

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

June 25, 2024

FROM

JOSHUA DUGAS, Director, Department of Public Health

SUBJECT

Ordinance Relating to Changes to Existing Laws Necessary to Implement a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return Program

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Consider proposed ordinance relating to existing laws concerning control, impoundment, and abandonment of cats necessary to implement a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return program.
2. Make alterations, if necessary, to the proposed ordinance.
3. Approve introduction of the proposed amended ordinance.
 - An ordinance of San Bernardino County, State of California, to amend Chapters 1, 2, and 12 of Division 2 of Title 3 of the San Bernardino County Code relating to existing laws concerning control, impoundment, and abandonment of cats necessary to implement a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return program.
4. SCHEDULE ORDINANCE FOR FINAL ADOPTION ON TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024, on the Consent Calendar.
5. Find that the proposed amended ordinance is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15061 – Common Sense Exemption.
6. Direct the Department of Public Health to file the Notice of Exemption in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

(Presenter: Joshua Dugas, Director, 387-9146)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Promote the Countywide Vision.

Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This item will not result in the use of Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). The update to the ordinance will allow the Department of Public Health (DPH) to operate a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return program, also known as the Community Cat Program. The Community Cat Program will allow residents to trap, spay/neuter, vaccinate and return to the community, cats living in the unincorporated areas of the county without violation of County laws regarding abandonment and control of animals as currently written. The update to the ordinance is non-financial in nature. Contracts associated with Community Cat Program services will be brought to the Board of Supervisors (Board) separately.

**Ordinance Relating to Changes to Existing Laws Necessary to Implement a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return Program
June 25, 2024**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The DPH Animal Care Division provides animal care services for residents in the unincorporated areas throughout San Bernardino County. DPH is working to implement a new widespread program to enhance services through robust outreach and education, spay and neuter vouchers to residents, a kitten foster program, and a Community Cat Program. These new and enhanced initiatives are expected to be fully operational in the fall of 2024. In order to provide sterilization and vaccination care to community cats, DPH proposes an update to the San Bernardino County Code.

Revisions to the San Bernardino County Code are necessary because, as currently written, it is ambiguous if an individual or rescue that returns a community cat to the outside area where it was originally collected would be in violation of the County's laws concerning control and abandonment of animals.

Community cats are described as free-roaming cats who may be cared for by residents of the immediate area. They consist of a mixture of feral cats, semi-socialized cats, and occasionally abandoned pets. In a community cat colony, one unspayed female cat can have approximately three litters of kittens each year. When these cats are spayed/neutered and vaccinated, it improves their health by reducing unwanted litters, fighting, and the incidence of disease.

The Community Cat Program works to reduce the incidence of healthy community cats being euthanized at the County shelters, which is a key component of the initiative. Once spayed or neutered and vaccinated, the cat will be identifiable by an ear notch indicating that they can no longer reproduce and have been vaccinated. Community members will make an appointment, at no cost, with a DPH veterinary contractor, mobile unit, or obtain a spay/neuter voucher, to have the healthy community cat sterilized and vaccinated, then return it to its outdoor home. This would not eliminate the ability to pick up cats or kittens should they be found to be creating a health and safety concern, or on the rare occasion for nuisance reasons.

With the proposed change to the County Code, a resident who returns a community cat to the outside area from where it was collected, following treatment in the Community Cat Program, will not have violated the County's laws concerning control and abandonment of animals. These updates will allow community cats to be sterilized and vaccinated without being transported and kept in a County shelter. Implementation of the Community Cat Program will improve the health and well-being of cats throughout the region, and reduce the need for shelter resources, allowing DPH to care for more sick and injured animals. DPH is in the process of securing additional veterinary contractors to provide Community Cat Program services throughout the county.

The proposed ordinance would amend the County Code for the purpose of regulating how community cats are to be controlled and when it is permissible to release them into the outside environment in which they have already been living. Therefore, the ordinance is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because it can be determined with certainty that the proposed ordinances will not have a significant effect on the environment.

PROCUREMENT

Not applicable.

**Ordinance Relating to Changes to Existing Laws Necessary to
Implement a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return Program
June 25, 2024**

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Daniel Pasek, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on May 31, 2024; Finance (Carl Lofton, Administrative Analyst, 387-5404) on June 5, 2024; and County Finance and Administration (Robert Saldana, Deputy Executive Officer, 387-5423) on June 8, 2024.

**Ordinance Relating to Changes to Existing Laws Necessary to
Implement a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return Program
June 25, 2024**

Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County

APPROVED (CONSENT CALENDAR)

Moved: Curt Hagman Seconded: Joe Baca, Jr.
Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Jesse Armendarez, Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.

Lynna Monell, CLERK OF THE BOARD

BY 
DATED: June 25, 2024



cc: File- Final BAI
JLL 06/25/2024