23 April 2016

Dear Council Member,

As one of your constituents, I am writing to ask for your support of changes to Frederick County, Maryland Code of Ordinances, Chapter 1-5: Animals and Fowl in support of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return-Manage (TNVRM) otherwise known as just TNR.

I, as well as many other citizens of Frederick County, am very concerned about the welfare of stray and feral cats in our communities. We have spent, and continue to spend countless hours of our time along with our funds to provide veterinary care, shelter, food, and humane treatment for these cats.

Our laws don’t reflect modern knowledge or best practices in dealing with community cats. Outdated laws waste taxpayer money and cost healthy cats their lives at the shelter. Amending ordinances related to ownership, licensing, and leash/at-large laws eliminates obstacles to TNR. Requiring caretakers to meet the same legal requirements of owners of pet cats can be counter-productive to TNR. Requiring free-roaming cats to be licensed place an undue financial and administrative burden on citizens already volunteering their time and resources to care for the cats. Almost all feral cats are already at-large when efforts to implement TNR begin, so making colony caretakers responsible for confining them makes little sense if the community wants volunteers to participate in the TNR program. TNR can best succeed when laws do not deter caretaker involvement.

Stray and feral cats will always exist as they are part of our wildlife ecosystem like birds, squirrels, and rodents. These cats are helpful in our communities in that they control the spread of harmful rodents such as rats and mice. However, cat colonies, and their human neighbors benefit from careful management. Trap-Neuter-Release-Manage (TNR) programs achieve that management.

By enacting changes to our county code, you would be joining council members in cities and towns across Maryland as well as the country who are taking similar actions. A substantial number of counties and cities across MD practice or promote TNR such as Anne Arundel, Washington, Carroll, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Rockville, Laurel, as well as Arlington, Fairfax and Alexandria counties in VA.

Our volunteer work could be greatly helped with a few changes to our County animal control ordinances. We hope that you will bring these before the Frederick County Executive and Council and adopt them.

Thank you for your support,

Sincerely,

Your Name