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PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT BY MAKING WISE CHOICES BEFORE AND AFTER A NEW PET

Alexandria, Va. – April 20, 2021 – In recognition of Earth Day on April 22, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) is reminding the public that making environmentally-friendly choices doesn't just involve what kinds of products you choose for your pet—it begins well before you even decide to bring a new pet home.

“The responsible pet care community urges anyone considering a new pet to do thorough research to make sure the habitat requirements, life span and other factors are compatible with your lifestyle and future plans so you're less likely to give up the pet in years to come,” said Mike Bober, PIJAC president and CEO. “It is especially problematic when well-intentioned but uninformed owners set pets free in waterways or forests, which causes both the animal and the environment to suffer.”

It is never a good idea to release pets into the wild, and in many parts of the country it is illegal to set loose non-native animals or plants. While some pets can survive outside their captive habitat, the majority can become invasive and cause environmental problems, infrastructure damage, or harm to human health. Even small and seemingly harmless pets can have unintended impacts on the delicate ecosystems of native wildlife and plants when released into local waterways.

One resource to begin researching wise pet choices is Habitattitude.net, an educational website sponsored by PIJAC, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The site provides basic information on invasive species and proper pet selection and care guidance, including sections on reptiles and aquarium fish that address basic considerations and requirements for habitat, diet and health concerns.

Once the informed decision has been made to acquire a new animal companion, pet owners have a wide variety of environmentally-friendly products available to care for them. These include biodegradable waste bags, compostable cat litter, organic food and treats, and toys, collars, dishes and beds made from recycled materials, to name a few.

“The responsible pet care community is committed to protecting our environment and ensuring a safe and healthy future for pets and people alike by providing education on appropriate pet selection and avoiding companion animal releases, advancing the development and selection of sustainable food, packaging and products, and much more,” said Bober.

About PIJAC

Founded in 1971, the [Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council](#) (PIJAC) represents the experience and expertise of the responsible pet care community to legislative, regulatory, and governing bodies in order to promote animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, foster environmental stewardship, and ensure the availability of healthy pets. PIJAC members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers' representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations.