

Legislation - What's Hot

By Joan Miller, CFA Legislative Information Liaison

Why the CFA Legislative Group opposes ALL mandatory spay/neuter laws with "breeder permits"

Ordinance proposals introduced in cities or counties often seem innocuous to breeders of pedigreed cats. If the law only affects large commercial breeders, it may even sound reasonable. For many years we've watched legislation that starts with breeder licensing ONLY for the largest most commercial profit-driven facilities. CFA breeders, believing such a proposal will not hurt their small breeding program, remain apathetic. With little opposition the law is usually enacted. Suddenly, a few years later we are faced with amendments that seriously impact the small home breeders of pedigreed cats.

The City of St. Louis "Board Bill" #107 is, unfortunately, a perfect example. Alderwoman Lyda Krewson introduced the ordinance in June 2011. It includes drastic changes to existing law. There was one hearing in September and, as far as we know, Krewson is currently attempting to secure enough support to bring it to a vote.

BB 107 is a mandatory spay/neuter law. Anyone who wants to keep an intact pet cat or dog must apply for a "hobby breeding permit", microchip their pet and pay an annual \$200 license fee. St. Louis already mandates sterilization of all at-large animals. St. Louis also has an existing "hobby breeding permit" as well as an existing "commercial breeding permit". This bill, however, changes the number of intact females a hobby breeder can own from 10 to 2. A "commercial breeder" remains defined as a person who "harbors more than 1 intact female" for the "primary purpose of breeding animals for sale". The new ordinance requires "commercial breeders" to also be licensed by the State Dept. of Agriculture. BB 107 means that all breeders with only 1 intact female would have to argue their motives for breeding or acquire a commercial license. The state animal facility laws are rigid and inappropriate for cats in a home environment. A breeder who owns more than 2 intact females would be required to be licensed as a commercial breeder. Further complicating the situation is the existing law that allows only 4 animals in a residential zone unless one has a commercial breeding license or a "noncommercial kennel permit". The noncommercial permit allows up to 8 animals, but they can't be sold or used for breeding. Most breeders of pedigreed cats will keep more than 2 intact females and will own more than the 4 animals allowed in a residential zone. Therefore the new proposed ordinance will make any small home breeders of pedigreed cats "commercial" facilities in St. Louis.

The mandatory spay/neuter requirement, and required microchip ID, would also impact any trap/neuter/return (TNR) efforts for feral cats. When a person "harbors" a domestic animal for more than 7 consecutive days in St. Louis they are the "owner". Feral and free-roaming homeless cats will simply be ignored and continue to reproduce.

We have alerted fanciers in Missouri but so far have not heard from anyone living in the City of St. Louis. We fear that this ordinance may move to other cities if it passes. Breeders of intact pedigreed cats are not the cause of animal population problems anywhere. Providing high quality, high volume, low cost spay/neuter clinics or spay/neuter voucher programs has proven to be the most effective approach to encourage sterilization. Education programs targeting the areas where strays are found and cats are relinquished to shelters successfully reduces shelter intakes and city expense. Mandatory spay/neuter laws with "breeder permits" have not worked anywhere. Local ordinances like this one are introduced all year long – contact legislation@cfa.org if you hear of any similar proposal in your city or county.

