



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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March 5, 2024

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Agriculture - Roosters – Restrictions – SB 1055 - Support

Chair Feldman, Vice - Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment 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 Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Agriculture - Roosters – Restrictions – SB 1055.

This bill would prohibit, unless authorized by the Department of Agriculture, a person from keeping a certain number of roosters on certain property beginning on January 1, 2026, subject to certain exceptions; authorizing the Department to work in cooperation with a local animal control or law enforcement officer to enforce the Act; and establishing a fine of \$1,000 for a violation of the Act.

Maryland has taken a strong stance against cockfighting, which involves roosters. Unless the roosters are being used for agricultural purposes, there are concerns that a large number of roosters being kept could be used for not only for cockfighting, which is illegal in Maryland, but also that they could present a potential health hazard in the form of Avian Flu.

SB 1055 would ensure that the cockfighting industry could not find a home in Maryland and also protect the health and well-being of Marylanders.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 1055 and ask the committee for a favorable report.