

HFC Committee

From: Emma White <emmaharberwhite@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 5:13 PM
Subject: Support Amending the Maui County Code, Chapter 6.04.040, to Prohibit the Feeding of Feral Animals.

Dear Council Members on the Healthy Families and Community Committee,

What is truly inhumane is allowing feral cats to take over Maui to comfort a vocal minority that is ignorant of both science and uncaring of the ecological health of Maui. , Please SUPPORT amending the Maui County Code, Chapter 6.04.040 to ban the feeding of feral animals. I am sure you are hearing a lot of push back from the vocal minority/feral cat community. Thank you for your courage to bring this to your committee and I implore you to look passed their supposed numbers and really look into whether those that sign petitions or testify are really even Maui residents or that their statements are truly evidence-based. To prove my point, please consider this study from 2014, which shows that 86.9% of Hawaii survey respondents want a reduction in our feral cat

population.<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24372971>

Additionally please consider this study that supports Hawaii residents' support of feral cat reduction through live traps as most preferred and TNR as least preferred.<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/.../b5bdc07975172fc8e84948a2...>

Cat owners need to take responsibility for their animals by keeping them on their private property, tagging, licensing, and keeping them up to date with vaccines/flea/tick protection. Feral cats are different than owned cats and are invasive species that are actively attacking our endangered native birds. By feeding feral cats, their population increases as their carrying capacity increases. Can you imagine it being ok to feed a predatory invasive species like mongooses? Unfortunately, I've witnessed feral cat feeders unintentionally feeding mongooses with their dry cat food strewn about Kanaha and Keopalani Parks. This human-provided food just makes these invasive species procreate more successfully and makes them stronger to better hunt our endangered birds. A feeding ban is a step forward in the direction of reducing the number of invasive feral predators on our island.

Lastly, to counter the argument for TNR, I beg you to read this literature review published by the University of Florida.
<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw468...>

TNR simply does not work, which the majority of studies show unquestionably. I am a longtime faculty at UHMC. A few years ago we permitted TNR and feeding of a colony with the promise that it would lower and eventually eliminate our feral cat problem. That has been a failure. There are more cats than ever. I saw one right before quarantine chowing on a bird by my office. I see them more now than three years ago.

Our beaches have become covered in cat feces, ill cats, and ill cat feeders who leave trash and feeding dishes strewn about. Further, feral cats threaten agriculture with their toxoplasmosis-infected feces deposits. What is truly inhumane is allowing these cats to take over Maui. When I was pregnant I was warned by farmers not to eat from certain fields where because it could risk toxoplasmosis- caused blindness in my child. This risk is completely unnecessary, as are the toxoplasmosis-linked deaths of endangered species.

I wish this County Council would go further than this bill but this is a good start. Hopefully one day we can put forward laws and resources to eliminate feral cats with the use of lethal traps.

Thank you so much for your thoughtful consideration of this important issue!

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