

SCR-36

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Testimony for AEN on 3/21/2018 1:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Steve Montgomery & Anita Manning	Testifying for Conservation Council for Hawaii	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

Dear Senators,

To conserve native wildlife, cat populations must be controlled by natural resource professionals especially on lands dedicated for conservation purposes. Cat owners should be educated as to impacts to the environment of their cats and as responsible pet owners should keep them inside.

Due to evidence showing the environmental harm caused by feral cats, legislation supporting the practice of “Trap, Neuter, Release” (TNR) to maintain feral cat colonies must be opposed. Scientific studies document extensive wildlife mortality resulting from cat predation, as well as a growing risk to human health from toxoplasmosis spread by cats. Continued tolerance for roaming feral cats is [“not tenable on public health grounds”](#) because of the persistent threat posed to communities.”

Toxoplasmosis, threatens the health and welfare of people and wildlife. This disease is caused by a parasitic protozoan that depends on cats to complete its life cycle. Up to 74 percent of all cats will host the toxoplasmosis-causing parasite in their lifetime and shed hundreds of millions of infectious eggs as a result. [Studies show that any contact with cat feces](#), either direct or indirect, risks human and wildlife health. In humans the parasite often encysts within the brain, which may cause behavioral changes, and has been linked to memory loss and schizophrenia. Pregnant women may suffer sudden abortion or fetal developmental defects (e.g., blindness). Contamination of watersheds with cat feces has been linked to the infections of people, nene & alala, as well as freshwater and marine wildlife (e.g. 8 Hawaiian monk seals so far).

TNR programs cannot be relied upon as a management tool to remove cat colonies or protect people and wildlife—as multiple peer-reviewed studies, including the CDC's, have found. According to Dr.Pat Foley: “No plausible combinations of life history variables would likely allow for TNR to succeed in reducing [feral cat] population size.” [Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.2005.227.1775](#)

POOP SHEET on Cat harms of H B 2593 & SCR 36 Urgent Health Advisory: Vote NO

Every State Dept. has opposed this Feral Cat Exemption Bill since it would institutionalize releasing of cats, making public parks and waysides poop patches of polluted, unhealthy landscapes since it exempts persons releasing cats from any County or State rules on Cat confinement and feeding.

More cat colonies at community parks and beaches, even where used by canoe clubs, will expose our visitors and families, especially children and water sports enthusiasts, to the stench of daily droppings, more dung flies, and the many diseases carried by cats.

Please count the ways diseases and taxpayer liability will increase:

1. *Toxoplasma* is a contaminant on the order of [DDT](#), which [lingers in the environment](#) for years where it can threaten human and animal health. The Toxoplasmosis threat makes outdoor cats nothing less than a public health issue.

2. Giardia Infection is common in cats & dogs via Cyst shed in poop as the infective stage, which can survive for weeks in the environment. Cats have been reported to carry parasite genotypes found primarily in humans. Transmission occurs by the fecal-oral route, either by direct contact with an infected host or through a contaminated environment. Infections with *Giardia* are due to excretion of very resistant cysts by infected cats, resulting in a gradual increase in environmental infection pressure. Cysts are a source of reinfection for animals, particularly those in crowded conditions (e.g., catteries).

3. *Cryptosporidium hominis & felis* cysts are a source of reinfection for animals, particularly those in crowded conditions (e.g. catteries). Feces should be removed as soon as possible (at least daily) and disposed of securely. Infected animals should be bathed to remove cysts from the hair coat. Prompt and frequent removal of feces limits environmental contamination.

4. Hookworms (*Ancylostoma*) are worms that live in animals and can be transmitted to humans. Cats can become infected with several hookworms then eggs are shed in poop to contaminate the ground. People become infected when hookworm larvae penetrate unprotected skin, especially when walking barefoot or sitting on contaminated soil or sand. This results in disease when larvae migrate through skin causing inflammation. Wearing shoes and avoiding skin contact with sand or soil helps prevent infection. In subtropical climates, especially on beaches, wear shoes to prevent skin contact with sand. Routine veterinary care of cats, including regular deworming, will reduce environmental contamination with hookworms. Prompt disposal of animal feces to prevent eggs from hatching and contaminating soil is vital for control of this parasite (cdc.gov/parasites/zoonotichookworm)

TNR (trap-sterilize-return) is also terrible for cats themselves, so much so that PETA has come out against it. Cats get sick and good cat owners take them to a vet, but feral cats, once they are TNR'd, tend not to be easy to catch again. Feral cat colonies

encourage more animal abandonment & dumping of pets on public lands worsens. The Lanai private cattery is a much better model. Please Vote No.

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