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August 17, 2010

Councilman Bill Rosendahl
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring St., Room 415
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: CF No. 10-0982 – Increasing Animal Limits in Residential Zones

Dear Councilman Rosendahl:

I am a longtime property owner in Del Rey, and I oppose efforts to increase the per-residence pet limit, even if the increase is just for cats. The pet limit is closely tied to the more general issue of feral, abandoned and free-roaming animals in the city. Rather than relaxing the restrictions on the number of domestic pets owned by residents, additional tools should be given to the Department of Animal Services to deal with problem situations. In particular, there should be a ban on cats (not just dogs) roaming freely.

There is a leash law for dogs. Cats should be treated the same and be confined to their owner's property. I don't have pets, and indeed was not pleased to start my vegetable garden this year and find that the area had been used as a latrine by my former neighbor's cats. I also have had to take three birds to Wildlife Rescue after they were caught by a friend's outdoor cat. Unfortunately, the birds probably died because cat saliva is full of bacteria that are poisonous to birds.

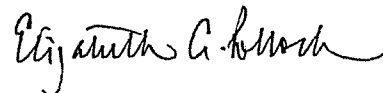
I tried the trap-neuter-return approach for feral cats on my property, and it did not work. In 2004, we had a problem on my street. It started with one batch of kittens born under my house. I borrowed a trap from a neighbor to catch them. I was willing to go to the time and expense to get the mother spayed. She still roams our street (and gives me a wide berth). I found homes for the kittens through a cat adoption group in Redondo Beach. About a month later, I caught another batch of kittens in my yard. Again, I spayed the mother and took the kittens to a cat adoption group in Culver City. That same month, there was a third batch of kittens born in a neighbor's garage, and I wound up spaying that mother, too. The mother rescued one of her kittens from my kitchen and dragged it to the freeway embankment across the street. Both disappeared, but I took the remaining kittens to a cat adoption group.

Despite my efforts, within six months, there were 19 black feral cats on our street, only one of which had been spayed, and none of which had been immunized. They were all gathering where another neighbor was putting out food for them and were leaving their waste in any yard that did not have a dog to chase them off. I went out of town for three weeks, and while I was gone, a neighbor trapped the 19 cats, found homes for the kittens and took the adults to the West Los Angeles Animal Shelter. Only when the cats were removed permanently did the street return to its prior state of calm.

Fortunately, to my knowledge no diseases were transmitted by the 19 feral cats, but I was getting concerned about that risk. Several of my relatives study diseases that are transmitted from infected animals to humans by mosquito, tick and flea bites, e.g. murine typhus, which has been reported in Orange County. There are also diseases transmitted through contact with cat feces, e.g. Toxoplasmosis.

Raising the legal limit on pets will not do anything to solve the problem of animal control in Los Angeles and in fact will weaken one of the few tools the City has to deal with problem situations. Instead, pet owners must be required to keep their animals under control, and the city should be responsible for catching abandoned and feral animals and taking them to the shelter, where they can be properly immunized and adopted out to a proper home, or euthanized.

Very truly yours,



Elizabeth A. Pollock

cc: Councilman Paul Koretz
Acting General Manager, Department of Animal Services
John White, Legislative Assistant, Public Safety Committee