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Office

Marci Clingan, HDOA/Chairperson's Office Jason Azus-Richardson, HDOA/IT

Minutes of the Board of Agriculture January 28, 2025

A video recording of this meeting can be found online by visiting this website: https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/meetings-reports/

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting of the Board of Agriculture was called to order on January 28, 2025, at 9:07 am by Board of Agriculture Chairperson, Sharon Hurd. The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom and in-person from:

> State of Hawaii, Department of Agriculture Plant Quarantine Branch 1849 Auiki Street

Members Present In-Person:

Sharon Hurd, Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

Members Virtually Present: Roll call/alone

Dr. Parwinder Grewal, Dean CTAHR, Ex-Officio Member

Dane Wicker, DBEDT, Ex-Officio Member

Diane Ley, Hawaii Member

Nathaniel Oswald, Maui County Member

Fred Cowell, Kauai Member Randy Cabral, Member-at-Large

En Young, Member-at-Large (left at 9:57 am)

James Gomes, Member-at-Large

Excused: Ryan Kanaka'ole, DLNR, Ex-Officio Member

Deputy Attorney General Present In-Person:

DAG Jennifer Waihee-Polk

Others Present In-Person:

Dean Matsukawa, Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA)/Chairperson's

Scott Nishimoto, HDOA/Pesticides

Greg Takeshima, HDOA/Pesticides

1		Jonathan Ho, HDOA/PQ
2		Christopher Kishimoto, HDOA/PQ
3		Jessica Ann Miura, HDOA/PQ
4		Stephen DeLuz, Ernest DeLuz Ranch
5		Lilia Kapuniai, Ti Leaf Group
6		Charles Stevens, SC Ranch
7		Nicole Galase, Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
8	.	Nu
9	Others	s Virtually Present:1
10		HDOA IT
11		Parwinder Grewal# CTAHR Dean (Carol Oshiro (CTAHR)
12		Kauai Coffee Orchard
13		Andrea Kawabata
14		Klayton Kubo
15		Cathy Goeggel
16		Brandi Ah Yo
17		Katie Propp
18		Hyatt Rep (1374731)
19		Emily Severson
20		Kauai Coffee Orchard
21		Andrea Kawabata
22		melvin kunitake
23		Steve Sarro
24		HDOAPIO
25		Cathy Goeggel
26		Klayton Kubo
27		Chris Kishimoto
28		Brandi Ah Yo
29		J
30		R
31		jerome.k.yasuhara
32		Georgette Freitas
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35	II.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 11/26/24 MEETING
36 37	11.	AFFROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 11/20/24 MEETING
38	Motion	n to Approve: Gomes/Grewal
39	MOUIOI	1 to Approve. Comes/Orewar
10	Vote:	Approved; unanimously
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¹ The identification of the public members is based on their sign-in name but are not verified.

1 2	III.	INTRODUCTIONS		
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	IV.	COMMUNICATIONS FROM DIVISIONS AND ADMINISTRATION		
		A. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION		
		 Request for Acceptance of Annual Lease Rent as Determined by Independent Appraisal for Rent Re-openings for Various Lots Located Statewide; TMK Nos.: (1) 4-1-009:266, (2) 1-1-003:028, (2) 2-7-008:015, (2) 5-2-004:123, (4) 1-9-001:011, (4) 2-8-022:006 		
	Brandi Ah-Yo, Property Manager, presented testimony as submitted.			
13 14	Motion to Approve: Gomes/Cabral			
15 16	Discussion:			
17 18 19	Member Gomes asked how long these leases have been in effect.			
20 21	Ms. Al	Ms. Ah-Yo said she will need to look up this information and provide it to the board.		
22	Memb	er Gomes asked if the appraised value is per acre or the total?		
23 24	Ms. Ah-Yo said it's the annual lease.			
25 26 27	Member Gomes said there is a deposition diversified agriculture for just 1.8 acres. He asked how we'd calculate that.			
28 29 30	Ms. Ah-Yo said she is not the appraiser, but she can check with Ted to get that information.			
31 32 33 34	Member Ley asked if there are any insights into whether the decreasing rents for our producers are being driven by market prices in the area or specific guidance that has been given to the appraiser.			
35 36	Ms. Al	Ms. Ah-Yo said no, it's just by the market.		
37 38 39	Vote: Approved; Unanimously			
40 41 42		 Request Approval for Conversion of Revocable Permit No. S-7732 to a New General Lease for G&C Freitas Ranch, Inc. (FKA: George Freitas 		

1 Dairy, Inc.); TMK: (3) 5-5-007:011, Portion of Government Lands of 2 Hualua, North Kohala, Island of Hawai'i 3 4 Brandi Ah-Yo, Property Manager, presented testimony as submitted. 5 6 Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley 7 8 Discussion: 9 Member Cabral asked if this conversion is open to 65 years lease or is it limited to 35? 10 11 Ms. Ah-Yo said it's up to the board and lessee if they want a longer lease term from the 12 start. 13 Member Cabral asked if the lessees are informed that they could get a longer lease? 14 15 16 Ms. Ah-Yo said yes, that's an option but in this case, she said she did not have that conversation with the lessee. 17 18 19 Member Gomes asked what improvements need to be completed on this parcel of 20 property? 21 22 Ms. Ah-Yo said they want to do more cross-fencing. She added that there are some 23 clearing of the land of invasive trees and some irrigation that they may want to bring to 24 the property as well. 25 26 Member Gomes asked if they've been asking for a while to convert this to month to 27 month? 28 29 Ms. Ah-Yo said it's been a process to get the documentation in. She said they've been 30 working with them within the last couple of years. 31 32 Member Gomes said he'd like to know if these people would want to know if they would want a 65-year lease instead of 35-years. 33 34 35 Georgette Freitas from GNC Freitas Ranch was called forward. She said yes, she would 36 like a 65-year lease. She said she is familiar with the terrain and the different seasons. She added that they've been trying to obtain a long-term lease for this property for a few 37 years now. 38 39 Ms. Ah-Yo confirmed that Georgette is a lessee. 40 41

Member Young said he would like lessees to have access to the fullest extent of the law. He said it would be good for them to look at a higher level on the kind of landscape of what revocable permits are out there and what is still pending.

Member Gomes retracted his motion.

Motion to approve a 65-year lease instead of a 35-year lease: Cabral/Gomes

Vote: Approved; Unanimously

 3. Request for Approval for the Transfer of Public Lands from the Department of Land and Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture, Pursuant to Act 90, SLH 2003, Codified as Chapter 166E, Hawaii Revised Statutes; TMK Nos.: (3) 4-3-010:008, (3) 4-3-010:002, (3) 4-2-008:002, and (3) 4-1-006:007 Island of Hawaii

Brandi Ah-Yo, Property Manager, presented testimony as submitted.

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Ley

Discussion:

Clayton Kubo said he wants to be sure that agricultural lands throughout the State of Hawaii do not get used for rubbish dumps or other unintended purposes.

Nicole Galase, Managing Director for the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, said she is in strong support of this agenda item. She said since 2003, they've been waiting to get these ag lands transferred from DLNR so the ag lands are kept in ag production. These leases are in ag production, and they've all made improvements to the land and have had multiple generations on the land as well. She added that they need to be under DOA to be sure they can continue to steward the land in these ways.

Steven DeLuz, owner of Ernest DeLuz Ranch, said they are a 4-generation family ranch. He said in 2005, they lost 21,000 acres to conservation and he has only 5,000 acres left from DLNR. He said he cannot afford to lose any more land. He appreciates this request going through.

Member Cabral asked if these 4 leases were already approved for transfer by DLNR.

Ms. Ah-Yo said no, they needed to do the due diligence first. The next step would be DLNR making the determination as to what is going to come over. There have been some negotiations back and forth and DLNR notified HDOA that they were willing to transfer parts of these 4 leases.

 Chairperson said that they were on the portion of the list for "do not transfer", but through the advocacy of the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, they were reconsidered, and these 4 leases are now on the table for transfer.

Member Young said there are other agricultural pertinent uses for agricultural land. He asked if Brandi could line some of those out if there are other existing uses besides just straight agriculture so that the public can know what is received. He wants to be sure there are no surprises for the public when land comes over.

Ms. Ah-Yo said she does not have a timeline for when this will be back from DLNR. She said she will notify them today that the board has passed these 4.

Vote: Approved; Unanimously

B. PLANT INDUSTRY DIVISION

Pesticides Branch

 Request for: (1) Preliminary approval of the proposed amendments to Chapter 4-66, Hawaii Administrative Rules necessary to comply with State Certification Plan updates with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and with Act 220 (2023); and (2) Authorization for the Chairperson to schedule public hearings and appoint one or more hearings officers in connection with the proposed amendments to Chapter 4-66.

Greg Takeshima, Pesticides Program Manager, presented testimony as submitted.

Motion to Approve: Gomes/Young

Discussion:

Clayton Kubo said there were too many repeat offenders, and the list was 60-70 pages with each page containing about 12 repeat offenders. He said he and his family have been impacted by pesticides drift, fumes and vapors for many years.

Member Gomes asked if DOA would consider having these public hearings in the late afternoons and early evenings so there are more participants. He also asked if there are enough personnel for this enforcement and if we are still recruiting.

Mr. Takeshima said yes, we can take that into consideration. For the staffing capacity, he said they do have one staff member for the case prep. He added that they are

currently in internal recruitment for the second position and that capacity will be coming on board hopefully within the next month or two.

Member Cabral asked if the proposed rule state rules exceed the requirement of CFR or is it the same?

 AG Waihee-Polk said we met with EPA and they had requested this language changes into our rules to match the CFR. EPA always wanted HDOA to provide a copy of the CFR provisions with the rules so that people could see them, but this would be too many pages longer than the actual rules. Therefore, links to the CFR were added instead. The EPA felt that HDOA's rules were not comporting appropriately with the CFR, and they weren't going to approve HDOA's certification plan without those changes.

Member Cabral asked for clarification on the labeling requirements specifically where it says that the applicator must be physically present at the site of application.

Mr. Takeshima said if the label requires it, the certified applicator does need to be on site. He said there are labels that allow for non-certified applicators to be immediately available and that is where they allow certified applicators to not physically be there but be in contact through phone to provide immediate direction.

Member Ley asked when penalties are assessed, who makes the recommendation and approval?

Mr. Takeshima said the case development staff are the ones who make the initial recommendation for civil penalties. It goes through multiple levels to ensure that it is appropriate.

Member Ley said with respect to the Advisory Committee's review of the proposed rules in October, there were a significant number of new board members. What were the concerns about the increase in penalties that might impact the smaller producers?

Mr. Takeshima said the discussion and no-votes were all related to the increase in fines.

 Scott Nishimoto, Program Compliance Officer, said he wants to add that the Attorney General reviews the penalties prior to issuance. He also added that these increases in penalty amounts are the maximum penalty amount. These are maximum penalty amounts that are capped by violation for the branch. He added that the initial violation triggers a warning notice that carries no civil penalty. Usually, an initial violation will not automatically trigger as a penalty. They will need a second violation for the notice of violation to receive a civil penalty.

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Chairperson Hurd asked when the penalties will be in effect.

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8 9 Mr. Takeshima said that we'll need to go through the hearing process and, once approved, we'll go through each county to ensure that we have the appropriate comments from the public. Amendments will be made based on the comments from the hearings. We'll also go through the Small Business Review Board. Once the boards make the secondary approval, it'll go to the Governor's office and Lieutenant Governor's office. He said this should take us through possibly the 3rd or 4th guarter of this calendar vear.

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Chairperson Hurd said the rule changes will not occur at this meeting.

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Vote: Approved; Unanimously

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Plant Quarantine Branch

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1. Request to: (1) Allow the Importation of Four (4) African Black-Footed Penguins, Spheniscus demersus, an Animal on the List of Restricted Animals (Part B), by Permit, for Exhibition, by Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa; and (2) Update Permit Conditions for the Importation and Possession of Four (4) African Black-Footed Penguins, Spheniscus demersus, an Animal on the List of Restricted Animals (Part B), for Exhibition, by Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa.

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Jessica Ann Miura, Acting Land Vertebrate Specialist, presented testimony as submitted.

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Motion to Approve: Gomes/Grewal

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Discussion:

Povi Carissa Abney, Wildlife Supervisor at the Hyatt Regency Maui, said we focus on African penguins because we've been given a unique opportunity to make a difference in the world. 40 years ago, when the decision was made to house penguins. They were not an endangered species, and were chosen because they could thrive in our similar tropical climate, but now that they are in our care. We have a responsibility to the colony living in Maui, and their declining wild counterparts. Only 1% of the original African penguin population remains, and at this rate they could be functionally extinct by 2035. Our team has been certified and maintains all necessary permits to keep and breed. African penguins, going through these certifications requires a rigorous screening

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- 42 process that has taken us over 2 years to achieve. These management plans will
- ensure responsible breeding practices for generations to come. Because the population 43

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of penguins in our care has been geographically isolated for over 40 years, they are

- 2 genetically unique and considered extremely valuable. In 1950, the Hawaiian Nene was
- 3 all but gone when a biologist named Peter Scott stepped in and saved them from
- 4 extinction by bringing them in England. Nobody looks back criticizing this scientist for
- 5 helping birds outside of England, because in his words, "extinction is forever".
- We have a responsibility to prevent species extinction if it is in our power to do so.
- 7 The plight of the endangered African penguin mirrors the struggles of our own native
- 8 birds. Extinction is a worldwide issue, and as keepers of an endangered species, we
- 9 have a responsibility to help educate the public by sharing our penguin story. We give a
- voice to life-threatening issues that endangered birds are facing all around the world.
- We strongly believe in introducing our keiki to animals from around the world. We're
- inspiring them to dream big and think globally. Birds are an indicator species. The same
- loss of resources and habitat that affects them comes back to affect us.
- 14 Animal habitats are windows to ecosystems around the world. There are no zoos in
- 15 Maui which means many children on the island do not have an opportunity to see
- animals that live outside of Hawaii. We need to begin by recognizing the value of animal
- 17 care facilities and the role they play in saving species.

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Katie Propp, Penguins International, spoke on behalf of their positive experiences with

20 Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa and their African Penguin Program. African

21 penguins were uplisted this past October to a critically endangered species, and it is

imperative now more than ever to share about their plight with the public through

23 education programs and with conservation dollars. We've worked directly with Hyatt

- 24 Regency Maui Resort and Spa to highlight their African penguins through a
- conservation social media competition that went viral, reaching over 600,000 people
- 26 across the world, including a feature on BBC showcasing these endangered species
- 27 thriving in Hawaii. Through our partnership with Hyatt Regency Maui, we were able to
- 27 annual Tribugh out partitioning with Tryon (1997) with the delication of
- co-teach virtual education programming to school districts in the U.S.A. that are unable
- 29 to connect with penguins at zoos and aquariums, as well as share their African penguin
- paintings with the community to bid on during silent auctions with funds going to support
- our South African partners at Sam Cobb and Dyer Island Conservation Trust.

32 If Hyatt Regency Maui is unable to continue their African penguin programming, it would

be a loss of funding to African penguin conservation programs which desperately need

our support as the species continues to dwindle in the wild.

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Cathy Goeggel, President of Animal Rights Hawaii said they oppose this, and that the hotel is a hotel and not a zoo. She said we should be showing animals that are endangered here in Hawaii and not at a hotel or spa which is not an educational facility. She said there must be other places in the world where these animals can be bred and improve their chances of survival in the wild.

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Diane Pure, resident of Maui, said she has been a volunteer with the Lahaina school system. The students are brought to the Hyatt so they can learn about penguins as well

as other animals. The penguins are well cared for and are an education system for the community of West Maui. They are not just entertainment for the people who visit the Hyatt. They are crucially important to the children and to the families of West Maui, especially since this fire. That's what kept a lot of these kids going who were staying at the Hyatt during that time, and they also took in all their animals. They're very animal, oriented.

Member Gomes said he would like to support this with reservations. He asked if it'd be better to feature native species at the hotels. He said according to Dr. Allison, due to climate change and the reduced access to their food, how would it be in the long run for these penguins? He asked why there was no response from the other two doctors?

Ms. Miura said during that time, Dr. Wright was out of state. She said she reached out and left voice messages on their phones but didn't receive a response until it was a little too late. Dr. Reid was out of state during that time as well.

Member Grewal said he wants to know where these 4 penguins are coming from and where they are located.

Ms. Miura said they are interested in receiving the penguins from Metro Richmond Zoo located in Virginia.

Member Gomes asked if there is anywhere else in the states that has these African Penguins and are thriving and making a comeback.

Ms. Miura said she can only answer for Hawaii and that the Honolulu Zoo also has Black-Footed penguins. They are also part of the conservation.

Povi Carissa Abney, Wildlife Supervisor at the Hyatt Regency Maui, said they source the food for the penguins, which is capelin from the Atlantic Coast and is a sustainable stock. She said they work with several different native species organizations including Maui Seabirds and Maui Forest Birds for education. She said they don't want to house the penguins for display but to present them as a form of education. Ms. Abney said Metro Richmond Zoo is one of the most successful African penguin programs in the world. The curator of the zoo came to Maui and gave approval of their program. She said they respect all the rules in place and wants to be sure that this is a very safe procedure.

Member Grewal asked what the economic benefit to the hotel is.

Ms. Abney said they do not charge for any of their wildlife tours and penguin presentations.

 Vote: Approved – 8; Reservations (Ley/Gomes)

2. Request for Review of the Petition From Andrea Kawabata, University of Hawai'i (UH) College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), to Initiate Administrative Rule Making and Rule Amendment to Chapter 4-72, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), to Designate the Islands of Kaua'i, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i as Coffee Berry Borer (CBB), *Hypothenemus hampei*, infested areas.

Jonathan Ho, Plant Quarantine Branch Manager, presented testimony as submitted.

Motion to Approve: Cowell/Gomes

 Discussion:

Bronson Yadao testified on behalf of Kauai Coffee Company. He said they first discovered CBB in the northernmost portion of their farm. It then spread to all of their farm in a span of 18 months. He said some of their fields have reached as much as 94% of CBB. Expanding the states designation of infested to Kauai, Lanai, and Molokai would expedite the exchange of much needed resources, materials and collaboration to combat both CBB and CLR in the state.

Member Cowell said the degree to which CBB is affecting the islands that are currently covered by this rule is not yet determined. We are looking for the fastest way forward to reduce the amount of time it takes to get materials between islands. Whatever's fastest is what we need to be working toward.

Andrea Kawabata said she spoke with growers on different islands and discussed how extensive CBB was on their island. She said she wanted to take that step forward for the industry and she does not want to change the rules and repeal it because it is for the industry to do. By including Kauai, Molokai, and Lanai as CBB infested, it would help HARC, USDA and anyone else who is trying to distribute their plants statewide without this one-year quarantine.

 Mr. Ho said the way the rules are written, the section has a very specific provision that you need to consult with people prior to the action being taken which has not yet happened. Once that happens, we can make another submittal and bring it back to the board and they can then make the designation. That could be a month or two and it wouldn't be years. To effectuate what Ms. Kawabata has provided, that would be the regular rulemaking. There is a way for the board to board order to expand the quarantine designation and that is essentially an administrative function and would not need to go through rulemaking.

 Mr. Ho said the recommendation of the branch is to deny the request and direct the branch to work with the petitioner to use the quarantine expansion process that's in 4-72 and come back before the board so that the Board can decide on the rest of the islands being infested

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Member Cowell withdrew his motion.

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Motion to deny Ms. Kawabata's petition and to direct the branch to take action – Cowell/Gomes

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Vote: Approved; Unanimously

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V. OLD BUSINESS

None

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VI. NEW BUSINESS

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1. NON-ACTION ITEM: Invasive Species Action Plan Updates

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Jonathan Ho, Plant Quarantine Branch Manager, presented new business item.

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Discussion:

Mr. Ho said we have a systems approach pest management contract for \$800,000 to UH. For Brown Tree Snake, we are getting 150 traps for statewide distribution. We're looking for equipment to expend the \$240,000. We have a pest diagnostic Request for Proposals (RFP) for \$240,000 that closes at the end of the month. There is a \$1.1 million dollar contract for HTM Contractors for the cutting and removal of dead trees on public land. There was an RFP issued in November 2024 for green waste management and that will need to be reissued due to the inability to come up with an agreement with the bidder. The compost reimbursement program for \$400,000 was opened in October 2024 and will be ongoing until May of 2025. \$1.1 million was awarded to Rentokil for little fire ant (LFA) treatments of residential sites and the contract is being finalized. There was \$74,355 for coqui frog (coqui) and we have spent \$8,000 on citric acid. We're going to use the rest of the funds for purchasing citric acid for treatments, particularly on Oahu and Kauai. The biosecurity facility planning was awarded for approximately \$400,000 for a design development planning document for a modular containment facility. We are working on finalizing the contract. There was \$300,000 for RRP and a \$150,000 went to Kauai County. The City and County of Honolulu declined their \$150,000 so we're working on a supplemental contract toward the additional \$150,000 to Kauai County. There was about \$360,000 for TLS for UH and there is another RFP

for about \$240,000 for management on Hawaii Island that is going to be closing at the

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1 end of the month. The department maintains its coqui, LFA and coconut rhinoceros 2 beetle responses. Senate Bill (SB) 252 provides the department administrative search 3 or administrative inspection authority for 4 things people, passengers, cargo, including now inner-island and creates civil penalties 5 to manage some of the administrative search issues. SB251 creates a placard program which is similar to the DOH program. House Bill 427 also changes the name of this 6 7 body to the Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity if the bill passes. 8 9 10 Motion to adjourn: Gomes/Cowell 11 12 The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 am 13 14 Respectfully submitted, 15 16 17 18 Marci Clingan