

ANIMAL ISSUES MOVEMENT

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November 17, 2013

Councilman Paul Koretz, Chair	Los Angeles City Council	City Attorney Michael Feuer
Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee	City of Los Angeles	City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street	200 N. Spring Street	200 N. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012	Los Angeles, CA 90012	Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Council members and City Attorney:

RE: CF 13-1513 –INCREASE IN INDOOR (ONLY) CATS (prior CF 10-0982)

If the number of indoor (only) cats is increased in the City of Los Angeles to five (5), the following requirements MUST be part of any policy/ordinance allowing this; otherwise, this is merely a method to create more feral cats.

Although the proposed motion mentions the spay/neuter ordinance requiring sterilization of cats, as we know, this is totally unenforceable UNLESS the owner is required to prove sterilization of all cats in order to maintain the extra two (2). There must also be restrictions on breeders having more than three adult (3) cats. This can most easily be done by requiring certificates of sterilization for ALL cats, when a person is requesting five (5).

The idea that this will only affect “responsible” cat owners is ludicrous. A visit to any low-income area (or any field experience with hoarding) will show that often every stray cat is added to households and hoarding situations are just as prevalent as in more affluent areas.

The policy/ordinance suggested for the City of Los Angeles should be consistent with that of the County of Los Angeles, as follows:

(Los Angeles County Code Sec. 10.20.038) –Limits – Up to three (3) licensed and altered dogs may be kept at any residence. Up to five (5) licensed, altered, and indoor cats may be kept at any residence. Keeping animals in excess of these amounts requires an animal facility license.

Spay/Neuter: Any increase in cats MUST include providing proof that ALL cats in the household are sterilized.

Microchipping: ALL cats in homes where five are allowed must be microchipped. Cats regularly escape from even responsible homes; the more cats in the household, the greater the possibility that one will get outside. The obligation of those more likely to have a cat get outside MUST be offset by required microchipping in order for that cat not to become a stray.

Penalties: Any ordinance/policy change that increases the number of cats MUST include strict penalties for violation—either allowing them outside, failing to spay/neuter; or inhumane conditions must include immediate monetary and/or criminal penalties that are enforced—not just warnings. These penalties must also include immediate rescinding of the privilege of owning animals beyond the three allowed by law or loss of privilege to own animals in the event of conviction for animal cruelty/neglect.

Cat Licensing: The LAMC for the City of Los Angeles already allows licensing of cats and this would be the perfect time to begin this process. Besides providing accountability for the ownership of cats (rather than leaving them "disposable",) licensing can also generate at least a small amount of cost recovery for the tremendous expenditure from taxpayer money for the care of stray/unwanted cats in animal shelters.

If the City is serious about providing more homes for cats and not just emptying the shelters in order to appear "no kill," then strict requirements will be imposed and enforced.

Anything less is disingenuous and self-serving by the General Manager of the Department of Animal Services and irresponsible by the City Council, because the communities of this city will merely become more inundated with feral/stray cats and the resultant hazards/health dangers and costs that affect City residents.

At the Animal Services Commission meeting of November 12, Director of Field Operations Mark Salazar stated that often there is not even one animal control officer in the field in any given area of the City because of inadequate staffing and absences. Yet, the Council continues to pass more laws and add more enforcement responsibilities. In view of the fact that serious inhumane and injured animal situations are obviously not receiving attention, new ordinances must not be passed unless the Council is convinced that the workload of this department will be diminished--not increased.

Sincerely,

Phyllis M. Daugherty

Phyllis M. Daugherty, Director