

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 1023, S.D. 1, RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 **TIME:** 10:01 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**
(For more information, contact Kelcie K. Nagata,
Deputy Attorney General, at 808-586-1180)

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to establish and appropriate funds into a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats. The special fund is to be administered by the Department of Budget and Finance. In addition, the bill allows the counties to print special numbered plates and individuals to designate five dollars of their income tax refund to be deposited into the special fund.

The bill establishes the special fund within the Department of Budget and Finance but codifies it within chapter 143, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the chapter related to the Department of Agriculture. See page 1, line 16, to page 2, line 2. This may cause confusion for both the Department of Budget and Finance and the Department of Agriculture with regard to the administration of the special fund. To ensure clarity and consistency, if the intent is to establish the special fund within the Department of Budget and Finance, it should be codified in the statutes relating to the Department of Budget and Finance (e.g., chapter 36, HRS). Conversely, if the intent is for the Department of Agriculture to administer the special fund, the bill should be amended to designate the Department of Agriculture as the responsible agency.

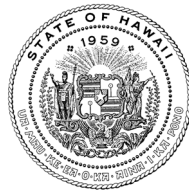
Additionally, the proposed section 143- (c) establishes an advisory committee "to assist the department of budget and finance in establishing the eligibility criteria and

procedures for disbursements from the special fund." Page 2, line 20, to page 3, line 2. However, article V, section 6, of the Hawaii State Constitution requires "instrumentalities of the state government and their respective powers and duties [to] be allocated by law among and within not more than twenty principal departments[.]" To ensure compliance with the constitutional requirement, if the intent is to place the special fund in the Department of Budget and Finance, we recommend amending the first sentence of section 143- (c) on page 2, line 20 to page 3, line 2, to explicitly place the advisory committee within the Department of Budget and Finance, as follows:

(c) There is established within the department of budget and finance an advisory committee to assist the department of budget and finance in establishing the eligibility criteria and procedures for disbursements from the special fund.

Conversely, if the intent is to place the special fund in the Department of Agriculture, the reference should be changed accordingly to designate the "department of agriculture" instead of the "department of budget and finance" in the above suggested amendments to section 143- (c).

We respectfully ask the Committee to consider our comments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1023, S.D. 1

February 18, 2025
10:01 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 1023, S.D. 1, does the following: 1) establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund (SNSF) within B&F to finance spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free roaming cats; 2) establishes an advisory committee to assist B&F in establishing SNSF disbursement eligibility criteria and procedures; 3) allows taxpayers to contribute \$5 of their income tax refund to be deposited into the SNSF; 4) requires the Directors of Finance for the City and County of Honolulu and Counties of Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Maui to design and issue a special number plate for registered motor vehicle owners supporting the SNSF; 5) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for both FY 26 and FY 27 for deposit into the SNSF; and 6) appropriates an unspecified amount of special funds out of the SNSF for both FY 26 and FY 27 for the purposes of the SNSF.

B&F strongly believes that it is not the appropriate agency to administer the SNSF and its related program functions. B&F does not possess the required subject-matter

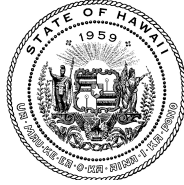
expertise on spaying and neutering animals or any other related veterinary services as these subject areas are outside of the purview of the department. Further, with the ongoing statewide financial management replacement project, B&F staff are fully engaged and committed to working on the project and doing its regular work; therefore, additional staff and funding would be necessary to administer the SNSF.

B&F recommends that funds be appropriated directly to the counties instead because they have historically been responsible for animal control functions. The counties can then allocate these funds to entities best able to perform the desired services.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION
Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau
P.O. BOX 259
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. No. 1023, S.D. 1, Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

BEFORE THE:

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2025

TIME: 10:01 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding S.B. 1023, S.D. 1, for your consideration.

Section 2 of S.B. 1023, S.D. 1, establishes a new "Spay and Neuter Special Fund." Section 4 amends section 235-102.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to establish a source of funding through a new income tax "check-off" option. Individual taxpayers with a refund of \$5 or more may designate \$5 to the fund, and married couples filing jointly with a refund of \$10 or more may designate \$5 per person to the fund.

As with other existing check-off box options, if no initial designation was chosen, a taxpayer may amend their return to choose a designation within 20 months and ten days after the due date for the original return for that taxable year. A designation is nonrevocable once made.

This measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 2050, with Section 3, regarding an additional funding source from the issuance of special number vehicle license plates effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

DOTAX requests that the effective date of the bill be amended so that section 4 applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

DOTAX estimates the expected revenue gain from the “check-off” option as follows:

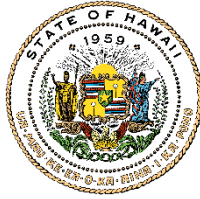
Special Fund Impact (\$ millions)

FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

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

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

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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, February 18, 2025
10:01 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1023, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE SPAYING AND NEUTERING OF ANIMALS

Senate Bill 1023, Senate Draft 1 establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats, and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) provides the following comments.**

Feral cats are a significant threat to Hawai'i's endangered forest birds, seabirds, and other native species. The Department is mandated to protect and manage Hawai'i's natural resources, including its native bird populations, and trap-neuter-return (TNR) has not been shown to be an effective method to reduce feral cat populations.

The Department controls invasive predators in sensitive habitats. Reducing pet overpopulation and free-roaming cats would benefit both cats and wildlife. If a spay and neuter program could decrease the number of unwanted animals, it would benefit wildlife populations. Still, the Department does not know if this program would be effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**Testimony in Support of SB 1023
Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 18, 2025**

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, supports passage of SB 1023 and the creation of a Spay and Neuter Special Fund to expand access to vital spay/neuter resources for both pets and free-roaming cats and tackle the challenges of overpopulation in the state.

This legislation is good for the people and animals of Hawaii. There is broad interest in helping companion animals and, by extension, the people who care for them. This legislation would create an opportunity for Hawaii taxpayers to do just that, voluntarily contributing funds to provide needed sterilization and veterinary care to cats and dogs in need.

When such veterinary services are made accessible and costs are subsidized, sterilization rates will increase. The truth is that most people want to do the right thing and are not ideologically opposed to sterilization but simply lack the resources to do so. This is particularly true for those who find themselves caring for a large number of free-roaming cats. Unable to get enough of the cats sterilized in a timely manner, the cats continue to reproduce, making the goal of reducing the population even more of a challenge. When funding is made available to cover the cost of sterilization, organizations which deliver these services to communities can be more effective in their outreach efforts. Not only will this prevent many surplus animal births and deaths but also lowers the cost of animal care and control in the future, reduce public health concerns and decrease threats to wildlife and the environment.

There is an urgent need for practical and effective solutions to the challenges associated with the presence of cats outdoors. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to managing cats in the environment, but with determination, innovation, and collaboration, we can implement and sustain effective programs to humanely resolve human-cat-wildlife conflicts.

This bill creates an opportunity to help many people and animals across the state. The HSUS encourages a favorable report on SB 1023.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Susan Rhee

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

LATE

SUBJECT: INCOME TAX; Spay and Neuter Special Fund, Income Tax Check Off

BILL NUMBER: SB 1023 SD 1

INTRODUCED BY: Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment, Transportation and Culture and the Arts, and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new section to chapter 143, HRS, to establish a spay and neuter special fund ("Fund"). Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; provided that the uses and expenditures of moneys in the special fund shall follow the eligibility criteria established by a new advisory committee created by the bill.

Adds a new section to chapter 249, HRS, providing special number plates for motor vehicles supporting the spay and neuter special Fund. Fees charged for the plates will be deposited into the Fund established by this measure.

Amends section 235-102.5, HRS, to allow an income tax check-off for \$5 to be deposited into the Fund, or for a joint return each spouse may designate \$5.

An appropriation out of the general fund of \$_____, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for fiscal year 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 shall be deposited into the special Fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2050; provided Section 3 shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

STAFF COMMENTS: This bill creates a new special fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats. The fund is fed by legislative appropriations, \$5 State income tax refund designations, and fees from special license number plates. The fund is to be administered by the Department of Budget and Finance.

Special funds are pots of money that exist for a specific purpose and largely bypass the legislative appropriation process. The existence of hundreds of these special funds has often confounded those who seek answers to simple questions like "How much money does the State have?"

Our Legislature is supposed to be the steward of all state moneys, but special funds make it very easy to lose track of where the money is and how it is being spent. Departments are supposed to tell the Legislature if they have special funds and how much is in them, but let's just say they don't always. Recently, in Report No. 20-01, the State Auditor took DBEDT to task for failing to report \$6.5 million in non-general fund moneys. DBEDT's response? Just that they'll "take corrective

action.” Not even a “Whoops! We screwed up and promise to do better next time!” This followed closely on the heels of Report No. 19-16, where the Auditor found that \$1.04 million in non-general fund moneys administered by the Attorney General wasn’t reported. That department responded that they “shall establish procedures to assure required reports are issued.” Is it any wonder that it’s getting harder and harder to follow the money and rein in government spending?

Perhaps as the result of the foregoing concerns, the Legislature has itself established criteria for when a special fund may be maintained (HRS section 37-52.3). The criteria for a special fund are:

(1) Serves a need, as demonstrated by:

(A) The purpose of the program to be supported by the fund;

(B) The scope of the program, including financial information on fees to be charged, sources of projected revenue, and costs; and

(C) An explanation of why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process;

(2) Reflects a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the program users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue, as opposed to serving primarily as a means to provide the program or users with an automatic means of support that is removed from the normal budget and appropriation process;

(3) Provides an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity that is used only when essential to the successful operation of the program or activity; and

(4) Demonstrates the capacity to be financially self-sustaining.

Of these, at least two of the criteria are violated because there is no nexus between the purpose (reducing the feral cat population) and the source of revenue (income tax checkoffs and license plate fees), and because there is no indication that the proposed fund can be financially self-sustaining. Establishing this special fund is inappropriate, as is the proposed method of financing the fund.

Additionally, in the long run the cost of administering the income tax checkoff merely siphons resources that should otherwise be used for providing needed public services. If lawmakers believe certain programs are of great importance, then they can prioritize those programs through the appropriations process. With the Hawaii tax burden already so heavy, why should taxpayers turn any more of their hard-earned dollars over to government? What lawmakers also do not recognize is that by creating these checkoffs, they add to the cost of administering the law, a cost which steals funds from other programs including those enumerated for a checkoff designation.

Digested: 2/15/2025

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 5:30:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Vivian S. Toellner, from the east side of the Island of Hawai'i. I would like to see our State support free / low cost Spay Neuter Clinics held by volunteer 501c3 nonprofits here on the Big Island of Hawai'i. This would be a wise use of our tax dollars.

686 dogs and cats were sterilized by Petfix Hawaii in January 2025. Just think what an impact that is on animal overpopulation in the community. **Clearly people want this service. Yes, there are that many animals out there to fix.** If other methods, such as round up and kill had worked, we would not be discussing this problem today.

I too love our native birds and animals and want us to increase their safety with this spay neuter bill. TNRM cats need to be eligible for these funds, as not doing so only creates more cats. Please support the humane reduction in animal overpopulation, the veterinarians, vet techs, volunteers, pet owners, TNRM caretakers, are supporting spay/neuter with their **long hours of community work and donations.**

Cats are free roaming by nature. Even indoor pet cats get out and never return home. Cats are abandoned at parks and transfer stations. Turning away Trap Neuter Return cats is not productive. It is far better to sterilize all cats that come to a clinic. The breeding of cats in the open environment is the Cat-Tastrophe we have now!!

Consider funding organizations that specialize in Trap-neuter-release practices, provided that they be encouraged not to release back into the environment whenever possible. In fact, Petfix requires all cats at their clinics to have the ear tipped to show sterilization. This prevents cats returning to the clinic and thereby taking up a much-needed appointment!

Please understand that animal issues are complicated and require looking at all possibilities. Also, I would like to see the Bill to stipulate that volunteer 501c3 nonprofits that provide no cost / low cost spay/neuter services are the organizations eligible for these funds. As most veterinary businesses charge well over \$200 for just one spay!

The Veterinary advisory board representative needs to be an **experienced high volume sterilization surgeon that knows what a high-volume clinic needs.** I would also like to see the advisory committee have an active spay neuter **advocate from each island.** Either as a voting or nonvoting member and without expense reimbursement. These people truly have an ACTIVE INTEREST in the humane method of animal overpopulation here in Hawaii. The reimbursement

of advisory committee members should be limited to a low percentage, to ensure the funds are truly used as intended.

The annual report and other information should be public information and easily available. Special number plate design should be kept simple. A paw print with the words "Spay Neuter" is enough and no design fee paid. Are these fundraising fees in line with the other special license plates offered by the State? **Again, keep expenses low so funds are spent as intended on spay neuter surgeries.**

Please realize the problem grows exponentially the longer we wait. The sooner and harder we act on this problem the sooner the results, thereby saving more native animals. Please support increasing the funding to \$500,000.

There is outer island apprehension about the distribution of funds. An allocation based on population and land area would be fair to each county. Please realize the magnitude of this problem. We need to spay neuter every cat we can get our hands on. This is no joke, please do not euthanize this bill. I urge you to support this bill with amendments.

Sincerely, thank you for your time and Mahalo for allowing me to submit testimony.

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2025 2:52:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Notwithstanding the unfortunate deletion of important portions of the original version of this bill, SB1023 will still provide a valuable service by creating a spay and neuter fund, which may help to reduce the runaway proliferation of feral cats. These unhappy and unhealthy animals pose a danger to domestic pets and wildlife alike, including a significant number of endemic species, which, as residents of Hawaii, the only place where these animals occur, it is our sacred kuleana to protect. Some of these native species are already highly endangered, and dwindling away, as the number of feral felines increases inexorably. Please pass SB1023. By the way, I am speaking as a cat lover, and cat owner, whose own pets suffer frequent injuries from invading ferals, and are at threat of catching diseases from these unvaccinated, uncared for animals.

February 15, 2025

Committee on Ways and Means
RE: SB1023 SD1, Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

Dear Committee on Ways and Means,

As a practicing veterinarian in Hawaii dedicated to animal health and conservation of native wildlife, I am writing to express my opposition to SB 1023 SD1 as written. While I am grateful for the support of so many legislators in desiring to address our animal overpopulation crisis and reduce the free-roaming cat population, I am concerned that use of these special funds for popular “trap-neuter-release” (TNR) programs will be ineffective in reducing these populations and protecting native wildlife.

While there are conflicting published studies and data regarding the effectiveness of TNR programs, most scientific reviews and mathematical models of population growth support the conclusion that TNR is ineffective in decreasing free-roaming populations in real world situations. The failure of this approach is multifactorial: high breeding frequency and large litter sizes, lower actual rates of trapping and sterilization than necessary to stop population growth, overabundance of food provided to free-roaming colonies, and continual abandonment of unwanted pet cats. Any successful population reduction with TNR programs has been attributed primarily to concurrent adoption and/or euthanasia of over 50% of the estimated colony population.

Multiple national and international organizations do not support TNR as an effective method of managing free-roaming cat populations, including the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, The Wildlife Society, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, PETA, and the American Bird Conservancy.

The negative health impacts of free-roaming cats on native wildlife are especially poignant in Hawaii due to our unique native biodiversity that is threatened by increasing environmental pressures. Native birds such as honeycreepers, nene, and alala, and marine mammals such as monk seals and spinner dolphins are increasingly at risk from either direct predation or indirect spread of disease such as toxoplasmosis which is only spread by infected cats.

Additionally, free-roaming cat colonies are often afflicted with infectious diseases such as upper respiratory viruses, leukemia and immunodeficiency viruses, internal and external parasites, and ringworm, which lead to chronic health issues and poor quality of life for affected animals. TNR programs do not focus on finding permanent homes for cats or improving the quality of life for cats that are re-released, and can inadvertently increase cat abandonment rather than encouraging responsible pet ownership or surrender of unwanted pets to shelter or rescue groups.

As there are multiple introduced bills regarding spay/neuter special funds before the legislature this session, I ask that you strongly consider amending this bill with language from HB 364, specifically the following:

“Moneys in the special fund shall be expended to reduce pet overpopulation, including the free-roaming cat population, by providing spaying and neutering surgery and associated veterinary care; ***provided that spayed or neutered animals are not re-released into the environment.***”

This specific language would ensure public funds are used toward effective sterilization and population control programs that restrict re-release of sterilized animals. Without clear guidelines on how these funds will be used, please OPPOSE SB 1023 SD1 as written. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Jill Yoshicedo, DVM

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 9:33:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1023. I volunteer for Hawaiian Humane Society and for Catfriends, both of which offer low-cost spay/neutering of free-roaming cats. A recent survey of Oahu residents by the Humane Society found that the vast majority of those surveyed support TNR (trap/neuter/return) and spaying/neutering of unowned cats. This has been shown to be the most effective way to control the free-roaming cat population. It works much better than killing these cats. Every female cat that is spayed prevents 1000 cats from being born in the next ten years. And because TNR controls the cat population, it benefits wildlife. However, at present there is a shortage of appointments for low-cost spay/neuter surgeries. Funding is part of the problem, and this bill would address that.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way

Honolulu, HI. 96816

LATE

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 10:39:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Duane Inoue	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Co-Chairs, Ways and Means (WAM)

Subject: Senate Bill (S.B.) 1023 SD-1, Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals

Hearing Date: February 18, 2025

My name is Duane Inoue, and I am a concerned citizen, testifying against S.B. 1023, as written.

The bill will establish the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats and various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

I strongly believe that we need to take action to reduce the reproduction of free-roaming cats in order to control the free-roaming cat population. However, I have following concern about the proposed bill:

The bill has numerous occurrence of the term “pet overpopulation”. I think that the term “pet” needs to be defined unless it is already done so in other parts of the state law.

The term “pet” is defined as any animal kept by human beings as a source of companionship and pleasure. Therefore, cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets, pigs, goats, fish, lizards, etc. are considered pets. As written, the bill could be interpreted to allow the use of spay and neuter for all types of pets. Was the intent of proposed bill to allow funding for all pets AND free-roaming cats? If so, will the advisory committee identify the amount of funding used for various pets vs free-roaming cats? Without this distinction, the State will not be able to determine the impact it will have on pet overpopulation and the reproduction of free-roaming cats. If it was meant for all pets, the bill needs to specify that and provide adequate checks and balances.

Please note that HB364 HD-1, also adds the Spay and Neuter Special Fund with the same revenue and fundraising source. However, it also includes a cat breeding permit as a funding source, and an exception to spay/neuter, which I have opposed strongly. Please note that HB364 HD-1 did not include dog breeding permit, which could suggest that the bill was meant only for cats. Was SB 1023 SD-1 written for cats only? If so, recommend changing “pet overpopulation” to “pet cat overpopulation”.

V/r

Duane Inoue

95-214 Paheue Pl, Mililani, HI. 96789

(808) 372-1162



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

LATE

Date: Feb. 17, 2025

To: Chair Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki,
and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 1023, SD1:
Relating to the Spaying and Neutering of Animals
Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025, 10:01 a.m., Room 211 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our strong support for Senate Bill 1023, SD1, which establishes the Spay and Neuter Special Fund to reduce pet overpopulation and the reproduction of Free-Roaming cats and authorizes various revenue and fundraising sources for the special fund.

This measure is designed to address an urgent need in our community. We have more pet animals than families adopting pets. Puppies, which were historically rare among the wide range of animals to be found at local shelters, are now regularly being surrendered entire litters at a time. Economic challenges and housing insecurity force families to give up beloved pets. The Hawaiian Humane Society is at the forefront of taking a multifaceted, community centered approach to these issues and one undeniable need is for greater access to low-fee and no-fee spay neuter services.

Due to their costs of doing business, private veterinary clinics are no longer able to provide low-cost spay neuter at the levels they once did. Local nonprofits have stepped up to help, but they are under resourced. This bill is designed to help them help our communities.

Convenient and affordable access to spay/neuter is the best way to prevent pet overpopulation. Due to business costs, the number of clinics offering low-fee spay neuter on O'ahu has fallen from more than 20 to five. One of them, Hawaiian Humane's Ginny Tiu Community Spay/Neuter Center in Mō'ili'ili, is regularly booked four months



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

in advance. Our Spay/Neuter Center in 'Ewa Beach has yet to open due to lack of staffing and inadequate funding.

Decades of education around the importance of spay/neuter for improving the health and longevity of animals, reducing nuisance behaviors and curbing pet overpopulation have borne fruit. Demand for services at our community spay/neuter center since its opening in 2018 suggests that most people want to do the right thing for their pets. In a 2024 survey of O'ahu households, 81 percent of pet dogs were reported to be spayed/neutered, as were 68 percent of pet cats. Of those who reported their pets were not spayed/neutered, 30 percent of cat owners and 17 percent of dog owners said it was because the cost was too high.

If we are going to reduce the suffering caused by pet overpopulation, better access to affordable spay/neuter services is needed statewide. We have nonprofits in place eager to do that work with funding support.

The ability to offer no-fee spay/neuter for Free-Roaming cats has had incredible impact on O'ahu. According to the 2024 survey conducted for Hawaiian Humane by Ward Research, the spay/neuter rate for Free-Roaming cats jumped from 38 percent in 2018 to 70 percent in 2024 according to the residents who feed cats they do not consider to be their own. Over those six years, the City and County of Honolulu invested resources into the Feline Fix program, which allows participating clinics to offer no-fee spay/neuter for Free-Roaming cat caregivers. The spay/neuter fund created by this bill could enable similar progress across our state.

There is a clear public interest in reducing the number of unwanted pets and the population of Free-Roaming cats. We hope the state will embrace this opportunity to join the counties and private donors in supporting the local organizations working tirelessly to address this issue and reduce animal suffering.

We urge the committee to pass SB1023 with a good effective date and the funding recommended by the subject matter committees. Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 1:02:10 PM
Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this, as it will help decrease free-roaming cats in the area, which affects native plants and wildlife!

LATE

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2025 3:34:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Beers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feral cats reproduce very quickly, and the **ONLY** way to keep a cat from having more kittens is to sterilize them! On Oahu there are several organizations that perform free spay/neuter surgery for feral cats, but are severely limited due to lack of funds. More funding = more surgeries. End result is fewer /kittens and cats!

That being said, the feral cat problem on Oahu needs a multi-faceted solution. Trap-Neuter-Release **DOES** work, but only if people also:

1. Spay/neuter their pet cats **ALWAYS**, while they are still young kittens. A female cat can start having kittens at 4 months old.
2. Stop dumping/relocating (abandoning) their unwanted pet cats and/or nuisance cats from their property/neighborhoods into other areas. This is a very common practice, and can undermine existing TNR efforts at that location, and overburden colony caretakers.

Public education is needed and easy access to spay/neuter services is absolutely neccessary. If everyone worked together, Oahu could get a handle on its massive feral cat population.

*A note about mass euthanasia as a solution for Oahu's feral cat population. It won't work, and will take up a lot of resources. It might lessen the cat population in a particular for a short while, but the problem **WILL** come back. There's no way to catch/euthanize them all, and meanwhile they will continue to reproduce and people will continue to dump unwanted cats.

****In a dream world**, Oahu would have a cat sanctuary. Please research the cat sanctuary on Lanai and learn how it has improved the feral cat situation on that island.

LATE

SB-1023-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 9:46:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hazel Cashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a former science teacher and a current member of a local conservation organization, I strongly support the need for funds directed towards spaying and neutering of our feral cats. Here on Kaua'i the feral cat issue has gotten far out of hand, to the point where it has not only become one of the largest threats to the health of our remaining intact native ecosystems, but is also inhumane for the cats as well. This is a no-brainer, really. Slowing (and ideally, stopping) the growth of the feral cat population is only the first of many necessary steps in making the islands safe again for populations of native birds that are threatened by cat predation and diseases carried by cats, as well as removing this entirely unnecessary threat to human health. This issue has become politicized for no reason- cats are pets, and if you want a cat, adopt it the proper way, keep it inside, get it vaccinated, and care for it properly. Feral cats are an invasive species at this point, and need to be dealt with as such.