



## MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411  
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 15, 2023

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee  
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.  
Re: Natural Resources- Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund- Uses  
- HB 378 – Support

Chair Barve, Vice - Chair Stein, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the House Environment & Transportation Committee vote favorably for Natural Resources- Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund – Uses - HB 378.

This bill would allow the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to authorize grants from the Fund to be made for projects that reduce conflicts between black bears and humans. It would rename the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund to be the Black Bear Conflict Reduction and Damage Reimbursement Fund and require a certain amount of the Fund to be reserved for black bear damage reimbursement- and increase the minimum and maximum amounts of reimbursement from the Fund per person annually authorized for damage caused by black bears.

These changes to the existing program would expand the Black Bear Reimbursement Fund and allow it to be used as a proactive tool to fund conflict avoidance. It would open the fund to residents and towns as well as farmers.

The goal of this bill is to take a preventative approach to reduce conflicts with Black Bears. The grants would be for projects that reduce conflicts between humans and black bears through non-lethal methods such as bear-proof trashcans, appropriate fencing, and additional programs to reduce the number of Black Bears that frequent agricultural and community areas with community support. The grants could not be used to reduce the Black Bear population by lethal methods. By taking protective measures for property, people, and pets, Maryland makes a worthwhile investment as the Fund would enable recipients to stop conflicts with black bears before they occur, saving lives and property.

Thanks to Delegate Love for sponsoring this legislation. I urge the committee for a favorable report on HB 378.