



Memorandum in SUPPORT

March 24, 2014

A. 2778, by M. of A. McDonald

S. 1081, by Sen. Marchione

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to community based initiatives for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area from which they were trapped

The Conference of Mayors has reviewed this legislation, supports its provisions and recommends its enactment into law.

This legislation would authorize up to twenty percent of the Animal Protection Control Fund to be utilized for grants to eligible entities working in coordination with community based initiatives, for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area in which they were trapped.

Out of control feral cat colonies are a major problem for many NYCOM members. In an effort to address the problem, many municipalities are forced to expend considerable financial and human capital. This legislation would make additional financial resources available through a grant program to assist local governments in their efforts to manage feral cat populations by trap, neuter and release (TNR). TNR programs have proven to not only reduce costs, but significantly reduce feral cat colonies. As the sponsor's memo notes, TNR is now generally accepted as a viable and effective population control tool. NYCOM applauds the sponsors for introducing legislation that will help NYCOM members begin and strengthen their TNR programs.

For the foregoing reasons, the Conference of Mayors strongly supports this legislation and recommends its enactment into law.

JAM/njs

Assm. Agriculture 3-30-15
Sen. Agriculture 3-30-15



**County
Health Officials
of New York**
Leading the way to healthier communities

SUPPORTS

A2278/S1081 (McDonald/Marchione)

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to community based initiatives for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area from which they were trapped

The New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) supports the above-referenced legislative proposal, which would amend the agriculture and markets law to authorize up to 20 percent of the annual animal population control fund to be allocated to eligible entities cooperating with community initiatives for the purposes of capture, neutering, vaccinating, and returning feral cats to where they were trapped.

Although a major public health concern of those supporting the “catch and kill” method of feral cat population control has been the spread of disease such as rabies, the last case of cat to human transmission of the disease was in 1975. With this in mind, the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) method does make the effort to vaccinate the feral cats that are captured to spay or neuter. NYSACHO notes that this is a time-limited solution for protecting feral cats from the disease, since a rabies booster and three-year follow-up shots are required to maintain rabies immunity. Thus, this portion of the TNR method will require attention in the future if rabies prevention is a goal.

TNR practices to manage feral cat populations have been implemented in diverse communities as an alternative to the “catch and kill” method of controlling feral cat populations. In these communities that have implemented TNR, there have been reductions in their feral cat population ranging from 16% reduction to 66% reduction, and in some communities complete eradication over 10 years. Within one year of implementation, many communities saw a reduction in their intake of feral kittens, with some reporting as much as a 58% reduction. Several communities report that, after implementation of TNR, the number of feral cats born to the community each year has been reduced to zero, some within just a few years. Research suggests that the catch and kill methodology is flawed, as the population of feral cats in communities utilizing this method continue to grow. In North Carolina, the mean decrease in the feral cat community using TNR was 36% over two years, while the population in communities that did not utilize TNR grew by 47% in the same two-year period.

In addition to reducing the population size, cats returned to the feral colony after TNR are less aggressive and display fewer mating behaviors such as yowling and spraying, making them less of a nuisance in the community. Communities where TNR has been implemented have not only seen a decrease in the feral cat population but also in the number of complaints made to animal control about feral cats. The number of complaints regarding feral cat bites or other aggressive behaviors has also decreased significantly.

TNR has shown to be effective in reducing population size of feral cats and is a more humane and efficient alternative to the “catch and kill” modality. For the above stated reasons, NYSACHO supports this legislation as it would allow the administration to allocate funds from the already existing annual population control fund to implement TNR in communities throughout the state.

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NYSAPF is the voice of New York's humane societies, municipal animal shelters and SPCAs.

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Memo of Support for A.2778 (McDonald)/S.1081 (Marchione)

Communities throughout the state have been struggling with the challenge of managing feral cat colonies, also known as “Community Cats.”

Many times the financial burden for these cats is carried by local governments through their municipal animal shelters, local humane societies and/or SPCAs. **The best way to save hard-earned taxpayer dollars and to put philanthropic dollars that support local municipal and 501-C-3 humane societies and SPCAs to the best use is to allow for a small portion of the state’s Animal Population Control Program fund to support local Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) programs in upstate New York and on Long Island.**

Evidence has shown the following:

- The strategy of trap and kill (which falls mostly on the shoulders of local municipalities and their shelters) does not work. Feral cat colonies will simply repopulate instead of disappear because it is impossible to trap and kill all the cats in a colony.
- Financially, the cost to trap and euthanize an animal runs between \$100 and \$125 compared to the low cost of TNR, which also includes vaccinations. This cost is between \$35 and \$55.
- During an 11 year study to TNR at the University of Florida, the number of cats on campus declined by 66% with no new kittens being born after the first four years of operation.
- Another program at the University of Texas A&M neutered 123 cats in its first year and found no new litters the following year.
- When communities institute TNR programs, local shelters report less cats coming in that are unadoptable and ultimately euthanized. The Mayor’s Alliance for Animals credits the City’s TNR program for the significant drop in the City’s euthanasia rates from 32,000 in 2003 to 6,000 in 2013.
- Connecticut’s TNR program has resulted in the spay/neuter of thousands of cats. Over the 16 year period that the Dept. of Agriculture’s Animal Control Division and Animal Population Control Programs have tracked statistics, the impound rate has dropped 32%, the adoption rate is down 16% (less animals means fewer adoptions) and the euthanasia rate is down 51%.

These types of statistics are within New York’s reach with the implementation of the proposed TNR Fund.

The humane societies, animal shelters and animal welfare organizations throughout upstate New York and Long Island support its establishment. Many are already using funds available from the Animal Population Control Fund to spay/neuter pets of low-income folks in the communities they serve.

They are well equipped and ready to take on the challenge of pro-active TNR programs. They know their communities, their animal advocates and their cat colonies. All that needs to happen is for the TNR fund to become a reality.



Memo of Support for A.2778/S.1081

An act in relation to community-based initiatives for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area from which they were trapped.

In 2017, the SPCA Serving Erie County will celebrate its 150th anniversary. We hope that as part of that celebration, we will be able to announce success in our local TNR initiatives. But, that will only happen if funding is made available through the state's Animal Population Control Program.

This is a budget-neutral initiative. No direct tax dollars will be used. Instead, money that comes to the Animal Population Control Program from dog licenses and other animal-based revenue will be used to fund local trap, neuter and return initiatives in order to control feral cat colonies.

If we want to actually make something happen and curtail the feral cat population, we must put some resources behind these programs. SPCAs such as our work hard each and every day to protect animals, provide health care and forever homes. We have worked diligently to bring down our rates of euthanasia and increase our rates of adoption.

Spring is popping out all over and with that will be an increase in the birth of kittens. Some of these kittens will be brought to shelters, like ours, throughout the state. Many will stay with their cat colonies and be raised as feral cats. In another year, those cats will be having kittens of their own. Trap and kill programs do not work. The numbers bear that out. Trap, Neuter and Return programs are the only way for us to truly get a handle on this quality of life issue.

TNR not only cuts down on the reproduction with these cat colonies, but it also changes cat behavior. Fighting, hissing and spraying—three main feral cat traits—are curtailed considerably when cats are spayed or neutered. The cats brought in to shelters through TNR are also vaccinated which cuts down on communicable diseases that can spread quickly within one of these cat communities.

A.2778/S.1081 is essential if we are to really make an effort to control the feral cat population in New York State. We've seen how well these programs have worked in other states across the country and in New York City. It is time for New York to join with other forward thinking states and do what's right for the cats and for our communities.

Fund the TNR program. Support A.2778/S.1081.

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**REPORT ON LEGISLATION BY THE
ANIMAL LAW COMMITTEE**

A.2778

S.1081

M. of A. McDonald

Sen. Marchione

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to community based initiatives for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area from which they were trapped.

THIS LEGISLATION IS APPROVED

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED LAW

The proposed legislation would amend subdivision 1 of section 117-a of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law to expand the scope of the Animal Population Control Program (“APCP”) to include funding to eligible entities, in coordination with community-based initiatives, for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning to the area from which they were trapped, feral cats as defined by section 11-0103(6)(e)(2) of the environmental conservation law. A new subdivision 10 would be added authorizing the allocation of twenty percent of the APCP fund balance annually for grants to such eligible entities to carry out these activities. Additionally, subdivision 3 would be amended by adding a new paragraph (d) which provides that the funding authorized by the new subdivision 10 is not available to those eligible entities receiving funding pursuant to subdivision 8 of section 117-a.

BACKGROUND

Enacted in 1995, the APCP was initially created to reduce the homeless animal population in New York State animal shelters by providing low-cost spay/neuter for dogs and cats adopted from shelters, pounds, SPCAs, humane societies and animal protective associations through a voucher/veterinary reimbursement program administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Recognizing the importance of spay/neuter as the means to control animal overpopulation and subsequently lower euthanasia, the law was amended in 2006 to offer such services to eligible low-income residents, regardless of where they obtained their pet.¹

¹ Section 117-a(1) provides in pertinent part as follows: “The purpose of this program shall be to reduce the population of unwanted and stray dogs and cats thereby reducing incidence of euthanasia and potential threats to public health and safety posed by the large population of these animals. This program shall seek to accomplish its

While the legislative intent of the APCP remained the same, the law was significantly changed with the enactment of Part T of Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2010 which required the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets to award the administration of the APCP to an eligible not-for-profit entity² and transformed the program to one in which the chosen administrative entity disbursed grants to eligible spay/neuter programs.³ As of January 1, 2011, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (“ASPCA”) became the organization responsible for the administration of the APCP as a low-cost spay/neuter grant program.

Under the current law, the allocation of APCP grants is restricted to entities providing low-cost spay/neuter services for dogs and cats *owned* by New York State residents who receive public assistance⁴ or who have adopted an animal from a qualified “designated beneficiary” (i.e. qualified nonprofit or government organization).⁵ Although the statutory purpose of the law is to reduce the population of homeless dogs and cats thereby reducing the incidence of euthanasia of cats and dogs in shelters, the APCP does not provide authority to award grants for the trap-neuter-return (“TNR”) of feral cats⁶ thereby excluding an ever increasing portion of the stray animal population. Accordingly, there is no state funding for TNR programs in New York State.

JUSTIFICATION

The number of feral cats has been reaching epidemic proportions throughout New York State and across the country.⁷ Because many of these cats are not socialized with humans, they are not candidates for adoption and therefore are almost always euthanized if and when they become part of the overcrowded animal shelter system.

purpose by encouraging residents of New York state who are the owners of dogs and cats to have them spayed or neutered by providing low-cost spaying and neutering services to such owners meeting the criteria enumerated in subdivision three of this section.”

² Section 117-a(2) provides in pertinent part as follows: “Eligible not-for-profit entities shall consist of duly incorporated societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, duly incorporated humane societies, duly incorporated animal protective associations, or duly incorporated non-profit corporations that have received designation as 501(c)(3) entities by the Internal Revenue Service and which entities are operating as animal rescue organizations, animal adoption organizations, spay/neuter clinics, or other entities whose core mission predominantly includes statewide efforts to manage the companion animal population in New York state.”

³ Section 117-a(2)(a)(b).

⁴ Section 117-a(3)(b).

⁵ Section 117-a(3)(a).

⁶ A feral cat is generally defined as a cat who has been born and raised in the wild and therefore never had any human contact or whose contact with humans has so diminished over time that he/she is no longer socialized and is unlikely to adapt to the indoors. See “Feral Cats FAQ,” ASPCA, <http://www.asPCA.org/adopt/feral-cats-faq#1> (last visited May 18, 2014). The Additional Guidelines for Proposals issued by the ASPCA specifically state that “only feral cats who are owned by New York residents who qualify for accepted forms of public assistance may receive spay/neuter services through APCP grants.” See “New York State Animal Population Control Program,” ASPCA, http://www.asPCapro.org/sites/pro/files/asPCA_guidelines_apcp.pdf (last visited May 18, 2014). Because feral cats are rarely “owned,” they are not eligible beneficiaries of the spay/neuter services subsidized by the APCP grants.

⁷ It is estimated that the number of feral cats in the United States is in the tens of millions. See “Feral Cats FAQ,” *supra*. Less than 3% of the stray and feral cats are sterilized. See *New Scientific Study Finds Vast Majority of Pet Cats Are Neutered*, Ally Cat Allies, <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=650> (last visited May 18, 2014).

As noted in the legislative findings of the proposed legislation, it is now widely accepted that TNR is the only humane and scientifically proven effective method of controlling the overpopulation of feral cats.⁸ The TNR process involves humanely trapping a feral cat, having the cat spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, identified through an ear-tip and then returned to the area where he or she was trapped. TNR provides benefits both to the cats and the community by stabilizing and then dramatically reducing over time the overall number of homeless cats and kittens through low or zero birth rate and attrition, improving the health of the cats, and eliminating nuisance behavior often attributed to unneutered cats. Such a decrease in the population ultimately results in a decline in the number of feral cats euthanized in animal shelters and a reduction in the costs to shelters and municipalities associated with handling these homeless animals.

Both individuals and private not-for-profit organizations are performing TNR activities throughout New York State, oftentimes in conjunction with local government, and are reporting a decline in the overall number of cats in those areas.⁹ In 2012, New York City recognized the concept of TNR when it adopted Local Law 59 which defines the terms “feral cat”¹⁰ and “Trap-neuter-return”¹¹ and requires the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to post on its website the names of organizations that offer TNR information and conduct TNR activities.¹²

Thus, the proposed legislation’s allocation of funds to support TNR efforts is consistent with its statutory purpose as well as the overall acceptance of TNR both by the public and private sectors as the effective and humane means of addressing the feral cat overpopulation crisis. The

⁸ Research demonstrates that removing cats from an area by killing or relocating them is inhumane and ineffective as such removal merely opens the habitat for the influx of new cats, while the existence of established feral cat colonies actually prevents new cats from entering the area. See *The Vacuum Effect: Why Catch and Kill Doesn’t Work*, Ally Cat Allies, <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=926> (last revisited May 18, 2014). See also Karyen Chu, Ph.D and Wendy M. Anderson, J.D., *U.S. Public Opinion on Humane Treatment of Stray Cats*, at <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=926> (last visited May 18, 2014).

⁹ In 2002, the ASPCA, the Humane Society of New York, Neighborhood Cats, Animal Care and Control, and the NYC Department of Corrections collaborated to resolve a feral cat crisis on Rikers Island in New York City. Within the first few months, over 90% of the cats were trapped, sterilized and returned. TNR continues on the island when necessary and, to date, the number of feral cats has been substantially reduced. See *Neighborhood Cats: Mass Trapping Program*, ASPCA, http://www.aspcapro.org/sites/pro/files/neighborhoodcats_profile_by_aspcapro_org_07_07_0.pdf (last visited May 18, 2014). A similar program has been successfully established in Rome, New York. See *The R-Cats Program in Rome, New York*, Ally Cat Allies, <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=998> (last visited May 18, 2014).

¹⁰ Section 17-802(c) of the NYC Administrative Code defines “feral cat” as “an animal of the species *felis catus* who has no owner, is unsocialized to humans and has a temperament of extreme fear of and resistance to contact with humans.”

¹¹ Section 17-802(g) of the NYC Administrative Code defines “trap-neuter-return” as a “program to trap, vaccinate for rabies, sterilize and identify feral cats and return them to the locations where they were found.”

¹² The Committee has previously recommended that “the City embrace TNR as its official policy for the humane and effective management of feral cats, educate all of its agencies as to this fact, and require these agencies to work with available nonprofit organizations engaged in TNR services to humanely remediate issues involving feral cats.” See November 2013 Letter to New York City Mayor de Blasio, available at <http://www2.nycbar.org/pdf/report/uploads/20072599-TransistionMemotoMayor-ElectBilldeBlasio.pdf>.

legislative findings of the proposed legislation note that at least 15 other state-sponsored animal population control programs (including those in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Delaware) authorize the use of spay/neuter funds to subsidize viable TNR programs.

CONCLUSION

For the forgoing reasons, the Committee supports the proposed legislation.

Reissued January 2015



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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT **A.2778 (McDonald)/S.1081 (Marchione)**

AN ACT in relation to community based initiatives for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area from which they were trapped

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and its 230,000 New York State supporters urge your favorable consideration of A.2778/S.1081, which would authorize a small portion of the state's Animal Population Control Program funding to support viable Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) projects in communities with pressing feral cat management needs. This legislation would come at no cost to state or local governments and would be consistent with similar state-sanctioned spay/neuter programs in at least 15 other states, including neighboring Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware.

Feral cats are free-roaming domestic cats who were never socialized by humans or have lived outdoors for so long that they reverted to a wild state. Adult feral cats typically cannot be handled and are not suitable for placement into homes as companion animals. As a result, cats deemed "feral" are often euthanized once admitted to animal shelters. The kittens of feral cats may be able to be handled and socialized if efforts begin when they are less than eight weeks of age.

No one knows how many free-roaming cats live in the United States, but estimates are about twenty million. Sometimes called "Community Cats," free-roaming cats are found in all areas of the country and tend to gather together in colonies. Many attempts to eradicate free-roaming cat colonies by trapping and euthanasia ultimately fail, usually at a significant cost to local government or not-for-profit stakeholders, because the removed cats are replaced through reproduction, movement of the remaining cats and the addition of lost and abandoned animals, which repopulate the vacated space. Indeed, taxpayer-funded "trap and kill" programs are extremely expensive because they lock local animal control operations into an endless and expensive cycle of catching, euthanizing and disposing of feral cats while doing nothing to actually reduce the population.

At this time the most humane, effective and financially sustainable strategy for controlling free-roaming cat populations is trap-neuter-return (TNR), whereby free-roaming cats are trapped, sterilized, vaccinated, and returned to their colony of origin. Trap-neuter-return programs have the ability to stabilize the population of a free-roaming cat colony and, over time, reduce it (Levy and Crawford, 2004; Robertson, 2008). At the same time, the objectionable spraying, vocalizing and fighting behaviors of cats in the colony are largely eliminated.

Therefore, in order to stabilize and eventually reduce the free-roaming cat population through attrition, the ASPCA supports the management of free-roaming cat colonies through TNR. It is our position that truly unsocialized, free-roaming cats are best served by focusing resources on these programs, distribution of exclusionary devices and deterrents, and public education regarding the humane management of free-roaming cats. Ideally, the management of free-roaming cat colonies should include trapping, scanning for the presence of a microchip, vaccination, sterilization, ear "tipping" (surgical

removal of the tip of one ear as a visible sign that the cat has been sterilized) and, when feasible, microchipping.

Recognition by animal control officers and shelter staff that an ear-tipped cat has already been spayed or neutered allows for healthy, unsocialized cats to remain at or to be returned to their origin, rather than be admitted to an animal shelter. TNR programs should only return cats to their origin if they are receiving adequate food, water and shelter, and should the environment be conducive to successful outdoor living. The programs should also advocate for the well-being of the cats, mediate cat-related neighborhood nuisance complaints and assist with installation of exclusionary measures or deterrents to limit cats' presence in dangerous, ecologically sensitive or contested areas.

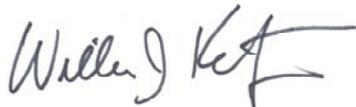
The ASPCA does not support managed colonies in ecologically sensitive areas, in areas where demolition or development is impending, where cats are being subjected to harm or abuse or, where despite best efforts, nuisance complaints cannot be satisfactorily mediated. In such cases, we recommend re-location of the colony according to the guidelines outlined by Alley Cat Allies (2005), the adoption of sociable animals and the placement of unadoptable animals into legitimate, humane sanctuaries. In addition, after the cats are removed, exclusionary measures and deterrents can be put into place to prevent immigration of new cats to the area.

As indicated in the sponsor's memorandum, the ASPCA has administered the Animal Population Control Fund under contract with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets since 2011 at absolutely no cost to the state. Since that time, we have funded extremely viable, effective and forward-thinking spay/neuter programs and invested wisely in projects that have high impact in areas of great need, as well as projects that reach more remote and less served populations.

Each year, however, we must turn away some very strong funding applications because existing statutory guidelines do not expressly authorize grants for the management of TNR programs. As we enter the fourth year of our partnership with the Department to operate this visionary grants program – and as we continue to seek out innovative, high-impact initiatives to control New York's considerable homeless animal population – we feel that it is appropriate to carefully establish the capability to fund TNR programs through the APCP that can meet our rigorous funding criteria. As the only proven humane and effective method to manage feral cat colonies, these systems can have enormous value to a community. It is our hope that the legislature will fully recognize the value of amending the law to allow such measures eligibility for funding through the APCP.

We applaud Assemblyman McDonald and Senator Marchione for introducing this forward-thinking measure and respectfully urge its swift passage before the conclusion of the 2015 legislative session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Ketzer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Ketzer
Senior Legislative Director, Northeast Region
Government Relations



Mayor's Alliance
for NYC's Animals®



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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT A.2778 (McDonald)/S.1081 (Marchione)

AN ACT in relation to community based initiatives for the purpose of trapping, neutering, vaccinating and returning feral cats to the area from which they were trapped

The Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals® (the Alliance) is a not-for-profit organization serving as the lead agency for a coalition of more than 150 animal rescue groups and shelters working with Animal Care & Control of New York City (AC&C) to end the killing of healthy and treatable cats and dogs at AC&C shelters.

The success in reducing euthanasia in this system from 32,000 cats and dogs in 2003 down to 6,000 in 2014 was due in large part to a vibrant trap-neuter-return (TNR) program that maximized the availability of low cost or free spay/neuter services. Passage of A.2778/S.1081 would ensure that spay/neuter capacity becomes available throughout New York State in its entirety – from Buffalo to Brookhaven.

If enacted, this forward-thinking measure would result in the eventual reduction in the number of cats euthanized each year at shelters statewide, the reduction of an unnecessary burden on these shelters, and result in sound, cost-effective animal welfare/public health policy.

The New York City Feral Cat Initiative (NYCFCI) is a program of the Alliance whose mission is to raise awareness about the thousands of feral and stray cats living outdoors throughout New York City's five boroughs, humanely reduce the number of stray and feral cats in NYC, and improve the lives of those cats currently living outdoors through the humane, non-lethal method of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR).

The NYCFCI supports TNR as the only effective and humane method to control and eventually reduce the stray and feral cat over-population. TNR means that the cats are trapped, spayed (females) or neutered (males), vaccinated against rabies, ear-tipped on the left ear for identification, and returned to their territory where they are provided food and shelter by their caretakers.

TNR performed consistently in a targeted neighborhood has the potential to significantly reduce intake at the city's shelters and, consequently, reduce euthanasia rates. Because feral cats are not socialized to humans, they are not candidates for adoption. In fact, most adult feral cats taken in at city shelters are killed because they are not adoptable as house pets.

Continued...

TNR is much more effective and humane than traditional trap-and-kill or trap-and-remove. Both trap-and-kill and trap-and-remove result in the "vacuum effect" where new, unaltered cats move into the emptied area and breed. Instead, TNR practices immediately stabilize a given colony and reduce tensions in the community because no new litters are being born and nuisance behaviors often associated with unaltered cats (spraying, fighting, crying) are dramatically reduced. Additionally, natural non-toxic rodent control remains in place.

For these reasons, the Alliance respectfully urges Agriculture Committee members to vote in support of this responsible, well-established animal control method, which comes at no new cost to state or local governments.



Started in 1963 to organize volunteers of the Southold Animal Shelter, the North Fork Animal Welfare League, out on the east end of Long Island, now manages two shelters—the Southold Animal Shelter and the Riverhead Animal Shelter. Both shelters care for animals by locating owners of lost animals, by finding homes for homeless animals and by providing, shelter, food, grooming, exercise and medical treatment for animals while in our care.

Memo in Support of the Bill To Create a Trap/Neuter/Release Fund Through the NYS Animal Population Control Program

The North Fork Animal Welfare League is presently responsible for 325 feral cats that live in 15 colonies in Southold Town. The League provides 1,000 pounds of food to colony caretakers each month. In Riverhead, where the League has just begun feral cat management, there are two colonies discovered so far with over 100 cats in each.

On a day to day basis, we are involved in managing feral cat colonies. We are doing the best we can with limited resources. Money is not presently available through the Animal Population Control Program for feral cat managements—it is only available for spay/neuter of cats and dogs owned by low-income individuals. It is time for us to have a program not linked to owner income but linked to the ability to manage these colonies.

The North Fork Animal Welfare League supports A.2778/S.1081. From our first-hand experience, we are convinced that a TNR fund out of the state's Animal Population Control Program—even at just 20%--will go a long way in helping organizations such as ours cut down on feral cat colonies throughout their service areas.

TNR is the only humane remedy available to humane societies, animal shelters and animal welfare organizations. The overwhelming majority of people involved in animal welfare agree that TNR is the best avenue for population control. The old, outdated method of trap and kill just doesn't work. It is expensive and ineffective.

Please join us and support this important bill. It will make a difference in the quality of life of not just these cats but all of our communities.



FERAL CAT FOCUS

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Memo in Support of A.2778/S.1081 To create a Trap/Neuter/Release Fund through the Animal Population Control Program

Feral Cat FOCUS Inc. asks you to support A.9487/S.7290 which would allow the Animal Population Control Program to fund spay/neuter projects for outdoor, feral/free roaming “community” cats.

Studies show that less than 3% of the stray and feral cat population is spayed or neutered.ⁱ A female cat can have two to three litters per year, and her offspring can start having their own litters as young as five months.ⁱⁱ

Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) is not only humane, it is cost effective. It is reported that the cost to trap, hold, and euthanize an animal is between \$100 and \$125. Low cost spay/neuter which includes vaccinations is between \$35 and \$55 per animal.ⁱⁱⁱ

New York's spay/neuter fund is not currently authorized to fund projects to sterilize feral/free roaming cats. Trap and kill has already proven to be an unsuccessful tactic to deal with the free roaming cat population. The ASPCA, The Humane Society of the United States, and Alley Cat Allies, have all endorsed TNR as the best way to manage the free roaming “community” cat population. Cities such as Indianapolis, Indiana have successfully implemented a TNR program and have consistently seen lower impound and euthanasia rates of cats resulting in saving taxpayer dollars.^{iv}

Feral Cat FOCUS strongly believes that setting aside a portion of the State’s Animal Population Control Fund to help support TNR is good for the community, good for the cats, and good for the taxpayers.

We are more than happy to provide you with more information about TNVR or answer any questions you may have.

ⁱ <https://www.alleycat.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=650>

ⁱⁱ http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/feral_cats/qa/feral_cat_FAQs.html

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/cat-behavior/stray-and-feral-cats>

^{iv} <http://indyferal.org/Literature/ImpactChart.pdf>