

Animal welfare groups appeal for more animals to be considered under Road Traffic Act



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BY XUE JIANYUE - OCTOBER 27

SINGAPORE — The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) have issued a joint statement appealing against the Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) decision not to amend the Road Traffic Act to expand its definition of "animals".

Calling the current legislation "archaic", the SPCA and ACRES said there is a need to widen to scope of an "animal" defined under the Act, to include animals such as cats

which are popularly kept as pets today, as well as wildlife.

“While the current law is derived from societies where farm animals are protected, the policy in general arises from a recognition that animals matter to humans or certainly to a significant part of our society,” they said in a letter issued to the press late yesterday (Oct 26) night.

The two groups, supported by other animal welfare groups like the Animal Lovers League, Cat Welfare Society and Action for Singapore Dogs, are appealing to the MHA to reconsider amending the definition of “animal” under the Act’s section 84(6) to make it consistent with the definition of an “animal” in the Animals and Birds Act section 2. This is so that it includes other animals such as cats, and wild animals which are potential victims of road accidents.

They noted an increased incidence of cats, in particular, reported as road accident casualties in recent years. “The current legislation, as it stands now, is archaic. MHA has to contemporise the law to place significant value on community animals and wildlife that extends beyond utility,” they said.

The group said they recognise the authorities’ concerns for the safety of motorists who stop the vehicle after hitting an animal. However, they noted that the law “saw fit to place the value of farm animals above this perceived risk,” and still requires motorists to stop and render assistance to the hit animal, or at least remove the carcass for the safety of other motorists.

“Why, then, should this be different with cats and other wild animals that now thrive and flourish in Singapore?” they asked.

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