



To: David Y. Ige
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Re: Hawai'i Administrative Rules
15. Chapter 13-232-57.1 Feeding of colony strays or feral animals prohibited
16. Chapter 13-232-57.2 Animal abandonment and creating or contributing to colonies prohibited

March 9, 2018

Dear Honorable Governor Ige:

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is requesting that you proceed to limit feral cat colonies on public lands to curb their predation on birds, and to reduce the risks of disease. We urge you to please sign the proposed administrative rules as presented by the Board of Land & Natural Resources.

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds with a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including Canada, Mexico, Japan, China, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Among PSG's members are biologists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. Over 20 PSG members are residents of Hawaii, who serve as scientific experts and conservation leaders within their local communities. Collectively, the Group's members have a great deal of knowledge and experience with respect to feral cat management and tropical seabird research in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific Region.

It is patently unfair that specific user groups usurp public spaces for a single purpose, in this case, to maintain feral cats. Harbors, parks, playgrounds, and schoolyards belong to everyone and giving cat advocacy groups control of public lands violates the very principal of open space, especially when that use creates a suite of health problems for people and other animals.

There is no justification for the presence of free-range feral cats on any of our public lands. Yet cat supporters are attempting to rebrand feral cats as "community cats." These introduced predators kill native animals, both seabirds and forest birds. Cat feces on

beaches have infected Hawaiian monk seals with Toxoplasmosis. Children and pregnant women are also very vulnerable to Toxoplasmosis, whose health effects can be debilitating. We do not accept that feral cats are, in any way, a community responsibility to maintain. They are a public nuisance to most people, a disaster for nearly all native Hawaiian species, and a public health threat.

For example, last year at the Kihei Boat Ramp on Maui, approximately 100 Wedge-tailed Shearwater chicks were killed by feral cats, as determined by physical and photographic evidence collected by seabird experts. Feral cats at the harbor are fed by people, and public land managers are ultimately responsible for these bird deaths which violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Controlling animals at our harbors is a good step in the right direction. We support any legislation and/or rules that prohibit the feeding or maintaining of feral cats on state, county, or federal lands.

This is but one example of the “Tragedy of the Commons,” a lesson learned long ago, where public livestock users of open space ruined it for everybody else. Please sign these bills that will help prevent feral cat colonies from spreading and limit the damage that they have already done, and elevate the State of Hawaii as a strong proponent of native species over introduced species.

Mahalo for considering our request,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark J. Rauzon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Rauzon" clearly legible.

Mark J. Rauzon
Vice-Chair for Conservation