

**SB-760 - Criminal Law – Animal Cruelty – Petition for Costs for Care of Seized Animal**  
**Maryland Horse Council, FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT**

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, March 10, 2021



**MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL**  
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The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners, representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses to the owners of trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. As such, we represent over 30,000 Marylanders.

MHC recognizes that Maryland's current animal abuse and neglect seizure law (Criminal Law Section 10-615) provides too little guidance or structure to courts, law enforcement, and animal control authorities when domestic animals suffer and seizure is the only option. There are a number of post-seizure disposition options available for livestock that would mitigate or even obviate the need to provide for compensation of costs of care for the seizing authority. SB 760, as drafted, does not provide a such a range of disposition options for abused and suffering livestock (including horses, mules, and donkeys), that is acceptable to MHC. Nor does SB 760, as drafted, do anything to correct some built-in incentives for seizing agencies to overreach their mission during livestock seizures.

MHC has worked with Professional Animal Workers of Maryland (PAWS) on a reasonable cure of these deficiencies, and urges the sponsor to amend SB 760 to exclude all livestock by species from its application. SB 760, if so amended, would provide good options for abused *companion* animals and the cost of their care after seizure and before trial while placing the burden of that care on the abusing custodian. Therefore, MHC would support SB 760, provided it is amended to exclude all livestock.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryland Horse Council