

March 16, 2026

MEMO TO: David Raatz, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Keone J. Hurdle, Legislative Analyst *KJH*

SUBJECT: **WEBINAR ON PET-INCLUSIVE HOUSING AND POLICY**
(PAF 25-010(24))

This report summarizes the Animal Law Section of the Hawai'i State Bar Association's webinar on March 12, 2026, featuring Ross Barker from Michelson Found Animals. The discussion focused on the intersection of animal welfare and rental housing, emphasizing the Pet Inclusive Housing Initiative and practical tools for housing providers to reduce structural barriers for pet owners.

Housing supply and pet ownership misalignment

- About 71 percent of U.S. households own a pet, yet only about 8 percent of rental properties allow pets without breed or size restrictions.
- Although 76 percent of owners and operators consider themselves pet-friendly, 72 percent of residents report that pet-friendly housing is hard to find.
- "Pet-inclusive" housing removes structural barriers like breed bans, weight limits, and non-benefit fees, distinguishing it from merely "pet-friendly" marketing.

Hawai'i's housing landscape for pet owners

- Hawai'i has the lowest percentage of pet-friendly units in the United States, with only about 33 percent of units allowing pets.
- When factoring in breed and weight restrictions, the percentage of accommodating units drops to around 7 percent.
- Housing barriers and pet restrictions are common drivers of pet relinquishment to animal shelters.

Policy, insurance, and risk management

- Research does not support dog breed as a reliable predictor of behavior.
- Instead of breed restrictions, behavior-based screening is recommended as a more effective risk management tool.
- Housing providers often adopt operational policies regarding breeds that are broader than what their insurance language actually requires.
- Many insurance providers do not have breed restrictions in their commercial or landlord policies.

Pending Hawai'i legislation

- House Bill 1593 (2026) proposes linking public-housing financing to pet access, requiring affordable-housing developments financed by the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation to allow common household pets. The bill prohibits restrictions based solely on breed, size, or weight, while still allowing reasonable rules for health, safety, and nuisance issues. Representatives Tyson Miyake and Mahina Poepoe of Maui County are co-introducers of the bill.
- Senate Bill 3011 (2026) aims to allow pets in State public housing and open existing public housing to pet owners by removing breed and size restrictions. Senator Angus McKelvey of Maui is a co-introducer of the bill.

Legislative resources

The Animal Law Section shared the following links for anyone interested in following the related legislation:

- HB1593:
https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=H&billnumber=1593&year=2026
- SB3011:
https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=S&billnumber=3011&year=2026

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Thank you for the opportunity to attend this informative webinar. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact me at ext. 7659. Mahalo.

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