

Town Institutes Spay or Pay Option for Cat Owners

Mansfield, Conn., to require that owners pay an annual fee for cats 6 months or older that are not fixed.

The Mansfield, Conn., town council has unanimously approved an ordinance to require that cats older than 6 months be spayed or neutered unless the owner pays a \$75 annual fee for an unaltered animal permit.

Mansfield, which has a population of about 21,000, is the first town in the state to approve a cat spay/neuter measure, according to Susan Linker, president of the Animal Welfare Federation of Connecticut. However, cities and counties in 13 other states, including Colorado, California, New Jersey, New York, Missouri and Hawaii, have similar laws.

Connecticut currently has a bill before the governor that would set up a working group to come up with spay/neuter legislation by Jan. 1.

The legislation was imposed because of cat overpopulation and abandonment problems in the town. Linker said the best estimate of free-roaming cats statewide is 500,000.

The new ordinance, which goes into effect June 16, carries a \$90 fine.

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