

# **urgent**

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f a c s i m i l e

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*Subject:* For Inclusion in C.F. 10-0982: Increasing Dog and Cat limits

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This is the second document I would like to have inserted in Council File 10-0982, increasing the cat/dog limit.

Earlier this morning I sent a rebuttal of Phyllis Daugherty's protest of the increase.

In this document I request consideration of increasing the cat limit to 10 based on the experience of other S. California municipalities. ☺

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AUGUST 10, 2010

Councilmember Paul Koretz  
Councilmember Bill Rosendahl

RE: COUNCIL FILE 10-0982: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CATS/DOGS OWNED

### **Request to consider increasing the owned cat limit to 10**

#### **SUMMARY:**

Your proposed legislation would increase the three dog and cat limit to five each. I know there has been limited opposition to increasing the dog limit, and I have addressed that opposition in a separate letter.

However, there is considerable evidence cited below that suggests that increasing the cat limit far beyond the proposed five would have no negative impact on residential areas, nor increase hoarding as some have alleged. I draw from the professional experience of animal services/control agencies in three Southern California municipalities/county that suggests that increasing the cat limit actually decreases manpower costs and results in fewer impounds, with no increase in hoarding busts.

Santa Monica and San Diego City have no cat limit. For Santa Monica, that applies to indoor cats, for San Diego City, that applies to both indoor/outdoor cats, and for San Diego County, they allow 6 dogs and unlimited indoor cats.

A brief Conclusion section can be found at the end of page 4.

#### **Pet Limit Laws in Select California Communities—Experience**

**SAN DIEGO CITY AND COUNTY: THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH NO CAT LIMIT**

San Diego Has No Cat Limit Law; Their Live Save Rate Is Far Higher Than Los Angeles

The City of San Diego does not have a cat limit. The limit on dogs is 6.

The Live Save rate for San Diego County Animal Services that covers both the City and the County is 82% for dogs and 54% for cats. Their live save rate for other animals, which would include rabbits, turtles, ferrets, etc., is an amazing 83%, and the live save rate for all animals, dogs, cats and other animals is 70%.

All of these stats are better than either LA City or County Animal Services.

Therefore, having no cat limit law, and a 6 dog limit certainly has not affected their save rate statistics negatively.

This County Agency impounds about 26,000 animals annually, which is about 50% of LA City's usual impound rate.

In addition, San Diego Humane, which does have investigation and seizure powers, as well as takes owner turn-ins, handles about 3,500 animals a year and has a live save rate of 86%. They work in association with the County agency.

#### STATISTICS:

<http://www.sddac.com/docs/SDAWC.pdf>

[http://www.sdhumane.org/site/DocServer/Final\\_Proof\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf?docID=1981](http://www.sdhumane.org/site/DocServer/Final_Proof_Annual_Report.pdf?docID=1981)

In addition, eight City, County and private SPCA organizations cooperate to save animals in San Diego. Together they have an impound rate of 47,000, slightly less than LAAS, but with a live save rate for dogs of 85%, 64% for cats, 89% for other animals and 76% for all animals.

These are fantastic statistics compared to Los Angles City or County.

[http://www.sdhumane.org/site/DocServer/SDAWC\\_Asilomar\\_Stats\\_10-2-07.2.pdf?docID=1401](http://www.sdhumane.org/site/DocServer/SDAWC_Asilomar_Stats_10-2-07.2.pdf?docID=1401)

Actually, it was hard to talk to anyone at the SD County shelter because no one seemed to be answering their phones. I finally talked to someone on their emergency reporting line, and then someone in the administrator's office. Both told me there was no cat limit. In addition, I then searched the stats of the various shelters and the SD Municipal code for info on pet limits. The city website confirmed no regulation of cat numbers.

From the City of San Diego website:

The quantity and type of animals kept on residential property are restricted in the San Diego city limits. **Cats are not regulated.** The total number of fowl and rabbits maintained on a residential property is restricted to 25, except up to 100 pigeons provided that the animals are kept at least 50 feet from any residence. Having more than six dogs at a residence is considered a kennel, and is not permitted in residential zones.

<http://www.sandiego.gov/nccd/noise/animal.shtml>

#### San Diego County Animal Service Officer Says Not Having Cat Limit Law Is a Blessing

I talked to Lt. Kalanai Hudson this morning of San Diego County Animal Services.

In her opinion, it was a blessing not to have to enforce a cat limit law. She said she has been to houses where there were 65 indoor cats and you could see no dirt and smell no smell. She said with no limit, the County is not in a position of being forced to settle neighbor disputes where fighting neighbors use animal services as a club.

She stated when there are complaints of an animal nuisance, like too many cats, they inspect, and if necessary intervene based on their animal sanitation codes ([http://sddac.com/docs/ord\\_chap6\\_of\\_div2\\_of\\_title6.pdf](http://sddac.com/docs/ord_chap6_of_div2_of_title6.pdf)). In matters of very poor maintenance, they will impound and treated. She said they also will involve volunteer and non-profits who will come out and help clean or supply food. She said they handle each case on an individual basis, and the term "hoarder" is never used, because its conditions, not the number of animals that is important. She said raids with mass impounds are almost unheard of as they work with people to abate problems.

She points out they have not had a substantial increase in impounds on a year to date basis as has Los Angeles.

### **Santa Monica**

#### **Santa Monica Allows Backyard Cat and Dog Kennels**

I talked to the acting head of Santa Monica's animal shelter, StanHernacki last September about their experience regarding allowing unlimited cat ownership. Stan has been with the shelter for over 20 years.

Stan said he was asked by their Council 15-20 years ago to do a study of the number of busts they did regarding people with too many cats. The study revealed they did 2 or 3 in a ten year period of time, despite having no limit on the number of cats owned.

**He said during the past five years there were no such cases. Any impounds were for single or animals.**

He stated several people have built cat or dog kennels in their back yards that cause no neighbor complaints whatsoever.

He stated sometimes SMAC responds to neighbor complaints of excessive smell or nuisance conditions, and they do investigate. He said, for example if they found 30 cats living in deplorable conditions due to an owners inability to maintain the cats, they might give an order to reduce the total number to 15 or face further action.

If conditions persist, they could and would seize under Californian Penal Code 597, but they have not.

He says it is not a matter of how many animals but the conditions the animals live in.

#### CONCLUSION:

This leads to the strongly supported conclusion that increasing the dog limit to five, and the cat limit to ten would not lead to increased hoarding, would decrease manpower demands on animal services due to neighbor and ex spousal complaints with reduced follow up. There would be no need to issue Notice to Comply for someone having 4 dogs or 7 cats, with reduced follow up visits. It would mean that many people who now own 4-10 cats, and 4-5 dogs illegally, would be brought into compliance<sup>3</sup> with an expanded kennel limit immediately.

I would also note that Animal Services wants to increase their foster program, which would provide homes for neonatal and temporarily adult cats, but such program expansion is inhibited by having the present low legal limit for cats and dogs. Animal Services under the current law would be giving animals to residents they know have more than 3 cats or dogs, putting them in an awkward legal position.

Council can consider whether the limit of 10 cats be with respect to both indoor and outdoor cats, or indoor only as in Santa Monica. Also, if deemed necessary, one can require inspection by Animal Services for any household with more than 5 cats. Another consideration would be to allow 10 cats with a kennel fee of \$50. There are many ways to go.