

HFC Committee

From: Scott Parker <parker96768@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 1:08 PM
To: HFC Committee
Cc: Keani N. Rawlins; Tasha A. Kama; Riki Hokama; Kelly King; Mike J. Molina; Tamara A. Paltin; Shane M. Sinenci; Yukilei Sugimura; Alice L. Lee
Subject: Testimony in support of the management of Feral Animals
Attachments: Testimony in support of the management of Feral Animals.pdf

Aloha mai kākou,

Attached, please find my testimony in support of the management of feral animals, particularly supporting a feral animal feeding ban.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Mahalo,

Dr. Scott K. Parker
138 Kapela Place
Kahului, HI 96732
808-495-5933

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Dr. Scott K. Parker
138 Kapela Place
Kahului, HI 96732

20 May 2020

Maui County Council
200 S. High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

RE: Testimony in support of the management of Feral Animals

Aloha mai kākou,

I write this letter as testimony in support of the management of feral animals in Maui County, which include a proposed ban on the feeding of **all** feral animals.

This ban has the potential to positively impact our community by reducing the negative impact that can be felt by the proliferation of chickens, axis deer, cats, dogs, and other non-native birds and species – all of which have been detrimental to our native flora and fauna.

Aside from the visual impacts to our community, there are health impacts as well. Feral animals defecate uncontrolled in public spaces, which can result in hazards to humans and as you may have recently saw in the media, deadly to native Hawaiian monk seals (among others) through toxoplasmosis - a single-celled parasitic organism.

Although the feeding ban is applicable to all feral animals, it is evident from earlier testimony in a prior Council meeting, that some in the community want to make this issue only about cats, and the protection of cats. It is important to reiterate that management of feral animals will result in the reduction of feral cats on the landscape. Something that is greatly needed. And any true animal lover will agree, that cats left to fend for themselves in the wild is not humane – no matter if they are fed or spayed and neutered. They still live unsheltered and uncared for, not something a domesticated animal should experience. So, the only one true remedy is adoption or taking them into a loving home. Cats should be treated as pets, it's better for the cat and better for our community

Furthermore, the proposed feeding ban is important as it seeks to reduce overall cat numbers and densities. Although many in the community will speak to Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR), TNR is not being done at the critical levels necessary to reduce cat numbers.

Finally, along with this feeding ban, I support licensing and containment of cats the same as for dogs. Doing so ensures that the chances of cats getting out into the wild, where their feces can spread contamination and disease, is greatly reduced. I also support the enforcement of current laws already in place that forbids feeding of feral cat colonies in County Parks, but which is not being enforced.

This issue and feral animal feeding ban should not pit cats against native birds, Hawaiian monk seals, or other native species. Hawai'i makes up less than 0.2% of U.S. land, but over 25% of species found on the nation's endangered species list are endemic to Hawai'i, earning it the rather unflattering title of "endangered species capital of the world." We have this one chance to protect what remains and

instituting a feeding ban on feral animals will bring us closer to protecting the last vestiges of what remain of our native species for future generations.

I humbly urge our Council to hear the voices of the 'I'iwi, 'Apapane, Pueo, 'Amakihi, 'Akohekohe, Nēnē, and the Kiwikiu. For they call out from Haleakalā, Mauna Kahalawai, and the plains in between asking for you to save them from further desecration by uncontrolled feral animals. You are their last hope. If you do not make this last stand for them – who will?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott K. Parker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott K. Parker, Ed.D.
808-495-5933