

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader

Senate Bill 338

(Senator Simonaire)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment and Transportation

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Local Government – Animal Control Facilities – Adoption Fee Waiver for  
Veterans (Pets for Vets Act of 2021)

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This bill requires an animal control facility operated by a county or municipality to waive the adoption fee for a dog or cat adopted by a veteran who presents specified identification that notes the individual is a veteran. An animal control facility may limit the number of adoption fee waivers granted to an individual to one dog and one cat within a six-month period.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Local government revenues may decrease to the extent that dogs and cats are adopted from county and municipal run animal control facilities; however, any impact is likely to be minimal. Local expenditures are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** There are no statutory provisions directly applicable to the bill.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** The Maryland Association of Counties indicates that local animal adoption fees generally range from \$0 to \$150 with larger or more exotic animals having higher fees. Moreover, county shelters sometimes waive adoption fees for certain animals or for special adoption programs and events. For example, Anne Arundel County indicated that it has partnered with the “Pets for Patriots” program, which works with animal shelters

and adoption facilities to link military veterans and their families with companion pets. The program focuses on overlooked or undervalued dogs and cats that may not otherwise be adopted.

In calendar 2019, Anne Arundel County processed 911 cat adoptions and 287 dog adoptions, with the maximum adoption fees totaling \$14 for cats and \$17 for dogs. The county also collected licensing fees from county residents who adopted/bought a pet from another organization. In total, the county collected approximately \$228,000 in adoption and license fees in fiscal 2018.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SB 128 of 2020 passed the Senate with amendments and received a hearing in the House Environment and Transportation Committee, but no further action was taken.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 563 (Delegate Long) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Montgomery, and St. Mary's counties; Maryland Association of Counties; City of Salisbury; Maryland Municipal League; towns of Bel Air , Leonardtown, and Riverdale Park; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 31, 2021  
rh/tso Third Reader - February 25, 2021

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Analysis by: Arnold Adja

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510