

Chapter 340

(Senate Bill 703)

AN ACT concerning

Caroline County – Regulation of Animals – Dogs

FOR the purpose of repealing certain requirements for the issuance of dog licenses in Caroline County; and generally relating to the regulation of dogs in Caroline County.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Local Government

Section 13–116

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2013 Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

Article – Local Government

13–116.

(a) [(1) In Caroline County, on or before July 1 of each year, a person owning or keeping a dog shall apply to the county tax collector for a license for the dog if the dog is at least 6 months old.

(2) At the time of application, the applicant shall pay the fee for a dog or kennel license set by the county commissioners.

(3) Except as provided in § 13–108 of this subtitle, the licenses and fees required under this section are the only licenses and fees required for owning or keeping a dog.

(4) The County Commissioners of Caroline County shall prepare and supply the form for a license issued under this subsection.

(5) A dog license shall contain the date of issuance, a serial number, and a description of the dog licensed.

(6) A license expires on July 1 of the year after issuance.

(b) (1) In Caroline County, the county tax collector shall issue a tag with each dog license to a person owning or keeping a dog when the person pays the license fee for the dog.

(2) The County Commissioners of Caroline County shall prepare and supply tags to the county tax collector each year.

(3) The tags shall be:

(i) composed of metal;

(ii) imprinted with a serial number corresponding to the number on the license issued to the owner under subsection (a) of this section;

(iii) imprinted with the calendar year for which the tag is issued;

(iv) 1 inch or less in length; and

(v) equipped with a substantial metal fastener.

(4) The county commissioners shall change the general shape of the tags each year.

(5) Tags supplied to owners of kennels shall contain the word “kennel”.

(6) The person owning or keeping a dog shall attach the tag to a substantial collar and keep the collar and tag on the dog for which the license was issued at all times, except when the dog is:

(i) confined in a kennel; or

(ii) hunting under the charge of an attendant.

(7) The county tax collector shall replace a lost tag on:

(i) application by the person to whom the original license was issued;

(ii) the production of the license; and

(iii) payment of a fee of 25 cents.

(c)] (1) The County Commissioners of Caroline County may adopt rules and regulations by resolution or ordinance to provide for:

(i) issuing dog licenses;

(ii) keeping records of all sales of licenses;

(iii) designating persons authorized to sell licenses; and

(iv) seizing and disposing of dogs found running at large in the county.

(2) Before the county commissioners adopt a rule or regulation in accordance with this subsection, a summary of the proposed rule or regulation shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the county once each week for 2 successive weeks, to provide any person an opportunity to be heard.

(3) The rules and regulations shall include standards and operate uniformly.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, the county commissioners may delegate, by written contract, the enforcement of the rules and regulations.

(5) (i) The county commissioners shall reserve the right to cancel a written contract executed in accordance with paragraph (4) of this subsection.

(ii) A cancellation under this paragraph:

1. may be without notice or recourse, if the cancellation is for cause; or

2. requires notice at least 30 days before cancellation, if the cancellation is without cause.

[(d)] (B) (1) The County Commissioners of Caroline County may appoint animal control officers.

(2) An animal control officer appointed under this subsection:

(i) has all the powers of a peace officer;

(ii) may sell and issue dog licenses; and

(iii) may seize and dispose of stray, injured, unlicensed, diseased, or vicious dogs in accordance with rules and regulations of the county commissioners.

(3) The county commissioners may provide for the compensation of an animal control officer appointed under this subsection.

[(e)] (C) (1) The County Commissioners of Caroline County may provide animal shelters where dogs seized by an animal control officer may be placed.

(2) The county commissioners may enter into agreements with adjacent counties to establish an animal shelter to serve the counties.

(3) Notwithstanding § 13–105(d) of this subtitle, the county commissioners may use the proceeds from dog license fees to:

- (i) establish and maintain an animal shelter; and
- (ii) collect, care for, or euthanize dogs.

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

Approved by the Governor, April 28, 2026.