

January 28, 2026

Mayor Cindy Johnson
City of Alpena
208 N. First Avenue
Alpena, Michigan 49707
via electronic mail only

Dear Mayor Johnson and Members of City Council,

Alley Cat Allies is reaching out to express our deep concerns about Ordinance §25-514, which is a feeding ban against cats by the City of Alpena. 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 has 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 Alpena.

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. 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.

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

The City of Alpena 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. Today, communities across the country have adopted TNR ordinances or policies, and advocates in thousands more communities worldwide are conducting grassroots, volunteer-led programs.

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. Alpena 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.

Please Reject a Feeding Ban

A feeding ban will not make cats in Alpena 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 City of Alpena. We ask that you reject this feeding ban and support TNR instead.

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,



Outreach Team
Alley Cat Allies