



7920 Norfolk Ave, Suite 600

Bethesda, MD 20814-2525

TEL: 240-482-1980

FAX: 240-482-1990

Email: media@alleycat.org

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Contact:

ELIZABETH PAROWSKI, eparowski@alleycat.org or (240) 482-1984

FRANCIE ISRAELI, frisraeli@johnadams.com or (202) 737-8400

ALLEY CAT ALLIES HELPS DEFEAT ANTI-CAT ORDINANCE

Alabama proposal would have restricted feral cat caregivers and led to more killing of cats in local shelter

BETHESDA, MD— Alley Cat Allies, the national advocate for feral and stray cats, today applauded the city commissioners of Dothan, Alabama for rejecting changes to their animal control laws that would have led to more cats being killed in a local shelter.

“We are delighted that the city commissioners saw reason and refused to pass this very poor legislation,” said Becky Robinson, president of Alley Cat Allies. “It would have set a terrible precedent. Although the proposed ordinance would have recognized outdoor cats and local feral cat colonies, it also contained layers of mandates for volunteer feral cat caregivers that were punitive and unnecessary, and would have significantly boosted the number of cats sent to and killed at the shelter.”

Another measure proposed as part of the new ordinance would have mandated licensing all companion animals in an attempt to encourage people to spay or neuter their animals, noted Robinson. “Licensing laws do not ensure animals are spayed or neutered and vaccinated, and in fact lead to the killing of more animals – animal control officers are directed to round up ‘unlicensed’ outdoor cats and kill them,” she said. “It is far more effective to subsidize low-cost spay and neuter programs.”

In 2005, volunteers at Dothan’s animal shelter and the local newspaper, “The Dothan Eagle,” spearheaded an effort to press the city to improve conditions at the shelter and hire full-time professionals to run the facility. While the city did allocate money for improvements, they also proposed an ordinance which would have encouraged the trapping and killing of feral cats.

The proposal was met with fierce opposition by “The Dothan Eagle,” as well as dozens of local feral cat caregivers and other supporters. Alley Cat Allies led a letter-writing campaign opposing the proposed law.

“The citizens of Dothan have set a great example,” said Robinson, noting that local organizations and individuals in Dothan have been helping outdoor cats and preventing litters of kittens for years with Trap-Neuter-Return – on their own time with their own money. “The next step is for the city to provide accessible, affordable, spay and neuter for all residents’ companion animals and for feral and stray cats. Preventing litters and improving the lives of outdoor cats is the only way to reduce the number of animals entering the local shelter.”

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About Alley Cat Allies

Alley Cat Allies is dedicated to ending the killing of cats and leading the movement for their humane care. Their web site is www.alleycat.org

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