
TUXEDO PARTY OF CANADA CAT WELFARE SOCIETY

tuxedoparty@gmail.com September 17, 2018

Committee on Law Amendments

Dear Sir/Madam

re: Bill Number 27, Animal Protection Act

Please accept this submission on Bill 27, Animal Protection Act.

I am a retired veterinarian with over 25 years experience in feline practice, having founded the first feline specialty practice in Atlantic Canada over 30 years ago. I have been a staunch proponent of animal welfare causes during that time. I was the first veterinarian to propose a ban on feline declawing - at the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association Annual General Meeting in 2014. Although they failed to enact a ban that year, the NSVMA eventually enacted a ban in March of 2018.

I welcome the government's action to update the Animal Protection Act with the improvements proposed in Bill 27. Banning cosmetic surgery such as tail docking, dewclaw removal, ear cropping and de-barking in dogs is a constructive step forward for protection of our canine companions. Banning declawing of cats is similarly beneficial for felines.

Unfortunately, there is another surgical procedure that can be performed on cats that is not mentioned in the proposed bill. Deep digital flexor tendonectomy is a surgical procedure in which a portion of the tendon that pulls the claw forward is cut away (see attached diagram). This effectively removes a cat's ability to use its claws. Although it may sound like a reasonable alternative to having ten digits amputated, it has been found to lead to numerous serious complications. The procedure is not recommended by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (1), the American Veterinary Medical Association (2) and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (3), among others.

I urge the government to add an amendment to Bill 27 to include deep digital flexor tendonectomy and any other surgical procedure designed to interfere with the normal anatomy and/or function of feline claws, unless a veterinarian deems it medically necessary for the health of the cat.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "H Chisholm, DVM". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Hugh Chisholm, DVM (retired)

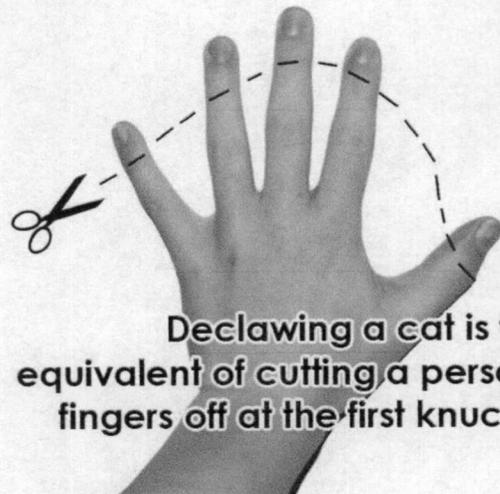
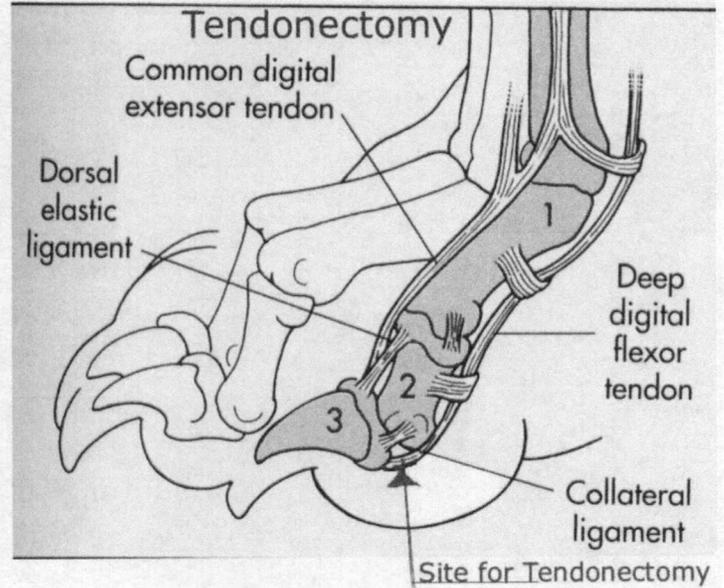
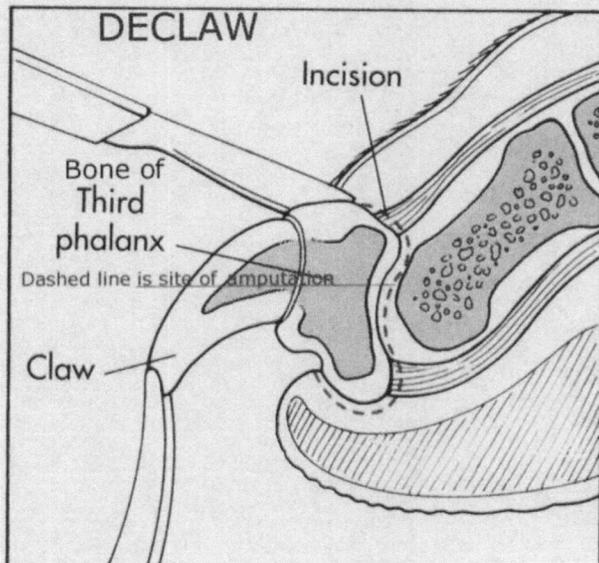
- President, Tuxedo Party of Canada Cat Welfare Society
 - Atlantic Canada Director, The Paw Project
 - Vice President, Spay Day HRM
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References:

1. *Tendonectomy is not an acceptable alternative to PDA* because it causes similar pain post-surgery and could lead to increased complications if the nails are not properly maintained.*
 - CVMA Position Statement - <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/partial-digital-amputation-onychoectomy-or-declawing-of-the-domestic-felid-position-statement>
2. The surgical alternative of tendonectomy is not recommended.
 - AVMA position statement - <https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/030415c.aspx>
3. *The surgical alternative of deep digital flexor tendonectomy can cause deleterious results due to the overgrowth of nails, the need for more extensive claw care required of the owner, and the development of chronic discomfort in some patients. Consequently, deep digital flexor tendonectomy is not recommended.*
 - AAFP Position Statement - <https://www.catvets.com/public/PDFs/PositionStatements/2017-DeclawingStatement.pdf>

*PDA = partial digital amputation, another term for declawing

DIAGRAMS



Declawing a cat is the equivalent of cutting a person's fingers off at the first knuckle.