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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United in support for Hawaii's animals and pet owners

(April 15, 2020)— County animal service providers across the state are committed to saving lives and supporting the human-animal bond at this time of crisis. We are closely monitoring expert guidance on animal handling and the protection of animal-care staff and updating procedures accordingly.

Gov. David Ige has recognized that the care of animals is essential even as our community battles the spread of COVID-19. Animal shelters, animal rescues, dog walking, caring for established cat colonies and emergency foster care are all sanctioned activities as long as social distancing and other rules are respected.

While there may be some risk of infection from humans to pets according to the American Veterinary Medical Association, there is no indication that pet animals can transmit COVID-19 to human beings. As with any illness, it's best to limit contact with your pets if you are sick, just as you would limit contact with a human family member. It is essential for every pet owner to prepare a plan for who will care for your pet in the event you cannot do so. Whenever possible, animals should stay in a home environment.

If you need help feeding your pets due to financial hardship, visit the website of your county animal service provider to see what resources are available. Our goal is to help you keep your family intact.

If you are able to help in this time of crisis:

- Emergency foster care procedures have been streamlined to minimize human contact. Find out more on the website of your county animal service provider.
- Donations of food and other pet supplies via the Amazon wish list of your county animal service provider benefit our agencies as well as pet owners in need.

Our programs and services have changed in response to the threat posed by COVID-19, but our commitment to being a vital resource in our communities has not. Please visit the website of the animal service provider in your county for the latest updates. Be well and stay safe.

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