

Legislation Text

File #: 170043, **Version:** 0

Authorizing Council's Committees on Legislative Oversight and Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings examining the incidence of raccoon infestation in the City of Philadelphia and administrative solutions for the public health concerns posed thereby.

WHEREAS, While anecdotal evidence from constituent service requests compiled in the 2nd Council District indicate that raccoon infestations affect a variety of neighborhoods in the City of Philadelphia, especially those further-removed from the City's dense urban center, very little officially-collected information is available on the incidence of raccoon infestations citywide. Such information is vital for understanding and addressing the impact of these animals on the City's residents; and,

WHEREAS, The stated purpose of Philadelphia Public Health Department's Vector Control program is "to remove and control pests that can interfere with healthy living." While Vector Control's team of environmental health inspectors will "inspect the site, provide treatment for the problem, and make recommendations to keep residences rodent free" in cases of rat complaints, the unit does not currently address raccoons, which are the animal most frequently reported to display signs of rabies, and which are common hosts to other communicable diseases such as roundworm and leptospirosis; and,

WHEREAS, The Animal Care and Control Team (ACCT) of Philadelphia states that they will respond to raccoon-related complaints under two circumstances: if the animal is inside a resident's living space, or if the animal appears to be sick or injured. While the latter condition is difficult for the average resident to determine, the former standard is rarely met, as raccoons are more often found in crawl spaces and other locations that would not fall under ACCT's purview; and,

WHEREAS, The Department of Licenses and Inspections is also tasked, at least in part, with addressing issues of raccoon infestation in residential areas. While not directly responsible for animals, the Department plays a crucial role in sealing vacant buildings and denying wild animals access thereto. However, the Department is not tasked with sealing those structures' upper-level entries, leaving raccoons a safe haven in vacant buildings whose upper windows are not properly secured; and,

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia's educational efforts provide residents with vital tools for combatting raccoon infestation but education alone has not been completely effective in removing potentially-dangerous infestations from residential areas. These educational efforts must be coupled with City action aimed at treating sick animals and assisting residents with managing existing raccoon populations that inhabit neighboring structures; and,

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has the administrative tools and the dedicated public workforce that is required to manage the public health concerns posed by raccoons and other animals. Better coordination between these relevant departments and a clear understanding of the role that each should play in combatting infestation are vital to ensuring the public welfare; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes Council's

Committees on Legislative Oversight and Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings regarding the incidence of raccoon infestation in the City of Philadelphia and examining administrative solutions for the public health concerns posed thereby.