Maui – A Growing Problem

The overpopulation of axis deer on Maui is a major ecological and agricultural crisis. Without natural predators, axis deer populations have expanded rapidly, causing severe damage to the environment and local farms. The unchecked growth of these herds results in:

- Deforestation and loss of native plant life
- Soil erosion and watershed contamination, impacting fresh water supplies
- Destruction of crops and agricultural lands, leading to financial hardship for local farmers

Hawaii must take immediate action to manage the axis deer population, and HB 1334 and SB 1230 provide a practical solution by allowing responsibly harvested game to be used for food donation rather than wasted.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawaii faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Axis deer meat is nutritious, lean, and locally sourced, making it an excellent protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of disposing of harvested deer, these bills ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Deer Meat is Non-Amenable Under Federal Guidelines

It is important to note that under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), venison is classified as a non-amenable species. This means that deer meat is not subject to mandatory federal inspection, unlike beef or pork. Many states have successfully implemented wild game donation programs that align with these federal exemptions, ensuring safe handling and distribution without unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

HB 1334 and SB 1230 would bring Hawaii's policies in line with these federal guidelines, removing outdated barriers that prevent harvested axis deer from being donated to communities in need.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii by addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. By enabling the responsible donation of axis deer meat, these bills will help protect our ecosystems, support local farmers, and provide essential food resources to those in need.

I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and strengthen food security in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Robert Dean

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:39:41 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Badillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

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Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawai‘i, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Noel Badillo

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:52:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory vares	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support The distribution of Meat to the food banks. that's one way we can really help the people in need with the resource we have here.

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:12:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jared Joaquin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

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Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawai‘i, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information, if desired]

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

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Addressing Food Insecurity

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HB 1334 and SB 1230 would bring Hawai‘i’s policies in line with these federal guidelines, removing outdated barriers that prevent harvested axis deer from being donated to communities in need.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawai‘i by addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. By enabling the responsible donation of axis deer meat, these bills will help protect our ecosystems, support local farmers, and provide essential food resources to those in need.

I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and strengthen food security in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jared Joaquin

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:40:16 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole B Padilla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

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Conclusion

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Contact Information, if desired]

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing as a concerned citizen and supporter of sustainable food practices and environmental conservation to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230. These bills would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer from Maui, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

Axis Deer on Maui – A Growing Problem

The overpopulation of axis deer on Maui is a major ecological and agricultural crisis. Without natural predators, axis deer populations have expanded rapidly, causing severe damage to the environment and local farms. The unchecked growth of these herds results in:

- Deforestation and loss of native plant life
- Soil erosion and watershed contamination, impacting fresh water supplies
- Destruction of crops and agricultural lands, leading to financial hardship for local farmers

Hawaii must take immediate action to manage the axis deer population, and HB 1334 and SB 1230 provide a practical solution by allowing responsibly harvested game to be used for food donation rather than wasted.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawaii faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Axis deer meat is nutritious, lean, and locally sourced, making it an excellent protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of disposing of harvested deer, these bills ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Deer Meat is Non-Amenable Under Federal Guidelines

It is important to note that under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), venison is classified as a non-amenable species. This means that deer meat is not subject to mandatory federal inspection, unlike beef or pork. Many states have successfully implemented wild game donation programs that align with these federal exemptions, ensuring safe handling and distribution without unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

HB 1334 and SB 1230 would bring Hawaii's policies in line with these federal guidelines, removing outdated barriers that prevent harvested axis deer from being donated to communities in need.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii by addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. By enabling the responsible donation of axis deer meat, these bills will help protect our ecosystems, support local farmers, and provide essential food resources to those in need.

I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and strengthen food security in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With Gratitude,
Nicole B Padilla
Beneditn33@gmail.com

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:55:17 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karin S. Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334
Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

My name is Karin S. Carlson, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and ensuring that no one in our community goes without nutritious food. Every month, the Maui Food Bank provides critical food assistance to thousands of individuals and families, including seniors, children, and those experiencing economic hardship.

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 1334, which would exempt the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations from certain inspection and transportation regulations. This legislation is a crucial step forward in expanding access to nutritious, high-protein food while simultaneously addressing an urgent environmental issue affecting our islands.

Addressing Food Insecurity

As a board member of Maui Food Bank, I have seen firsthand the growing demand for fresh, healthy food options in our community. Many families rely on food assistance to get by, yet access to high-protein sources remains one of the most significant challenges. Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 presents a unique and necessary opportunity to reduce food waste, fight hunger, and support conservation efforts all at once. As a current board member of Maui Food Bank, I recognize the tremendous positive impact this legislation could have on food access and sustainability in Hawaii. I strongly urge the committee to support and pass this bill for the benefit of our environment and those who rely on food assistance programs across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karin S. Carlson/Secretary
Board Member, Maui Food Bank

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:13:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing as a concerned citizen and supporter of sustainable food practices and environmental conservation to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230. These bills would allow for the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer, to charitable, religious, or nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawaii faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Wild game meat is a nutritious, lean, and locally sourced food that could provide a valuable protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of letting harvested game go to waste, HB 1334 and SB 1230 ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Environmental Benefits

The overpopulation of axis deer is causing severe damage to Hawaii's ecosystems, including:

- Deforestation and destruction of native plant life
- Soil erosion and damage to watersheds
- Devastating agricultural losses for local farmers

Responsible harvesting of these animals helps restore ecological balance, and allowing donations ensures that this effort also benefits our communities. These bills present a common-sense solution that supports both conservation and food security.

Safe and Responsible Meat Donation

Wild game meat donations have been successfully implemented in many other states, aligning with federal exemptions under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), which does not require inspection for donated venison. HB 1334 and SB 1230 follow proven models that allow for safe and regulated donation, ensuring that harvested meat is properly handled and distributed to those who need it most.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii, addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and provide essential food resources to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information, if desired]

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230

Relating to Meat Donation

January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

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Axis Deer on Maui – A Growing Problem

The overpopulation of axis deer on Maui is a major ecological and agricultural crisis. Without natural predators, axis deer populations have expanded rapidly, causing severe damage to the environment and local farms. The unchecked growth of these herds results in:

- Deforestation and loss of native plant life
- Soil erosion and watershed contamination, impacting fresh water supplies
- Destruction of crops and agricultural lands, leading to financial hardship for local farmers

Hawaii must take immediate action to manage the axis deer population, and HB 1334 and SB 1230 provide a practical solution by allowing responsibly harvested game to be used for food donation rather than wasted.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Hawaii faces significant food insecurity, with many families, seniors, and individuals struggling to access high-quality protein. Axis deer meat is nutritious, lean, and locally sourced, making it an excellent protein source for food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of disposing of harvested deer, these bills ensure that this resource can be used to help feed those in need.

Deer Meat is Non-Amenable Under Federal Guidelines

It is important to note that under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), venison is classified as a non-amenable species. This means that deer meat is not subject to mandatory federal inspection, unlike beef or pork. Many states have successfully implemented wild game donation programs that align with these federal exemptions, ensuring safe handling and distribution without unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

HB 1334 and SB 1230 would bring Hawaii's policies in line with these federal guidelines, removing outdated barriers that prevent harvested axis deer from being donated to communities in need.

Conclusion

House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230 represent a win-win solution for Hawaii by addressing both environmental and food insecurity challenges at no cost to taxpayers. By enabling the responsible donation of axis deer meat, these bills will help protect our ecosystems, support local farmers, and provide essential food resources to those in need.

I urge the committee to support and pass these critical pieces of legislation to reduce waste, protect our environment, and strengthen food security in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Keeney

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1334 & Senate Bill 1230
Relating to Meat Donation
January 29, 2025

To: Chair and Members of the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1334 and Senate Bill 1230, which would allow the donation of wild game meat, including axis deer from Maui, to charitable, religious, and nonprofit organizations by exempting it from certain inspection and transportation regulations.

The Axis Deer Problem on Maui

Maui's axis deer population has grown out of control, creating serious environmental and agricultural challenges. With no natural predators, these deer continue to multiply rapidly, leading to:

- The destruction of native plants and forests
- Soil erosion and contamination of watersheds, threatening freshwater supplies
- Widespread damage to crops and farmland, causing financial strain on local farmers

Managing this overpopulation is crucial, and these bills provide a commonsense solution—ensuring that harvested deer meat is put to good use rather than going to waste.

Helping to Address Food Insecurity

Hawaii struggles with food insecurity, and many families, seniors, and individuals lack access to high-quality protein. Axis deer meat is a nutritious, lean, and locally available resource that could help feed those in need through food banks, shelters, and community programs. Instead of discarding harvested deer, these bills would allow this valuable food source to be distributed where it's needed most.

Federal Guidelines Support This Approach

Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), venison is classified as a non-amenable species, meaning it does not require the same mandatory federal inspection as beef or pork. Many other states have already adopted wild game donation programs that align with these federal exemptions, ensuring safe and responsible food distribution without unnecessary red tape. HB 1334 and SB 1230 would bring Hawaii in line with these proven policies.

A Practical, No-Cost Solution

These bills offer a win-win for Hawaii—helping to control the axis deer population, reducing waste, supporting farmers, and providing much-needed food assistance, all without requiring taxpayer funding.

I urge the committee to support and pass these measures, which will benefit both our environment and our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:32:11 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wild game meat, such as axis deer, represents a sustainable and nutritious food source that could greatly benefit those facing food insecurity.

HB 1334 removes unnecessary barriers that prevent charitable organizations from accepting and distributing wild game meat. By allowing for the donation of responsibly harvested game, we can increase food access for those in need, reducing dependency on imported proteins and strengthening local food security.

A Sustainable Solution to Environmental Challenges

In addition to its benefits for food distribution, this bill directly supports environmental conservation efforts. The overpopulation of axis deer in Hawaii has led to significant ecological damage, including soil erosion, destruction of native plants, and agricultural losses. By allowing responsible harvesting and donation of these animals, we turn an environmental challenge into a community benefit, ensuring that excess game does not go to waste.

Federal Exemptions for Venison Donations

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) exempts wild game meat, including venison, from mandatory federal inspection when donated to charitable organizations. Many states have successfully implemented similar donation programs, proving that wild game can be safely distributed to food banks without the same regulatory burdens as commercial meats. HB 1334 aligns Hawaii's policies with these federal exemptions, ensuring that valuable food resources are not discarded due to unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions.

HB-1334

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:57:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/31/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Moana Lutey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

My name is Moana Lutey and I am on the Board of Directors for the Maui Food Bank ("MFB"), whose mission is to alleviate hunger in the County of Maui. Over the last few years, the MFB has become a critical source of food supply for many members in our community who were impacted during the Covid pandemic then the Lahaina wildfires. MFB has seen our food distribution numbers skyrocket and believe that HB 1334, which exempts the donation of wild game meat (i.e., axis deer), to charitable or nonprofit organizations would assist MFB in addressing the need for nutritious food in our community. Mahalo for your consideration, Moana Lutey, Maui Food Bank Board Member