

Exhibit A



We support the City of Sparks' proposal to ban feral cat colonies within the City of Sparks. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is very concerned about the serious negative effects of feral cats on native wildlife because of both direct predation and disease transmission. Feral and free-ranging domestic cats are exotic species to North America. Exotic species are recognized as one of the most widespread and serious threats to the integrity of native wildlife populations and natural ecosystems. A growing body of literature is increasingly documenting these effects. For example, a 2013 study showed that feral cats are responsible for an estimated 1.4 to 3.7 billion bird deaths and 6.9 – 20.7 billion mammal deaths annually in the United States (Loss et al., 2013). The majority of these birds are protected by Federal law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The impact of predation by feral cats not only affects species by direct predation, but also increases competition with native predators for the same prey populations.

In addition to predation, NDOW is seriously concerned about disease transmission, both for human and wildlife populations. Diseases such as rabies and Toxoplasmosis may be transmitted to humans and wildlife, and feral cats have been identified as vectors for avian flu. Feral cats may be reservoirs for parasites such as roundworms and fleas. Additionally, a study in Florida found that 75 percent of cats within a colony were infected with hookworms, a parasite known to affect humans and other wildlife. One time vaccinations do not adequately solve the disease issue. For example, as any pet owner knows, cats need to get rabies shots periodically over their lives in order to maintain immunity against the disease.

Feral cats should not be released after capture for many reasons, including their impact on native wildlife and their own health and well-being. However if cats must be released, at a minimum, feral cat colonies should be prohibited near or in any conservation area, state or federal land (including National Park Service, National Forest, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management), wetlands or any other lands managed for wildlife. Additionally, any colony should be adequately tracked and monitored, documenting the numbers of cats, the conditions of cats, and a decrease in numbers over time. All colony locations should be maintained in a central database with a central point of contact. These measures can help minimize the impacts that feral cats have on our native wildlife.

Thank you.

Citation:

Loss, Scott R., Tom Will, and Peter P. Marra. 2013. The Impact of Free-ranging Domestic Cats on Wildlife in the United States. *Nature Communications* 4: #1396.

Exhibit B



Shaping the future for birds

July 22, 2015

City Council
City Hall
431 Prater Way
Sparks, NV 89431

RE: Feral Cat Control

Dear Mayor Martini and Council Members:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy (ABC), I am writing to urge your support for an ordinance that would prohibit establishing and maintaining feral cat colonies in the City of Sparks. An abundance of scientific evidence and professional organizations have clearly determined that cat colonies, maintained under trap, neuter, release (TNR) programs, are ineffective in reducing feral cat numbers, contribute to unsustainable predation on sensitive wildlife, and undermine public health and safety.

TNR Does Not Reduce Feral Cat Populations

Despite good intentions, TNR programs do not effectively reduce feral cat populations. Rather than slowly disappearing, scientific studies have identified that colonies persist and the number of cats may actually increase.^{i,ii,iii} Behavioral changes associated with spaying and neutering and the supplemental feeding of feral cat colonies under TNR “care” has been shown to attract stray cats and lead to the increased abandonment of pets by irresponsible owners, resulting in a waste of “money, time, and energy.”ⁱⁱⁱ The results of an evaluation of two long-term TNR programs in California and Florida led a team of researchers to conclude that “no plausible combination of [conditions] would likely allow for TNR to succeed in reducing population size.”^{iv}

Feral Cat Colonies Threaten Wildlife

Domestic cats are a non-native species that impose considerable ecological damage and have contributed to the extinction of 33 species.^v The International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists cats among the world’s worst invasive species globally, and the Department of Interior’s State of the Birds 2014 Report recognized outdoor cats as the number one source of direct, human-caused mortality for birds.^{vi,vii} Every year in the United States, outdoor cats kill approximately 2.4 billion birds and 12.3 billion mammals.^{viii}

Unfortunately, feeding cats does not eliminate this instinctive hunting behavior.^{ix} Moreover, even when cats do not directly kill wildlife, their mere presence has been shown to result in a reduction in the feeding of nesting chicks by one-third and an increased likelihood of nest failure by an order of magnitude.^x Not only are these wildlife species public trust resources, many are also protected by a variety of state and federal laws including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and

the Endangered Species Act. To support a program that intentionally releases non-native predators into an environment with known endangered species is a potentially severe legal liability.

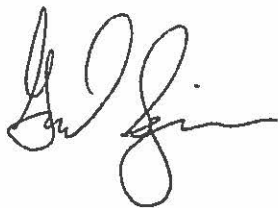
Feral Cat Colonies Threaten Public Health

Permitting and maintaining feral cats roaming in parks and neighborhoods is a recognized risk by public health scientists, agencies, and professional organizations such as the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians.^{xi} Cats carry a number of diseases including plague, typhus, and cat-scratch disease. Cats are also consistently the number one carrier of rabies among domestic animals and pose a “disproportionate risk for potential human exposure.”^{xii} Indeed, the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control advises that all stray cats be removed from the community.^{xiii} Even when TNR programs incorporate rabies vaccinations, required booster shots necessary to ensure public safety are almost never administered.^{xiv}

Cats also spread the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, which causes toxoplasmosis. This parasite is excreted by cats into the environment through feces, effectively contaminating soil and waterways. Although cats are the only definitive hosts for the parasite, all warm-blooded species can be infected with toxoplasmosis, and studies have linked such infections in deer with nearby feral cat colonies in TNR programs.^{xv} Although once thought to only harm people with compromised immune systems, new research has shown that even healthy adults are at risk. Toxoplasmosis has been linked to schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s, obsessive compulsive disorder, and other neuro-degenerative diseases and can cause sudden abortion, fetal abnormalities, and death.^{xvi,xvii} Furthermore, a new study has documented “remarkable” working memory performance reductions in seniors 65 and older that test positive for the parasitic disease.^{xviii} TNR programs actually facilitate the spread of *T. gondii*, and such conditions can lead to epidemics of toxoplasmosis in North America.^{xviii}

Based on the overwhelming evidence that invariably indicates the failure of TNR and the need to remove feral cat colonies, ABC urges your support for an ordinance that prohibits establishing and maintaining such colonies. Rather than maintain hordes of roaming feral cats, the City would be better served by treating cats like dogs and effectively removing these feral animals. If ABC can be of any help to you, please let me know.

Thank you for your consideration,



Grant Sizemore, M.S., AWB®
Director of Invasive Species Programs
American Bird Conservancy

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- ⁱ Castillo D. and A. L. Clarke. 2003. Trap/Neuter/Release methods ineffective in controlling domestic cat "colonies" on public lands. *Natural Areas Journal* 23: 247-253.
- ⁱⁱ Natoli E., L. Maragliano, G. Cariola, A. Faini, R. Bonnani, S. Cafazzo, and C. Fantini. 2006. Management of feral domestic cats in the urban environment of Rome (Italy). *Preventive Veterinary Medicine* 77: 180-185.
- ⁱⁱⁱ McCarthy R. J., S. H. Levine, and J. M. Reed. 2013. Estimation of effectiveness of three methods of feral cat population control by use of a simulation model. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 243: 502-511.
- ^{iv} Foley P., J.E. Foley, J.K. Levy, and T. Paik. 2005. Analysis of the impact of trap-neuter-return programs on populations of feral cats. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 227: 1775-1781.
- ^v Medina F.M., E. Bonnaud, E. Vidal, B.R. Tershy, E.S. Zavaleta, C.J. Donlan, B.S. Keitt, M. Le Corre, S.V. Horwath, and M. Nogales. 2011. A global review of the impacts of invasive cats on island endangered vertebrates. *Global Change Biology* 17: 3503-3510.
- ^{vi} Lowe S., M. Browne, S. Boudjelas, and M. De Poorter. 2000. 100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species: A Selection from the Global Invasive Species Database. The Invasive Species Specialist Group, International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
- ^{vii} North American Bird Conservation Initiative, U.S. Committee. 2014. The State of the Birds 2014 Report. U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 16 pages.
- ^{viii} Loss S.R., T. Will, and P.P. Marra. 2013. The impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wildlife of the United States. *Nature Communications* 4:1396.
- ^{ix} Adamec R.E. 1976. The interaction of hunger and preying in the domestic cat (*Felis catus*): an adaptive hierarchy? *Behavioral Biology* 18: 263-272.
- ^x Bonnington C., K.J. Gaston, and K.L. Evans. 2013. Fearing the feline: domestic cats reduce avian fecundity through trait-mediated indirect effects that increase nest predation by other species. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 50: 15-24.
- ^{xi} National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. 1996. Free-roaming/Unowned/Feral Cats. Position Statement. <http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/pdf/NASPHV%201996%20-%20Free-roaming,%20unowned,%20feral%20cats.pdf>.
- ^{xii} Roebing A. D., D. Johnson, J. D. Blanton, M. Levin, D. Slate, G. Fenwick, and C. E. Rupprecht. 2013. Rabies prevention and management of cats in the context of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release programmes. *Zoonoses and Public Health* doi: 10.1111/zph.12070.
- ^{xiii} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2011. 2011. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 60: 1-17.
- ^{xiv} Barrows P.L. 2004. Professional, ethical, and legal dilemmas of trap-neuter-release. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 225: 1365-1369.
- ^{xv} Ballash G.A., J.P. Dubey, O.C.H.Kwok, A.B. Shoben, T.L. Robison, T.J. Kraft, and P.M. Dennis. 2014. Seroprevalence of *Toxoplasma gondii* in white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and free-roaming cats (*Felis catus*) across a suburban to urban gradient in northeastern Ohio. *EcoHealth*. doi: 10.1007/s10393-014-0975-2.
- ^{xvi} Torrey E.F. and R.H. Yolken. 2013. *Toxoplasma* oocysts as a public health problem. *Trends in Parasitology* 29: 380-384.
- ^{xvii} Gajewski P.D., M. Falkenstein, J.G. Hengstler, and K. Golka. 2014. *Toxoplasma gondii* impairs memory in infected seniors. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* 36: 193-199.
- ^{xviii} Boyer K., D. Hill, E. Mui, K. Wroblewski, T. Karrison, J.P. Dubey, M. Sautter, A.G. Noble, S. Withers, C. Swisher, P. Heydemann, T. Hosten, J. Babiarz, D. Lee, P. Meier, and R. McLeod. 2011. Unrecognized ingestion of *Toxoplasma gondii* oocysts leads to congenital toxoplasmosis and causes epidemics in North America. *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 53: 1081-1089.

Exhibit C



August 10, 2015

The Honorable Geno Martini, Mayor of Sparks
Honorable Members of the Sparks City Council

**Via e-mail: gmartini@cityofsparks.us; jratti@cityofsparks.us;
clawson@cityofsparks.us; rsmith@cityofsparks.us;
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Dear Mayor Martini and Council Members,

We hope you are well. PETA supports the city's efforts to prevent cat abandonment with the introduction of a zoning ordinance to discourage hoarding animals outdoors (20.03.005 Animals: C. Prohibited Practices; Non-Domestic Animals). PETA is an animal-protection organization, so the growing popularity of programs that collect, sterilize, and then re-abandon cats (often called trap/neuter/release [TNR]) deeply concerns us. Public officials should be concerned about the practice for a number of reasons unrelated to animal welfare, e.g., potential liability exposure when taxpayers are denied assistance with removing cats from their properties, the spread of rabies and other zoonotic diseases, and more.

TNR programs conflict with the mission of public-health and safety agencies. According to the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, "[N]o evidence exists that maintained cat colonies adequately reduce human public health risks or appropriately address their impact on pets or native wildlife. Several reports suggest that support of 'managed cat colonies' may increase the public's likelihood of abandoning unwanted pets in lieu of more responsible options."¹ Phoenix College in Arizona decided to end its TNR program because, according to a spokesperson, "[i]nstead of stabilizing the population, it has doubled, creating an unhealthy situation for the cats and the community."² After experimenting with a pilot TNR program, the city of Parry Sound, Florida, recently reconsidered allowing the practice, because, as a council member noted, "the number of feral cats appears to be increasing—as does the noise, smell and general nuisance."³

A study published in the peer-reviewed public health journal *Zoonoses and Public Health* found that "[f]ree-roaming cat populations have been identified as a significant public health threat and are a source for several zoonotic diseases including rabies, toxoplasmosis, ... plague, tularemia and murine typhus" and

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¹"Free-Roaming/Unowned/Feral Cats," Position Statement, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Sept. 1996 <<http://www.inrealitycheck.com/media/NASPHV.pdf>>

²Eugene Scott, "Phoenix College Ending Feral-Cat Program, to Remove Animals," AZCentral.com, 7 Feb. 2014 <http://www.azcentral.com/community/phoenix/articles/20140129phoenix-college-ending-feral-cat-program.html?click_check=1>.

³Stephannie Johnson, "Town Council Tires of Feral Cat Problem," ParrySound.com, 15 Oct. 2014 <<http://www.parrysound.com/news-story/4915139-town-council-tires-of-feral-cat-problem/>>

that "free-roaming cats account for the most cases of human rabies exposure among domestic animals and account for approximately 1/3 of rabies postexposure prophylaxis treatments in humans in the United States."⁴

In 2011, an 8-year-old girl contracted rabies, likely from an infected homeless cat roaming the grounds of her school in Humboldt County, California.⁵ The Southern Nevada Health District reports: "Domestic pets, particularly house cats, may carry plague-infected fleas ... and occasionally transmit infection by their bites or scratches. Occasionally, cats or humans infected with plague pharyngitis or pneumonia may spread plague in airborne droplets."⁶ (Note: Feral cats are domestic house cats who have not been appropriately socialized. They are the same species and are identical physically and genetically.) In July 2012, an Oregon man had to have his fingers and toes amputated after contracting the plague from his cat, who was allowed to roam outdoors. That same year, the police department in Santa Ana, California, alerted the community to flea-borne typhus in the area, and feral cats were considered a key threat in its spread.

TNR programs are also in direct conflict with Nevada Criminal Law, Chapter 574, Cruelty to Animals, which forbids animal abandonment and requires the owners of cats and other animals to provide their animal companions with humane and adequate care. In a December 3, 2013, opinion, the Washoe County District Attorney's Office stated: "The Nevada law in this area is very straightforward. The release of the feral cats after being captured is an abandonment of that animal and that act violates NRS 574.100 and/or 574.110. NRS 574.100."⁷

It's also of serious consequence that roaming cats terrorize and kill countless birds and other wildlife who are not equipped to deal with such predators. A 2013 *New York Times* article reports that feral cats account for the majority of cat-caused wildlife deaths in the U.S., an astounding "2.4 billion birds and 12.3 billion mammals a year, most of them native mammals like shrews, chipmunks and voles rather than introduced pests like the Norway rat."⁸ The American Bird Conservancy reports that "[c]at predation is one of the reasons why one in three American bird species are in decline."⁹

Allowing the presence and growth of colonies of homeless cats doesn't just endanger wildlife and public health. It also sends a dangerous—and wrong—message to the public, because it implies that cats can and do thrive outdoors without daily attention, parasite prevention, regular veterinary medical care, adequate and safe shelter, and more. **Nothing could be more untrue.**

We receive countless reports of incidents in which cats—"managed" or not—suffer and die horribly because they must fend for themselves outdoors. PETA's caseworkers routinely handle cruelty cases involving "outdoor cats" who have been poisoned, shot, mutilated, tortured, set afire, skinned alive, or killed in other cruel ways, often by property owners or neighbors who just didn't want the cats there, regardless of the cats' reproductive and/or vaccination status. Some recent cases in Nevada include a cat

⁴R.W. Gerhold and D.A. Jessup, "Zoonotic Diseases Associated With Free-Roaming Cats," 16 Mar., 2012 <<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/681002-zoonotic-diseases-associated-with-free-roaming.html>>

⁵"Recovery of a Patient From Clinical Rabies—California, 2011," CDC.gov <<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6104a1.htm>>

⁶"Health Topics Plague," SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org <<http://southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/health-topics/plague.php>>

⁷Richard Gammick, Washoe County District Attorney to Lieutenant Robert Smith, Animal Control Supervisor, December 3, 2013, Re: Public Records Request.

⁸Natalie Angier, "That Cuddly Kitty Is Deadlier Than You Think," *The New York Times*, 29 Jan. 2013 <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/30/science/that-cuddly-kitty-of-yours-is-a-killer.html?_r=4&g>

⁹Elizabeth Weise, "House Cats Kill More Critters Than Thought," *USA Today*, 7 Aug. 2012 <<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/story/2012-08-06/house-cats-kill/56831262/1>>

in Las Vegas who was shot and killed while sitting on a wall as his horrified owner watched;¹⁰ a cat who was roaming outdoors unattended in Elkton and was taken by a man to a deserted location where the animal was stomped on and then decapitated with a sword;¹¹ and a man in Indian Hills who was arrested after shooting and beheading a feral cat who had taken refuge under his house.¹²

Cats are not safe outdoors.

PETA supports the proposed zoning ordinance to prohibit outdoor animal hoarding. We also hope you will consider passing ordinances that further protect cats by requiring that all owned cats be spayed or neutered (unless owners purchase a breeding permit) and prohibiting cats from roaming at large. I can be reached at 443-320-1277 or TeresaC@peta.org.

Thank you for all your hard work for the citizens of Sparks.

Very truly yours,



Teresa Chagrin
Animal Care and Control Specialist
Cruelty Investigations Department
443-320-1277
TeresaC@peta.org

cc: Chet Adams, City Attorney (cadams@cityofsparks.us)

¹⁰Christine Kim, "Owner, Neighbors Stunned After Cat Shot in Backyard," News3LV.com, 26 Feb. 2015

<http://www.news3lv.com/content/news/story/las-vegas-cat-shot-killed-torrey-pines-alta/5h4r9xxU_0WU6SClkqOglUA.aspx>

¹¹Dylan Woolf Harris, "Man Accused of Torturing, Killing Cat Arrested," 21 Mar. 2014 <http://elkodaily.com/news/man-accused-of-torturing-killing-cat-arrested/article_443af47e-b15e-11e3-a435-001a4bcf887a.html>

¹²Erik Ortiz, "Nevada Man Guilty of Beheading Cat Gets Jail Time and Must Volunteer at Animal Shelter," 26 Sept. 2012, NYDailyNews.com <<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/nevada-man-guilty-beheading-cat-jail-time-volunteer-animal-shelter-article-1.1168508>>