



**Maryland's Association of Animal Care and Control
Agencies and Humane Societies**

**PO Box 1143
Easton, Maryland 21601**

**HB 146 Department of Agriculture- Spay/Neuter Fund- Extension and Fee on Commercial
Feed**

Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation Committee

January 26, 2021

Dear Honorable Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and members of the committee:

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland, the state organization comprised of animal control agencies and humane societies supports HB 146 with amendments.

The forethought of the Sponsor and this Committee in your efforts to ensure the MDA Spay/Neuter Fund continues is so very appreciated by our membership. Many of our agencies and organizations are those which benefit from the grant program allowing us to help thousands of Maryland animals each year. We strongly support reauthorizing the program.

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland also appreciates the intent behind the fee increase that is detailed in the bill. This past year has brought the demise of large distributors, one which works directly with shelters and rescues- PetValu and decreases in the lines of food available for purchase. These trends and the current financial climate bring pause to our organization to support such increases without data to support this decision. We are certain the last thing anyone wants is to see these increases harm rather than support the program and Maryland animals.

We support the offered amendments provided by the bill's sponsor, Delegate Lehman which ask the Department of Agriculture to provide a report about market trends, including a forecast of how different fee structures would be predicted to impact revenue.

The requested amendments are as follows:

HB146

- Strike the new language page 4, lines 24 – 28
- Add at the end of the bill the following language:
 - AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that, on or before October 1, 2021, the Department of Agriculture shall report to the General Assembly with a program evaluation identifying any significant programs that are currently not funded, the market capacity to further increase the fees, and a recommendation for the fee structure over the next 5-10 years of the program that would enhance the revenue generated to the Fund.

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland thanks Delegate Lehman, her co-sponsors and the committee for your commitment to the MDA Spay/Neuter Fund and respectfully requests the adoption of the proposed amendments to HB 146 in order that due diligence is conducted to protect the future of this very important state-wide program.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patty Crankshaw-Quimby

Executive Director/Chief Animal Control Officer: Talbot Humane/ Talbot County Animal Control

President: Professional Animal Workers of Maryland