

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

December 18, 2025

Village of Creston
100 North Main Street
PO Box 194
Creston, Ohio 44217

Dear Mayor and Village Council,

Alley Cat Allies is reaching out to express our deep concerns about Ordinance Nos. 2025-29 and 2025-30—a feeding ban against cats and a “cat at large” law. As a preliminary matter, please be advised that if these ordinances are passed by the Village of Creston, Alley Cat Allies will pursue legal action against the Village to invalidate them. The provisions of these laws are directly in conflict with state law.

In addition, the proposals are misguided. Feeding bans do not eliminate cats from an area, they penalize the people most willing to help cats and their community, and they prevent the only humane and effective approach to community cats (unowned cats who live outdoors): Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). We strongly recommend rejecting this feeding ban and urge you to support TNR instead.

Alley Cat Allies is the leader of the global movement to protect and improve cats' lives. Through our cutting-edge programs and fearless advocacy, we champion the humane treatment of all cats and kittens. We work toward a world where every cat is valued and protected and every community and shelter have policies and programs 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. We offer the opportunity to provide our expertise and resources to the Village of Creston.

Feeding Bans Are Ineffective

Feeding bans do not work, punish both the cats and the compassionate people who care for them, and are not supported by science. To cut off food from cats who are used to receiving regular meals is cruel in itself—but does not mean the cats will simply go away. Cats are territorial, bonded to their surroundings, and will not disappear simply because caring individuals can no longer legally feed them. Instead, these cats will roam further to find other food sources that are a byproduct of human habitation and activity.¹⁻² As a result, cats will become more visible in the community, which can lead to increased calls to animal control.

Feeding bans are also very difficult to enforce since they are complaint-driven. They are punitive and tend to direct resources towards administrative tasks like enforcement and away from incentive-based programs that encourage sterilization. Ultimately, ineffective ordinances and policies, like feeding bans, are a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Feeding bans interfere with TNR because organized feeding is a necessary part of the process. If caregivers are prohibited 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.

Furthermore, feeding bans punish the compassionate people who are working the hardest to improve conditions for the cats and the community. The Village of Creston residents who spend their own time and money to spay and neuter, conduct TNR, and organize foster programs for adoptable cats and kittens will be most targeted by a feeding ban. They and the cats deserve better.

A feeding ban will not make cats in the Village of Creston disappear. Instead, it will discourage well-meaning people from improving their community by caring for cats and participating in TNR because they fear legal consequences. We urge you not to penalize the compassionate cat advocates of the Village of Creston. We ask that you reject this feeding ban and support TNR instead.

Leash Laws are Ineffective

Leash laws for cats are ineffective, impossible to enforce, and incompatible with TNR, the only humane and effective approach to community cats. If such a law is enacted in the Village of Creston, it will only result in cats being impounded and killed and/or the penalization of compassionate the Village of Creston residents spending their own time, energy, and money to care for community cats.

Under a leash law, any cat not wearing a leash outdoors is a visible target. There is no reliable way to distinguish between a community cat, an owned cat allowed outdoors, and an indoor-only cat who is unintentionally outdoors.

All of these cats will therefore be at risk, along with the people who care for them. Some jurisdictions have repealed their leash laws because they found they were unenforceable and only served to pit law enforcement needlessly against citizens.

If the goal of the law is to address community complaints or disputes, that is better accomplished through facilitating discussions that result in positive outcomes for the cats and people involved. If the goal is to address populations of cats outside, the Village of Creston needs to know that community cats are at home outdoors, and it is their natural environment. They have no owner to leash them, and they generally cannot be adopted into indoor homes.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Is the Only Humane, Effective Approach

The Village of Creston should instead seek a humane and effective approach that improves both cats' lives and the community. TNR is the only answer. Through TNR, community cats are humanely trapped; brought to a veterinary clinic to be spayed or neutered, eartipped (the universal sign that a cat has been spayed or neutered through a TNR program), and vaccinated; and then returned to their original outdoor homes.

TNR is proven to stabilize community cat populations by stopping the cycle of reproduction; improve the cats' health through vaccinations; and benefit animal control agencies and shelters by reducing cat intake and calls of concern.³ Today, communities across the country have adopted TNR ordinances or policies, and advocates in thousands more communities worldwide are conducting grassroots, volunteer-led programs.

Please Reject the Proposals

As noted above, Alley Cat Allies would prefer to forego litigation and work with the Village of Creston to implement humane programs for cats, including TNR. Please contact me to discuss ways we can work together for the good of cats and the community. If the Village proceeds with Ordinance Nos. 2025-29 and 2025-30, we will move forward accordingly to address these issues.

Sincerely,



DanaMarie Pannella
Director of Law and Policy
Alley Cat Allies

¹ Haspel and Calhoon, Home Ranges of Free-Ranging Cats (*Felis catus*) in Brooklyn, New York. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* Vol 178, 1989.

² Liberg, Olaf, Mikael Sandell, Dominique Pontier, and Eugenia Natoli. "Density, Spatial Organization and Reproductive Tactics in the Domestic Cat and Other Felids." In *The Domestic Cat: The Biology of its Behaviour*, Second Edition, edited by Dennis C. Turner and Patrick Bateson, 119-148. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

³ Zaunbrecher, K.L., D.V.M., & Smith, R.E., D.V.M., M.P.H. "Neutering of feral cats as an alternative to eradication programs." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 203 no. 3 (1993).