Alley Cat Allies

VIA ELECTRONIC EMAIL

October 29, 2026

Mayor Baronzzi Dickey and Honorable Members of the Salem City Council
231 S Broadway Ave.,
Salem, Ohio 44460

Dear Mayor Baronzzi Dickey and Honorable Members of the Salem City Council,

Alley Cat Allies is reaching out to express our concerns regarding the recently introduced amendment to Chapter 505.15 ("Management of Cat Population"), also referred to herein as Ordinance 261020-78. This amendment will subject community cat caregivers to unjust penalties by holding them to similar responsibilities as pet owners, though the current language appropriately defines them as “not being the owner, harborer, controller, or keeper of a community cat.”

Alley Cat Allies understands the city is invested in the community cat population and how they are cared for. After a thorough review of the existing language in Chapter 505.15, we have identified some provisions which may be causing caregivers to feel apprehensive about fully participating in Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) with the city.

Founded in 1990, Alley Cat Allies is the leader of the global movement to protect and improve the lives of cats. We work with lawmakers, shelters, and the public toward humane, nonlethal, and effective laws and policies that serve the best interests of cats and the communities in which they live. We offer our expertise and resources to the City of Salem.

Registration Discourages Caregivers

Currently, Chapter 505.15(a)(2) and 505.15(c)(4) codify registration requirements; caregivers must be "approved by Salem TNR Project" and the list is submitted to the Department of Health, Safety and Service Director, and the Animal Control Officer. Since they are complaint-driven, ordinances that police community cat care are very difficult to enforce. Such measures are punitive and tend to direct resources toward administrative tasks and away from incentive-based programs that encourage sterilization.

Additionally, registration requires caregivers to disclose personal, identifying information about themselves and the cats they care for, which creates concern about public harassment. These requirements also create uncertainty among caregivers because of the potential for ambiguous enforcement. As a result, TNR participation, and even routine care for community cats, decreases.

Ultimately, ineffective ordinances and policies, like Ordinance 261020-78 and existing registration requirements in Chapter 505.15, are a waste of taxpayer dollars and deter caregivers from participating in TNR.

TNR is a Community Effort

Alley Cat Allies is aware that the council appointed a volunteer coordinator to run the Salem TNR Project, but one person cannot sustain the entire program; TNR is a community effort. Community members' hesitation to participate in the Salem TNR Project could stem from registration requirements, insufficient community education, and a lack of available resources.

Alley Cat Allies is happy to help guide the creation and implementation of a sustainable TNR program for the City of Salem.

Please Reject This Ineffective Ordinance

Ordinance 261020-78 will not resolve any concerns you may have and will only discourage well-intended citizens from improving their community by caring for cats or participating in TNR because they fear legal consequences.

We urge the council to reject this unsuitable ordinance and consider a more appropriate path forward through further investment in Salem TNR Project, repealing unnecessary registration requirements, and prioritizing compassionate community education.

Alley Cat Allies would be happy to meet with the council, or a representative for the council, to provide our expertise and guidance. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Maggie Slezak, *Research and Community Change Manager*
Alley Cat Allies