Safety of Cats & Birds

# **Letters to municipal representatives - Template March 2018**

***Safety of Cats & Birds***

**Letter to Municipal Representative - Template**

(Your NAME)

(STREET ADDRESS)

(CITY, PROVINCE)

(POSTAL CODE)

(DATE)

Dear (Municipal Representative TITLE & NAME)

I'm writing to you because I want to express my concern about cats and birds, and how their treatment is impacting our community and our environment.

Many cat owners let their cat outdoors to explore. But just like dogs, cats need supervision to be protected from traffic, other cats, animals, and the many diseases they can catch, not to mention getting lost. Additionally, roaming cats can spread diseases such as toxoplasmosis, cause conflicts between neighbours, and kill birds and other wildlife.

Habitat loss and climate change are taking their toll on birds, and the official list of bird species at risk has increased 85% since 2001. Many species of birds are declining, some as much as 60-90%. According to Environment Canada, people directly cause an estimated 130 to 433 million bird fatalities a year. 75% of that is attributed to cats.

It's imperative that we improve the treatment of both cats and birds and adopt progressive policies and bylaws in our community. Pets and wildlife should not interact, for the welfare of both. If cats are permitted to roam unsupervised, their owners can’t protect them from predators, or wildlife from them. No-roam bylaws offer an opportunity for our municipality to encourage responsible pet care and help protect our struggling birds. Many municipalities, large and small, have instituted such bylaws. Ideally any bylaw is part of an overall plan to improve cat and bird welfare, which may include licensing (a revenue stream), low cost spay-neuter services, and feral cat care programs. The program can reward cat owners for compliance, whether return of a lost pet, or an incentive program.

You can learn more about the issue at catsandbirds.ca, a campaign run by Nature Canada. They recommend a collaborative approach to the issue: gather the local stakeholders (cat-care organizations and nature organizations) to form a committee and charge them with coming up with a plan to improve the welfare of cats and birds. They have a wonderful resource for municipalities outlining a balanced approach that helps both animals, available from info@catsandbirds.ca.

I urge you to address the issue of cats and birds in our community. It’s better for cats, better for birds, and better for people.

Sincerely,

Signature

(Your Name)