MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

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www.voteanimals.org

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To: Senate Finance Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Public Health – Prohibition on Testing Cosmetics on Animals – SB 282 – SUPPORT

Chairman Kelley, Vice Chairman Feldman, members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. On behalf of our board of directors and our thousands of members across the State, I urge you to support Public Health – Prohibition on Testing Cosmetics on Animals – SB 282.

I vividly remember testifying before all of you in support of this bill last session. It was March 12, 2020. That morning, Senate President Ferguson announced new protocols that would take effect at the end of that day until the session ended. Yet, despite the surreal quality of that day and the others that followed, this committee issued a favorable report for the bill - and it passed unanimously in the Senate. Unfortunately, it ran out of time as the session ended early due to COVID concerns. I am hopeful that this committee will see this issue in the same light and issue a favorable report.

In 2020, laws to ban the sale or import of cosmetics on animals took effect in California, Illinois, and Nevada. Hawaii, New York, Virginia, Rhode Island, and New Jersey are in the process of passing similar legislation. Animal-tested cosmetics already are banned in the Europe Union, India, and Israel.

Alternatives to animal testing are available and being implemented. In many instances, lab - grown cells are being used to test whether a cosmetic is safe. Cosmetics giants such as Unilever, Avon, and Procter & Gamble are using a product called EpiDerm that is made from cells taken during procedures such as breast reductions and tummy tucks as a substitute for animal skin in their testing protocols.

Animal testing correctly predicts human reaction to cosmetics approximately 40% - 60% of the time, as opposed to using alternative testing, which is accurate close to 80% of the time. Not only is animal testing inefficient, but also it can be expensive as animals have to be fed, housed, and given veterinary care.

This may seem like simply a "cosmetic change" but to the animals enduring those gruesome tests, it's way more than skin deep.

I would like to thank Senator Lam for sponsoring SB 282 and urge a favorable report.