

RES23-204 Testimony

MISC. COMM. 547

HOUSING, SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH (HSH)

HOUSING, SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH (HSH) Meeting

Meeting Date: Oct 18, 2023 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 9

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Lei Fisher	Email: oleimomimo@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 13, 2023 @ 03:23 PM
Testimony: Aloha mai kakou, Please support this measure as a key step to address the flagrant & irresponsible feral cat problem in Hawai'i. The data is all there showing how horrible these uncontrolled feral cat populations are for all living things - including the feral cats themselves. I live on the north shore of O'ahu where I have only seen the problem worsen over the years with little to no action by the state or county. It is so infuriating & sad to see monk seals dying & pregnant women getting sick from the toxoplasmosis that these feral animals carry, let alone the precious endangered birds that are murdered for no reason each year by these out-of-control animals - all because a vocal minority of radical cat lovers protest any sort of control over them whatsoever? Please take this opportunity to make a real difference by controlling this severe environmental problem as soon as possible. Mahalo so much for considering my testimony! Aloha, Lei Fisher		
Name: Scott Fisher	Email: skeliifisher@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 13, 2023 @ 03:29 PM
Testimony: I strongly support this measure - please pass it. The feral cat population is out of control in Hawaii, especially on the north shore of Oahu, & something needs to be done asap. Too much of anything is never good, and clearly there are too many feral cats! Please do something to control them. Mahalo, Scott Fisher		
Name: Stephanie Kendrick	Email: skendrick@hawaiianhumane.org	Zip: 96826
Representing: Hawaiian Humane Society	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Oct 17, 2023 @ 02:03 PM
Name: Joy Schoenecker	Email: schoeneckerj39@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 17, 2023 @ 02:20 PM
Testimony: The feeding of feral cats not only increases disease (and TNR does not work) - but can destroy other animal life in our island home . I submit this peer-reviewed article for additional support ! https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/news/resolution-19-2-keeping-cats-indoors-using-peer-reviewed-science/		
Name: Holly Holowach	Email: Holly@popokiplace.org	Zip: 96734-3404
Representing: Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Oct 17, 2023 @ 02:30 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Kimeona Kane	Kimeonakane@gmail.com	96795
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 17, 2023 @ 10:32 PM
Testimony: Aloha nui, I strongly support the efforts to better understand the impacts of feral cat populations and the immediate response to address them in all of our communities. It is no secret that current processes to spay and neuter then release back is a failed attempt to address the rooted issues and it certainly minimizes the destructive impacts that feral cats have on the wildlife. Mahalo for taking this item up and making it as important as it really is. Mahalo nui, Kimeona Kane		
Name: Samuel Wolff	Email: sbwolff@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 17, 2023 @ 10:47 PM
Testimony: Mahalo for introducing this resolution to discuss what is an omnipresent yet contentious issue that has gone unresolved for decades. As it relates to TNR, it is an expensive and never ending initiative that will have taxpayers subsidizing an entire division of HHS in perpetuity. Not to mention, the scientific community has done multiple studies which show that it is completely ineffective- 300,000 cats on this island makes this impossible. Additionally, we need to have a discussion about the feeding practices and locations- not just for cats but all animals. We do not feed fish at Haunama, we do not feed nn on Big Island, yet we can put unlimited amounts of cat and bird food on public property with no limitations. The excessive amounts of food left out by feeders attracts additional pests like rats, mongoose, cockroaches, etc that flourish in numbers because of this uneaten cat food. We need to create designated feeding areas on the island where feral cats congregate away from residential areas and prohibit the feeding on city and county property outside of those designated feeding sites. These sites can also be used to provide services to these animals for injuries and disease but also TNR if it is still funded. Feral cats should not be in populated areas because of the risk of cat scratch fever in the event of an attack. By allowing for unlimited food and anywhere, people have chosen parks and sidewalks and take over areas meant for families with uneaten food and feces. Please pass this resolution and mahalo for taking action.		
Name: Ikaika Ing	Email: ikaika027@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 18, 2023 @ 08:03 AM
Testimony: Aloha City Council I'm writing to support the proposed resolution. I am a lifelong resident of Hawaii Kai and a small business owner and am frustrated by the status quo as it relates to feral animals. I have personally been impacted by feral cats on a regular basis because people that feed them dump large piles of food underneath my pick up truck and alongside the curb which then attracts the cats to defecate and urinate in the bed of my truck. Having to come out in the morning to a pile of food on the curb that I have to sweep off so my wife can get in the car and for me to clean out urine and feces from my truck bed so I can use it to transport materials for my business is absolutely infuriating.		

It is incomprehensible for me to know that these feeding practices are entirely legal and the people who feed these cats have no responsibility to pick up the inevitable waste that comes from them.

Please pass this resolution and I thank you for your consideration.

Name: Nikki Yasutake	Email: teacookie@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 18, 2023 @ 08:41 AM

Testimony:

Testimony Regarding Feral Cat Resolution

I have been asked to provide a statement regarding our family's experiences with the feral cat feeding on and near the Mauna Luan property. I hesitated to do this because of the bitter, divisive issue it has become. However, when I read how horrible and inhumane those people opposed to feeding are, I feel I must comment. "Poor kitties" indeed...I would ask you what about the poor humans and other animals being harmed by this practice.

Our first incident was when my granddaughter walked her dog on Hahaione Street and a feral cat jumped out of the bushes fronting the property and attacked the dog. That resulted in a Vet bill for wound cleaning and medications. Poor dog.

The second incident was when my granddaughter was again walking the dog on Hahaione Street. Three cats jumped out of the bushes and went on the attack. She tried to rescue the dog from them and in the process was herself attacked. They clawed and bit through her flannel pants. She had open wounds all over her legs. She was on heavy duty meds for weeks and was watched for infection and more seriously for cat scratch fever. Doctor bills. Scars. Poor child.

Someone suggested that my granddaughter or the dog must have "provoked" this somehow. That is ridiculous. She is an animal lover. And the dog is smaller than the cats and is scared silly of them. (Speculation is that a feral animal will try to guard their food.) All you need to see is the video of the little white dog being walked by its owner on the Mauna Luan driveway and the UN-provoked attack by a cat. I wish we had video of my granddaughter...and her support animal...and how traumatized they were and still are. I repeat...at what cost is this feeding? It is not "humane" when harm is being created as a result. Something must be done. Continuing in the current fashion is just wrong.

I urge passage of the Resolution before the Council.

Name: Oskar Ramirez	Email: guaporamirez19@icloud.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 18, 2023 @ 08:59 AM

Testimony:

Aloha, My name is Oskar Ramirez, I am a Hawaii Kai Resident, and more specifically, a resident of the Mauna Luan. I am father with a young child and I am writing these remarks to address an important issue that has become highly controversial and unfortunately event toxic to discuss or address.

The issue regarding the feral cats is both puzzling and frustrating at the same time. I would like for everyone to remove the emotion from the discussion and focus on clear facts that pertain to the feeding of feral cats.

To be clear, I am asking for a solutions based approach that addresses the inherent dangers of having feral animals around populated areas and how this danger is exacerbated by a small group of people making decisions for the rest of us when it comes to feeding the cats. This feeding of feral animals needs to stop or at least be mitigated in such a form that our building complex stops being a feral cat depot and we are no longer faced with this issue. This is not a nuisance, it is a real issue that affects our building and more importantly our residents.

Feral cats/animals:

- 1) Carry disease and can infect other domesticated animals
- 2) Are wild by nature and do not behave safely around humans. They are easily threatened and respond accordingly. As an example, my young child was nearly scratched up by a feral cat hiding under some rocks in our complex as she was playing outside. As she played near some rocks, the cat became defensive and started hissing at her and tried to scratch her.
- 3) Cats do not clean up after themselves and defecate where they want leaving excrement throughout the complex which is not only unsanitary and smells, it attracts flies and other insects which also spread disease, contaminate food and create their own problems. We pay our staff to clean up after these animals which then detracts them from their job of maintaining the building.
- 4) Their activities throughout the complex create hazards for the elderly. I have seen several of our residents who use canes or walkers almost fall as cats jump out of various spaces and startle them.
- 5) They kill other smaller animals and leave the carcass around which creates foul smells, carry disease, attracts flies and is a threat to small children who may pick it up etc.
- 6) Noise- given their feral nature, the cats will fight nightly for territory creating a noise nuisance that affects all the residents. We chose to live in our building because we have the ability to leave our windows open and enjoy the breeze and view. Closing our windows so we can block out the noise of nightly cat fights is not an option- we pay for our right to live there, the cats are feral and don't share the same privilege.

Of course, the propagation of the cats would not occur to the degree that it does if there were not people from the neighborhood and beyond contributing to their presence by feeding them daily. Most of these feeders drive down to the canal across from our complex, feed the cats so they can satisfy their hobby and leave the mess (the aforementioned 6 issues) for others to clean up, deal with and manage. If these individuals are so concerned with the cat's wellbeing and care, they can take them to their homes and feed them there, but as we know, this is more about their interaction with the cat then it is about dealing with the consequences and impact that their actions have on others. This is why I support any effort to address the issue, remove the feral cats from the area (in a humane fashion) and return our neighborhood to its safe form. This is not an attack on anyone's beliefs about the cats, nor is it an attempt to create some nefarious program that will exterminate these animals, but it is to address a public health and safety hazard. Regardless of anyone's views on the animals, they are a hazard and do not belong in our neighborhood.

Name: Jean New	Email: jean@newflooringhawaii.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 18, 2023 @ 09:06 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Honolulu City Council,

I have lived on Hahaione Street for over 20 years, and often observe the dumping of cat food on the sidewalks and streets in front of the Commodore and Mauna Luan condos by those who are eager to tell me that what they are doing is legal. I made the mistake of questioning why cat food was being dumped in front of my residence – instead of in front of the cat feeders home, which I thought was a logical question – resulted in a spew of profanities towards me.

It came to my surprise to learn the details of the Humane Societies' TNR program: trap - neuter -release, and the illogical practice of returning the cat to where it was found.

In my opinion it is cruel and inhumane to return abandoned animals to fend for themselves. Colonies of cats form and they live where they can find food, which also

attracts rats, and mongoose. Often after it rains the food becomes a pile of mush which remains until maintenance workers from the condos clean it up.

In my opinion the street in front of Mauna Luan and Commodore attract cat feeders, as individual homeowner would certainly be angry and catch the feeders on home security videos. Responsible owners do not want militant cat feeders dumping food in front of their property .

Please do something to prohibit the feeding and abandonment of animals on City and County Property.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826
808.356.2200 • HawaiianHumane.org

Date: October 17, 2023

To: Chair Matt Weyer
Vice Chair Esther Kia'āina
and Members of the Committee on Housing Sustainability and Health

Submitted By: Steph Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Comments on Resolution 23-204 Relating to the City's Feral Cat
Population
Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2:30 p.m., City Council Chamber

Aloha Chair Weyer, Vice Chair Kia'āina and Committee Members,

The Hawaiian Humane Society is committed to accountability and welcomes the opportunity to provide information regarding its work to the City Council and the public. Thank you for chance to submit comments regarding Resolution 23-204.

We strongly believe that Honolulu is employing the best tools available by supporting a Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage (TNRM) strategy as an effective and humane strategy to reduce the Free-Roaming cat population over time. It does so by subsidizing no-fee surgeries for community cat caregivers who dedicate their time and other resources to this volunteer-led effort.

Several years ago, the City and County of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Humane Society faced a crisis of community confidence that threatened the existence of an institution that is now celebrating 140 years of service to O'ahu. That crisis was largely perpetuated by policies that allowed for the euthanasia of cats who were too unsocialized to be adopted into homes. This decades-old strategy had failed to reduce the FRC population and was contrary to our mission.

With the forward-thinking support of the Department of Customer Services, we pivoted to an increased investment in high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter for FRCs. The program has mended that distrust in the community and attracted so much support from volunteers that we have regularly exhausted the allocated funding.

We understand that there are some in the community who believe that this effort is not working, to which we'd point out that Honolulu has barely begun its implementation and we are still working on reducing barriers to its success. This population has grown over decades despite lethal control policies. A shift to a more humane approach is not going to change the picture overnight.

We urge those interested in reducing the number of cats living outdoors to support the work of animal caregivers or, better yet, become a caregiver yourself. Make sure the cats you see outdoors are spayed/neutered. Support the organizations that do FRC spay/neuter. Animal welfare organizations are all desperately seeking the funding and staffing levels that would allow us to do more.

We respectfully request that the committee refocus RES23-204 on the preparation of data and information. Allow us to work closely with you, as the City's animal service provider and your partner, to make the City's humane approach to Free-Roaming cats as effective as possible.

Mahalo for your consideration.

PŌPOKI PLACE O'AHU CAT SANCTUARY



Date: October 17, 2023

To: Chair Matt Weyer
Vice Chair Esther Kiaāina
and Members of the Committee on Housing Sustainability and Health

Submitted By: Holly Holowach, Founder and President
Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary
Main: 808-262-1099 / Direct: 808-226-2271

RE: Resolution 23-204 Relating to the City's Feral Cat Population
Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2:30 p.m., City Council Chamber

Aloha Chair Weyer, Vice Chair Kiaāina and Committee Members,

Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the mission of creating a sanctuary for homeless cats on the island of O'ahu while helping to protect our endangered monk seals and ground-nesting birds. **Popoki Place is the missing link in the efforts to manage the thousands of cats** roaming the island. In addition to rescue groups, shelters, adoption sites, and TNRM (Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage) efforts, **we will serve a critical role in helping solve the crisis of cat overpopulation.**

For decades, cats have been roaming the landscape of every island in the state without adequate human intervention. This has led to an explosion of feral free-roaming cats.

The people of this state have been discussing this issue for years now and very little has been done. But now, we, at Popoki Place, have a plan to help make a serious dent in the problem. This year in the State Legislature, there was an attempt to help fund the TNRM program by allowing taxpayers to click a box on their tax return that would earmark their own money to go to the TNR program instead of going back to them in the form of a refund. This bill will greatly help reduce the cat overpopulation. This would not have cost the taxpayers more. **More funding for TNRM is critically needed.**

Modeled after the very successful Lana'i Cat Sanctuary, now in its 14th year, we are planning to build Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary. **We need land to do it.** Of course, we realize that land in Hawaii is very precious and extremely expensive. We have spoken with the DLNR and the DoAg about land. Currently, there are acres and acres of vacant agricultural land that sits vacant year after year because there aren't enough farmers to work it.

Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary
P.O. Box 732 Kailua, HI 96734
<https://popokiplace.org/>

We have identified land to purchase but would need to get the zoning amended to allow the sanctuary on P-2 land using a Conditional Use Permit. We are working on that.

Like Honolulu, people all across the country have tried eradication and it doesn't work. **What does work is a Cat Community Program, and we have a very active one here on O'ahu.** There is a strong network of literally thousands of dedicated individuals who spend all their free time, and money, going out night after night trapping cats for sterilization, which WILL, over time, help to reduce the overall cat population.

Now we need a dedicated sanctuary. Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary is ready to create that sanctuary. which is designed with a succession plan, so it will be sustainable and available for as long as it is needed. We need the land and a commitment to let us use it as long as there is a need.

We think the City should partner with us to help us solve this important issue. We have a comprehensive presentation that we have shared with Vice Chair Kia'aina. We would like to offer that we do our presentation for the entire City Council, so you are clear about what we are offering to do and what we need from you.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this and oral written testimony. We strongly urge you to consider helping us secure land so we can begin to help the City with this important issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Holly Holowach

Holly Holowach
Founder and President
Popoki Place O'ahu Cat Sanctuary