

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 & FOOD SYSTEMS

MARCH 21, 2025
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 200
MAUI AXIS DEER CONTROL AND VENISON INITIATIVE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 200. HCR200 resolves that the State Department of Agriculture and the County of Maui Department of Agriculture are urged to take further meaningful action to address the axis deer overpopulation, including:

(1) Implementing policies to make United States Department of Agriculture-certified in-state inspectors, certified inspections, and certified processing facilities more accessible, capable, and affordable for local hunters to utilize in order to sell or gift venison; and

(2) Implementing policies to increase the amount of certified United States Department of Agriculture in-state meat inspectors for game mammals; and convene a joint task force to oversee the County of Maui program that, in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture certified processing facilities, would aim to investigate and develop plans to make affordable the processing of locally hunted axis



deer meat and the distribution of this venison to the community; and that the joint task force is requested to submit a report of the program's accomplishments and barriers to the accomplishment of the program with its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than November 30, 2025.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (department) provides the following comments. The intent to address the axis deer overpopulation has merit as the deer are a hazard to agriculture production the environment and public health. Similarly, investigation into processing facilities and methods to lower production costs benefits agriculture producers. The Department notes that engaging with USDA regarding inspectors and staffing is useful, however, USDA controls their staffing levels.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.