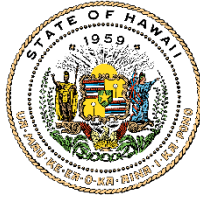


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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

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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N.S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Thursday, February 06, 2025  
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 347  
RELATING TO GOATS

House Bill 347 prohibits the Department of Land and Natural Resources from establishing or implementing bag limits for goats in public hunting areas. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

The Department is responsible for creating, maintaining, and managing public hunting opportunities as both a recreational resource and a management tool for game species populations. Public hunting provides an opportunity to reduce game species' impacts on native landscapes and can be a food resource for subsistence hunters.

The removal of bag limits for goats in public hunting areas removes one tool in the Department's management toolbox for managing a hunting program. Removing bag limits for goats is one way to control their population, but extending open hunting days to seven days a week is the Department's preferred approach. Data indicates that extending hunting days increases hunter effort and take on a sustainable basis and that bag limits are not the limiting factor as hunters can only take so many animals a day. This strategy gives hunters more opportunities while managing the goat population effectively and minimizing ecological damage.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:25:43 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Ley	County GMAC	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Brian Ley, Distric 4 GMAC commissioner.

We strongly oppose this Bill This is the DLNR job to manage game herds on the islands. besides being a food source for our community, It is lacking common sense. As seen on Maui and in more recently in California. We need to manage these valuable animals in protecting our communities from wildfires. Goats are used in the Western states by local and state agencies to keep fire fuel loads under control. we need a game Managment plan, to protect our resources.

once again Strongly oppose this Bill, Mahalo for your time and consderation

Sincerly Brian Ley Distric 4 GMAC commissioner

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:26:33 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Godfrey Akaka	The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We the NHGRA are in opposition of this bill because it is taking away the ability of DOFAW to manage game animals instead of forcing irradiation efforts pushed by environmentalists who do not understand balance. When forage gets overgrown, communities will be threatened by more wildcard fires of which game animals, when properly managed assist with prescribed grazing. Mahalo.



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Ted Radovich  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the House Water & Land 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. **HFU supports HB347.**

By prohibiting the Department of Land and Natural Resources from establishing or implementing bag limits for goats in public hunting areas, the bill addresses the problematic overpopulation of goats, which has significant ecological and economic impacts. Goats, known for their voracious grazing habits, can cause substantial damage to native vegetation and delicate ecosystems. Allowing hunters to manage goat populations without the constraint of bag limits will help restore balance to these environments, ultimately preserving Hawaii's unique biodiversity.

For local farmers, the uncontrolled growth of goat populations can mean devastating crop losses, threatening their livelihoods and the state's agricultural output. By supporting HB347, we empower landowners and hunters to work together to manage goat populations more effectively. This approach helps mitigate damage to farmland and pasture, promoting more sustainable agricultural practices across the islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:54:20 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Nakagawa	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I'm writing to oppose this bill in regards to feral goats. DLNR has already implemented an "adapting management" program that allow them (DLNR) to adjust bag limits and seasons

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:15:27 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Oppose. No bag limits is no game management.

DATE: February 5, 2025

TO: Honorable Legislators

FROM: Christopher D. Thomas, Attorney at Law

RE: Public Comment and Testimony Regarding

My name is Christopher D. Thomas. I am an avid hunter, and a registered State of Hawaii gun owner. I do not support HB347; the legislation is overbroad and over-reaching. The legislation is reversible only by subsequent legislative action. The Bill also supersedes the authority of the DLNR to effectively manage game populations in Hawai'i.

I have no doubt that Goat populations in the County of Hawai'i are out of control; I have witnessed the danger they pose. However, an effectively managed hunting protocol, to include eradication or incentive hunts, is a better way to effectively manage this problem

The proposed legislation seems to indicate that the law removes, forevermore, the ability of the DLNR to set bag limits on a certain species. Would it not be more prudent to authorize the DLNR professionals responsible for game management to set reasonable (or temporarily remove) bag limits based upon changing conditions in the environment? Hypothetically, environmental conditions could change (disease, drought, hunting) that could effectively decimate a species' population, on any island. If bag limits are void, DLNR lacks the ability to then limit hunting to rehabilitate the population. The Bill does not seek to eliminate all Goats; only manage them.

Bag limits and population of game species should follow the direction of wildlife biologists and environmental experts; rather than being controlled by legislative action. Bag limits are established and regulated by wildlife management authorities to ensure the sustainable and responsible harvest of wildlife populations. These limits are set based on scientific assessments of the species' population dynamics, reproductive rates, and overall health of the ecosystem. Wildlife biologists and ecologists regularly assess the health of species and ecosystems, providing vital data that informs bag limit regulations. This should remain the case in Hawai'i.

Please consider alternatives to game management and vote against HB347. Rather, mandate the DLNR to devote efforts to effectively study and manage game populations consistently.

Respectfully submitted, Christopher D. Thomas, goshawaii808@gmail.com

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 4:07:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
nani pogline	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Drastically reducing wild goat populations in this way will increase grass and brush fire fuel for potential wild fires. Enhancing goat and other wild game habitat will draw these animals away from searching out water and green grass along road sides. In a private survey it was discovered that while there were a number of sheep and pig killed by traffic, there were no goats killed by cars along the west Hawaii GMA areas at that time. It appears that goats are more intelligent and agile with road hazard. The bennifits of wild goat as a game resource and control of wild fire out weighs the detriment.



**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:47:05 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jerry Ilo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly oppose. DLNR/DOFAW are our resource managers. Removing DLNR from setting bag limits is madness! Without goats and sheep Kona is prime to be the next Lahaina! Goats are designated game animals it is DLNRs job to manage them for the publics benefit.

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:06:54 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
PRZEMYSŁAW M GRZYBOWSKI	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition to the Removal of Bag Limits for Goats in Hawaii

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose any measure that prohibits the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) from establishing or implementing bag limits for goats in public hunting areas. Maintaining reasonable bag limits is essential to balancing ecological health, cultural practices, and responsible wildlife management. Goats provide several benefits to the Mauna Kea area when their populations are properly managed. Hereâ€™s why keeping bag limits in place is critical:

1. Goats Help Reduce Wildfire Risks

Invasive grasses, such as fountain grass, pose a major wildfire threat in dry environments like Mauna Kea. When managed sustainably, goat populations contribute to natural vegetation control, reducing the density of these fire-prone grasses. Completely eliminating bag limits could lead to overhunting, disrupting this ecological service and increasing the risk of large-scale wildfires that threaten native forests and communities.

2. Goats Support Sustainable Hunting and Food Security

Hunting is an important resource for many local families, providing a sustainable source of food. If unlimited hunting is allowed without regulation, goat populations could decline to

unsustainable levels, impacting subsistence hunters who rely on them. Bag limits help ensure long-term availability of this resource for future generations while still allowing responsible population control.

### 3. Maintaining Balance in the Ecosystem

While overpopulation of goats can damage native forests, responsible management is key. Goats play a role in maintaining open landscapes that support endangered bird species, such as the palila, by preventing the overgrowth of invasive shrubs that compete with native ma'amane trees. Allowing unrestricted hunting could cause population crashes, leading to unintended consequences for these fragile ecosystems.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose the removal of bag limits and instead support scientifically guided wildlife management that ensures a balance between conservation, hunting traditions, and ecosystem stability. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Przemyslaw Grzybowski

Grzybowski.pm@gmail.com

**HB-347**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 6:26:34 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/6/2025 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Abraham Antonio sr	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear. Chair Mark Hashem and Chair David Tarnas

Vice Chair Rachele Lamosao and Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe

I, Abraham Antonio sr, oppose HB347 for the following reasons:

1. Ongoing Adaptive Management Effort: The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has already initiated an adaptive management plan that started recently and is set to run for two years. I believe we should allow time to assess the results of this plan before considering new legislative action.

2. Goat Population on Public vs. Private Lands: The issue of goat populations on West Hawaii public lands is not the primary problem. The real issue lies with private lands and the areas around roads, particularly where divots in the road collect water, attracting goats to the greener, more abundant grasses found in these areas.

3. Need for a Game Management Plan: What is truly needed is a comprehensive game management plan for our wild game resources. These resources continue to provide food to the community and should be properly managed and protected to ensure their sustainability.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you reconsider HB347 and focus on effective long-term management strategies instead of moving forward with new legislation prematurely.

Sincerely,

Abraham Antonio sr.

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