

ANIMAL ISSUES MOVEMENT

420 N. Bonnie Brae Street
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 413-ADOPT
animalissu@aol.com

June 12, 2016

Councilman Paul Koretz
All Members, Personnel & Animal
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles CA 90012

Council President Herb Wesson
All Members, City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles CA 90012

Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles CA 90012

Honorable Officials:

SUBJECT: Council File #16-0585 - California Department of Fish and Game / Coyote Sightings

The subject file is regarding a May 24, 2016, motion (Buscaino-Koretz) resulting from the increase in coyotes in the Harbor/San Pedro areas REPORTED BY RESIDENTS/CONSTITUENTS because they are posing a danger to residents and pets (not coyote sightings by the California Department of Fish and Game).

Let's hope this manipulation of wording for the Council File title does not already indicate the intention of the City of Los Angeles to abdicate responsibility for public safety of its residents and taxpayers of State law permitting only CA Department of Fish and Game to dispatch coyotes upon attack or threat of bodily harm to humans.

The main deterrent to attracting coyotes to an urban area or location is to assure no food (including pet food) or water is available. This is confirmed by ALL coyote-management experts and by the documents in this file submitted in regard to Calabasas City Coyote Management Plan.

The attached June 7 article on City Watch – Los Angeles, “*Doublethink Leaves L.A. Torn Between Coyotes and Feral Cats,*” illustrates the ludicrous funding of over \$800,000 in the 2016-17 Los Angeles City Budget to allow TNR (trap-neuter-release) free-roaming feral cats to be fed unimpeded ALL OVER LOS ANGELES in outdoor areas and on public land adjacent to private property.

This proposed “Cat Program” pushed for many years by LA Animal Services GM Brenda Barnette and Councilman Paul Koretz will also prohibit any owners of private property to trap feral cats and take them to city shelters.

Thus, any determination on this dangerous issue must also include compliance with the following LAMC Section which prohibits the feeding of non-domesticated mammalian predators. This category should include feral cats, which are non-domesticated (wild) mammals, predators and not indigenous (not a native species, but one that was exported originally from Africa), which is why the damage they impose on the environment (disease, tons of feces washed into waterways, decimation of birds and small wildlife) is unnatural and excessively destructive:

SEC. 53.06.5. FEEDING OF NON-DOMESTICATED MAMMALIAN PREDATORS PROHIBITED.
(Amended by Ord. No. 175,383, Eff. 9/14/03.)

(a) No person shall feed or in any manner provide food or cause to be fed any non-domesticated mammalian predator including, but not limited to, coyotes, foxes, possums, raccoons and skunks.

(b) This section shall not apply to any person who has legal possession of any non-domesticated mammalian predator and who has a permit from the State Department of Fish and Game to keep the animal. This section shall not apply to any person who provides food or water to any non-domesticated mammalian predator while the animal is injured, trapped or unweaned provided that the person notifies the State Department of Fish and Game within 48 hours of commencing the care.

(c) Any person violating this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.00 or by imprisonment in the County Jail for a period not more than six months, or by both a fine and imprisonment.

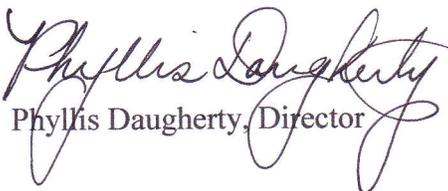
When feral cats are fed outdoors--especially in colonies--coyotes, skunks and other wildlife are attracted and become an increasing health and safety concern. Leaving food outside is the #1 cause of coyotes being attracted to a location; and, in turn, the feral cats themselves are cruelly killed and eaten by the coyotes.

Until the City prohibits the massive feeding of feral cats and cites anyone who feeds any animals outside and leaves food and water available, coyotes will become increasingly dependent upon and demanding of humans providing food. This increases the aggression in coyotes—not only toward the feeder, but toward all humans, especially children and the elderly.

This is the main topic that MUST be considered at any meeting—and it must not include just pet owners—but all those who feed any animals or birds outdoors (bird food that is dropped on the ground attracts small rodents and wildlife, which then attracts coyotes).

If a representative of CA Fish and Wildlife or any advocate for coyotes is present at ANY meeting regarding this subject, they must be asked to respond publicly on the outdoor feeding of feral cats—otherwise the City's entire effort is a charade.

Sincerely,


Phyllis Daugherty, Director

Doublethink Leaves LA Torn Between Coyotes and Feral Cats

PHYLLIS M. DAUGHERTY

06 JUNE 2016



LOS ANGELES

ANIMAL WATCH--Councilman Paul Koretz' naive doublethink now has the City Council ensnared between powerful competing groups—coyote advocates and feral cat feeders--that may soon be fighting mad. And, Koretz and Animal Services GM Brenda Barnette are caught inextricably in the middle.

This is just one more example of why LA Animal Services must be moved from the unilateral decision-making by Koretz, Chair of the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee, and restored to oversight by the Public Safety Committee, where there might at least be discussions regarding potential unexpected consequences of animal-related policies.

Koretz lacks personal expertise regarding animals and continually makes decisions based solely upon the advice or propaganda provided by affluent/influential animal-rights groups with political interests, without considering the negative impact on LA residents and--as in this case--their pets.

On May 24, Councilman Joe Buscaino, who represents the San Pedro area, introduced a motion which Koretz seconded, instructing Animal Services to "*...report on or before July 1, 2016, with a detailed plan on the Department's Coyote Management Program...and recommendations for improvements to that Program that will further control the coyote population in the City's residential neighborhoods, including any ordinances or City policies that will support the effort.*"

One day later, on May 25, the City Council, which is advised by Koretz on all things animal, approved \$800,000 in the Mayor's 2016-17 Budget for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on cats, with the goal of authorizing official Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) of feral cats (re-abandoning altered cats into the streets)—under the guise it is the only way the city will reach "No Kill."

It is important to understand that "No Kill" pertains ONLY to shelter populations and does not count the animals that die in the streets, which provides the impetus to NOT impound strays nor address problems that might cause more animals to be brought to the shelter.

Neither Koretz nor Barnette was transparent with the Council prior to the vote on the \$800,000 cat report. Koretz did not advise his colleagues that TNR is already legal in L.A., with sterilizations of abandoned and/or unsocialized animals well funded by private grants, large pet-supply corporations; such as PetSmart, and major humane organizations, including Best Friends.

Barnette did not disclose that “feeders” throughout LA trap street cats, have them altered and release them constantly, providing food outdoors to large groups of feral cats in “colonies” daily with no interference by L.A. Animal Services.

The \$800,000 EIR is intended to overturn a court injunction which **prohibits using City funds to perform or promote TNR, without including mitigating measures to reduce the sources of the problem.** The goal of the injunction was to reduce the decimation of birds and small wildlife necessary to maintain the environmental balance, and to reduce public health risks posed by millions of outdoor cats.

The City could simply negotiate humane safeguards such as, a “non-roaming” ordinance to require owners to keep their cats inside or in their own yards; mandatory licensing/microchipping of cats, and the right of property owners to remove nuisance feral cats by taking them to the shelter.

Both Koretz and Barnette have absolutely rejected any measures placing accountability for cats on owners (as we do with dogs)—opting instead to spend \$800,000 of taxpayer’s money for consultants to justify the fiction that millions of outdoor, ‘wild’ cats have no negative impact on the environment.

But Councilman Buscaino’s coyote-report motion—to which Koretz added his name—is aimed at “...**prioritizing resident’s [sic] safety through deterrence of these wild animals in our neighborhoods**, in addition to the Department’s efforts to educate residents about coyote behavior.”

This is in direct conflict with the anticipated outcome of the \$800,000 EIR.

LAAS estimates there are 3.5 million feral cats in Los Angeles. Creating feral cat ‘colonies’ all over the city, maintained by “feeders” who dump cat food in accessible areas and provide containers with fresh water, also attracts rodents and other wildlife to the location—including coyotes.

Experts in coyote control unanimously agree that NOT feeding pets outside and NOT leaving pet food and water bowl outdoors is fundamental to any coyote-control program.

In fact, on June 1, L.A. Animal Services Wildlife Officer Hoang Dinh told **Fox 11**, "Most importantly, it's important to keep pets inside and doors closed when there are coyotes roaming neighborhoods. Dog and cat food is a big clue to the coyotes that there is food nearby in the form of someone's pets." (He either inadvertently or intentionally omitted feral-cat feeding.)

There is another important aspect of humans providing food to feral cats, which in turn become food for coyotes. When a feral-cat feeding station appears in a vacant lot or urban alley, appreciative coyotes quickly realize a human has set up a smorgasbord.

This teaches them two things: (1) humans are not the coyotes’ enemy; and (2) the intended benefactors—the feral cats themselves—also become a food source that does not require hunting.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provides an informative section on avoiding coyote conflict, including:

- *Coyotes eat wild species, but they are known to eat pet food, garbage, garden crops, livestock, poultry, and pets (mostly cats).*
- **Don't feed feral cats** (domestic cats gone wild). *Coyotes prey on these cats as well as any feed you leave out for the feral cats.*
- *Humans increase the likelihood of conflicts with coyotes by deliberately or inadvertently feeding the animals, whether by handouts or by providing access to food sources such as garbage, pet food or livestock*

carcasses. When people provide food, coyotes quickly lose their natural fear of humans and become increasingly aggressive. They also become dependent on the easy food source people provide. Once a coyote stops hunting on its own and loses its fear of people, it becomes dangerous and may attack without warning.

Buscaino's motion claims, "While coyotes typically pose no threat to humans, these interactions create safety concerns for parents and owners of small pets who are unsure of the coyote's aggressiveness."

That's not exactly accurate according to residents who say they have observed the aggressive nature of the "urban" coyotes in L.A. who are born and raised in or near highly populated communities and have lost their fear of humans.

We also can't ignore the four children attacked in Orange County within three months last year, including a three-year-old inside a garage with her father present. Plus, **KTLA** reported two attacks in Elysian Park in 2015—one a 3-year-old girl and the other an adult male.

UC Davis published an important GUIDE to identifying progressive problem coyote behavior, which is well worth reading in its entirety. Here are several excerpts:

- **Recognizing Problem Coyote Behavior**

As coyote numbers increase in cities, they become accustomed to the presence of people, especially if the people do not harass them. Studies of coyote attacks on pets and on humans have revealed a predictable pattern of change in coyote behavior in these environments. This progression is accelerated when coyotes are provided abundant food, either unintentionally or intentionally, in residential areas.

When it reaches the point where pets are being attacked or coyotes are seen in neighborhoods in early morning or late afternoon, area-wide corrective actions are recommended to prevent an escalation to attacks on humans . . . (See Responding to Coyote Aggression and Attack.)

- **Sequence of increasingly aggressive coyote behaviors**

1. Increase in coyotes on streets and in yards at night
2. Increase in coyotes approaching adults and/or taking pets at night
3. Coyotes on streets, and in parks and yards, in early morning/late afternoon
4. Coyotes chasing or taking pets in daytime
5. Coyotes attacking and taking pets on leash or near owners; chasing joggers, bicyclists, other adults
6. Coyotes seen in and around children's play areas, school grounds, and parks in midday
7. Coyotes acting aggressively toward adults in midday

- **Hazing and Behavior Modification.**

Using sound or visual stimuli to keep coyotes away from livestock or other resources will provide only temporary effectiveness, if any. . . In the absence of any real threat, coyotes quickly adapt or habituate to sounds, flashing lights, propane cannons, scarecrows, and so on.

Will Paul Koretz and Brenda Barnette ignore the warnings of scientists and other experts?

How will Koretz (who had 19 cats as a child and has made TNR a priority) resolve the looming undeniable conflict between the vocal advocates for coyotes and TNR/feral-cat feeders without negatively impacting his current fundraising efforts or re-election?

Is seconding Councilman Buscaino's motion a sincere attempt by Koretz to determine and implement coyote deterrence for public safety or merely lip service and a ploy to assure the status quo is not changed in regard to coyote management?