

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT relative to amending the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to increase the number of cats that a City resident may own.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. APPROVE changing the cat limit for indoor cats from three to five cats as detailed in the August 25, 2015 Department of Animal Services (DAS) report, attached to the Council file.
2. REQUEST the City Attorney to prepare and present an Ordinance that would amend the relevant LAMC sections to increase the per household cat limit in the City of Los Angeles as detailed in the August 25, 2015 DAS report, attached to the Council file; and to include any required California Environmental Quality Act analysis to be performed as part of said Ordinance.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The DAS reports that there is no fiscal impact.

Community Impact Statement: Yes

For:

Glassell Park Neighborhood Council

Summary:

On November 19, 2013, your Committee considered a Motion (Koretz - O'Farrell) relative to amending the LAMC to increase the number of cats that a City resident may own. According to the Motion, the City has undertaken many efforts to reduce the rate of stray cats and increase the number of cat adoptions from its shelters. In February, 2008, the City adopted a Spay and Neuter ordinance that requires all cats in the City to be spayed or neutered after the age of four months. In addition, the City Council assists animal rescue organizations to facilitate pet adoptions through its "Adopt a Pet" programs. The latest effort was a city ordinance enacted in 2013 to prohibit animal stores in the City from selling cats that are not provided to them through the City's shelters, or other rescue organizations.

There is, however, one barrier that prevents cat adoptions: the City's limit on the number of cats a person may own. Currently, LAMC Section 53.00 et seq. prohibits a resident from owning and registering more than three cats at any one time. For a City resident to have more than three cats, the resident must qualify as a kennel and have a kennel permit. Clearly, this limitation is preventing stray cats and those cats in shelters from finding homes and potentially putting them at risk of euthanization.

One way to beneficially lower the number of cats being euthanized in our City's shelters is to increase the number of cats that are adopted out of the shelters. The people most likely to adopt additional cats are those who already have cats in their homes. This is why it is so important for the City to raise the number of cats a resident may own from three to five. Therefore, appropriate steps must be taken to raise the number of cats that a City resident may own from three to five. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to continue this matter pending the DAS submitted a report in response.

Subsequently, on January 20, 2015, the Committee considered a January 14, 2015 DAS report in response to the above Motion. According to the DAS, the City restricts each household to three owned cats. All owned cats allowed to roam at large are required to be altered. The DAS is recommending that owned cats be kept indoors for their own safety. The City and County of San Diego have no limit on the number of cats allowed in a residence or a very high limit (both the City and County limit dogs to six.). San Diego animal control officers believe that pet limits should be a function of living conditions and not an arbitrary, static limit. The City of Santa Monica does not limit the number of indoor cats. That city has not had a hoarder bust in the last five years and only two or three in 15 years. Based on evidence supplied by San Diego and Santa Monica, the DAS believes that increasing the cat limit would not lead to increased hoarding and would allow the City to place more cats in temporary foster care to save cats' lives due to space constraints in shelters or rescues. Today, as in the past, the highest shelter deaths compared to intake are for cats.

The DAS also detailed its proposal regulations for a "private clogder", modeled off of those used in Laguna Beach, which would enable individuals to keep more than three cats along with proposed fees. Finally, representatives from the DAS answered questions from the Committee members. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to continue this matter pending the DAS reporting back in regard to the impact of higher cat limits.

On February 17, 2015 and April 21, 2015, the Committee further considered February 12, 2015 and April 16, 2015 DAS reports, respectively. The DAS provided further information to the Committee in regard to the potential impacts of increasing the limit of indoor cats that a City resident may have. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to continue the matter in each instance.

Subsequently, on September 2, 2015, the Committee considered an August 25, 2015 DAS report. According to the DAS, it is recommending that the companion cat limits be increased to five indoor altered cats. If a person owns one to three cats, the cats may be indoor, indoor/outdoor, or outdoor. The City has a rigorous spay/neuter ordinance with enforcement increasing under the Administrative Citation program and as such, all cats must be altered pursuant to LAMC Section 35.15.2(b) unless they legitimately qualify for an exemption. If the owned cats exceed three, all owned cats shall be maintained solely indoors and they must be altered.

After further consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the DAS's recommendations as contained in the August 25, 2015 DAS report and detailed in the above recommendations. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.



Respectfully Submitted,

PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

MEMBER

VOTE

KORETZ: YES
RYU: YES
HARRIS - DAWSON: YES

ARL
9/2/15

-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-