

Chapter 230

(Senate Bill 423)

AN ACT concerning

**Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Prohibitions and Adoption Requirements
(Animal Research Modernization and Best Practices Act of 2026)**

FOR the purpose of prohibiting a research facility or testing facility from using certain dogs and cats for research or testing purposes; prohibiting a research facility or testing facility from performing certain procedures on dogs or cats; prohibiting a testing facility from using traditional animal test methods under certain circumstances; applying certain provisions of law regarding the adoption of dogs and cats used for scientific research purposes to testing facilities; and generally relating to research facilities and testing facilities that use animals in research, education, or testing.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Agriculture

Section 15–101 to be under the amended title “Title 15. Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals”

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Agriculture

Section 15–101 through 15–103, 15–105, and 15–106

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2016 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, Scientific research and medical innovation are essential to protecting public health and advancing knowledge; and

WHEREAS, The State has a compelling interest in ensuring that scientific research and medical innovation are conducted in a manner that is ethical, responsible, and consistent with evolving scientific standards; and

WHEREAS, Advances in technology and methodology have increasingly made reducing, refining, or replacing the use of live animals in laboratory testing a possibility; and

WHEREAS, The unnecessary or excessive use of animals in research undermines public confidence and fails to reflect best practices in modern science; and

WHEREAS, It is the policy of the State to require that animal testing be employed only when scientifically justified and when no reasonably available alternative methods exist; and

WHEREAS, When animal testing is necessary, it should be conducted using the minimum number of animals required and adhere to standards that prioritize humane treatment and oversight; and

WHEREAS, Establishing clear statutory standards for the necessity, minimization, and review of animal laboratory testing will promote scientific integrity, ethical responsibility, and public trust; now, therefore,

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

Article – Agriculture

Title 15. Research Facilities [that] **AND TESTING FACILITIES THAT Use [Dogs or Cats] ANIMALS.**

15–101.

(A) IN THIS TITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) (1) “ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD” MEANS A TEST METHOD, INCLUDING A NEW OR REVISED METHOD, THAT:

(I) DOES NOT USE LIVE VERTEBRATE ANIMALS;

(II) PRODUCES INFORMATION OF EQUIVALENT OR BETTER SCIENTIFIC QUALITY AND RELEVANCE COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHODS; AND

(III) HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AND ACCEPTED FOR USE BY THE FEDERAL AGENCY OR PROGRAM WITHIN THE FEDERAL AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATING THE SPECIFIC PRODUCT OR ACTIVITY FOR WHICH THE TEST IS BEING CONDUCTED.

(2) “ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD” INCLUDES:

(I) COMPUTATIONAL TOXICOLOGY AND BIOINFORMATICS;

(II) HIGH–THROUGHPUT SCREENING METHODS;

- (III) TESTING CATEGORIES OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES;
- (IV) TIERED TESTING METHODS;
- (V) IN VITRO STUDIES; AND
- (VI) SYSTEMS BIOLOGY.

~~(c)~~ (1) ~~“BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH” MEANS:~~

~~(i) THE INVESTIGATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND CAUSES OF DISEASE; OR~~

~~(ii) RESEARCH CONDUCTED TO INCREASE FUNDAMENTAL SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND EXPAND THE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW PROCESSES IN LIVING ORGANISMS DEVELOP AND FUNCTION.~~

~~(2) “BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH” DOES NOT INCLUDE TESTING DONE TO ASSESS THE SAFETY OR EFFICACY OF:~~

~~(i) CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES;~~

~~(ii) INGREDIENTS;~~

~~(iii) DRUGS;~~

~~(iv) VACCINES;~~

~~(v) PRODUCTS; OR~~

~~(vi) PRODUCT FORMULATIONS.~~

~~(D)~~ (C) “CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE” MEANS ANY ORGANIC OR INORGANIC SUBSTANCE INCLUDING:

~~(1) A DRUG, AS DEFINED IN 21 U.S.C. § 321(G);~~

~~(2)~~ (1) A PESTICIDE, AS DEFINED IN 7 U.S.C. § 136(U);

~~(3)~~ (2) A CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE, AS DEFINED IN 15 U.S.C. § 2602(2); AND

~~(4)~~ (3) A FOOD ADDITIVE, AS DEFINED IN 21 U.S.C. § 321(S).

(D) (1) “MEDICAL RESEARCH” MEANS RESEARCH RELATED TO:

(I) THE CAUSES, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, CONTROL, OR PREVENTION OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISEASES OR IMPAIRMENT IN HUMANS OR ANIMALS; OR

(II) THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOMEDICAL PRODUCTS, MEDICAL DEVICES, OR DRUGS AS DEFINED IN 21 U.S.C. § 321(G).

(2) “MEDICAL RESEARCH” DOES NOT INCLUDE THE TESTING OF AN INGREDIENT THAT WAS FORMERLY USED AS A DRUG AND THAT IS NOW PROPOSED FOR USE IN A PRODUCT OTHER THAN A BIOMEDICAL PRODUCT, MEDICAL DEVICE, OR DRUG.

(E) (1) “RESEARCH FACILITY” MEANS ANY FACILITY IN THE STATE THAT USES LIVE VERTEBRATE ANIMALS FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, OR EXPERIMENTATION.

(2) “RESEARCH FACILITY” DOES NOT INCLUDE A PARTNERSHIP, A CORPORATION, AN ASSOCIATION, AN INSTITUTION, AN ORGANIZATION, OR ANY OTHER ENTITY IN THE STATE THAT PROVIDES ONLY BENEFICIAL SERVICES TO AN ANIMAL SUCH AS SPAYING AND NEUTERING.

(F) (1) “TESTING FACILITY” MEANS A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP, CORPORATION, ASSOCIATION, ORGANIZATION, OR ANY OTHER ENTITY IN THE STATE THAT USES LIVE VERTEBRATE ANIMALS FOR THE TESTING OF:

(I) CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES;

(II) INGREDIENTS;

~~(III)~~ DRUGS;

~~(IV)~~ VACCINES;

~~(V)~~ (III) PRODUCTS; OR

~~(VI)~~ (IV) PRODUCT FORMULATIONS.

(2) “TESTING FACILITY” INCLUDES A PARTNERSHIP, A CORPORATION, AN ASSOCIATION, AN ORGANIZATION, OR ANY OTHER ENTITY IN THE STATE THAT IS OWNED, LEASED, OR OPERATED BY A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITY.

(3) “TESTING FACILITY” DOES NOT INCLUDE:

(I) A PARTNERSHIP, A CORPORATION, AN ASSOCIATION, AN INSTITUTION, AN ORGANIZATION, OR ANY OTHER ENTITY IN THE STATE THAT PROVIDES ONLY BENEFICIAL SERVICES TO AN ANIMAL SUCH AS SPAYING AND NEUTERING; OR

(II) A SCHOOL OR AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(G) “TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD” MEANS A PROCESS, AN EXPERIMENT, OR A PROCEDURE THAT:

(1) USES LIVE VERTEBRATE ANIMALS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE, AN INGREDIENT, ~~A DRUG, A VACCINE,~~ A PRODUCT FORMULATION, OR A PRODUCT; AND

(2) GENERATES INFORMATION REGARDING THE ABILITY OF THE CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE, INGREDIENT, ~~DRUG, VACCINE,~~ PRODUCT FORMULATION, OR PRODUCT TO PRODUCE A SPECIFIC BIOLOGICAL EFFECT UNDER SPECIFIED CONDITIONS.

15-102.

(A) A RESEARCH FACILITY OR TESTING FACILITY MAY NOT USE A DOG OR CAT THAT HAS UNDERGONE A DEVOCALIZATION SURGERY FOR RESEARCH OR TESTING PURPOSES.

(B) A RESEARCH FACILITY OR TESTING FACILITY MAY NOT PERFORM A DEVOCALIZATION SURGERY ON A DOG OR CAT.

(C) A DOG OR CAT AT A RESEARCH FACILITY OR TESTING FACILITY MAY BE EUTHANIZED ONLY ~~BY A LETHAL INJECTION OF SODIUM PENTOBARBITAL ADMINISTERED~~ IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MOST CURRENT AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES FOR THE EUTHANASIA OF ANIMALS:

(1) BY A VETERINARIAN LICENSED IN THE STATE; OR

(2) UNDER THE DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUPERVISION OF A LICENSED VETERINARIAN ~~LICENSED IN THE STATE.~~

15-103.

(A) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO ~~BIOMEDICAL~~ MEDICAL RESEARCH.

(B) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A TESTING FACILITY MAY NOT USE A TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD IF THE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATING THE SPECIFIC PRODUCT OR ACTIVITY FOR WHICH A TEST METHOD IS BEING USED HAS:

(I) APPROVED AN ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD; OR

(II) MADE AVAILABLE TO OR GRANTED THE TESTING FACILITY A WAIVER FROM USING A TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD.

(2) IF THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD AVAILABLE OR WAIVER MADE AVAILABLE OR GRANTED, A TESTING FACILITY MAY USE A TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD IF THE TESTING FACILITY USES THE FEWEST NUMBER OF ANIMALS POSSIBLE AND MINIMIZES THE LEVEL OF PAIN, SUFFERING, AND STRESS OF AN ANIMAL USED FOR TESTING.

(3) NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION MAY BE CONSTRUED TO PROHIBIT:

(I) THE USE OF A TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD TO COMPLY WITH FEDERAL OR STATE REQUIREMENTS IF THE APPROPRIATE FEDERAL OR STATE AGENCY HAS APPROVED THE USE OF AN ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD BUT DETERMINED THAT THE ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD DOES NOT ENSURE THE HEALTH OR SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC OR THE ENVIRONMENT; OR

(II) THE CONTINUED USE OF A TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD THAT:

1. WAS INITIATED:

A. BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2026; OR

B. WITHIN 180 DAYS AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2026, FOLLOWING AGENCY APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE TEST METHOD OR STRATEGY; AND

2. IS USED ONLY TO COMPLETE THE TEST FOR WHICH IT WAS STARTED.

[15–101.] 15–104.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Animal rescue organization” includes:

(i) A nonprofit organization incorporated for the purpose of rescuing animals in need and finding permanent adoptive homes for the animals; and

(ii) A government–operated animal control unit that provides animals for adoption.

(3) [“Research facility” includes:

(i) A higher education research facility;

(ii) A scientific research facility;

(iii) A medical research facility; and

(iv) A product testing facility.

(4)] “Scientific research purposes” includes:

(i) Investigation;

(ii) Experimentation;

(iii) Instruction; and

(iv) Testing.

(b) This section applies to a dog or cat that, in the determination of an attending veterinarian, is suitable for adoption.

(c) A research facility **OR TESTING FACILITY** located in the State in which dogs or cats are used for scientific research purposes shall take reasonable steps to provide for the adoption of a dog or cat that, in the determination of the research facility **OR TESTING FACILITY**, is no longer needed for scientific research purposes by:

(1) Establishing a private placement process to provide for the adoption of a dog or cat;

(2) Establishing a list of animal rescue organizations that are approved by the research facility **OR TESTING FACILITY** and are willing to take a dog or cat from the research facility **OR TESTING FACILITY**; and

(3) Offering the dog or cat to the animal rescue organizations identified in the list established under item (2) of this subsection if the research facility **OR TESTING FACILITY** is unable to place the dog or cat through its private placement process.

(d) A research facility **OR TESTING FACILITY** may enter into a collaborative agreement with an animal rescue organization for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this section.

15-105.

(A) ON OR BEFORE ~~JANUARY 31~~ DECEMBER 1, 2028, AND EACH ~~JANUARY 31~~ DECEMBER 1 THEREAFTER, EACH TESTING FACILITY SHALL SUBMIT TO THE SECRETARY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING ~~12-MONTH PERIOD~~ FISCAL YEAR:

(1) THE NUMBER OF EACH SPECIES OF ANIMALS OWNED AND USED BY THE TESTING FACILITY;

(2) THE NUMBER OF DOGS OR CATS RELEASED TO ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS UNDER § 15-104 OF THIS TITLE AND THE NAMES OF THE ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH THE DOGS OR CATS WERE RELEASED;

(3) THE TYPE AND NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVE TEST METHODS AND TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHODS USED;

(4) THE NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHOD WAIVERS USED; AND

(5) THE PURPOSE OF ANY TESTS CONDUCTED USING ALTERNATIVE TEST METHODS OR TRADITIONAL ANIMAL TEST METHODS.

(B) ON OR BEFORE ~~JANUARY 31~~ DECEMBER 1, 2028, AND EACH ~~JANUARY 31~~ DECEMBER 1 THEREAFTER, EACH RESEARCH FACILITY USING OR KEEPING DOGS OR CATS SHALL SUBMIT TO THE SECRETARY, FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING ~~12-MONTH PERIOD~~ FISCAL YEAR, THE NUMBER OF DOGS OR CATS RELEASED TO ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS UNDER § 15-104 OF THIS TITLE AND THE NAMES OF THE ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH THE DOGS OR CATS WERE RELEASED.

(C) THE SECRETARY SHALL:

(1) PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT AGGREGATING THE INFORMATION SUBMITTED UNDER THIS SECTION IN AN ANONYMIZED MANNER; AND

(2) POST THE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE.

(D) A REPORT MADE TO THE SECRETARY UNDER THIS SECTION IS NOT SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE UNDER THE MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT.

15-106.

A RESEARCH FACILITY OR TESTING FACILITY THAT VIOLATES THIS TITLE IS SUBJECT TO:

(1) FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000; AND

(2) FOR A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, April 28, 2026.