

HFC Committee

From: Temple Weste <templemaui@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 5:14 AM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: Proposed Bill 6.04.041 Feeding of Feral Animals Prohibited

Aloha Council Members all!

I am writing to you today as a citizen of the United States of America, and a resident of the state of Hawai'i, County of Maui, TO VOICE MY OPPOSITION to the proposed bill **6.04.041 Feeding of Feral Animals Prohibited**. This bill is cruel, ineffective, unenforcible and costly.

The welfare of all species is one of my core concerns, and I feel that humane treatment of animals is the responsibility of the human race. By passing a ruling that insists that "NO person may feed or deliberately introduce any food, material, substance or attractant directly to, or in the vicinity of, any feral animal" you will place the citizens of Maui Council in the untenable position of making us all a party to terrible cruelty, as well as advocating a violation of the state's anti-cruelty to animals statute. You can't criminalize compassion! People will continue to feed both stray and feral cats (two types of animals with very different relationships with humans).

I support efforts to lower the numbers of feral cats on Maui by using the humane strategy of Trap Neuter Release (TNR). I implore you to commit to this science-based, cost effective way to control and eventually reduce the number of cats on our island.

The Maui Humane Society began an island-wide TNR strategy in 2015, offering free traps, free neuter and spaying, as well as free chip implantation and ear tip marking. As a result, today the intake number of feral cats has dropped by 25%, and live releases are now 80%-90%.

Maui's success, in fact, has become a model for feral cat management and has received nationwide attention.

National research has seen similar results and spay/neuter programs have proven effective in numerous peer-reviewed, published studies.

Mr. Hokama needs to provide information and examples of where starving feral cats has been proven to reduce the feral cat population.

I have found misinformation abounding blaming everything on feral cats. In fact, humans clearing their forest habitats for agriculture and raising cattle have a huge responsibility for reducing our honeycreeper population which once had 56 species to 18 species. And how about introducing mongoose (diurnal) to the islands to kill rats (nocturnal) whose favorite food is bird eggs and birds?

Let us examine the reality of toxoplasmosis as against the hysteria about how dangerous it is and we should all fear coming in contact with feral cats or strays because we might get it. There have been 11 cases of problematic toxoplasmosis in humans in Hawai'i in ten years. Twelve monk seals have perished in Hawai'i in 19 years from toxoplasmosis which are being blamed on cat feces but more

likely came from shellfish or raw meat used as crab bait, or from dead mongoose or rat carcasses. One website claimed the parasites can only breed in the guts of cats. This is wrong. It is a colony of tiny parasites living in all animals--shellfish and mammals including pigs, mongoose, cats and humans. You can get it by eating undercooked or raw meat and shellfish, by drinking water containing the parasite, by receiving a donated organ or transfused blood, and by cleaning the kitty litter. Normally, it lives in the intestines and is encysted in muscles including the heart. Most people will not experience symptoms from the parasites their entire lives. It only causes trouble if the host has a weak immune system, cancer, HIV, or is exposed to it as a baby in the womb by your pregnant mom cleaning the kitty litter. When that happens, the parasites go straight to the nervous system, brain and eyes, and can be very damaging.

In my personal experience, I was apparently exposed to it when my mom was pregnant with me, and it was dormant until I was over 50 and went through the stress of being hit head-on by a drunk driver. Awhile later, I awoke to being blind in my right eye. It cleared up, but then went through two more cycles and finally never reoccurred. It seems the stress stirred up the parasites (hundreds) who burst out of their cyst for awhile and then went back into it. The activity left my eye scarred so i no longer see parallel lines as parallel in that eye, and it stimulated cataract development.

Thank you for reading this testimony. I trust you will do the research and come to an informed, rational and humane decision in accordance with the voices of us, your constituents.

You are welcome to contact me with any questions you might have.