



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 1055

DATE: March 5, 2024

SPONSOR: Senator Kramer

ASSIGNED TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT (Montgomery County Office of Animal Services)

Agriculture – Roosters – Restrictions

Senate Bill 1055 addresses cockfighting in Maryland by prohibiting, with certain exceptions, a person from keeping more than five roosters per acre or more than 25 roosters on a single property beginning January 1, 2026, unless authorized by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). Upon conviction, violators could face a penalty of up to \$1,000. The bill provides exceptions for the number of roosters if the owner is a member of 4-H, the Future Farmers of America, a commercial poultry producer, a school, or a government-owned animal shelter. The MDA would be responsible for enforcement and could work in cooperation with local animal control offices or law enforcement. The Montgomery County Office of Animal Services supports SB 1055.

Roosters are protective of their hens, and too many roosters in one area can lead to fighting and harassment of the hens. Accepted animal husbandry practices limit the number of roosters in a flock to reduce the risk of injury to the animals. Individuals involved in cockfighting, however, are intentionally holding more than five roosters per acre and violating legitimate breeding practices. In Montgomery County, the two most recent cases that resulted in convictions for cockfighting were at properties known by the Office of Animal Services to have more than 25 roosters for breeding.

Senate Bill 1055 would place a reasonable limit on the number of roosters a person can keep. The bill promotes healthy flock dynamics and is consistent with good animal husbandry practices. The Montgomery County Office of Animal Services urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report on SB 1055.