RES25-226
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 425

*GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & CUSTOMER SERVICES (GCS)

***GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & CUSTOMER SERVICES (GCS) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Aug 21, 2025 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Edwin Ampon	edwin@hoomaluhiahorserescue.org	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ho'omaluhia Horse Rescue Hawaii	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 08:44 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Members of the GCS

My name is Edwin Ampon, Co-Founder of Ho'omaluhia Horse Rescue Hawai'i, a registered nonprofit dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and lifelong care of equines in need across O'ahu.

As the only actively operating equine rescue on this island, we strongly support RES25-226 and urge the City and County of Honolulu to recognize the urgent need for a structured program to address the neglect, abuse, and abandonment of equines.

Since our incorporation, Ho'omaluhia Horse Rescue has stepped into a critical gap in animal welfare. When no other agency was available, our entirely volunteer-led team has responded, rehabilitated, and rehomed horses often without resources, funding, or formal authority. We have relied on veterinary professionals, community partners, and supporters who believe, as we do, that horses deserve the same protections afforded to dogs and cats.

Legally, horses are categorized as livestock, yet they are not raised for consumption in Hawai'i. Instead, they are working partners, companions, and cultural symbols deeply tied to paniolo traditions, ranching heritage, and island life for over two centuries. Despite this, there is no dedicated government program or agency tasked with equine rescue and rehabilitation. As a result, these animals often fall into a legal and logistical gray area, with no clear authority responsible for their welfare.

We have repeatedly sought collaboration with the Hawaiian Humane Society, including offering to provide equine-specific training for their officers on assessing body condition and recognizing neglect. Unfortunately, no partnership has materialized, and cases involving horses have too often gone unaddressed.

We are not asking to replace or undermine any existing organization. Instead, we respectfully request that equine rescues like ours be officially recognized as qualified partners in this program, with the ability to respond and intervene in equine cases. We are prepared to provide documentation of our nonprofit status, facilities, veterinary partnerships, and successful outcomes.

Looking ahead, we also urge the Council to consider legislation that would allow qualified equine rescue organizations limited enforcement or intervention authority in cases of neglect or abuse, similar to the authority extended to the Humane Society for companion animals. This would ensure horses are no longer overlooked in our animal welfare system and that those with specialized expertise can act swiftly in the best interest of equine lives.

Ho‘omaluhia Horse Rescue Hawai‘i was founded because horses in Hawai‘i deserve better. With official recognition and support under RES25-226, we can strengthen the City’s animal welfare system and ensure that no species is left behind.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.