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Position: FAV



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

March 24, 2021

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

HB146

Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Fee on Commercial Feed

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urges a favorable report on HB146 with the amendments added in the House, which refine provisions of the bill related to changing the fees.

This committee should be proud of its work to create the Spay/Neuter Fund, which provides a national model for how to raise revenue for this critical, lifesaving work. We are grateful to the Sponsor and the legislature for proactively looking to renew the Fund and to ensure that it continues to operate. While the Fund does not sunset until next year, 2020 has shown us that planning pays, and we are grateful for this bill which would re-authorize the program in advance of its technical sunset date.

We also appreciate the intent behind the fee increase in the bill as introduced. However, we are concerned that the flat fee structure proposed initially might not be calibrated to recent market changes and do not feel confident that we have the information we need to determine a new level at this time. We appreciate that the House added amendments that modify the bill to require the Department of Agriculture to provide a program evaluation detailing the optimal fee structure that would increase revenue for the program and ensure it is functioning at full capacity. Such an analysis would provide this committee with the data we need to determine a fee structure for legislative action in 2022.

With these amendments, this is a life-saving and valuable bill that will position legislation next year to ensure the fees are structured at the optimal level. We urge a favorable report and look forward to working with this committee next year to right-size the fees.

Written Testimony on House Bill 146 (Beltsville Co

Uploaded by: Deegan, Bobbie

Position: FAV

To: The Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Sallie Rhodes, President, Beltsville Community Cats, Inc.
Date: March 22, 2021
RE: Testimony on House Bill 146

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of Beltsville Community Cats, Inc. (BCC) in support of House Bill 146, Spay/Neuter Fund – Extension and Fee on Commercial Feed. This bill, which is sponsored by Delegate Mary Lehman, will be considered by the Maryland State Senate’s Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee on Wednesday March 24th. HB 146 would extend the Department of Agriculture’s Spay/Neuter Fund for an additional 10 years and increase the fee on commercial feed prepared and distributed for consumption by dogs or cats.

Beltsville Community Cats, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization formed in March 2019 as a program of Laurel Cats, Inc. BCC separated from Laurel Cats in July 2020 and became a free-standing, non-profit entity.

- BCC’s mission is to work with residents and businesses to humanely manage and reduce the number of free roaming, "community" cats in Beltsville, MD.
- BCC is committed to promoting the importance of spaying and neutering all cats and to using humane methods such as targeted trap-neuter-vaccinate-return (TNVR), rescue, and natural attrition to reduce the risk of unwanted litters and keep free-roamingcats healthier while minimizing the size of community cat colonies.
- As deemed appropriate, BCC volunteers rescue stray, abandoned, and feral kittens that are 8 weeks of age or younger to be placed in foster homes for socialization, vetting and adoption into forever homes.
- BCC volunteers also manage and monitor approximately 170 community cats living in feral colonies on 16 industrial and commercial sites in Beltsville. Volunteers ensure that these cats have appropriate food and fresh water every day while monitoring these colonies for unaltered cats, dumped house cats, and/or sick or injured cats. Unaltered cats are trapped, sterilized, vaccinated and released back to their colonies.

BCC partnered with Laurel Cats in applying to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) in 2019 for FY 2020 funding and again in 2020 for FY 2021 funding. BCC’s share of the 2020 MDA funding (i.e., \$2,750) was used to spay 33 female cats and neuter 27 male cats. BCC’s share of the grant recently awarded for FY 2021 was \$2,925. BCC is in the process of applying for a MDA grant for FY 2022 as an independent organization.

Why is spaying and neutering cats and dogs so important? Unaltered cats can go into heat four to five days every three weeks during mating season. They yowl and urinate more frequently to advertise for a mate. Fixing female cats reduces these behaviors and lowers the risk of uterine infections (e.g., pyometra) and breast cancer. The fatality rate for these diseases is 50% in dogs and 90% in cats. Spaying a female before her first heat offers the best protection against these diseases.

Neutering male cats lowers their chances of getting prostate/testicular cancers, helps decrease volatility and aggression, and reduces the urge to roam in search of a mate. Unneutered male cats spray strong-smelling urine to “mark their territory.” The bottom line is that spaying and neutering cats improves their temperament and keeps them healthier, increasing their potential to live longer and healthier lives.

The biggest reason for spaying and neutering community cats is that their population growth is potentially exponential. Let's look at the example of two unaltered cats that mate and produce 4 kittens (2 males and 2 females). Assuming none of the cats is sterilized and they are healthy enough to reproduce, the 2 females and the mother cat each would produce additional litters. The new females would then produce litters, while the original mother cat and her older kittens would continue having litters. It is estimated that this could result in as many as 50+cats in about 16 months' time, when a fourth generation of kittens is born. Based on this theory of exponential growth, the 33 female cats that Beltsville Community Cats spayed using Maryland Department of Agriculture funding in 2020 significantly reduced the growth of the community cat population in Beltsville. Considering how many cat groups benefit from the spay/neuter grants awarded by MDA, the tremendous value inherent in the MDA funding is clearly demonstrated.

Groups like Beltsville Community Cats are committed to seeing that house cats and free-roaming cats have access to spay/neuter surgeries and the benefits associated with sterilization. This benefits the community by reducing the number of unwanted litters while minimizing fighting, spraying, flea/tick infestations and the use of yards and gardens as litter boxes. The benefits to government-run animal shelters include a reduction in the number of cats being taken into the facility, a reduction in the number of cats being euthanized due to a lack of other alternatives, and a reduction in the number of complaints about free-roaming cats.

Beltsville Community Cats, like so many other all-volunteer organizations, does not have any paid staff or established sources of funding. BCC is funded through small grants from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Prince George's County, and groups like the Petco Foundation, and through donations from private citizens and businesses. The small volunteer staff struggles to keep up with trapping and transporting cats, staying on top of the extensive recordkeeping and reporting required of non-profits and associated with the receipt of grant funds, seeking fundraising activities, recruiting volunteers, responding to requests for assistance, maintaining a foster care network, etc. BCC is so appreciative of the opportunity to apply for spay/neuter funding from the MDA and strongly supports the extension of this funding authority as proposed in HB 146.

If you have any questions about Beltsville Community Cats or how BCC uses the spay/neuter funding available through the MDA, please do not hesitate to call me at 301-802-1274.

Sincerely,
Sallie Rhodes, President



PO Box 942

Beltsville MD 20704

<https://www.beltsvillecats.net>

spay neuter testimony Mar 24.pdf

Uploaded by: Evans, Katherine

Position: FAV

Saving Lives, Four Paws At A Time



www.RudeRanch.org 410.798.9559



3200 Ivy Way, Harwood, Maryland 20776 • Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) #45379, Maryland Charity Campaign (MCC) #4650

*Rude Ranch Animal
Rescue, Inc.
Board of Directors*

*Katherine Evans
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*Robert J. Rude
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*Dr. Robert L. Harrison, DVM
Director of Animal Care*

*Diane VonSeggern, RD
Director of Sanctuary
Nutrition*

*Dr. Sandra Andrulis, DVM
Medical Co-Director*

*Lynn Hopkins
Member at Large*

*Dr. Erik Andrulis
Executive Director Elect*

March 24, 2021

Members of the Legislature:

My name is Katherine Evans. I am the president of Rude Ranch Animal Rescue. I am testifying in Support of HB 146: Spay / Neuter Fund - Extension and Report.

Rude Ranch is a non-profit organization established in 2001. In the past 19 years Rude Ranch found homes for more than 5,000 animals and facilitated the veterinary care and placement for more than 10,000 animals.

In October, 2012 we opened the Spay Spa & Neuter Nook, a regional a high quality, high volume low cost spay/neuter clinic, centrally located in Davidsonville. The clinic currently performs 7,400 - 8,000 surgeries per year and has provided over 60,000 spay/neuter surgeries since opening.

Rude Ranch and the Spay Spa has utilized the State Spay Neuter fund to provide in excess of 10,000 spay/neuter surgeries and rabies vaccines to animals belonging to many low income and under funded individuals, families, senior citizens and disabled veterans through out Anne Arundel County. Without this program many of these animals would have never received any vaccines, or seen by a vet during their lifetimes. Likewise, these animals would have produced many litters of unwanted and homeless puppies and kittens, adding to the animal over population problem. Most of these animals would have been surrendered to local animal controls and other organizations significantly adding to the costs of running these agencies.

Since this program began in 2014, euthanasias across the state have decreased 55%. Overall animal intake has dropped 17%. Likewise, calls for help to animal based government agencies and private organizations like mine are have been greatly reduced.

While my group has been able to accomplish much and help many animals under the state fund, unfortunately there are always many more people and animals that need our help. One of our biggest restraints to helping more animals is the need for additional funding from the state spay/neuter grant.

On behalf of Rude Ranch, the Spay Spa & Neuter Nook and the animals of Maryland, I want to encourage you to support and pass HB 146. Thankyou for taking the time to consider this bill. It will continue to greatly enhance animal welfare and residents of Maryland. Please contact me if you would like additional information regarding how my organization has utilized funding from this bill or a tour of our facilities.

SENATE WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON HB 146 SPAY NEUTER BIL

Uploaded by: Lehman, Mary

Position: FAV

DELEGATE MARY A. LEHMAN
Legislative District 21
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 317
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3114 · 410-841-3114
800-492-7122 Ext. 3114
Mary.Lehman@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL 146
Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Fee and Report

March 24, 2021

SUPPORT

MR. CHAIRMAN, MADAM VICE CHAIR AND ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: I AM HERE TO REQUEST YOUR SUPPORT OF HB 146, WHICH REAUTHORIZES THE STATE'S SPAY/NEUTER GRANT FUND. THAT FUND WAS CREATED BY A FEE ON COMMERCIAL PET FOOD. GRANTS ARE MADE ANNUALLY TO COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTERS AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT SPAY AND NEUTER CATS AND DOGS.

THIS SUCCESSFUL LAW WILL SUNSET IN SEPTEMBER OF 2022, BUT ADVOCATES DID NOT THINK IT WAS WISE TO WAIT UNTIL THE 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER CHANGES TO THE LAW IN THE EVENT THERE WAS A FAILURE TO REACH CONSENSUS. I AM BRINGING THIS BILL FORWARD NOW BECAUSE I AGREE.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS LAW IS TO FUND SPAY AND NEUTER SERVICES TO REDUCE ANIMAL SHELTER OVERPOPULATION AND EUTHANASIA RATES. THE BILL EXTENDS THE LAW FOR ANOTHER 10 YEARS, AND INITIALLY RETAINS THE PET FOOD LICENSE FEE AT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF \$100 PER PRODUCT LABEL

WHILE THE PROGRAM HAS RESULTED IN THE SPAY/NEUTER OF 65,216 DOGS AND CATS, MARYLAND IS STILL EUTHANIZING A STAGGERING NUMBER OF ANIMALS. ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BETWEEN 2014 AND 2019, MARYLAND SHELTERS TOOK IN 86,384 DOGS AND 146,859 CATS. OF THOSE, 22,287 DOGS AND 75,061 CATS WERE EUTHANIZED.

DESPITE THESE GRIM STATISTICS AND THE PROMISE LOW-COST SPAY AND NEUTERING SERVICES PROVIDE, NEITHER THE PET FOOD INDUSTRY NOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COULD AGREE ON AN APPROPRIATE PET FOOD LICENSE FEE INCREASE.

I HAVE WORKED WITH ANIMAL ADVOCATES AND THE DEPARTMENT ON WHAT I BELIEVE IS A GOOD COMPROMISE. IT REQUIRES THE DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE TO EVALUATE AN EXPANSION OF SPAY/NEUTER SERVICES AND AN INCREASE IN THE FEE BASED ON MARKET (PET FOOD INDUSTRY) CONSIDERATIONS THAT WOULD ENHANCE THE PROGRAM.

THIS IS A CRITICAL LAW FOR REDUCING THE POPULATION OF UNWANTED DOGS AND CATS, AND THE EUTHANIZATION RATES OF THOSE ANIMALS. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE REAUTHORIZE IT AND GET THE FUNDING FORMULA RIGHT OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

AN EVALUATION OF AN APPROPRIATE INCREASE IN THE FEE SEEMS TO BE THE BEST WAY FORWARD AND THE MOST FAIR WAY OF DETERMINING HOW TO ENHANCE THE GRANT PROGRAM AND REDUCE OUR STILL TOO HIGH EUTHANASIA RATE.

MR. CHAIR, MADAM VICE CHAIR AND EHEA COMMITTEE MEMBERS, I ASK FOR YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT.

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HB156 Testimony - HART.pdf

Uploaded by: Pellet, Mercedes

Position: FAV

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.**

**ADOPT.
DONATE.
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

HART FOR ANIMALS
P.O. Box 623
McHenry, MD 21541-0623

CONTACT US
301-387-7729
info@hartforanimals.org

www.hartforanimals.org

Department of Agriculture - Spay -Neuter Fund Exte

Uploaded by: Radov, Lisa

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 24, 2021

To: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Department of Agriculture – Spay/ Neuter Fund Extension and Fee on Commercial Feed – HB 146 -Support

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair 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. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee vote favorably for Department of Agriculture – Spay/ Neuter Fund Extension and Fee on Commercial Feed – HB 146 as amended in the House.

Maryland Votes for Animals worked on the legislation that passed in 2013 establishing The Spay and Neuter Grants Program. The goal of the program is to reduce shelter intake and euthanasia rates in Maryland. Using fees collected from pet food companies doing business in Maryland, the program provides competitive grants to local governments and non-profit animal welfare organizations for spay and neuter services of dogs and cats owned by low - income residents and for colonies of feral cats.

The sunset for this program is September 30, 2022. First and foremost, Maryland Votes for Animals would like to ensure that this lifesaving program continues without interruption. We would like to have as many funds as possible to approve even more grants. However, as a member of the Spay and Neuter Advisory Board representing Maryland Votes for Animals, I participate in the process to approve grants and respectfully recommend that this bill be amended to conform with the version that passed in the House, which would allow the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the agency that administers the program, to include their data and input from the years that the program has been in force to evaluate the future schedule of fees charged to pet food companies.

I want to thank Delegate Lehman for her commitment to this program and ask for a favorable report for HB 146 as amended in the House.

Let Kindness Reign, Vote Humane

WWW.VOTEANIMALS.ORG

March 22, 2021

MD H 146 Alley Cat Allies written testimony to Sen

Uploaded by: Robinson, Becky

Position: FAV

March 22, 2021

Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

On behalf of Alley Cat Allies and our more than 34,000 supporters in Maryland, I am writing to urge your support of **HB 146, "Department of Agriculture – Spay/Neuter Fund – Extension and Report."** If enacted into law, **HB 146** would continue the successful Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program, which is currently set to expire in 2022, by extending it through 2032. The bill would also require the Department of Agriculture to report on how to improve the fund, including a proposed fee structure that can be implemented over the next five to 10 years to enhance revenue available from the fund. **HB 146** was introduced by Delegate Lehman, passed the House and is now assigned to the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee.

Alley Cat Allies, based in Bethesda, Maryland, is the only national advocacy organization dedicated to the protection and humane treatment of cats. We have promoted sound and compassionate policies for cats since our founding in 1990.

Sterilization is the linchpin that makes possible the bigger goals of public health, animal welfare, and effective nonlethal control.

The 2020 Annual Report from the Maryland Spay and Neuter Grants Program says that it "appears to be having a significantly positive impact on its targeted metrics of intake and euthanasia," showing steady declines in both categories in Maryland animal shelters since the fund was established.

Without the availability of low-cost spay and neuter services that are made possible with this fund, there will be an increased cost of millions of dollars to Maryland taxpayers for the intake, housing, and killing of animals.

Low-cost spay and neuter programs are effective at increasing the sterilization rate among pet cats in lower-income households. These programs also benefit community cats, also called stray or feral cats, as part of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), whereby unowned, free-roaming cats are trapped, sterilized, vaccinated, eartipped, and returned to their outdoor homes to live and thrive.

HB 146 will significantly reduce one of the greatest barriers low-income owners face to neutering their pet: cost. A peer-reviewed scientific study published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* found that while most pet cats are already neutered, the neuter rate is significantly lower for pet cats living in households earning \$35,000 or less annually.¹ The lower-income owners who were interviewed primarily cited high cost as the reason for not neutering their cats. Providing low-cost or free spay and neuter

¹ Chu K, Anderson WM, Rieser MY, Population Characteristics and Neuter Status of Cats Living in Households in the United States, *J Am Vet Med Assoc*, 2009; 234: 1023-1030.

services benefits both cats and shelters as research has shown that spaying and neutering reduces the risk that adopted animals will be returned or relinquished to shelters.

There are also a substantial number of stray and community cats who benefit from spay and neuter programs. Sterilizing these cats prevents unchecked breeding, eliminates nuisance behaviors associated with mating, and improves their health.

Increased accessibility of spay and neuter services is a win for citizens, a win for animal shelters, and a win for cats. **For these reasons, we urge you to support HB 146.** Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Becky Robinson".

Becky Robinson
President and Founder, Alley Cat Allies

Pet Food Institute MD HB 146 Senate Written Testim

Uploaded by: Beach, Morgan

Position: FWA

March 22, 2021

Maryland Senate
Committee on Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Maryland House Bill 146 Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Report

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Pet Food Institute (PFI) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding [House Bill 146](#) Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Report.

Established in 1958, PFI is the trade association and the voice of U.S. cat and dog food and treat manufacturers. Our members account for the vast majority of pet food and treats made in the United States and feed 180 million pets in U.S. households. Our members operate under regulations issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and enforced by both federal and state officials. This means dog and cat owners throughout the United States and around the world benefit from science-based regulations that provide the safest animal food supply available globally.

PFI recognizes and agrees in principle with the intended goals of Maryland's spay and neuter program, with a core focus on low-income communities and populations, and commends Maryland for the great success of the program at its current funding level. Given this, no additional funds or an increased tax are needed which are levied solely on pet food manufacturers.

In addition to the current \$100 per product spay and neuter fee, pet food producers already pay a \$50 per product registration fee to Maryland and pet food consumers pay a 6% sales tax on products purchased in the state. **At an industry level, the taxes paid in Maryland account for approximately 10% of pet food manufacturers' cumulative budgets for all taxes and fees across the nation – a significant share for a single state.**

Even though HB 146 as amended and passed by the Maryland House removed the immediate fee increase provision, the language does require the Department of Agriculture to complete a report with the stated goal of expanding the program and increasing fees – essentially reaching the same goal. **This goes directly against the official opinion of the Department, which recently stated in a [Legislative Comment](#) that it “believes the Spay and Neuter Grants Program is currently well funded and operating as designed and envisioned. There is no current need to increase fees at this time.”**

Requesting a report and fee structure, with the express purpose of expanding the program and increasing fees, is inevitably still a tax on pet food makers for a program that is not directly related to them and where there is no need for additional funds. Increased taxes on pet food makers will reduce consumer choice and sales to brick-and-mortar pet retail in the state, who employ Maryland residents

and who have already been negatively impacted by the evolving shopping habits of customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the success of the program at its current funding level, we urge the committee to continue the program with the current \$100 per product fee. However, we question the need for a study given the stated goal to increase already high fees and the Department's opinion that the program is already appropriately funded.

On behalf of PFI members, whose nearly 25,000 employees in 32 states provide safe food for the 180 million pets across the U.S., we thank you for this opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,



Morgan Beach
Director of Public Affairs
Pet Food Institute

MDA - HB 146 - Letter of Info - 3.24.21.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Shirk, Cassie

Position: INFO



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Joseph Bartenfelder, Secretary
Julianne A. Oberg, Deputy Secretary

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Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

Date: March 24, 2021

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 146

SHORT TITLE: Department of Agriculture - Spay/Neuter Fund - Extension and Fee on
Commercial Feed

MDA POSITION: Information

House Bill 146 reauthorizes the Spay and Neuter Grant Program at the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), which is set to sunset on September 30, 2022. As amended, HB 146 requires MDA to report to the General Assembly on the Spay and Neuter Fund, including:

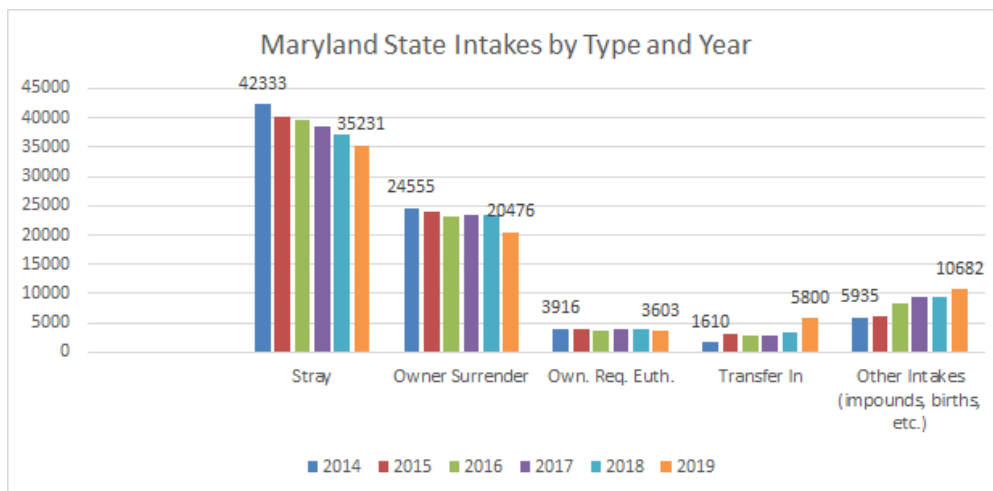
1. spay and neuter programs that are not receiving funding from the fund;
2. the market capacity for increasing the fees assessed on each brand name or product name of commercial feed that are paid into the fund; and
3. a proposed fee structure that can be implemented over the next 5 to 10 years to enhance the revenue generated from the fees.

The Spay and Neuter Grants Program was established by the Maryland General Assembly during the 2013 legislative session. A seven-member advisory board, appointed by the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, reviews all grant applications and provides recommendations to the Secretary on how grants should be administered.

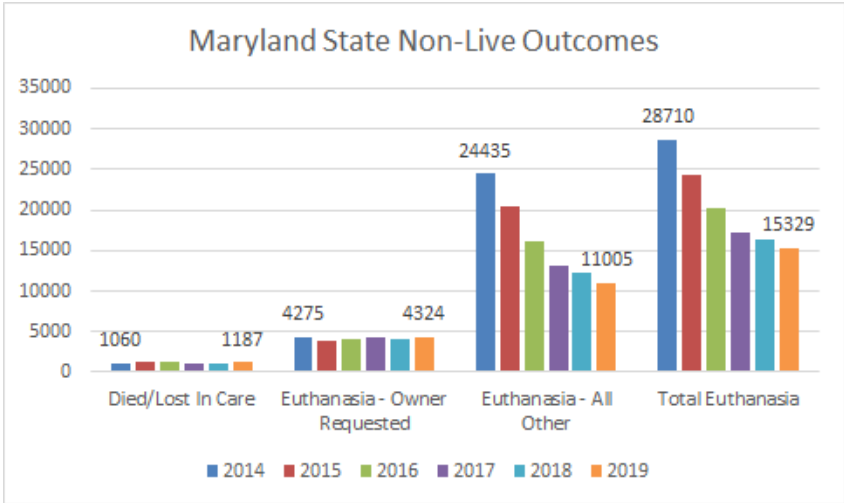
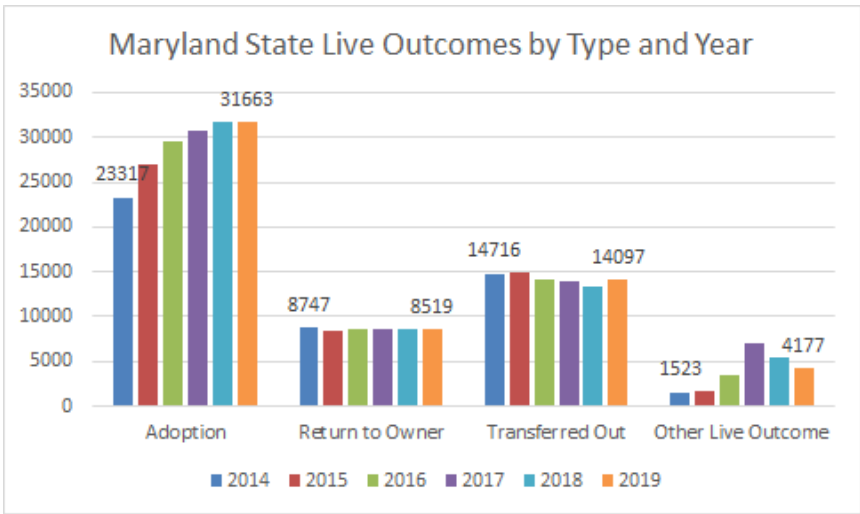
Since its inception, the program has awarded \$5,110,000.00 in grants that has funded 182 projects to spay and neuter owned pet cats and dogs of low income families, and feral cats. This includes two ongoing projects from FY19, 16 ongoing projects from FY20, and 28 new projects starting in FY21. To date these projects have resulted in 70,916 spay and neuter surgeries. With another 17,688 surgeries already funded in the existing projects, and the projects to be selected from the FY22 grant applications (which are currently being accepted), the program expects to break 100,000 surgeries completed before the initial projected sunset date. These projects have touched all 24 counties in Maryland.

MDA believes the Spay and Neuter Grants Program is currently well funded and operating as designed and envisioned. There is no current need to increase fees at this time.

The Spay and Neuter Grants Program has been fortunate that a way to evaluate the program's effectiveness was built into it. Every quarter, the program collects data from shelters across the state. This data includes the number and type of shelter intakes (strays, owner surrenders, transfers from other organizations, etc.) as well as the number and type of shelter outcomes (adoptions, returned to owner, euthanasia, etc.). Based on the information collected from 2015 to 2019 (data for 2020 is still being collected), all metrics show that shelters in Maryland are moving in the right direction. In 2019, stray and owner surrendered animals are down 16% (about 11,000 cats and dogs) from what they were in 2014. There are only two types of intakes that increased: transferred in and the "all other" categories. A possible explanation for the increase in transfers is that shelters not as overburdened as they once were are able to transfer animals between shelters to balance populations and prevent euthanasia. The "all other" category includes animals that are taken in for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) or groups that process them into their animal inventory before releasing.



The most noticeable changes are in the outcomes. Adoptions are up 26% from 2014, while most other live outcome metrics have stayed relatively unchanged. For non-live outcomes, most metrics have remained the same except for euthanasia not requested by owner. Euthanasia requested by owner is typically due to age, illness, or injury, and so no change is expected in these categories. All other euthanasia, which includes euthanasia that occurred at the discretion of the shelters is down 55%. These are typically done due to lack of space or dangerous behavior, and as such is the metric most related to the target goal of the Spay and Neuter Grants Program. With the reduction of shelter intakes, shelters across the state are not forced to euthanize for space as often.



If you have additional questions, please contact Cassie Shirk, Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs, at cassie.shirk@maryland.gov or 410-841-5886.