

HOUSE BILL 1038

L2

6lr3187
CF SB 703

By: **Caroline County Delegation**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Caroline County – Regulation of Animals – Dogs**

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

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

6 Article – Local Government

7 Section 13–116

8 Annotated Code of Maryland

9 (2013 Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

12 **Article – Local Government**

13 13–116.

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

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

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

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

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

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

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

11 (3) The tags shall be:

12 (i) composed of metal;

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

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

16 (iv) 1 inch or less in length; and

17 (v) equipped with a substantial metal fastener.

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

20 (5) Tags supplied to owners of kennels shall contain the word "kennel".

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

24 (i) confined in a kennel; or

25 (ii) hunting under the charge of an attendant.

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

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

29 (ii) the production of the license; and

1 (iii) payment of a fee of 25 cents.

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

4 (i) issuing dog licenses;

5 (ii) keeping records of all sales of licenses;

6 (iii) designating persons authorized to sell licenses; and

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

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

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

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

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

19 (ii) A cancellation under this paragraph:

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

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

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

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

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

28 (ii) may sell and issue dog licenses; and

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

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

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

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

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

11 (i) establish and maintain an animal shelter; and

12 (ii) collect, care for, or euthanize dogs.

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