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Project Coyote's Southern California Rep. Randy Feilich (center) with Los Angeles City Council celebrating passage of trap ban ordinance (April 9, 2014)

Animal traps that grip or snare are banned in L.A. as 'inhumane'

"Trapping sounds "safe" to people, but there's no guarantee that the targeted animal is the one trapped and killed"

Randy Feilich/Southern California representative for Project Coyote.

The Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to ban traps that snare or grip coyotes, bears, foxes and other animals in the city, deeming such traps inhumane.

Under the new rules, commercial trappers cannot use traps that grip or snare any part of the animal, with the exception of traps set for rats, mice and other small rodents. Angelenos are banned from using any trap "that maims or causes the inhumane death or suffering of any animal," the rules state.

Commercial trappers can still do business using other kinds of traps, which can include cage traps that involve a locking door.

However, the Department of Animal Services will also put forward regulations to ensure that such traps are not used inhumanely — for instance, by leaving an animal caged for a long time in the summer heat.

All traps "can be inhumane through negligent care or use, but snares, bodycrushing and

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A coyote strolls in a parking area in Griffith Park on Jan. 6, 2011. (Lawrence K. Ho / Los Angeles Times / January 5, 2011)

“Colleagues, banning these cruel and sadistic torture devices to deal with our wildlife is the way to go.”

Councilman Mitch O’Farrell

body-gripping traps are inherently inhumane,” a council committee focused on animal welfare wrote in a report. Besides banning snare traps, “the Department is requesting the authority to establish reasonable rules and regulations regarding the use of humane traps and the treatment of the trapped animals.”

Wildlife protection groups say banning snare traps will prevent needless suffering and keep other animals safe. Trapping sounds “safe” to people, but there’s no guarantee that the targeted animal is the one trapped and killed, said Randi Feilich, the Southern California representative for Project Coyote. Pets can also fall victim to the snares, she added.

“If you’ve ever seen an animal trapped in one of these traps, you would never, ever allow them to be used,” said Skip Haynes of the wildlife protection group Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife.

Animal trapping groups did not speak at the Wednesday meeting, but Dan Fox,

president of Animal Pest Management Services Inc., argued in an earlier letter to the council that cage traps were not effective in catching coyotes and that snare traps could be a humane option if used correctly. Experienced trappers consider whether other animals are in the area before setting traps, he wrote.

The new rules “will remove any efficient methods of trapping predator animals, and increase costs for residents without addressing the true issue” — people ignoring the existing rules, Fox wrote.

The ban was first proposed by Councilman Mitch O’Farrell and seconded by Councilmen Paul Koretz and Tom LaBonge.

“Mahatma Gandhi once said ... a society can be judged by the way it treats its animals,” O’Farrell said before the Wednesday vote. “Colleagues, banning these cruel and sadistic torture devices to deal with our wildlife is the way to go.”