

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 907
Judiciary

(Delegate Zirkin)

Injury to or Death of Pet - Noneconomic Damages

This bill provides that a person who tortiously injures or causes the death of a pet is liable to the pet's owner for noneconomic damages, including mental anguish, emotional pain and suffering, loss of companionship, comfort, and protection. Noneconomic damages are limited to \$25,000. The bill's provisions do not apply to a licensed veterinarian who was providing medical assistance to the pet or an employee of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity who was acting on behalf of the public health or the pet's welfare.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any additional lawsuits filed as a result of the bill's provisions could be handled with existing Judiciary resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Any additional lawsuits filed as a result of the bill's provisions could be handled with existing circuit court resources. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal. A small business that injures or kills an individual's pet could be held liable for noneconomic damages up to \$25,000.

Analysis

Current Law: The measure of damages for tortuous injuries to or the death of a pet is the market value of the pet before the injury or death, or the reasonable cost of veterinary care, but not more than \$5,000.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – March 14, 2001
ncs/cer

Analysis by: Susan D. John

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510