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HB 3917 RELATING TO GAME MAMMALS

House Committees on
Water and Land Use Planning
Energy and Environmental Protection

Joint Public Hearing - February 27, 1996
8:30 A.M., Room 312 State Capitol

By

John T. Harrison, Environmental Center
Mark Merlin, General Science
Cliff Smith, Botany

HB 3917 adds a new section to Chapter 183D recognizing game mammals such as the feral pig (*Sus scrofa*) for cultural, subsistence and recreational purposes.

Our statement on this measure does not constitute an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The intent and purpose of this measure are confusing. Basically, it requires DLNR to adopt rules acknowledging that feral pigs and other game mammals are respected as cultural icons, even though the measure previously has specified that the feral pig is a larger hybrid which bears little physical or ecological resemblance to the original polynesian pig. The measure profoundly blurs the distinction between traditional Hawaiian practices and more general recreational and subsistence hunting practices, imbuing the latter with values which are anthropologically invalid. This does not seem an appropriate purpose of statutory language.

We suggest that acknowledgment of the values of recreational and subsistence hunting for feral pigs might be an appropriate subject for a legislative resolution. Furthermore, recognizing the need for expanded awareness of all facets of this long standing public debate, we suggest that such a resolution should be accompanied by another resolution specifically drawing attention to the voluminous documentation of feral pig damage to indigenous native forest ecosystems, watersheds, and plants on the verge of extinction.

Finally, above all rhetoric surrounding this issue, on fact remains abundantly clear: no technique exists which will successfully eradicate feral pigs, hence the population is in no danger of disappearing. Furthermore, no amount of rulemaking by DLNR will address the "complexities of today's society" which challenge subsistence hunting.