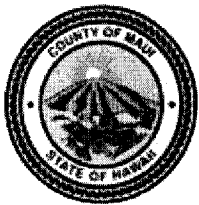


HFC Committee

From: Raynette Yap
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 8:24 AM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: FW: Please OPPOSE the Proposed Bill to Prohibit Feeding of Feral Animals

From: Kelly King <Kelly.King@mauicounty.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2020 12:47 PM
To: HFC Committee <HFCCommittee@mauicounty.us>
Subject: FW: Please OPPOSE the Proposed Bill to Prohibit Feeding of Feral Animals

With Aloha,



Office of Councilmember Kelly Takaya King
South Maui Residency
Office: 808.270.7108
200 South High Street, 8th Fl
Wailuku HI 96793
mauicounty.us

From: Peg Batchelder <pbatch55@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 8:38 PM
To: Kelly King <Kelly.King@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Please OPPOSE the Proposed Bill to Prohibit Feeding of Feral Animals

Aloha Council Chair King,

I am writing to express **opposition** to the proposed bill entitled "A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MAUI COUNTY CODE, CHAPTER 6.04.040," which proposes a prohibition on the feeding of feral animals. As a United States citizen, a resident of the Hawaii County of Maui, and a veterinarian, I believe I have not only the right but a moral duty to oppose this bill.

Speaking specifically about the problem of feral cats on Maui, the proposals in this bill would have a significant negative impact on current efforts to control the feral cat population. The Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) program, supported by the Maui Humane Society, has been scientifically proven to be effective, and has demonstrated measurable beneficial effects since the practice was started on Maui.

The proposed prohibition on feeding of feral cats will severely decrease the effectiveness of TNR and will result in unnecessary animal suffering. Simply allowing cats to die by disease or starvation is demonstrably futile and inhumane.

I am aware of the arguments supporting feeding bans, and have yet to see any scientific proof that 1) feral cats are a primary source of toxoplasmosis in either monk seals or people, 2) not feeding feral cats reduces predation on local wildlife, or 3) feeding bans are any more effective than TNR.

In short: TNR programs are humane and successfully reduce and control feral populations. Feeding bans are inhumane and have not been shown to help control the problem.

I request that you oppose the proposed bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.

For additional information, I include below a letter to the editor of Maui News, written by Steve MacKinnon, Chief Executive Officer of the Maui Humane Society.

Sincerely,

Peg Batchelder

1660 Limahana Circle #107

Lahaina, HI 96761

pbatch55@yahoo.com

808-633-4121

"Spay/Neuter Offers the Only Path to Fewer Cats"

"This week Councilmember Riki Hokama will be proposing an ordinance to ban all feeding of feral animals. In his March 14th editorial for Council's 3 Minutes, Council member Hokama, Chair of the Healthy Families and Communities Committee stated that cats on Maui are harming people by transmitting toxoplasmosis and are responsible for 12 monk seals dying from this disease. These conclusions are based on inaccurate testimony given to Mr. Hokama's committee at an earlier hearing. To cure cat overpopulation, Mr. Hokama had suggested a feeding ban on public lands, all owned cats to be licensed, and limits on the number of pets a resident can own. In addition, he wants the idea of cat sanctuaries to be explored.

"We agree with Mr. Hokama that cat overpopulation is a serious issue within our community. But others have overstated the harm caused. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, most people catch the toxoplasmosis parasite by eating undercooked meat or raw shellfish, not from cats. Notably, in the ten years from 2009 to 2018, there were only 11 cases reported on Maui. If toxoplasmosis from cats was a significant public health risk, surely this number would be much higher. When it comes to monk seals, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports the monk seal population is thankfully increasing. The 12 seals which died from toxoplasmosis over the course of 19 years could have gotten it from shellfish, meat used as crab bait, or the carcass of a rat or mongoose and not from cats.

"Inaccurate claims about cats distract from the real issue – how do we lower their numbers in a permanent, sustainable way? The laws suggested by Mr. Hokama have been attempted over the years by hundreds of communities and not once has it resulted in fewer cats. We already know people won't comply and enforcement is

difficult and costly. While sanctuaries may be a good idea on their face, they are expensive, do not control the population, and would only hold a fraction of the cats now on our island.

“In the two decades prior to 2015 Maui tried to euthanize its way out of cat overpopulation. At least 75,000 cats were euthanized. Yet nothing changed. In 2015 we at the Maui Humane Society instituted a new direction. At no cost to the public, the cats are spayed and neutered and their left ears tipped to identify them. No longer able to reproduce, the cats’ numbers are gradually declining; as evidenced by the over 25% drop in cats being surrendered to Maui Humane Society. National research has seen similar results and spay/neuter programs have proven effective in numerous peer-reviewed, published studies.

“Maui has found its solution – spay/neuter. It’s working and deserves Council and community support. We look forward to working with Chair Hokama and all others in the community to address this challenge.

Steve MacKinnon

Chief Executive Officer Maui Humane Society”