



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Christine Cohen, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Mike Demicco, Co-Chair  
Members of the Environment Committee

Via e-mail: [envtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:envtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

Dear Members of the Environment Committee,

We hope you're well. PETA is the world's largest animal rights organization, with more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including nearly 70,000 Connecticut residents. We strongly support Senate Bill No. 999, currently in the Environment Committee. We hope the information herein is useful as you consider the bill and that you'll vote to pass it.

As an animal-protection organization, PETA supports legislation that encourages responsible animal guardianship, including laws that require cat owners to license and spay or neuter their feline companions and keep them [indoors](#) unless closely supervised or securely confined to an outdoor enclosure. Such laws protect cats and the public health as well as native wildlife who are tormented, injured, and killed by cats—regardless of whether they're adequately fed—who are allowed to roam outdoors without supervision.

### Public Health

Attached is the National Animal Care & Control Association's guideline on cat licensing, which advises that "[s]tate and/or local statutes should require that all cats ... be licensed, and require licenses to be worn at all times. ... Cats pose similar problems in today's society to that of dogs. Public health concerns include the threat of rabies or other diseases from cat inflicted bites or scratches. Damage to property and overpopulation results in the degradation of a community's appearance and sanitation."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that cats are the main domestic animal linked to human exposure to rabies.<sup>1</sup> Roaming rabid cats have attacked residents across Connecticut. Last year, a rabid cat was found dead after attacking a resident and his two kittens in [Naugatuck](#), three employees and three volunteers required post-exposure rabies treatment after a stray cat housed at a shelter in [Dayville](#) tested positive for the virus, and a stray cat believed to be rabid attacked five people in [New Britain](#).

To enhance rabies control, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians recommends that identification of cats, dogs, and ferrets be required, either with metal or plastic tags or with microchips, and advises that "[r]egistration or licensure of all dogs, cats, and ferrets is an integral component of an effective rabies control program. A fee is frequently charged for such licensure, and

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- PETA France
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- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

<sup>1</sup>A.D. Roebing *et al.*, "Rabies Prevention and Management of Cats in the Context of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release Programmes," *Zoonoses and Public Health*, 2013  
<<http://www.coloradonativebird.org/uploads/3/3/7/5/3375180/catsrabiestnvr-article.pdf>>.

revenues collected are used to maintain rabies or animal control activities. Evidence of current vaccination should be an essential prerequisite to licensure."<sup>2</sup>

### **Animal Welfare**

Cat-licensing laws have been shown to protect and enhance the lives and welfare of cats when enforced. Calgary, Alberta, implemented a [cat-licensing bylaw](#) in 2006 and reports that it has drastically increased the number of lost cats reunited with their guardians in the community. As of 2013, the city reported that 45,421 cats had been licensed and that nearly half of all cats admitted to the community's animal shelter had been reunited with their owners—which is well above average—thanks to this law.<sup>3</sup> The city also set up a system whereby cat-licensing revenue can be used to pay for spay/neuter programs for owned cats, which helps to reduce the number of cats who breed and roam in the community as well as cat homelessness, intake at shelters, and subsequent euthanasia. Cities across the U.S. have implemented cat-licensing requirements to improve the welfare of animals and enhance the quality of life in their communities.

Requiring responsible cat ownership is critical to preventing costly problems for the state and its taxpayers—just as laws that require residents to license their dogs, have automobile insurance, wear seat belts, keep their yards within certain standards of sanitation, and enroll their children in school are intended to do. Preventing animal overpopulation and homelessness as well as neglectful, irresponsible ownership is far more effective and less costly than addressing their damaging results. **The implementation and rigorous enforcement of licensing laws have proved effective.**

I can be reached at 443-320-1277 or [TeresaC@peta.org](mailto:TeresaC@peta.org) and hope you will let me know if we can be of further assistance. Thank you for all your hard work for the residents of Connecticut.

Respectfully,



Teresa Chagrin  
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Cruelty Investigations Department

### **Enclosure**

"Animal Identification—Cat Licenses," The National Animal Care & Control Association, Guideline Statement, September 3, 2014

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<sup>2</sup>Public Veterinary Medicine: Public Health, "Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016," *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, Vol. 248, No. 5, 1 Mar. 2016, NASPHV.org <<http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/NASPHVRabiesCompendium.pdf>>.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen Burns, "Cat Licence Aims to Cut Euthanization," *WinnipegFreePress.com*, 9 Dec. 2014 <<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/cat-licence-aims-to-cut-euthanization-285181221.html>>.