September 16, 2013

Office of the Mayor
PO Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department's Trap-Neuter-Return Policy

Dear Mayor Berry:

In 2012, Best Friends Animal Society partnered with Albuquerque (City) Animal Welfare Department to begin a three-year Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program, funded by a grant from PetSmart Charities. In addition, the City has worked with New Mexico Animal Friends to cover the cost of sterilizing street cats. The Department of Game and Fish (Department) encourages the City and the Animal Welfare Department to discontinue support for these programs.

The Department fully supports spay-neuter programs for responsible pet owners. However, feral and free-roaming cats are not companion animals. Supporters of TNR programs refer to them as "community cats" and advocate for their return to locations where they were originally trapped by stating that these cats are part of the community. In fact, these cats (*Felis catus*) are nonnative predators introduced by humans.

TNR programs have not been shown to stabilize feral cat populations (Castillo and Clarke 2003, Anderson et al. 2004, Barrows 2004, Natoil et al. 2006, Longcore et al. 2009). The only TNR programs reporting success have included the removal of significant numbers of animals for adoption (Centonze and Levy 2002, Hughes and Slater 2002, Levy et al. 2003). Removal of cats and feeding stations can eliminate local cat populations while allowing the return of native bird species (Winter 2004).
Mayor Richard J. Berry  
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Both The Wildlife Society and the National Audubon Society have published position statements on feral and free-ranging cats that the Department fully endorses. These statements are attached for your review.

Sincerely,

Cal Baca, Chief  
Wildlife Management Division