

HFC Committee

From: Johann Lall <lalljp@gmail.com>
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To: HFC Committee
Subject: Testimony for HFC-24

One of government's primary responsibilities is to protect the environment and policy should be information-based, not emotion-based, or determined by the loudest voices. Invasive species are the biggest threat to remaining native ecosystems and endangered animals in Hawai'i, and feral cats are the single worst invasive. They are also the only invasive species that receives constant care, feeding, and advocacy from humans. Every invasive plant and animal is a human-caused problem and therefore our responsibility to solve. The least we can do is ban feeding them along with other feral animals.

Cat advocates will probably argue that feeding prevents them from preying on native animals, but peer-reviewed studies have found that feeding feral cats doesn't reduce their predatory behavior, and the existence of cat colonies encourages humans to abandon more cats. Being well-fed also increases the ability of the non-spayed cats to reproduce. Predation isn't the only issue, toxoplasmosis is a hazard for many animals including humans.

COVID-19 has also been shown to infect cats, and is transmissible among cats, so the act of feeding a feral cat colony creates a vector for transmission between humans and feral colonies, and increases the risk of creating a very large safe haven for the virus to thrive, mutate, and return to infect humans indefinitely.

If we're going to allow humans to

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