

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 620
Judiciary

(Delegate Cluster, *et al.*)

Ferret Protection Act

This bill provides that a commercial entity that produces, distributes, or aids in the wholesale or retail distribution of ferrets may not transport in or out of the State, sell, or offer for sale a ferret that is under 10 weeks of age or has not been spayed or castrated. However, a ferret that has not been spayed or castrated may be transported, sold, or offered for sale to a ferret breeder. The commercial entity may not spay or castrate a ferret that is less than six weeks old; may not transport, sell, or offer for sale a spayed or neutered ferret until more than seven days after the spaying or neutering procedure; and must provide certification dating the procedure.

A commercial entity must provide certification with each ferret that the entity is in compliance with the provisions of this bill. A commercial entity that violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum fine of \$100 for each violation.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill would not materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person is prohibited from hunting with a ferret. A person who owns or keeps a ferret that is at least four months old must have the ferret adequately vaccinated against rabies.

Ferrets that have been vaccinated against rabies and bite a human or expose a human to rabies must be quarantined in a manner designated by the local health officer or the public health veterinarian.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: This bill is similar to HB 1136 of the 2004 session. HB 1136 was heard in the Judiciary Committee, but received no further action. Another similar bill, HB 975 of the 2002 session, was referred to the Judiciary Committee, but was not reported out. HB 1359 of the 2002 session was referred to the Environmental Matters Committee, but was not reported out.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2005
mam/jr

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