HB 2342
RELATING TO FISH AND GAME

Statement for
House Committee on
Water, Land Use, Development and Hawaiian Affairs
Public Hearing – 28 February 1980

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HB 2842 would delete Section 187-1.1 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, a section under which the Animal Species Advisory Commission was established, and amend subsection (b) of Section 1.2, a subsection that now requires that the Fish and Game Division of the Department of Land and Natural Resources consult with the Animal Species Advisory Commission in making its findings concerning any proposed introduction of a species of animal. The amendment proposed would substitute a requirement that the Division merely consult with scientists in various fields.

The history of importation of animals in Hawaii is replete with instances of harmful effects that imported species have had on the flora and fauna of the Islands, particularly the endemic flora and fauna. It was in recognition of the potential for further harm that the Animal Species Advisory Commission was established. It would be quite unwise to abolish the Commission or to allow the Division of Fish and Game to fail to consult with it concerning proposed importation. The substitution proposed in HB 2842 of consultation with scientists selected by the Division of Fish and Game would be quite unsatisfactory, because the Division might well select scientists whose opinion it knew in advance to be favorable to a particular proposed importation and hence bias its findings in disregard of the weight of opposed scientific opinion.
There can be no assurance that the Commission, whose members are appointed by the Governor, will represent a balanced scientific opinion on any particular proposed importation, but Section 187-1.2, as it now exists, makes such balanced representation much more probable than the amended version proposed in HB 2842. Through the deliberation of the Commission of proposed introductions, there is an exchange of views that is very unlikely to occur among individual consultants to the Fish and Game Division.