

July 31, 2025

Dear Mayor Richards and Members of City Council,

Alley Cat Allies is glad to hear that the City of Festus is amended Bill No. 4832 in order to protect community cats (unowned cats who live outdoors) and allow for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), the only humane and effective approach to community cats. The City's commitment to provide TNR to 50 cats and kittens this year is both admirable and a heartening step forward. However, we remain concerned about potential restrictions, particularly regarding feeding, that will both discourage potential community cat caregivers and inhibit successful TNR.

Any restrictions on feeding community cats can have a chilling effect and are difficult to enforce, and there are more critical elements of a TNR program on which the city should focus its resources. To ensure the new bill is truly humane and effective for cats, we offer our expertise and assistance to the City of Festus.

Alley Cat Allies is the leading advocacy organization for cats with a mission to transform and develop communities to protect and improve the lives of all cats and kittens. Together with our over 1.5 million supporters, we work toward a world where cats are valued and every community has humane and effective programs and policies to defend them.

Founded in 1990, Alley Cat Allies regularly works with lawmakers, animal shelters, and the public to change attitudes and advance lifesaving laws and policies that best serve the interests of cats.

Feeding restrictions and bans do not work. They are also very difficult to enforce since they are complaint-driven and direct resources towards administrative tasks like enforcement and away from incentive-based programs that encourage sterilization. Ultimately, ineffective ordinances and policies, like feeding restrictions and bans, are a waste of taxpayer dollars.

The City of Festus should instead seek to truly support TNR. Feeding restrictions and bans interfere with TNR because organized feeding is a necessary part of the process. If caregivers are prohibited or restricted from feeding, trapping cats is far more difficult, which ultimately leads to fewer spays and neuters taking place. As a result, these laws are counterproductive to the goal of addressing the community cat population. In addition, caregivers may need to feed cats in order to trap them to provide medical care other than spay or neuter. The current language of Bill No. 4832 does not provide for this and incorporates an arbitrary 5 -day limit on feeding.

Alley Cat Allies offers support in policies that humanely and effectively address problems or concerns you have. We are happy to provide any other information that would be helpful, and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



DanaMarie Pannella
Director of Law and Policy

alleycat.org

p: 240-200-5438

e: dpannella@alleycat.org