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August 25, 2015

Council File: 13-1513

Council Districts: All

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Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

INCREASE THE CAT LIMITS FOR OWNED CATS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. APPROVE changes to the cat limit for indoor cats.
2. REQUEST the City Council to direct the Office of the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance that would amend the relevant LAMC section(s) to increase the per household cat limit in the City of Los Angeles as specified below, and to include any required CEQA analysis to be performed and SUBMIT the draft ordinance to the Mayor and City Council for approval.

SUMMARY

The Department of Animal Services was directed to report back to the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee with a plan to change the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) and increase the number of cats that a City resident can own over the current limit of three (C.F. 13-1513). The Department researched the impact of a higher cat limit and is recommending an increase to the limit of altered cats from three to five. These additional cats could be kept as pets or temporary fosters and must be kept indoors.

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Angeles restricts each household to three owned cats. All owned cats, including those allowed to roam at large, are required to be altered. Keeping a cat indoors does not

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qualify as an exemption to the requirement that the cat be sterilized. The Department recommends that owned cats be kept indoors for their own health and safety.

The City and County of San Diego have no limit on the number of cats allowed in a residence or a very high limit. (Both the City and County limit dogs to six.) San Diego animal control officers believe that pet limits should be a function of living conditions and not an arbitrary, static limit.

The City of Santa Monica does not limit the number of indoor cats. That city has not had a hoarder¹ bust in the last five years and only a handful in 15 years.

Based on evidence supplied by San Diego and Santa Monica, the Department believes that a limited raising of the cat limit would not lead to increased hoarding and would allow the City to adopt out or place more cats in temporary foster care to save cats' lives due to space constraints in shelters or rescues. Consistently over a number of years, the highest ratio of shelter deaths compared to intake is for cats.

DETAILS ON COMPANION CAT LIMITS

The Department is recommending the companion cat limits be increased to 5 indoor altered cats.

If a person owns one to three cats, the cats may be indoor, indoor/outdoor, or outdoor. Los Angeles has a rigorous spay/neuter ordinance with enforcement increasing under the Administrative Citation program. All cats must be altered (LAMC Section 35.15.2(b)) unless they legitimately qualify for an exemption. If the owned cats exceed three, all owned cats shall be maintained solely indoors and they must be altered.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact.



Brenda F. Barnette
General Manager

cc: Ryan Carpio, Office of the Mayor
Mandy Morales, Office of the Mayor

¹ People who hoard animals are more precisely described as having a "**hoarding disorder**". This is a pattern of behavior that is characterized by the excessive acquisition of and inability or unwillingness to discard large quantities of objects or live animals. These are not community members who are concerned with the current limit, nor does the Department anticipate that their behavior likely will be exacerbated by the ability to have five indoor cats. Nonetheless, as the Department's enforcement team encounters such situations they will be handled appropriately.