

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: envtestimony@cga.ct.gov

March 13, 2019

Chair Christine Cohen & Chair Mike Demicco
Joint Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Demicco, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Alley Cat Allies and our over half-million supporters, I am writing to urge you to **oppose S.B. 999, An Act Concerning the Fee for Adopting a Dog, Cat, or other Domestic Animal from a Municipal Pound and Requiring the Licensing of Such Cats and Other Domestic Animals**. If enacted into law, **S.B. 999** will require the licensing of cats, a flawed public policy that is unenforceable and puts a strain on local resources.

Alley Cat Allies is the global engine of change for cats. We protect and improve cats' lives through our innovative, cutting-edge programs. We are seen around the world as a champion for the humane treatment of all cats. Founded in 1990, today Alley Cat Allies helps tens of thousands of individuals, communities, and organizations save and improve the lives of millions of cats and kittens worldwide.

We are reaching out to you because **requiring cats to be licensed is expensive, ineffective, and increases the number of cats killed in animal shelters**. It's for these reasons that in October 2018 the National Animal Care and Control Association board voted unanimously to no longer recommend cat licensing.

Cat licensing laws are expensive. Licensing program administrative costs often exceed the generated revenue. Compliance rates for licensing laws are notoriously low and, by its nature, **licensing increases the number of cats picked up by animal control**. Thus, taxpayers are forced to foot the bill as more cats are housed, cared for, and "euthanized" in animal shelters. Cat licensing also wastes funds on enforcement and rounding up animals rather than directing it where it's needed most: low-cost veterinary services. Studies show that the main reasons why people don't sterilize and vaccinate their pets is due to cost and access to clinics. Adding licensing fees on top of veterinary costs will discourage, not encourage, spay or neuter surgeries and vaccinations.

Cat licensing laws are ineffective. Collar tags are the only way to distinguish between a licensed and unlicensed cat. Many cats do not tolerate collars, and those who wear them can easily lose them since nearly all cat collars today are designed to break away easily to prevent strangulation. Once a licensing law is in place, any cat not wearing a collar—owned or unowned, licensed or unlicensed, socialized or feral—becomes a target for impoundment by animal control.

Cat licensing laws increase the number of cats killed in animal shelters. Nationally, only 2 percent of impounded cats are reunited with their owners, and the number one cause of death for cats is being brought to an animal shelter. Simply put, licensing laws kill cats.

On behalf of your constituents, our supporters, and Connecticut's cats, we urge you to **oppose S.B. 999**. Thank you for considering the many risks associated with this dangerous legislation.

Sincerely,



Becky Robinson *President & Founder*