

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1136  
Judiciary

(Delegate Cluster, *et al.*)

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Ferret Protection Act

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This bill provides that a commercial entity that produces or aids in the wholesale or retail distribution of ferrets may not transport in or out of the State or offer for sale a ferret that is under 12 weeks of age or lacks full adult canine dentition.

A commercial entity must sexually alter all ferrets at no less than 10 weeks of age, prior to their sale, and provide medical certification that dates the procedure. A commercial entity may not transport any ferret from its commercial breeding facility within seven days of sexually altering the ferret. A commercial entity that violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum fine of \$100 for each violation.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill would not materially affect State finances or operations.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** A person is prohibited from hunting with a ferret. A person who owns or keeps a ferret that is at least four months old must have the ferret adequately vaccinated against rabies.

Ferrets that have been vaccinated against rabies and bite a human or expose a human to rabies must be quarantined in a manner designated by the local health officer or the public health veterinarian.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill, HB 975 of 2003, was referred to the Judiciary Committee, but was not reported out. Another similar bill, HB 1359 of 2002, was referred to the Environmental Matters Committee, but was not reported out.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 9, 2004  
ncs/jr

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