

## HFC Committee

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**From:** Tessa <tessabroholm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 07, 2020 2:06 PM  
**To:** County Clerk; HFC Committee  
**Subject:** Support for the Bill to Prohibit and Criminalize the Feeding of Feral Animals

To Whom it May Concern,

In regards to proposed bill 6.04.041 Feeding of feral animals prohibited, I offer the following testimony in support of the bill.

Hawaii is the endemic species capital of the world, and holds 25% of the endangered species found in the United States. There are 71 known taxa of birds on Hawaii, of which 30 are already extinct. Another 30 are categorized as endangered or threatened by the United States. An island of birds and insect, the introduction of mammals has been hugely detrimental on the existence on many of these species.

It is our kuleana, our responsibility, as inhabitants of this island, to protect that which cannot protect itself. We are responsible for protecting the many native and endemic species that have become threatened or endangered because of our actions of introducing non-native predators, like feral cats.

By feeding feral cats, we continue to jeopardize the biodiversity of this special island. Cats are hunters by nature, and will continue to hunt even if they are fed regularly. Studies show that bird remains comprise a regular component of feral cat diet. The act of not feeding feral cats will discourage cats from clustering and providing extreme damage to vulnerable native species.

Despite what some very vocal local organizations, such as the Maui Humane Society, may say, scientific studies from disseminated surveys have concluded that the majority of Hawaiian residents would like to see effective management that reduces the abundance of feral and free-roaming cats. Additionally, some opponents of this bill may say that if passed, national criticism of this measure will further damage the economy. Those people are blindsided by their own sense of fulfillment that they receive when tending for stray animals. In reality, many more people visit Hawaii because of its natural beauty, its uniqueness, its culture, and because of its biodiversity. Ecotourism is a huge part of our local economy, and birding brings in significant revenue to those local companies.

Furthermore, by feeding feral animals, we enable irresponsible pet owners to abandon their pets instead of sending them to more able caretakers.

There are many reasons why feral cats should NOT be fed on Maui. At the end of the day, we must think of what is most important to us as stewards of this land. To me, that means protecting its biodiversity and unique birds, and holding those values above all others. Thank you for your time and I hope you will take these points under consideration.

Best,  
Tessa Broholm