

HFC Committee

From: Yuana GARVIN <ygarvin@hawaii.rr.com>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2020 3:15 PM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: Testimony to Healthy Families and Communities Committee: feral cats

To Maui County Council Healthy Families and Communities Committee and Chair Riki Hokama,

My name is Yuana Garvin and I run a family daycare in Makawao.

I have been caring for upcountry children 15 years on Maui. I am submitting testimony in regards to free ranging cats in our community.

My concern is foremost the health and safety of the children in my care.

I observed a feral cat on my property last weekend and called the Human Society this morning for help in what to do. I was told that I was to come take a cage, catch the cat and bring it to them to be neutered then take it back to my property. I already have a cat which is fed inside but otherwise is let free to roam the property as our partner to keep away rats attracted otherwise by our fruit trees. Our cat is well fed, neutered, vaccinated and regularly treated against parasites. Knowing how expensive veterinary care is I am not able to care for another pet.

The children in my care are age one to four. At that age, it is virtually impossible to keep things away from their mouth. We know that cats are a non-native, invasive species and that they carry diseases (toxoplasmosis) that can be transferred to humans and small children. I do not see how allowing them to return to the wild within our community can be an answer. It certainly is not an answer for me.

At a time when we are facing an epidemic which has been traced to initial contact with a wild species I find the solution offered to this feral cat problem to be an aberration.

We also are well aware that cats are threatening the already difficult survival of native birds, maybe the Humane society is not the adequate agency to address this. Should it be treated as an Invasive Species concern?

Thank you for your attention.

Best regards

Yuana GARVIN

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