



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: PAR 24-012

October 01, 2024

Introduced: 9/24/2024

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Preliminary Analysis
Report

Receive a preliminary response to **Board Referral No. 2024.11** seeking staff to modify the County's Rooster Ordinance in order to make it more effective at eradicating cockfighting operations in unincorporated Monterey County.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive a preliminary response to **Board Referral No. 2024.11** seeking staff to modify the County's Rooster Ordinance in order to make it more effective at eradicating cockfighting operations in unincorporated Monterey County.
 - 1) Proceed with completion of referral based on modifications by the Board; or
 - 2) Return to Board with a more comprehensive analysis of referral and anticipated effort for completion; or
- b. Provide further direction to staff, as appropriate.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS:

Referral Summary & Background:

On September 5th, 2024, Board Referral No. 2024.11 was assigned to the Health Department to have staff look at modifying the County's Rooster Ordinance in order to make it more effective at eradicating cockfighting operations in unincorporated Monterey County.

The County of Monterey adopted its Rooster Ordinance in 2015. One of the main purposes of the ordinance was to prevent illegal cockfighting. There are several aspects of the ordinance, however, that make it difficult to enforce. While other counties across the state who have rooster ordinances limit the number of roosters a person can have with a permit, the County of Monterey's ordinance allows for up to 499 roosters in certain zoning areas. Additionally, the County of Monterey's ordinance places the burden of proof on Animal Control to prove that cockfighting is taking place.

Proposed Project Description:

This referral asks staff to investigate making the following changes to the County's Rooster Ordinance (and other changes as they see fit):

1. Placing limits on the maximum number of roosters allowed, similar to other counties in CA, possibly a sliding scale based on lot size.

2. Placing the burden of proof on the permit seeker to show that they are not using birds for cockfighting.

Animal Services, through Hitchcock Road Animal Services, enforces County of Monterey Ordinance 8.50, Requirements for Keeping Five or More Roosters. Currently, HRAS has 60 pending permit cases in the unincorporated areas in Monterey County, with 15 current permits and 15 expired permits.

Hitchcock Road Animal Services staff have already met internally to review potential modifications to the Rooster ordinance. Prior to making recommendations, staff intends to also meet with other County departments and external organizations that are stakeholders in the enforcement process of this ordinance:

1. Housing and Community Development
2. Agricultural Commissioner
3. Sheriff
4. SPCA for Monterey County

Estimated Project Cost:

At this time, there is no projected cost for this review and update.

Staffing Level Estimate:

Animal Services will have 3-4 staff members assigned to this project and will collaborate with County Counsel and various departments. This will take approximately 40-60 hours of cumulative staff time.

Departmental Challenges:

Limited staffing continues to remain a challenge for Animal Services.

Proposed Response Date:

Hitchcock Road Animal Services staff estimates to take about 6 months to review the ordinance, meet with stakeholders and work with County Counsel on modifications before bringing back an updated ordinance.

This work supports the County of Monterey Health Department 2018-2024 Strategic Plan Goal: 4) Engage MCHD workforces and improve operational functions to meet current and developing population health needs.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Hitchcock Road Animal Services staff will continue to have discussions with representatives from stakeholders from other agencies and departments.

FINANCING:

There is no impact to the County General Fund with receipt of this report.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

☐ Economic Development:

- Through collaboration, strengthen economic development to ensure a diversified and healthy economy.

☐ Administration:

- Promote an organization that practices efficient and effective resource management and is recognized for responsiveness, strong customer orientation, accountability and transparency.

☐ Health & Human Services:

- Improve health and quality of life through County supported policies, programs, and services, promoting access to equitable opportunities for healthy choices and healthy environments in collaboration with communities.

☒ Infrastructure:

- Plan and develop a sustainable, physical infrastructure that improves the quality of life for County residents and supports economic development results.

☒ Public Safety:

- Create a safe environment for people to achieve their potential, leading businesses and communities to thrive and grow by reducing violent crimes as well as crimes in general.

Prepared by: Cindy Burnham, Animal Services Administrator, 769-8796

Approved by:

Date
Elsa Mendoza Jimenez, Director of Health Services, 755-4526

Attachments:

Preliminary Analysis Report

Referral No. 2024.11