

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2004 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 213 (Chairman, Health and Government Operations Committee)

(By Request – Departmental – Health and Mental Hygiene)

Health and Government Operations

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**Exotic Birds - Standards and Permits**

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This departmental bill revises and expands the statute regarding permits to import, distribute, and breed exotic birds. The bill specifies under what conditions the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) may deny permit applications and suspend or revoke permits. Before final action is taken, applicants or permit holders must be given an opportunity for a hearing before DHMH. The bill also specifies DHMH's authority to inspect facilities and changes the requirements for how dead exotic birds must be treated. Additionally, it provides that permits expire one year after issuance instead of on the July 1 after their effective date.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill's changes would not materially affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** DHMH has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Since 1939 Maryland has had some form of regulation regarding parrots and psittacine birds to prevent psittacosis occurrence in humans.

A permit to import, distribute, and breed exotic birds expires on the July 1 after its effective date unless it is renewed for a one-year term. Permit holders must keep their facilities in a sanitary condition. Each permit holder must keep a record of each exotic bird received or disposed of by the permit holder or agent of the permit holder. Permit holders must keep required records for at least one year at the facility.

If a bird dies in possession of a permit holder, the permit holder must freeze the bird immediately. DHMH must specify the methods for handling, treating, and destroying any bird that dies in possession of the permit holder or in a case that involves psittacosis or any other disease contagious to humans has or is suspected to have, carry, or been exposed to the disease or is kept at the same facility where the disease is discovered or suspected.

In cases that involve velogenic visertrophic Newcastle disease or any other disease that is contagious to domestic animals or poultry, the Secretary of Agriculture must specify the methods for handling, treating, and destroying any bird that has, is suspected of having, is suspected of being a carrier, has been exposed, or is kept at the same facility where the disease is discovered or suspected.

The Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene or a representative may inspect a permit holder's facilities. On request, any permit holder or the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene must make available to the Secretary of Agriculture any record, specimen, or other material necessary to diagnose or trace any infectious disease that occurs in an exotic bird and is contagious to domestic animals or poultry.

**Background:** The bill incorporates the current practice standards and recommendations from the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians *Compendium of Measures To Control Chlamydophila psittaci (formerly Chlamydia psittaci) Infection Among Humans (Psittacosis) and Pet Birds*.

Psittacosis is an infection caused by the bacterium in bird droppings. There were fewer than 50 cases of the disease reported in the United States in the last five years.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Office of Administrative Hearings, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Agriculture, MEDLINEplus Health Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 30, 2004  
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