



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL 406

CRIMES – UNATTENDED DOGS IN EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

February 26, 2020

SUPPORT

MR. CHAIR, MR. VICE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HB 406, WHICH REQUIRES ADEQUATE SHELTER FOR DOGS IN EXTREME HOT AND COLD TEMPERATURES AND DURING AN ACTIVE WARNING ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS BILL? WHEN DOGS ARE LEFT UNATTENDED OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER AND WITHOUT ACCESS TO PROPER SHELTER AND WATER, THEY ARE AT RISK OF HYPOTHERMIA, HEAT STROKE OR INJURY IN THE CASE OF A HURRICANE, TORNADO, HIGH WINDS, OR OTHER SEVERE WEATHER. WE NEED THIS LAW BECAUSE TEN MARYLAND COUNTIES RECOGNIZE THE RISKS OF EXTREME WEATHER FOR DOGS OUTDOORS AND REQUIRE EITHER THAT THEY BE BROUGHT INDOORS OR THAT OTHER ADEQUATE SHELTER BE PROVIDED. THE REMAINING THIRTEEN (13) COUNTIES AND BALTIMORE CITY HAVE NO LAWS ON DOGS OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER, SO A STATEWIDE STANDARD IS NEEDED TO PROTECT OUR CANINE FRIENDS.

WHAT THE BILL DOES: HB 406 DOES THREE THINGS:

1. DEFINES EXTREME WEATHER AS BELOW 32 AND ABOVE 90 OR AN ACTIVE WARNING ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.
2. DESCRIBES WHAT SUITABLE SHELTER IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT. SUITABLE SHELTER MUST HAVE:

FOUR WALLS AND A DOORWAY; BE PROPERLY VENTILATED; HAVE A WEATHERPROOF ROOF; BE RAISED AT LEAST 2" OFF THE GROUND; HAVE INSULATION OR HEAT TO ALLOW THE DOG TO MAINTAIN ITS BODY TEMPERATURE, AND BE SUITABLE FOR THE DOG'S AGE, SIZE, BREED AND CONDITION.

SUITABLE SHELTER IS **NOT** A CRAWL SPACE UNDER A BUILDING; A SPACE UNDER A PARKED CAR; A FLOOR OF WIRE OR CHAIN LINK; OR A STRUCTURE MADE OF CARDBOARD OR FLIMSY MATERIAL THAT CANNOT WITHSTAND THE ELEMENTS.

AMENDMENTS: I HAVE TWO AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL. FIRST, WE ARE DROPPING THE MISDEMEANOR LANGUAGE TO SAY A VIOLATION WILL BE A CIVIL OFFENSE, AND THE PENALTIES WILL BE A WARNING THE FIRST TIME, A \$500 FINE THE SECOND TIME AND A \$1,000 FINE THE THIRD TIME. SENATOR KRAMER IS THE SPONSOR OF THE SENATE CROSSFILE AND HE AND I AGREED THAT THE GOAL SHOULD BE TO GET DOG OWNERS TO COMPLY AND PROVIDE SUITABLE SHELTER, NOT HAVE THEM END UP WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD AND FACING PRISON TIME. THE LAW WILL BE ENFORCED BY LOCAL ANIMAL MANAGEMENT AGENCIES.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT ADDS TWO MORE SPONSORS TO THE BILL.

MR. CHAIRMAN, DOGS ARE TRULY HUMAN'S BEST FRIEND. LET'S MAKE SURE IF THEY MUST BE LEFT OUTDOORS IN EXTREME WEATHER, THEY HAVE ACCESS TO SHELTER THAT KEEPS THEM SAFE. I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

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