



Chair Thompson and Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N1

**Request to strengthen Toronto Animal Protection Bylaw #349
Agenda Item # EC30.5**

Dear Chair Thompson and Committee Members,

As one of the oldest national nature charities in the country, Nature Canada has been a national voice for protecting, defending and conserving our environment and Species at Risk since 1939. We connect the dots between local action and systemic change to address the biodiversity and climate crises with a variety of our programs, one of which is Bird Friendly Cities. Toronto was one of the very first cities to become certified by our program with the dedicated action from many community partners such as Toronto Field Naturalists, FLAP Canada, Never Collide, ProtectNatureTO and the Toronto Ornithological Club. The program is built on 3 main pillars; reducing key threats to birds such as cat predation, window collisions, pesticide use and insect declines as well as protecting and restoring bird habitat while educating the public about the importance of birds in their community.

Please accept this letter as our formal request to strengthen the recommendations contained within staff report #EC30.5 (Updates to Chapter 349, Animals) which is being considered at the July 6, 2022, meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee. Nature Canada strongly believes that **keeping cats from roaming at large** and on their owner's property through the **implementation of an anti-roam bylaw** keeps both cats and birds safe. Outdoor cats face a variety of threats such as diseases (FIV, FLV, cancer, heartworm), vehicle collisions and fights with other cats or wildlife. Furthermore, Environment and Climate Change Canada research estimates that, in addition to the impacts of climate change and habitat loss, 130 to 433 million birds a year die as a result of human impact. While it is extremely difficult to calculate the number of birds killed by pet and feral cats — especially when the number of feral cats is not well understood — cats are thought to cause 75% of those bird deaths.

With Toronto's Bird Friendly City Certification status and the city's legacy of leading the way for animal welfare issues historically, we urge council to adopt the recommendations below to keep both cats and birds safe for generations to come:

- **Approve and implement a city-wide no-roam bylaw for cats**
- **Strengthen the “no feeding of wild animals” section of the bylaw**
- **Keep the requirement for Toronto Animal Services staff to retain nuisance animals, including cats**



- **Create a responsible-pet owner list of pets residents can own to decrease the negative impacts of the exotic species trade**
- **Launch a comprehensive public awareness campaign to educate the public**
- **Support local shelters and animal welfare organizations to support their rehome/relocation efforts of outdoor and unowned cats**

Nature Canada advocates for the introduction of no-roam bylaws, which place the responsibility for pet cats precisely where they belong, with cat owners. No-roam bylaws send the message that cats are valued pets and we need to take better care of them. No-roam bylaws can serve to improve the welfare of pet cats, help to decrease the influx of pets into the homeless cat population, and provide a safer environment for birds. Public education is critical to raise awareness about why bylaws are a positive step in this direction. Our recommendations include not only bylaws and public education, but also collaborating with local stakeholders, including the Bird Friendly Toronto Coalition, to develop a strategy and messaging around the importance of keeping both cats and birds safe.

We greatly appreciate the work that Toronto Councillors and Animal Services staff have done to improve the welfare of many animals and wildlife across the city with the adoption of Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines, cosmetic pesticide bans, free municipal spay/neuter programs as well as banning the sale of cats and dogs in retail stores. By adding the previously listed recommendations to Toronto's *Animal Protection Bylaw #349*, the city will once again be at the forefront of bold, positive action for wildlife conservation and protection.

Sincerely,

Autumn Jordan
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