

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 108 (St. Mary's County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

St. Mary's County - Regulation of Animals - Dogs

This bill requires the Animal Control Division of the Department of Emergency Services and Technology in St. Mary's County, rather than the county tax collector, to perform specified duties relating to the issuance and replacement of dog licenses and dog tags. The bill also requires the general shape of dog tags in St. Mary's County to remain unchanged from year to year.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The bill updates the licensing requirements of dogs in St. Mary's County to reflect current practices and does not affect county government revenues or expenditures.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: In St. Mary's County the county tax collector is generally responsible for the issuance and replacement of dog licenses and dog tags. The county commissioners are required to change the general shape of dog tags each year.

Background: Chapter 386 of 2015 authorized the St. Mary's County Commissioners to enact a local law to provide a comprehensive system for the regulation, humane treatment, and keeping of domestic animals and wild animals kept in captivity. The local law may include a schedule of fines for designated violations, which are considered civil infractions.

Chapter 386 also repealed provisions of law authorizing the St. Mary's County Commissioners to pass rules, regulations, or resolutions relating to dog licenses, the prohibition of dogs running at large off the property of the owner, the seizure and disposal of dogs found running at large, and the confinement of female dogs in heat, as well as the associated fines for violations.

Effective June 1, 2016, St. Mary's County initiated an online registration for dogs. This is in addition to two other registration methods available to county residents, which are registering by mail and in-person registration at either the county Animal Control Office, the Tri-County Animal Shelter, or the county Treasurer's Office. Currently, there is no fee for an individual dog license in the county. Kennel licenses are \$25. The county reports collecting \$6,357 in dog license fees in 2015 and \$2,968 in dog license fees in 2016. The bill eliminates the need for kennel license fees to be collected by the Treasurer's Office.

St. Mary's County reports that the new online registration system will allow the county to issue one tag for the life of a dog. Current law requires a new tag, of a new shape, to be issued each year.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 104 (Senator Waugh) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 20, 2017
md/tso Third Reader - March 21, 2017

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