

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 26 (Delegate Arnick)
Economic Matters

Puppy Protection Act

This bill provides limited remedies for consumers who purchase unfit dogs from pet dealers or breeders. The available remedies include return of the dog, refunds, receipt of another dog, and reimbursement for veterinary costs. The bill establishes the circumstances under which there is a cause of action, as well as the time frames for bringing or responding to an action. Consumers are precluded from bringing an action if specified written notifications are provided by the pet dealer or breeder, and the consumer signs a written waiver.

The pet dealer is required to supply written and oral notice to a consumer at the time of purchase and obtain pertinent information from that buyer. In addition, the pet dealer or breeder must conspicuously display notice of these provisions at the business premises, as well as provide written notice identifying the state in which a dog was bred in close proximity to any dog offered for sale.

Violators are guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum fine of \$500.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal general fund revenue increase as a result of the bill's monetary penalty provision. General fund expenditures would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Revenues: General fund revenues could increase under the bill's monetary penalty provision for those cases heard in the District Court, depending upon the number of convictions and fines imposed.

State Expenditures: None. Assuming that the Consumer Protection Division will receive fewer than 50 complaints per year stemming from this bill, existing resources should be adequate to handle any additional workload.

Information Source(s): Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection Division), Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 22, 1996

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