

March 22, 2021



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB146 –
Department of Agriculture –
Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Report**

HEARING: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021 – 1 P.M.

Presented By

**Mercedes M Pellet, Development Director and Retired Registered Veterinary Technician
HART for Animals, Inc.**

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VOLUNTEER.**

I am presenting my written testimony in support of HB146, to continue the Department of Agriculture's Spay/Neuter Fund, which provides no-cost surgeries for the pets of low-income Maryland residents.

Our animal rescue organization is located in Garrett County, where the poverty rate is 13%, as updated from the 2010 census. We applied for our first spay/neuter grant in 2015 and every year since then and have performed 2,980 surgeries in those five years.

There is an important correlation between the poverty rate in our county and the urgency with which we view the extension of the Spay/Neuter Fund.

During the years we have been performing these surgeries, we have spayed **949 cats** and **605 dogs**. If we had not spayed them, female cats and their female offspring could potentially have produced 4,745,000 kittens in seven years. And, similarly, those female dogs and their female offspring could have produced 302,500 puppies.

The sad reality is that cat and dog owners living below the poverty line do not have the funds to pay for the surgeries, even at HART's greatly reduced rates. Cats and dogs that are not sterilized will continue to reproduce to the detriment of the community in which they live and multiply.

On behalf of our nonprofit organization, our county and the animals, I ask you to support the extension of the Spay/Neuter Fund.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mercedes M. Pellet', is written over a horizontal line.

Mercedes M. Pellet
Development Director

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