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## Will Los Angeles Ban Feral Cats, TNR For Environmental Pollution, Along With Plastic Bags?



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By Phyllis M Daugherty, Thu, October 02, 2014

California Gov. Jerry Brown signed the nation's first statewide ban on single-use plastic bags at grocery and convenience stores into law yesterday, September 30, 2014, driven to action by pollution in streets and waterways, according to CA.gov.

"This bill is a step in the right direction — it reduces the torrent of plastic polluting our beaches, parks and even the vast ocean itself," Brown declared in a signing statement.

### LOS ANGELES 'LARGEST CITY TO BAN PLASTIC BAGS'

Los Angeles was credited with providing the momentum for the statewide plastic-bag legislation, said Senator Alex Padilla. In fact, on July 1, 2014, Los Angeles was proclaimed by the Daily News to be the largest city in the country to celebrate enactment of a ban to plastic bags—"a toxic threat that pollutes waterways and endangers millions of marine mammals and fish and does not deserve existence in a socially enlightened city," the Council members stated.

Shortly thereafter, the L.A. City Council banned e-cigarettes, which have thus far have no determination of negative impact on the environment, but "might" later prove to have toxic effects from second-hand vapors, according to activists and some members of the Council.

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT OF FERAL CAT POOP

Ironically, at the same time the City was cleaning up even potential threats to the environment, Councilman Paul Koretz, who chairs the Council's Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee, championed an effort to gain environmental clearance for a citywide "cat program." This program would legalize TNR (Trap/Neuter/Release) and colonization of feral cats adjacent to private property citywide and rescind the legal rights of property owners to remove the cats.

The article discussed that a six-year study of over 5,000 dead marine mammals in the Pacific Northwest (dolphins, porpoises, sea otters, seals, sea lions and three species of whale) found that many of them suffered from encephalitis (brain swelling) long associated with *Toxoplasma gondii*, a single-celled parasite. (National Institutes of Health, 2011.)

It concludes that the “issue at hand is the feces from outdoor cats.”

Apparently this was no surprise to scientists and those in the health-care industry, but it seems to have totally eluded politicians and animal activists, who claim to be protectors of the environment while promoting TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release of feral cats.)

## A GIANT LITTERBOX

Rick Nathanson of the Albuquerque Journal published a “wake-up” article, entitled, “One Giant Litterbox” in which he examines the effects of Albuquerque’s official feral cat/TNR (trap-neuter-release) program on people.

Nathanson acknowledges that it is usually taboo to consider other than the “unproven relief” TNR allegedly provides animal shelters which do not want to take in hundreds/thousands of unsocialized, unadoptable stray/feral cats in the world of “No Kill,” but will not tolerate euthanizing them.

In his article, Albuquerque resident Mendy Mills shares with Nathanson that this will be the second summer she is unable to use her swamp cooler because of the smell caused by feral cats climbing on her roof and spraying the cooler and around her roof. The pungent odor is then heightened and circulated throughout her house by the swamp cooler, she said.

Ms. Mills tells him that she has spent around \$1,000 to replace plants ruined by cat urine and digging up soil that has become a litter box for feral cats, plus additional costs to replace outdoor furniture and other items targeted by spraying cats.

“Exactly how does spaying or neutering these animals solve my immediate problem?” Mendy Mills of Albuquerque asked the Journal reporter

## DO POLITICIANS CONSIDER MARINE POLLUTION, PUBLIC HEALTH IN ENDORSING TNR?

According to Scientific American Magazine in its May 2013 issue, up to one-quarter of people in the U.S. house the *T.gondii* parasite. The report states that owners flushing cat feces down toilets, and feces being washed from soil into waterways that flow to the ocean are main causes of *T. gondii* entering the marine environment.

Feral cat colonies concentrate cat feces wherever they are established.

“Caretakers” release/relocate roaming TNR cats in both residential and commercial areas with the blessing and even encouragement of political leaders. There is no evidence that public health or marine life are being considered.

Are America’s cities becoming giant toxic litter boxes that drain into our waterways and the ocean—a silent killer of marine mammals?

Are Los Angeles and other cities ignoring the toxic effects maintaining large concentrations of feral cats in colonies can have on marine life and the environment, or does their concern end with plastic bags?

- See more at: <http://www.opposingviews.com/i/society/animal-rights/will-los-angeles-ban-feral-cats-tnr-environmental-pollution-along-plastic#sthash.BBf1Mj5v.dpuf>

In other words, almost any residential backyard, multi-unit or business properties in Los Angeles could become a litter box for dozens of feral cats, and property owners would have no legal right to object or interfere. (But, they would have to pick up the cat poop!)

Every year, 1.2 million metric tons of cat feces are deposited in the US, raising the risk of infection with the *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite, researchers from the Stanley Medical Research Institute and Johns Hopkins University Medical Center reported in *Trends in Parasitology* (July 10th, 2013 issue).

Feral cats contribute heavily to the 1.2 million metric tons, much of which finds its way into waterways and the ocean, according to experts.

"Some cat feces are contaminated with *Toxoplasma gondii*, a protozoan known to cause toxoplasmosis epidemics in healthy individuals, not just patients with weakened immune systems and pregnant mothers," the study found.

"The accumulation of *Toxoplasma gondii* oocysts, found in cat feces, may be a much bigger problem than we realize because of their apparent long life and their association with some diseases," stated Co-author, E. Fuller Torrey."

Torrey said authorities need to gain better control of cat populations, especially feral cats, *Medical News Today* reported.

#### WILL LOS ANGELES BE THE FIRST CITY TO BAN TNR AND FERAL CATS?

Now the question is, will the City of Los Angeles be the first to ban Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) of feral cats if the cats and their poop are determined to be equal, or exceed, the environmental/marine life damage attributed to plastic bags or the potential danger of vapors from e-cigs?

To get a closer look at cat poop and the possible implications for home or business owners near a TNR colony, "The Scoop on Poop" provides more graphic information than you probably want at: <http://www.catdocmaine.com/catfeces.html>

The fundamental argument by feral cat (TNR) enthusiasts is that the feral cats are in the streets anyway and spaying or neutering reduces their numbers. However, no conclusive evidence has proven that theory. With a steady diet, vaccinations, and not having to engage in dangerous searches for food and shelter, some experts say it is just as likely that reducing reproduction is offset by increased life span and also by other abandoned cats that are attracted to caretakers' feeding stations and continue to have litters because they are not "fixed" and are too clever or fearful to be trapped.

#### HOW MANY FERAL CATS ARE THERE IN THE U.S.?

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) estimates that the population of feral cats is 60 million, and growing; and that, across the United States, approximately 17 million caretakers tend to 35 million cats.

The median age of feral cat caretakers ('feeders') of thousands of feral cat colonies in cities and rural areas across the country, is 43.2, according to a Tufts University study, which the Feral Cat Caretakers' Coalition quotes on its website. So we are not just talking about a few "crazy cat ladies."

#### 'DEADLY CAT FECES' KILLING MARINE MAMMALS

The effect of the toxic waste generated by this huge number of roaming, outdoor cats was the subject of an April 2013, MSN article, 'Deadly cat feces killing thousands of marine mammals.'