

To the Committee revising Title 21:

Thank you so much for your kind attention to the recommendations that were so graciously adopted in the second public draft. I was thrilled with the removal of setbacks for housing and enclosing of animals other than dogs. I know to expect a backlash, and to lose ground on the third draft, but I continue to hope that not all will be lost, and further understanding will be gained.

Mike Billmaier, the municipal Code Enforcement Officer who has been working with me for a year and eight months has told me that noise is the issue that is going to cause the backlash, because prohibiting other kinds of animal noise was over-looked when Title 17 was revised. He said that noise is the main reason why fowl get reported to the City. The overwhelming majority of those noise complaints are caused by roosters. One does not need a rooster to get eggs, and the hens *certainly* don't need a rooster for quality of life. I wish that you might consider a way to deal with the noise with code, instead of using excessive prohibitive setbacks again.

The challenge is: Unless you want to start pointing legal fingers at each specific type of animal, the way the code is presently written and enforced prohibits rabbit hutches, bird aviaries, and even outdoor rooms for cats. I work as an animal health technician, and every veterinary professional I know recommends the building of an outdoor cat enclosure for the mental and physical stimulation of cats. We give informative handouts to encourage our client cat owners to switch their indoor/outdoor cats from free-ranging to indoor/enclosed. It's hard to walk a cat on a leash, and so a cat enclosure is truly a healthful and safe alternative for the cat that demands to go out! Unfortunately, it is by definition an enclosure for an animal other than a dog, and is prohibited by the limitations of present code. We in the veterinary profession are certainly not going to stop recommending them, but it would be nice if they were legal! It is also illegal to fence in a garden area for pet turtles. I defy anyone to find the cooing of doves unpleasant, and yet, outdoor aviaries are prohibited by the setbacks. Rabbits? Turtles? Doves? Pigeons? Cats? Ferrets? Hens? These are not noisy animals, and they are common urban and suburban pets. Setbacks cannot be the solution...

This last Tuesday, I went to the four main feedstores in Anchorage; Alaska Mill and Feed, Alaska Animal Food Warehouse, M Bar D Feed, and Petco. Every single store was featuring rabbit hutches prominently, as Easter is approaching. I spoke to managers or an assistant manager in every location, and not one business was aware that their hutches were illegal enclosures for (I'm guessing) 90% of their customers.

Also on Tuesday, I spoke to Dr. Myra Wilson at Anchorage Animal Control Shelter, and she told me that zoning is not a qualification that Animal Control can use to limit adoptions of pets other than dogs, nor can they inform folks of the conflict between Title 21 and Title 17. They can only inform and enforce regarding Title 17. In my opinion, this puts them in quite a legal bind too. I know that the Animal Control Advisory Board submitted a list of carefully considered recommendations for your attention, and none were adopted. I urge you to look at their ideas again and give them more thought. The

members of the Animal Control Advisory Board have been working with the conflicts between the codes for much longer than we have, and I'm sure their suggestions would be valuable contributions to this next revision.

I'm not a country girl. I was born and raised one block from I-5 on the west side of Capitol Hill near downtown Seattle. I personally can hardly wait till the code revisions you are writing will allow for small exciting business districts to develop near and in neighborhoods. At home visiting in Seattle, I walk to movie theatres, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, grocery stores, hardware stores, an awesome donut shop, and friends' homes and apartments. I would love to see that kind of growth happen at the intersection of Lake Otis and Abbott Road, and it may be possible in time with the new zoning map and town center idea. After fifteen years of living in this sprawling winter city, I still hate my car, and would rather bundle up and walk. The joy of integrated neighborhoods is that our backyard pets are not in conflict with that vision. In fact, they contribute to it! My neighbors' kids love my hens, and tell their mother to remember to save the gooey seeds from cantaloupe and honeydew melons, so they can visit and give my girls a special treat. If possible, I try to send them home with warm eggs from the nesting boxes. They *walk* over from their house around the corner. I wouldn't have met them if they hadn't seen my girls by the fence a few years ago. My girls have added to the quality and quantity of my neighborhood friendships immeasurably.

The separation between source of food and consumer is one of the great losses of modern society. True freshness was almost a thing of the past. Now, local farmers' markets, city gardens, and backyard hens remind us of the source of good things, of stewardship, and health. You can help build good neighborhoods and communities, and contribute to the education and understanding of youth by continuing to allow housing and enclosing of backyard pets in urban and suburban neighborhoods in Anchorage in this next revision. After all, St. Paul and Minneapolis MN, New York, NY, and my home town of Seattle, WA allow them, as do many other cities.

Thank you again for your consideration.

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