



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL

CRIMES – UNATTENDED DOGS IN EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

January 15, 2021

SUPPORT

MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HB 81, WHICH REQUIRES ADEQUATE SHELTER FOR DOGS LEFT OUTDOOR IN EXTREME TEMPERATURES AND DURING AN ACTIVE WARNING ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS BILL? WHEN DOGS ARE LEFT UNATTENDED OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER AND WITHOUT ACCESS TO PROPER SHELTER AND WATER, THEY ARE AT RISK OF HYPOTHERMIA, HEAT STROKE, INJURY AND DEATH IN THE CASE OF SEVERE WEATHER, WHICH INCLUDES EVERYTHING FROM A HURRICANE, TO A TORNADO, TO HIGH WINDS AND MORE.

WE NEED THIS LAW BECAUSE TEN MARYLAND COUNTIES RECOGNIZE THE RISKS OF EXTREME WEATHER FOR DOGS LEFT OUTSIDE AND REQUIRE EITHER THAT THEY BE BROUGHT INDOORS OR THAT ADEQUATE SHELTER BE PROVIDED OUTDOORS. THE REMAINING MD JURISDICTIONS HAVE NO LAWS ON DOGS OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER, SO WE NEED A STATEWIDE STANDARD TO PROTECT OUR CANINE FRIENDS.

WHAT THE BILL DOES: HB 81 DOES TWO THINGS:

1. DEFINES EXTREME WEATHER AS BELOW 32 AND ABOVE 90 OR AN ACTIVE WARNING ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.
2. DESCRIBES WHAT SUITABLE SHELTER IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT. SUITABLE SHELTER MUST HAVE:

FOUR WALLS AND A DOORWAY; BE PROPERLY VENTILATED; HAVE A WEATHERPROOF ROOF; BE RAISED OFF THE GROUND; HAVE INSULATION OR HEAT TO ALLOW THE DOG TO MAINTAIN ITS BODY TEMPERATURE, AND BE SUITABLE FOR THE DOG'S AGE, SIZE, BREED AND CONDITION.

SUITABLE SHELTER IS **NOT** A CRAWL SPACE UNDER A BUILDING; A SPACE UNDER A PARKED CAR; A FLOOR OF WIRE OR CHAIN LINK; OR A STRUCTURE MADE OF CARDBOARD OR FLIMSY MATERIAL THAT CANNOT WITHSTAND THE ELEMENTS.

CHANGES MADE TO ADDRESS DOGS WORKING OR IN TRAINING: LAST YEAR, AT THE REQUEST OF ADVOCATES AND OWNERS, THE BILL WAS AMENDED TO EXEMPT DOGS ENGAGED IN TRAINING, SPORTING OR HERDING ACTIVITIES. I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO MAKE ADDITIONAL CHANGES THIS YEAR FOR ACCLIMATION BUT DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IS APPROPRIATE. THIS BILL ADDRESSES SITUATIONS WHERE DOGS ARE UNATTENDED FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES AND CONFINED TO BACKYARDS OR OTHER PROPERTIES DURING EXTREME WEATHER.

MR. CHAIRMAN, DOGS ARE HUMAN'S BEST FRIEND. THIS BILL WILL ENSURE IF THEY MUST BE LEFT OUTDOORS FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES IN EXTREME WEATHER, THEY HAVE ACCESS TO SHELTER THAT KEEPS THEM SAFE. I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

####