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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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**Testimony in Support of HB 625**  
**Human-Relevant Research Fund - Collection of Contributions – Responsible Entity**

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, and honorable members of the Health Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to present **HB 625, Human-Relevant Research Fund - Collection of Contributions – Responsible Entity**. This bill assures that the fund we established in 2023 to spur the development of human-relevant research and drive the development of emerging research technologies that do not use animals is implemented as intended. The fund is administered by TEDCO and includes a license fee on institutions that engage in animal testing.

When we passed HB 626 in 2023, we wanted to ensure that Maryland stays a leader as new, non-animal testing methods move to the forefront. We are already seeing the impact that relevant human technologies have on advancing human health and discovering cutting edge solutions that animal testing could never have revealed (SEE ADDENDUM). Testing on animals is not even necessarily accurate-- 90% of drugs found safe on animals ultimately fail in human trials. Investing in these emerging technologies will take Maryland to the next level in our research, our biotech, and our lifesaving interventions.

However, under the previous bill, implementation of collecting the funds was turned over to the Maryland Department of Health. In 2025 it became clear that MDH did not have the capacity to accomplish this task; it was not just staffing, but a gap in the knowledge and experience of tracking the number of animals being held and used in the different institutions. So the only funds that were collected and turned over to TEDCO to use for grants to innovators came voluntarily from Johns Hopkins.

This bill seeks to assign the Maryland Department of Agriculture the role of collecting the funds. This is a logical addition to their Animals Health Program. I have spoken with Secretary Atticks, that the task would not require new reporting or oversight, as those institutions already must receive USDA licenses, and report the number of animals they test on. MDA is responsible for assuring that they meet these requirements and they collect the data as well.

HB 625 is a chance to fix a mistake and move forward with our intent to incentivize innovation, especially in our biotech activities. Thank you very much for your consideration and I ask for a favorable report.