

HOUSE BILL 1551

M4, C2

6lr1935

By: **Delegate Metzgar**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2026

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Department of Agriculture – Regulation of Dog Breeders**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Dog Breeder Accountability Fund as a special,
4 nonlapsing fund; requiring, on or before a certain date beginning in a certain year, a
5 certain dog breeder to register annually with the Department of Agriculture in a
6 certain manner; requiring, beginning on a certain date, a certain dog breeder to
7 submit to the Department an application for a certain puppy birth certificate in a
8 certain manner; prohibiting, beginning on a certain date, a certain dog breeder from
9 selling or otherwise transferring to the public a puppy unless certain conditions are
10 met; requiring, on or before a certain date, the Department to develop a certain
11 registry; and generally relating to the regulation of dog breeders by the Department
12 of Agriculture.

13 BY adding to

14 Article – Agriculture

15 Section 17–101 through 17–106 to be under the new title “Title 17. Regulation of Dog
16 Breeders”

17 Annotated Code of Maryland

18 (2016 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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 **TITLE 17. REGULATION OF DOG BREEDERS.**

23 **17–101.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

3 **(B) “BREEDER” MEANS A PERSON THAT BREEDS DOGS IN THE STATE TO**
4 **SELL, EXCHANGE, OR OTHERWISE TRANSFER TO THE PUBLIC.**

5 **(C) “FUND” MEANS THE DOG BREEDER ACCOUNTABILITY FUND**
6 **ESTABLISHED UNDER § 17–102 OF THIS TITLE.**

7 **(D) “MICROCHIP” MEANS A RADIO–FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION DEVICE**
8 **THAT COMPLIES WITH MICROCHIP STANDARDS SET BY THE INTERNATIONAL**
9 **ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION.**

10 **(E) “PUPPY BIRTH CERTIFICATE” MEANS A BIRTH CERTIFICATE FOR A**
11 **PUPPY THAT IS ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO A BREEDER UNDER § 17–103(B) OF**
12 **THIS TITLE.**

13 **17–102.**

14 **(A) THERE IS A DOG BREEDER ACCOUNTABILITY FUND.**

15 **(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO:**

16 **(1) PROMOTE BREEDER REGISTRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY; AND**

17 **(2) PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ANIMAL SHELTERS AND**
18 **SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAMS TO REDUCE SHELTER INTAKE AND IMPROVE SHELTER**
19 **OUTCOMES.**

20 **(C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.**

21 **(D) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT**
22 **SUBJECT TO § 7–302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.**

23 **(2) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY,**
24 **AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.**

25 **(E) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:**

26 **(1) REVENUE DISTRIBUTED TO THE FUND UNDER §§ 17–103 AND**
27 **17–106 OF THIS TITLE;**

1 **3. THE NUMBER OF BREEDING FEMALES MAINTAINED**
2 **BY THE BREEDER FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING CALENDAR YEAR;**

3 **4. THE NUMBER OF LITTERS MAINTAINED BY THE**
4 **BREEDER FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING CALENDAR YEAR;**

5 **5. PROOF OF COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL ZONING**
6 **REGULATIONS; AND**

7 **6. ANY OTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE**
8 **DEPARTMENT.**

9 **(B) (1) BEGINNING JULY 1, 2029, A BREEDER SHALL:**

10 **(I) WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE BIRTH OF A LITTER, SUBMIT TO**
11 **THE DEPARTMENT AN APPLICATION FOR A BIRTH CERTIFICATE FOR EACH PUPPY**
12 **BORN IN THE LITTER ON THE FORM THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES; AND**

13 **(II) PAY TO THE DEPARTMENT AN APPLICATION FEE OF \$50**
14 **FOR EACH PUPPY IDENTIFIED IN THE APPLICATION.**

15 **(2) EACH PUPPY BIRTH CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT**
16 **SHALL INCLUDE:**

17 **(I) THE REGISTRATION NUMBER ASSIGNED TO THE BREEDER;**

18 **(II) THE PARENTAGE OF THE PUPPY; AND**

19 **(III) FOR A PUPPY BORN ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2030, THE**
20 **MICROCHIP IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ASSIGNED TO THE PUPPY.**

21 **(C) THE FEES COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THIS SECTION**
22 **SHALL BE DEPOSITED INTO THE FUND.**

23 **17-104.**

24 **BEGINNING JULY 1, 2028, A BREEDER MAY NOT SELL, EXCHANGE, OR**
25 **OTHERWISE TRANSFER TO THE PUBLIC A PUPPY UNLESS:**

26 **(1) THE BREEDER IS REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT UNDER §**
27 **17-103(A) OF THIS TITLE;**

1 **(2) FOR A PUPPY THAT IS BORN ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2029, A PUPPY**
2 **BIRTH CERTIFICATE HAS BEEN ISSUED FOR THE PUPPY; AND**

3 **(3) FOR A PUPPY THAT IS BORN ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 2030, THE**
4 **PUPPY IS MICROCHIPPED AND THE MICROCHIP NUMBER MATCHES THE MICROCHIP**
5 **IDENTIFICATION NUMBER INCLUDED ON THE PUPPY'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE.**

6 **17-105.**

7 **(A) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:**

8 **(1) ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS TITLE; AND**

9 **(2) DEVELOP A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE REGISTRY TO MAINTAIN**
10 **INFORMATION RELATED TO EACH BREEDER REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT**
11 **UNDER § 17-103(A) OF THIS TITLE, INCLUDING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON**
12 **EACH PUPPY BIRTH CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO THE BREEDER.**

13 **(B) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2029, AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE**
14 **DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH §**
15 **2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE**
16 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS TITLE, INCLUDING:**

17 **(1) THE NUMBER OF BREEDERS REGISTERED WITH THE**
18 **DEPARTMENT;**

19 **(2) THE AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF MONEY DEPOSITED INTO THE**
20 **FUND;**

21 **(3) THE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT HAVE RECEIVED**
22 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE FUND; AND**

23 **(4) THE IMPACTS ON ANIMAL SHELTER INTAKE AND SHELTER**
24 **OUTCOMES.**

25 **17-106.**

26 **(A) (1) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS TITLE IS SUBJECT TO AN**
27 **ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY OF UP TO \$5,000 PER VIOLATION.**

28 **(2) EACH LITTER OF PUPPIES THAT IS NOT REPORTED TO THE**
29 **DEPARTMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS TITLE IS A SEPARATE VIOLATION.**

1 **(B) THE PENALTIES COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THIS**
2 **SECTION SHALL BE DEPOSITED INTO THE FUND.**

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
4 1, 2026.