

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1409 (Delegate Tavlör)

Judiciary

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**Pets - Killing and Injury**

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This bill requires an individual who kills or injures a pet to notify the State police or local law enforcement agency and the pet's owner within 12 hours after the incident. The individual must make a reasonable attempt to secure veterinary care if the pet is injured or to return the pet to the owner if the pet is deceased.

The bill specifies that in addition to any other available remedy a pet owner may file a civil action against an individual who kills or injures a pet and increases the amount of damages that a pet owner can recover against the individual. Under current law, a pet owner can only recover up to the market value of the pet before the injury or the reasonable cost of veterinary care, not exceeding \$2,500 if such charge is greater. Pursuant to this legislation, a pet owner can receive damages for the value of and injury to the pet, including associated veterinary expenses, court costs, and reasonable attorney fees. In cases where the individual fails to make the proper notifications, damages may include the sentimental or emotional value of the pet.

This bill takes effect July 1, 1998.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Enabling an individual to seek additional damages against a person who kills or injures a pet would not increase court expenditures.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services, Montgomery County, Prince George's County

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 18, 1998

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Analysis by: Hiram L. Burch, Jr.

Direct Inquiries to:

Reviewed by: John Rixey

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710