

SENATE BILL 375

M4
SB 1055/24 – EEE

5lr1380
CF 5lr1420

By: **Senator Kramer**

Introduced and read first time: January 17, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Agriculture – Roosters – Restrictions**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting, unless authorized by the Department of Agriculture, a
4 certain person from keeping a certain number of roosters on certain property
5 beginning on a certain date, subject to certain exceptions; authorizing the
6 Department to work in cooperation with a local animal control or law enforcement
7 officer to enforce this Act; and generally relating to restrictions on keeping roosters
8 in the State.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Agriculture

11 Section 3–105.2

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 Preamble

15 WHEREAS, Despite its illegality in Maryland, ongoing issues persist with
16 cockfighting; and

17 WHEREAS, Breeding roosters for cockfighting is directly linked to the spread of
18 Avian Flu; now, therefore,

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article – Agriculture**

22 **3–105.2.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
2 **INDICATED.**

3 **(2) “PROPERTY” MEANS:**

4 **(I) A PARCEL OF LAND; OR**

5 **(II) A COMBINATION OF PARCELS OF LAND OPERATING AS A**
6 **SINGLE UNIT.**

7 **(3) “ROOSTER” MEANS A MALE CHICKEN THAT:**

8 **(I) IS AT LEAST 6 MONTHS OLD;**

9 **(II) HAS FULLY DEVELOPED AN ADULT PLUMAGE; OR**

10 **(III) IS CAPABLE OF CROWING.**

11 **(B) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO:**

12 **(1) COMMERCIAL POULTRY PRODUCERS, AS DEFINED IN § 8–704.2 OF**
13 **THIS ARTICLE;**

14 **(2) A PUBLIC SCHOOL OR NONPUBLIC SCHOOL THAT RECEIVES**
15 **STATE FUNDS;**

16 **(3) A GOVERNMENT–OPERATED ANIMAL SHELTER;**

17 **(4) AN ANIMAL WELFARE ORGANIZATION, AS DEFINED IN § 19–701 OF**
18 **THE BUSINESS REGULATION ARTICLE; OR**

19 **(5) A MEMBER OF A 4–H OR FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA**
20 **PROGRAM IF, ON REQUEST OF AN ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER, AN OFFICER OF A**
21 **COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY, OR A POLICE OFFICER, THE MEMBER PROVIDES IN**
22 **WRITING PROOF OF:**

23 **(I) MEMBERSHIP IN A 4–H OR FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA**
24 **PROGRAM; AND**

25 **(II) AUTHORIZATION FROM THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE**
26 **ROOSTERS ARE LOCATED THAT SPECIFIES:**

1 1. **THE REASON FOR KEEPING MORE THAN 5 ROOSTERS**
2 **PER ACRE OR MORE THAN 25 ROOSTERS ON A PROPERTY;**

3 2. **THE NUMBER OF ROOSTERS THAT MAY BE KEPT;**

4 3. **THE BREED OF EACH ROOSTER THAT MAY BE KEPT;**

5 4. **THE DURATION OF TIME EACH ROOSTER MAY BE**
6 **KEPT; AND**

7 5. **THE ADDRESS OF THE PROPERTY WHERE EACH**
8 **ROOSTER MAY BE KEPT.**

9 (C) **BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2027, UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE**
10 **DEPARTMENT, A PERSON WHO KEEPS ROOSTERS THAT ARE MAINTAINED**
11 **INDIVIDUALLY AND KEPT MOVEMENT-CONSTRAINED THROUGH THE USE OF AN**
12 **ENCLOSURE OR TETHER MAY NOT:**

13 (1) **KEEP MORE THAN 5 ROOSTERS PER ACRE ON A SINGLE**
14 **PROPERTY; OR**

15 (2) **KEEP MORE THAN A TOTAL OF 25 ROOSTERS ON A SINGLE**
16 **PROPERTY.**

17 (D) (1) **THIS SECTION DOES NOT AFFECT THE AUTHORITY OF A COUNTY,**
18 **MUNICIPALITY, OR UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO ENACT AND ENFORCE**
19 **STANDARDS OR REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO ROOSTERS THAT ARE MORE**
20 **STRINGENT THAN THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.**

21 (2) **THIS SECTION DOES NOT LIMIT OR SUPERSEDE ANY OTHER**
22 **COUNTY, MUNICIPAL, OR STATE LAW, RULE, OR REGULATION THAT PROVIDES MORE**
23 **STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE KEEPING OF ROOSTERS.**

24 (E) **A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS:**

25 (1) **GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO**
26 **A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000; OR**

27 (2) **SUBJECT TO ENFORCEMENT UNDER § 3-119 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

28 (F) **THE DEPARTMENT MAY WORK IN COOPERATION WITH A LOCAL ANIMAL**
29 **CONTROL OR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER TO ENFORCE THIS SECTION.**

1 **(G) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE THE**
2 **DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS BEYOND THOSE**
3 **INSPECTIONS REQUIRED BY LAW.**

4 **(H) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS**
5 **SECTION.**

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
7 October 1, 2025.