



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA)

Established in 1886, MDVMA is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised primarily of licensed Maryland Veterinarians.

HB0053 - Criminal Law – Nondomesticated Animal Prohibitions – Alterations

Committee: Judiciary

February 3, 2026

MDVMA Position: INFO

On behalf of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, we submit this informational testimony on HB 53 Criminal Law –Nondomesticated Animal Prohibitions–Alterations.

We would like to thank the sponsors of the legislation who have clearly worked carefully to provide prescriptive language that limits irresponsible ownership of these animal species while offering appropriate exemptions to organizations licensed to responsibly handle, breed and exhibit them.

It is our belief as an association that responsible ownership, breeding, and exhibition of animals that do not pose imminent or immediate risk to the public should be supported in all instances. Zebras and kangaroo species likely do not pose imminent risk of harm to the public but they certainly do require uncommon containment and care practices. It is appropriate to ensure those providing for their care and containment can do so responsibly to protect these animal species and the public. We appreciate that this bill text largely preserves the rights of responsible owners to do that.

We would submit to the committee the need to ensure a network of support is pre-established to handle the intake of the species listed within this text should a situation arise in which they are found to be held illegally or found “at-large”. Such established guidance perhaps does not require inclusion to the regulations but it should be given serious consideration simply because, limiting ownership rights of animals does at times complicate the safe surrender, capture and holding efforts of those animals during emergencies or enforcement activities.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Legislative Committee Chair & Board Member
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association