

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB286 - Crimes Against Animals - Interference With Livestock

February 5th, 2020

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chairman Waldstreicher, members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 286. Currently, animal protections under criminal law are primarily applied to domestic animals, such as cats and dogs, as well as some birds. The only specific protection for other animals is that applied to racing and competitive exhibition horses. This bill simply extends the same statutory protections to all livestock.

This bill will protect fair animals on exhibition, carriage horses that may be unhooked or harassed, or farm animals that are unduly released. In each of these cases, the actions of a malicious individual leads to undue stress on the animal, as well as the risk of injury to the animal or the public. This bill applies the same consequences to each of these cases, as the outcomes are broadly the same.

As you will see in the additionally provided testimony, recent actions from bad actors give farmers and lawful operators of businesses involving livestock cause for concern. This legislation provides these farmers and business owners with protection from these bad actors, and applies the current law consistently across relevant cases of interference, tampering, or injury to livestock. For that reason, **I respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 286.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Carroll Counties