



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 19, 2020

To: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: State Government –Office of the Environmental and Natural Resources Ombudsman – Establishment (Environmental Accountability and Transparency Act)-SB 460 - SUPPORT

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairman Kagan, members of the Education, Health, and Environmental affairs Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify before to you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our thousands of members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Environment & Transportation Committee vote favorably for State Government –Office of the Environmental and Natural Resources Ombudsman – Establishment (Environmental Accountability and Transparency Act)-SB 460.

With the reduction in staff in many state agencies, we want to ensure that Maryland's animals are protected. Three Maryland agencies oversee the three major classes of Maryland's animals including: companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. The majority of Maryland's animals are under the purview of the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, two of the Maryland agencies that would fall under the auspices of the Office of Environmental and Natural Resources Ombudsman. In a more indirect, but nonetheless important way, the Maryland Department of the Environment impacts Maryland's animals as it safeguards the air, land, and water that all ecosystems need to survive.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture deals with issues affecting companion animals through the Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners and the Spay and Neuter Program. Moreover, it is vital to Maryland's horse industry as it is responsible for the Horse Industry Board and its many programs. In addition to companion animals and horses, the Maryland Department of Agriculture also protects livestock through a myriad of programs including the Food and Feed Quality Program to ensure safe feed for Maryland's farm animals as well as safe food for public consumption. These are but a few of the areas in which the Maryland Department of Agriculture protects Maryland's companion and farm animals. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources oversees Maryland's wildlife including important species management.

HB 614 will ensure that issues as diverse as livestock poisoned by tainted animal feed, maintenance of proper veterinary practices, practicing responsible deer management, to the poisoning of Bald Eagles on the Eastern Shore are handled in an efficient and transparent manner.

I thank for Senator Elfleth for sponsoring this bill, and urge a favorable report on SB 460.

Let Kindness Reign, Vote Humane

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February 18, 2020