

## Proposed Municipal Ordinance Would Require Cat Collars

### **Law would also fine people who feed stray felines in Waltham, Mass.**

A Waltham, Mass., councilwoman proposed a city ordinance that would require licenses and collars for cats, and fine people who feed stray cats.

Waltham, which has a population of about 59,000, is 10 miles west of Boston. The proposal is intended to lower what some say is a dangerously high population of feral cats in the city. Activists said the rules would hinder organizations already working to reduce the cat population.

The ordinance's sponsor, city councilwoman Sally Collura, said it would prevent situations such as a recent one where two brothers were jailed for failing to clean up their property last fall. The brothers had 15 cats in their two-bedroom house.

Collura and supporters of the proposed law say that cat-hoarders swell the feral cat population when they fail to spay or neuter their pets, then lose track of them. The animals run free and breed in wild spaces and backyards throughout the city.

However, activists say Collura's proposed ordinance will put a stop to the one thing that keeps stray cat populations down: trapping and fixing the animals so they cannot breed.

Massachusetts law currently requires owners to vaccinate their cats against rabies, but doesn't require municipalities to police stray or unlicensed cats.

A public hearing on the plan is scheduled for Monday. Full details of the proposal are available at the city's website.

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