

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 339

(Delegate Frush, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force on the Establishment of a Statewide Spay/Neuter Fund

This bill establishes a Task Force on the Establishment of a Statewide Spay/Neuter Fund to (1) collect and review data on the number of spay/neuter services performed each year in the State and the unmet need for the services; (2) review ongoing successful local spay/neuter programs in the State; (3) review spay/neuter programs in other states and identify best practices; (4) review and make recommendations regarding the most appropriate funding mechanism for a spay/neuter fund; and (5) make recommendations regarding the establishment of a spay/neuter fund that best meets the needs of the State. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) must provide staff for the task force, and the task force must report its findings and legislative recommendations to the Governor and specified legislative committees by January 1, 2012.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2011, and terminates June 30, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures may increase minimally to the extent a survey of veterinary hospitals, local animal control agencies, and other relevant organizations is required to collect data on the number of spay/neuter services performed each year in the State and the unmet need for the services. Otherwise, providing staff for the task force can be handled with existing resources of DLS by redirecting staff from other projects, and any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The State does not directly provide or fund spaying and neutering services. This issue is generally coordinated or handled by local animal control agencies, veterinarians, humane societies, rescue groups, and/or any other interested parties/agencies, with the actual procedures provided by nonprofit organizations that offer veterinary services and private veterinarians.

Background: In Maryland, some local animal control divisions, such as in Montgomery County, help coordinate, but do not provide, spaying and neutering services. Others, such as in Anne Arundel County, focus on encouraging spaying and neutering. In Washington County, revenue collected from dog and kennel licenses is used to assist with the cost of spaying and neutering of any cat or dog owned by a county resident. The Maryland SPCA, a private, nonprofit organization, has established a special organizational license plate through the Motor Vehicle Administration; according to its website, \$25 of the \$50 plate fee benefits spay/neuter programs.

Several states (including nearby states such as Delaware, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia have funding mechanisms for spaying and neutering services. Many of these programs are funded through special license plates and/or income tax check-off programs, while others are funded through fees on animal licenses or rabies vaccinations. Delaware's program, established in 2006, received an initial appropriation of \$50,000 and receives about \$275,000 annually from a \$3 surcharge on rabies vaccinations.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 639 (Senator Benson, *et al.*) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture, Professional Animal Workers of Maryland, Delaware Department of Agriculture, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2011
ncs/lgc

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