



To: State of Hawai'i – Board of Land and Natural Resources

Date: September 25, 2025

Subject: Agenda Item D-1 – Renewal of Revocable Permits for Livestock Grazing

From: Jacob Tavares – VP Business Strategy & Operations

Aloha Chair and Members of the Board,

Parker Ranch respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of the renewal of its existing Revocable Permits for livestock grazing lands currently under lease from the State of Hawai'i.

As one of the oldest and most respected cattle ranching operations in the United States, Parker Ranch has been continuously managing livestock on Hawai'i Island for over 175 years. Our grazing operations are deeply rooted in a long-standing commitment to land stewardship, sustainability, and community benefit. The parcels under Revocable Permits, are not peripheral to our work — they are strategic, irreplaceable components of our rotational grazing system. These lands are carefully integrated with Parker Ranch fee lands to maintain proper pasture rest, manage forage quality, and support animal health, while simultaneously advancing watershed protection and invasive species control in adjacent state forest reserves.

Over the years, Parker Ranch has treated these State-managed parcels as our own, investing significant labor, equipment, and operational resources to protect and enhance them — all at no cost to the State. Our stewardship has included coordinated wildfire mitigation, security patrols to prevent trespass and vandalism, control of invasive feral ungulates, and public access management for adjacent forest reserves. These collective efforts have created substantial ecological, operational, and community value.

Despite this record of partnership and stewardship, operating under short-term Revocable Permits presents significant and ongoing challenges to the livestock division. Cattle ranching — especially in Hawai'i — is a long-term, capital-intensive enterprise. Infrastructure such as water systems, fencing, corrals, and pasture improvements require substantial up-front investment and multi-year planning horizons to be economically viable. The uncertainty associated with short-term permits discourages investment, disrupts necessary planning, and undermines operational stability.

We are further concerned by recent indications that DLNR staff may recommend exploring the possibility of selling the lease associated with RP 7652 at public auction as a “resources permit.” Such a shift would have profound consequences for Parker Ranch's livestock operations and the broader landscape management strategy we have built over decades. The potential loss of access — or even the perception of uncertainty — around this parcel introduces unacceptable risk to a critical part of our grazing rotation. It would jeopardize the continuity of our operations and threaten the very stewardship outcomes that have benefited the State and community for so many years.

Parker Ranch respectfully requests that the Board renew its Revocable Permits, under the same terms and conditions as in previous years and refrain from pursuing a public auction for RP 7652. Doing so will enable the continuation of sound grazing practices, long-term watershed protection, and a proven public-private stewardship model that benefits both the land and the people of Hawai'i.

Separate Testimony – Rent Adjustment on RP 7659

In addition to the above, Parker Ranch respectfully requests clarification from DLNR staff regarding the proposed 15% rent increase on RP 7659, which is scheduled to be transferred to the Department of Agriculture.

We understand and accept the rationale for the standard 3% annual rent adjustments applied to Revocable Permits. However, the methodology and justification for this substantially higher increase remain unclear. Given the operational and financial planning required for livestock grazing, we request that DLNR provide a more detailed explanation of how this 15% figure was determined, including any underlying valuation changes, policy shifts, or external benchmarks used in the calculation.

Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony and for your continued partnership in advancing sustainable land management in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Jacob D. Tavares
VP - Business Strategy & Operations
Parker Ranch, Inc.